



## La traducción fan al inglés no oficial

Ofrecido por:



Welcome to Zarathustra. This is the home of the complete unofficial translation of the script of Xenosaga: Pied Piper, an RPG that came out for mobile phones in Japan and bridges the first two episodes of the Xenosaga series for Playstation 2. The game is currently unavailable in English, and unfortunately may never be. Still, it's an amazing story and I feel that Xenosaga fans of all kinds should be able to appreciate it.

Pied Piper takes place 100 years before the events of Xenosaga Episode I, and follows Jan Sauer (eventually known as Ziggurat 8, or Ziggy) in his investigation of a U.M.N. cyberterrorist by the name of Voyager. Essentially, it is comprised of the series of events leading up to the end of his human life.

If you'd like to be notified via email when updates are made, please enter your email in the form to the left and join the mailing list. Whenever I make a major update I'll send a notice out to the list.

Other than that, just enjoy, and read the disclaimer at the bottom of the page. Just for emphasis, this project is completely not for profit and I do not hold the copyright to the original script. The translation is licensed under a Creative Commons share alike license, which basically means that you're free to redistribute it as long as you attribute me (chaoslace@gmail.com), and you can make alterations of it (including translations into other languages) as long as you offer the same terms of use on your work.

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# Chapter 1.1 - Prologue

T.C. 4667 - Planet Abraxas. Evening is falling on a high one-room apartment that looks down over a city street. A child and a woman who appears to be his mother are using a network-access scope.

Joaquin: Mom! Hey Mom, check it out!

Sharon: Calm down... what is it?

Joaquin: Mom! It's a new kind of synthetic dog! And it looks just like the real thing, not like those stupid robot models...

Sharon: Don't be silly. You know we can't afford something like that right now. How about I think about it when the price gets more reasonable?

Joaquin: Really? When can we buy it?

Sharon: Hmm... maybe when you're taller than your mom.

Joaquin: Tch! ...Heeey, Mom?

Sharon: Whaaat?

Joaquin: Can I try out the trial version on the net?

Sharon: Alright, but only 30 minutes of UMN virtual reality a day.

Joaquin: Awesome! Thanks, Mom!

Sharon: And if you meet any weird people online, I want you to dive out immediately. Got it?

Joaquin: Yuh-huh. Okay, let's try a papillon [a variety of dog]. How about a six month old male? The location is up to you. I just want to test it out.

Network Operator: Understood. Small dog, papillon, male, six months old. Corresponding Nexus Corporation synthetic dog confirmed.  
Location: Abraxas Central Park.

Joaquin: Okay, sounds good!

The boy logs into Abraxas Central Park. Then, from behind, a hooded figure wearing a white coat logs in without a sound.

Unknown: ..... "And the bowl was poured on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." [Revelation 16:12]

He watches the boy intently from behind, then logs out, leaving only his enigmatic message.

Joaquin: Hm? Hello? Weird. I had the feeling someone was there... must be nothing. It says on the status screen I'm the only one logged on now. Hey! C'mere, boy!

Papillon: Woof woof!

# Chapter 1.2 - Archon Police Station

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Archon Division

At the landing zone, a transport plane sets down and a man gets off. Another man goes out to meet him, straightening his clothes and saluting.

Erich: Captain Sauer, this way please.

Jan: Status report.

Erich: You probably already know that a large-scale meeting between the Galaxy Federation and the Immigrant Fleet is planned for next term.

Jan: The Pilgrimage Council, right?

Erich: Yes. I gathered from the local news that the special delegate from this area, Donald Marquand, is recently under suspicion of pulling strings in an active right-wing organization.

Jan: ...Is that so? Donald Marquand is involved with the Torres Foundation and a favorite for political advancement. The Foundation's refugee aid and acceptance of the Immigrant Fleet got them past the moderates. Are they joining up with the Taka sect?

Erich: Yes. Consequently, they formed a Goodwill Ambassador group to garner public approval. It seems they set up their little 'meeting place' here in neutral Archon. However, the ambassadors have been kidnapped.

Jan: So their demonstration for the public turned into a much worse kind of show. Ironic. And the status of the Archon police investigation?

Erich: They've located the place where the ambassadors and diplomats are being held. Point NG-PP6-42T8. They think it's a crime by a fringe organization under the influence of the Immigrant Fleet.

Jan: Has the Immigrant Fleet released a statement?

Erich: Yes. Today at 22:00 Patriarch Julius announced in an official comment that they are completely unrelated to these events. He claims the Immigrant Fleet is also a victim, and if the Galaxy Federation doesn't let up their suspicions it is likely the Pilgrimage Council will be suspended. What do you think?

Jan: Patriarch Julius has always been an advocate of dividing up Abraxas. That eliminates the possibility that the group behind this is opposing him... Did the perpetrators make any kind of statement?

Erich: No.

Jan: ...That figures. Their goal is to trap Donald, not to demand a ransom from the Goodwill Ambassadors. Judging by the nature of the crime, I would wager that their ultimate goal is to erode diplomatic relations between the Federation and the Immigrant Fleet.

Erich: ...

Jan: I've heard there's a connection between the Torres Foundation and the construction of the Assembly Hall program [the virtual space in which the ambassadors are trapped]. Naturally, they have anti-hacking security of the highest level. A AAA-class barrier like that can only be broken by our own organization, or possibly...

Erich: ...Voyager?

Jan: Perhaps. Remember the incident involving the Immigrant Fleet anchoring in Miltian space? When the documents of mediation were falsified?

Erich: Sure... If I remember correctly, Gloria's team was in charge of that case, right? I also heard they didn't turn up any concrete evidence.

Jan: That incident... they say that an extreme right-wing organization on the Federation side, the Descendants of Nestorius, somehow got Voyager to do their hacking for them. Now that I think about it, I have no doubt that the Descendants and Voyager are behind this incident as well.

Erich: But if they did get Voyager to help them, wouldn't they be expected to make it worth his while?

Jan: I'm not sure. Until now there have been many acts of terrorism attributed to Voyager. We can't be sure what kind of rewards he was getting as a result of them. For now I'll dive in and take a look around. At any rate, until this business is settled our top priority must be recovering the diplomats and ambassadors. How are preparations for the dive coming?

Erich: ...Ah, yes, about that...

Jan: What is it? Don't withhold information in your reports.

Erich: Lactis and Melisse have already gone in with some members of the Archon police. Mikhail is currently tracing them, and given the strange circumstances they also brought Bugs. He's equipped with the level 3 counter-terrorism armament BT-278. They figured that since they were ready to go, why not get a head start...

Jan: They went in without approval? ...Was Melisse behind that?

Erich: Probably.

Jan: ...Then I'll log in. Prepare the device immediately.

In the Archon police station operating room.

Erich: We're here, sorry to keep you waiting.

Jan: Lactis and the others went ahead?

Mikhail: Y-Yes, Captain!

Jan: What's Melisse's situation? According to Erich's report it's almost time to approach the target.

Mikhail: Yes. Damn, whoever made the Assembly Hall's logic was pretty good.

Erich: ...

Jan: Is this interference?

Mikhail: Yeah. Are you receiving the image?

Jan: So this is the Carnegie construction process...

Mikhail: You're familiar with it?

Jan: Yes, but I've only heard the name. It was at police academy... and that was nearly ten years ago.

Erich: Back at the turn of T.C. 4400, Vector Industries had a UMN management and administration department... these days it's been merged into the First Division. They were behind the first theories of virtual reality construction inside the new UMN. "Carnegie" was the name of the mathematician who served as the leader of the organization at the time. Because of his ideas scientific progress has jumped forward rapidly in the past two hundred years. Without his research, virtual reality would still be hundreds of years away.

Mikhail: Not bad, Erich. That's right. It takes a genius programmer to come up with something like that... granted, he did call himself "The Original." Can you see it now?

Jan: What... is this? Looks like the construction of virtual reality.

Mikhail: This is the program where the ambassadors are being held. For now you'll dive in at this point. The Carnegie construction process is... everything. This virtual space is constructed by its own distinctive logic. Oh, and when you dive in you'll find heavy security and macrophages waiting for you. Why the hell would a criminal want to hack into that kind of place?

Jan: ...

Mikhail: ...Well, Lactis and the others made it in okay. And at least we know the point where the ambassadors are being held, thanks to the local police. It seems they somehow found a weak point in the security system. That'll make things easier for us.

Jan: Even if Bugs is with them, going in with only a scout and no backup seems like suicide.

Mikhail: I-I'm sorry. Melisse made me...

Jan: Afterwards I want a written explanation and apology from both of you. At any rate, for now prioritize preparations for my dive. Can you do that?

Mikhail: Y-yes. I did a few pick-ups before your secure login. I calculated the advance point for Melisse's mission, so if you dive into the virtual courtyard in their vicinity, you should be able to catch up to them. It's pretty safe, but I should still warn you that the security in this place is built like a maze. Anti-intruder units can swarm you, so be careful.

Jan: Understood.

Mikhail: I've finished up preparations for your dive.

Jan: Of course. Let's go, then.

Mikhail: Captain?

Jan: What?

Mikhail: Actually... there's just one more thing.

Jan: What is it?

Mikhail: After the incident occurred, all records of the ambassadors' presence were erased, and I couldn't find any electrical traces of resistance.

Jan: What does that mean?

Mikhail: When a normal person is held in virtual space against their will, the captive's brain waves leave some kind of electrical residue as evidence of their resistance. However, this time there was no such thing. The only possible explanation is -

Jan: That's ridiculous. Are you saying the ambassadors are staying in virtual reality of their own free will?

Mikhail: Maybe a disparity in the construction process could have caused an error in the trace records, but still... no program that I know of could cause an anomaly like that!

Jan: What do you think, Erich?

Erich: I don't know. I can't imagine that the ambassadors have a reason for staying in there. How about forcing them to log out?

Mikhail: If that were the answer we would have done it already. Externally forcing someone to log out can potentially damage their brain. For safety reasons, you have to dive into their personal space and make contact with them before you can execute a compulsory logout.

Jan: Understood. Keep careful records of my dive.

Mikhail: Please be careful. Something strange is going on... I have a bad feeling about this.

# Chapter 1.3 - Virtual Reality: Cathedral Entrance

Virtual Reality: Cathedral Entrance

The Archon police team and Melisse, Lactis, and Bugs have logged in.

Melisse: Our mission objective is to protect the minds of the Federation Goodwill Ambassadors and the diplomats. From the information we obtained, it appears they are being held captive at point NG-PP6-42T8. They've been trapped in the same place the negotiations took place. When we discover the target, keep an eye out for weaknesses, but don't act on your own. Report first.

Cordell: We can't force them to log out when we find them? They're criminals. We're police. We'll just arrest 'em like everyone else...

Lactis: This isn't a joke. You're to log out normally like you always do. Got it? Think about why our special team was called here. This virtual space isn't the familiar everyday world that you know. If you damage the target's brain by contacting their consciousness in the wrong way, then all the diplomacy and negotiations thus far will amount to nothing.

Cordell: U-Understood.

Melisse: Alright, confirming the target's present location. The coordinates are NG-PP6-42T8. It's not far from here. Re-confirming. This place has completely different logic from normal virtual space. We expect macrophages very similar to antibodies, but their basic construction algorithms are unknown. Be sure to be on your guard!

Police Officers: Yes sir!

The police officers salute simultaneously and hurry inside.

Melisse: ...Phew.

Lactis: That little sigh... do you ever think about quitting to become a schoolteacher?

Melisse: Don't tease me!

Bugs: Melisse has become extremely nervous. Respiration 128%. Heart rate 160%. Body temperature 112%. All of her basic vital signs are exceeding normal values...

Melisse: You lay off too! Geez, what kind of program is that anyway? I'm telling Erich!

Bugs: No no. I am sorry.

Lactis: Are you... really nervous?

Melisse: Probably. But one way or another, I want this mission settled! Will you help me?

Lactis: You didn't say anything before the dive. What are you getting so worried about?

Melisse: ...

Lactis: Well, if you don't want to talk, there's nothing I can do... I'll just let it go.

Melisse: Do you know when the Captain was promoted to his current position?

Lactis: ...I don't really pay attention to those things.

Melisse: It was seven years ago. He was 23 years old... the same age I am now.

Lactis: Ahh, I see now. So you think that if you do well on this mission, you'll get promoted to captain too? Don't kid yourself. You know, you can't swallow your pride if you don't let go once in a while. You probably just assume that failure isn't allowed, right?

Melisse: I know, I know. ...But if at all possible, I want to try to resolve this without the Captain's help. Please, lend me your strength.

Lactis: I'll see the mission through. Realians like myself were created for this purpose. Whether it's the Captain or you, that's the duty I was charged with - seeing the mission through to the very end.

Melisse: And you, Bugs?

Bugs: M-me? ...We've already come this far, so there's no avoiding a scolding from the Captain... I think if we are going to get scolded anyway, successfully completing the mission might result in less scolding. Oh, but I am worried about Erich! If the Captain finds out he used me without permission... no no, it is awful just thinking about it!

Melisse: Don't worry about Erich... I'll take full responsibility for that decision. ...I feel much better with you two helping me out. So let's hurry up and rescue those ambassadors!

They eventually arrive at a place where the policemen from earlier have cornered some kind of tank on legs.

Lactis: What's that?

Melisse: Seems like the kidnappers left it for us, doesn't it? I wonder if it was laying in wait here?

Lactis: Bugs!

Bugs: Accessing! Ah - there it is. It's a Tao Industries ambush-model mobile tank, 'Sleipnir.' Made in 4614. Pretty antique for a security unit.

Lactis: I don't like this 'laying in wait' business... pass that data over to me. Melisse! Go tell the other officers not to do anything until the analysis is complete. I don't think that's just an ordinary security unit.

Melisse: Okay. Attention! We are currently conducting an analysis of the mobile tank. You are absolutely not to approach it until you receive orders from us...

Marion: We're standing down in the face of the enemy? I guess it's best to be cautious when the situation is unknown.

Mark: It's just because the superior officers are so principled. That tank is probably all bark and no bite. Let's go ahead and get rid of it.

Marion: Fine with me. Alpha, Delta, keep it cornered. Bravo, circle around and approach it from the right side. Charlie, secure a good sniping position. The weak point is at the nape of the neck. Time your attacks when it's exposed! ...Alright, GO!

Melisse: Wait, no!

Lactis: Dammit!

Marion: It's got us!

Mark: This... how could something so old react so quickly!?

3 officers are deleted before their eyes. The remaining men flee in fear. Melisse has a look of horror on her face.

Lactis: Melisse! Hey, Melisse!! Snap out of it!

Melisse: I... I'm sorry... I... wasn't able to control them...

Lactis: Can we really do this without the Captain? And what are we supposed to do now, with you so upset?

Bugs: Lactis. That's a little...

Lactis: You be quiet. I went ahead and said it, didn't I? Melisse, whatever you do, I must still complete the mission that was given to me. Don't get in the way of that.

Melisse: And the people that the mobile tank deleted...?

Lactis: Quite possibly dead.

Melisse: Because of my... bad judgment?

Lactis: In the special investigation force things like this happen every day. Do you think a person who gets this upset about it is fit to be a commander?

Melisse: ...

Lactis: You should log out. I'll take over from here.

Melisse: ...

Lactis: What's that? Coming along after all?

Melisse: I... get it. I'll keep going.

Lactis: Alright, well, there is the matter of destroying Sleipnir. We should be safe if we can stay near its chest. We're lucky Erich created this counter-terrorism armament for Bugs. Even though it's just the three of us, we should be able to defeat it. Let's go!

## Chapter 1.4 - Virtual Reality: Cathedral Courtyard

Virtual Reality: Cathedral Courtyard

Jan: I logged in peacefully enough. Report on Lactis and the others.

Mikhail: Roger. Erich is tracing their movements. It appears they are currently engaged in battle with an enemy tank! Erich is starting up Bugs' level 3 anti-terrorist armament. Travel west from your current location to join up with them.

Jan: Got it. Resume your trace.

Mikhail: Captain!

Jan: What is it?

Mikhail: I've lost the life signs of six Archon policemen. It's possible they were deleted in the battle with the macrophage.

Jan: Understood. Can you get any specifics on that tank they're fighting?

Mikhail: Yeah. It's a 'Sleipnir' model, made by Tao Industries. This type was retired when I was a kid. It's an old model, but it seems to have been refined significantly for use in virtual space, so I'm not sure if the weapon specs we have from those days are accurate or not.

Jan: ...I see. Tell Erich to change Bugs's counter-terrorism equipment to level 6. From here on out take my position into consideration and adjust for stealth parameters. And don't forget to reconnect to me when I join up with the others.



Mikhail: Roger. Proceeding with a more direct communication link. If your security is compromised I'll halt correspondence for a while.

Jan: I'll leave the trace to you.

Mikhail: Yes sir!

Back in battle with the Sleipnir.

Melisse: !!

Lactis: Tch-!

Bugs: The enemy's weapons are more specialized for virtual space than I anticipated! If the battle continues in this manner we may be in danger -

Lactis: I'm aware of that! ...Well, what now?

Melisse: I... uh...

Their escape route is blocked, and the Sleipnir appears to have finished replenishing its energy.

Jan: To the right!

Melisse: !!

Following the voice, they make their way to Jan, narrowly avoiding an attack.

Jan: Are you alright?

Melisse: C-Captain! I'm so sorry...

Jan: I'll give you a chance to explain later. But for now, what do we do with the gatekeeper? Bugs!

Bugs: Y-yes?

Jan: Erich should have changed your weapons systems over to counter-terrorism level 6. Let's transmit the new armament to each person.

Bugs: Really? Then I'll prepare everyone now!

Jan: However much that security unit has been improved, it was still made by a human being. That we made it this far is proof that we're one step ahead. That mobile tank is no more than a well-made program. So let's take care of it!

Battle with the Sleipnir.

Melisse: ...

Jan: We have to hurry. The ambassadors are only a little bit further.

Melisse: ...

They arrive at their destination point. However, they find nothing but an empty room.

Melisse: ...Is this... it?

Lactis: It can't be. This should be point NG-PP6-42T8. Bugs! Can you detect the ambassadors' life signs?

Bugs: Yes. Surely they can't have gone far... What's this? There's some kind of large-scale reconstruction of virtual space...

Lactis: !

Abruptly, the door they entered through closes and they hear a lock click shut.

Jan: Melisse! Secure the escape route!

Melisse: It's too late! I can't open it!

Jan: A trap? But who? And for what purpose?

Suddenly the whole room shimmers with light. When the light dies down, the appearance of the room has changed.

Bugs: W-what's going on!?

Melisse: I... I don't...

Lactis: ...Captain. What on earth...?

Jan: It would seem the security system is operational. Bugs! Can you describe our present location?

Bugs: I'm on it! ...Huh? It seems our location has not changed, but... Ah! Wait just a moment. I'm getting a communication from Erich. It seems he was somehow able to maintain the trace! Connecting the circuit!

Erich: ...ptain .....n you h.... me? Ca...tain. Captain. Can you hear me?

Jan: Affirmative. There's a little noise but I can hear you. Do you know what's going on?

Erich: I analyzed the trace log, and there seems to be some major interference coming from outside the program.

Jan: Major interference? Are we prisoners in this room?

Erich: Don't worry. I had just enough time to construct a protective field around your location. Luckily, when the room was reconstructed earlier, a break in the connection caused a passage to the ambassadors' captivity point to appear. Please approach point NG-PP6-42T8 from there...

Jan: Understood. I'm cutting communication for a while. I'll contact you again when we've reached the ambassadors. Meanwhile, find the external access point that's interfering with this program. Over.

Mikhail: W-wait a moment!

Jan: Mikhail?

Mikhail: Yes. It seems that several Archon police officers have also been caught in the reconstruction. Please try to recover them!

Jan: I will. ...This place. It's been more dangerous than I expected. When we find the officers I'll urge them to log out immediately.

Mikhail: Thank you.

As they move towards their destination, they find an Archon police officer involved in some kind of argument.

Jan: Hm?

Powell: N-No! It's not my fault! ...S-Stay away from me...

Jan: This is odd...

Melisse: !!

Powell: Stop, don't come any closer! Please! Let go...!

Concerned, Melisse turns around and sees the figures of the officers who were deleted.

Melisse: !!

Cordell: Yo.

Melisse: What!?

Cordell: Young lady... We're in hell now thanks to you...

Melisse: I-I'm not responsible! If you had all been more reasonable...

Cordell: Oh, we know! You're not responsible at all. And yet you went on in spite of the danger, didn't you? This was all about your promotion, wasn't it!?

Battle with Cordell.

Melisse: C-Captain! What was that just now?

Jan: Someone probably traced the record of our actions and hacked in. It was just an illusion.

Melisse: I... caused those people to die.

Jan: Melisse. In combat you should only be thinking of numbers and tactics. Enemies will analyze your way of thinking when they attack. Show weakness to them and you'll be the next one to end up dead.

Melisse: Y-Yes sir.

Lactis: Captain...

Jan: I know, our movements are being watched. We should hurry.

# Chapter 1.5 - Virtual Reality:

## NG-PPT-42T8

Proceeding to the destination point, Jan and the others find themselves in a shrine-like room.

Jan: Mikhail... Mikhail, are you still with us?

Mikhail: I'm tracing you closely. Did you find the ambassadors?

Jan: We've arrived at point NG-PP6-42T8. I still can't see any signs of the ambassadors. Can you scan for their position from there?

Mikhail: Just a moment. ...Hmm, I'm seeing life signs at your current location. Um... can you walk around the perimeter and confirm your position? That area must be comprised of multiple levels. Shouldn't the ambassadors be there?

Jan: ...What's that over there?

An altar-like object surrounded by a fence is visible in the interior of the room. A shock courses through Jan's body when he touches the fence.

Jan: Damn, the fence!

Mikhail: C-Captain! What happened!?

Erich: Captain. This is an emergency! Get out of that place immediately!!

Jan: Erich!? What kind of emergency?

Erich: Someone is hacking in!! ...I'm almost certain it's the same program that triggered the reconstruction of that room earlier! Something else is at the ambassador's captivity point... an macrophage? ...No, it's something different. A level 4 virus! It's an extermination program!!

Jan: Attack specs!?

Erich: My attempts to analyze the enemy are being blocked!! You're in danger! Log out now!

Jan: Understood! It appears that someone from the outside is causing massive interference here... it's time to withdraw. Log out at once.

Melisse: Captain!?

Jan: No objections. Mikhail, bring us back.

Mikhail: Understood. Commencing recovery. ...? ...??

Jan: What's wrong?

Melisse: Captain...

Jan: You'll have time to voice your opinions later, Melisse.

Melisse: No... something's not right... I can't move...!!

Erich: Your consciousness is stuck there!?

Before their eyes, a huge extermination program appears and blocks their way.

Jan: The extermination program...!!

Erich: Dammit!

In the Archon police station operating room, Erich gets up from tracing Jan and the others and gets into a dive port. He starts preparing to log in.

Erich: I'm logging in from here and using a direct approach to force the others out!

Mikhail: W-Wait just a minute! Your equipment hasn't been prepared! It's too dangerous to go in there unarmed!!

Erich: This is about the Captain's life. ...And I'm concerned about that program that's causing the interference. If I don't see it for myself... Mikhail, trace me and bring me back!

Mikhail: H-Hey!

Back in virtual reality.

Mikhail: ...Captain? Captain!!

Jan: What's wrong!?

Mikhail: Dammit, that crazy bastard! ...Erich is logging in to that point to attempt to log you out manually!

Bugs: !!

Jan: What!?

Mikhail: He's not even armed! ...Captain. Once Erich logs in, please take care not to involve him in any battles!!

Bugs: Ridiculous! Absolutely ridiculous! Erich hasn't received training for combat like the rest of us! He should know better than anyone what it means to log in to a situation like this!!

Jan: ...I see. At any rate, it seems that once we log out we should make some changes to our organization. The question is whether the ambassadors' force of will will hold out until then.

Mikhail: Preparations for your recovery are complete. Follow Erich's directions and we'll get you back somehow.

Erich logs in right in the middle of the battle.

Erich: Captain!!

Bugs: Erich!!

Jan: ...That was a stupid thing to do.

Erich: Like I told you before, what you are experiencing is someone hacking into this space. What concerns me the most is that your consciousnesses are locked to this point. I'm going to use a direct approach to force you out one at a time. Please just try to relax...

He tries to approach Jan, but is intercepted and deleted by the extermination program.

Lactis: Dammit!

Melisse: !!

Jan: Erich!?

Bugs: Erich!? Erich... Erich!? No! No, it's not true...

Melisse: ...Bugs.

Bugs: ...Right? Melisse? This isn't real, right? Because how could Erich be gone ... Captain, this is just another hallucination, isn't it? I... I... if my operator is gone... I... it's not true! It's not true!

Battle with the extermination program "Auduhmla."

Mikhail: What's going on!? On this end Erich's life signs are fading fast! He can't be...

Jan: What's his condition!?

Mikhail: The medics are examining him. He appears to be in a state of cardiac arrest.

Jan: ...I see.

Mikhail: Erich...

Jan: The security unit has been eliminated. Was there any change in our surroundings?

Mikhail: The interference from outside appears to have ceased. You've also been released from the coordinate lock.

Jan: I see. Can we proceed with logging out the ambassadors?

Mikhail: ...Yes. Now that the lock is gone I don't think there will be a problem...

Jan: Understood. ...We'll proceed with the mission. In compensation for your partner's life...

Lactis: ...What?

Jan: No, never mind. It's nothing.

After the extermination program is destroyed, stairs appear, sinking down into an underground area. The figures of seven children and one woman are there.

Jan: Is this the place? Mikhail!! Open up a link! We've arrived at point NG-PP6-42T8. Let's get them out of here. Verify!

Mikhail: ...Circuit connected. Obtaining records of their thought patterns from the assembly headquarters. Confirmed – the people at your location are the Goodwill Ambassadors.

Jan: That means... the ambassadors are children?

Mikhail: ...Children?

Melisse: Some kind of PR stunt? Could this all be for the benefit of the media?

Jan: I know these talks were intended to boost public opinion, but using children for such a dangerous game...

Lactis: We're police officers. We've come to rescue you. We're going to perform a compulsory logout, so just try to relax... huh?

Eleanor: There's nothing to fear, no need to be afraid. We're going to the promised land. 'That person' told us so, right? ...Right. After this we're going to the promised land.

Jan: 'That person?' ...Wait! Who is 'that person'!?

Lactis: Captain, watch out! There's a self-delete switch on her necklace!

Jan: Self-delete!? Get these kids out of here now!!

Lactis: On it! Performing the compulsory logout! Mikhail! Are you ready to receive them?

Mikhail: Leave it to me! We can recover them at any time.

Lactis: Perform the logout in 10 seconds. And get us out of here as soon as the ambassadors are out!

Eleanor: "So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image..." [Revelation 16:2]

Jan: Wait!

Ignoring Jan's admonition, Eleanor presses the switch and disappears in a flash a light.

## Chapter 1.6 – Return to Archon

Archon Police Station Operating Room

Mikhail helps Jan and the others out of their dive ports.

Melisse: What happened to the children!?

Lactis: That should have been a wide-range compulsory logout, but it seems it was denied.

Melisse: Oh no...

Jan: Were their consciousnesses locked there? Could it have been the influence of some external force...?

Mikhail: As far as I can tell, there's no evidence in the ambassadors' trace logs that they were being held against their will!

Jan: Just like you said before the dive. So the ambassadors really were staying there of their own accord?

Lactis: I don't know about the ambassadors, but that woman... when I think about her behavior before she deleted herself, I can't deny the possibility that she had her own reasons for staying there. However...

Jan: What?

Lactis: Two things she said before she died are sticking out in my mind. "Promised land" and "that person"...

Jan: Was someone communicating with her consciousness in that place? Someone besides us and those attending the Immigrant Fleet talks?

Melisse: It couldn't be... Voyager?

Lactis: I don't know... this incident is just too strange.

Jan: Indeed. The interference from outside... the bizarre actions of that diplomat... I don't think the criminal merely intends to create discord between the Federation and the Immigrant Fleet. It's different somehow, more...

Lactis and Mikhail, go over the trace logs for any possible connection between that woman's words and the perpetrator. Melisse and Bugs, stand by until I give you further orders. I'm going to head to the hospital. I should recover the bodies of the officers who were killed.

After giving everyone their orders, Jan comes upon Bugs standing alone in front of Erich's body.

Jan: Bugs, you take a break too. I'm sorry, but I have to take him in for investigation.

Bugs: ...Yes, sir.

Galaxy Police Hospital

The examining room is overflowing with the rescued policemen and young ambassadors. Jan is standing in in the doorway.

Jan: I'm with the Federation Police. I'd like to speak with whoever's in charge here.

Sharon: That would be me, but can we do it later? I have to tend to these people first.

Kate: Doctor, we need your opinion please.

Sharon: Child #2 is triage red [in need of immediate attention]. Bring the physical injuries to me and the neurological injuries to Dr. Pirajat!

Kate: Okay!

Sharon: Wait a minute!

Kate: Yes?

Sharon: Policeman #5's feedback injuries look severe... based on the last case, it's most likely anaphylactic shock. Tell them to calm him down with nitrous oxide!

Kate: Yes, ma'am!

Sharon: Someone with a uniform like yours was taken to the room next door.

Jan: Thank you.

Sharon: ...Wait.

Jan: Yes?

Sharon: ...I'll go too.

They move to the next examining room. Erich and two of the Goodwill Ambassadors are lying there.

Richard: Doctor!! This policeman is in brain stem areflexia [a coma]. Should we resuscitate?

Sharon: ...It seems futile. Is that #3?



Eddie: Girl #2 is going into cardiac arrest! Employing the AED!  
[defibrillator]

Sharon: You!

Jan: !!

Sharon: Watch the monitor while we use the AED... you did learn basic first aid at Police Academy, right?

Jan: Yes. I'm on it.

Eddie: We used the AED up to 400 joules! Still nothing!

Sharon: Epinephrine?

Eddie: No good... no reaction.

Sharon: For a child to die at this time, in this way... it's truly...

Jan: ...

Jan walks alone down the hospital corridor, which is dyed red by the setting sun. A voice calls out to him and he stops and turns around.

Jan: ?

Sharon: Thank you for helping earlier.

Jan: No, I'm happy to be of service.

Sharon: I'm sorry about your subordinate.

Jan: Thank you... but how are the children?

Sharon: In the end, one of them didn't make it. Damn it! If nanotechnology were more readily available, we could have saved that one...

Jan: Surprisingly strong language.

Sharon: ...I'm sorry. I just get so upset when a child dies. The latest medical treatments are used to prolong the life of some rotting old rich man when they should be used where they are actually needed! Don't you feel anything when you see a child die like that?

Jan: ...However disturbed I may feel, I don't show it on my face.

Sharon: ...That must be tough. Or is it liberating?

Jan: I'm not sure even I know...

Sharon: What a mysterious man...

Jan: Thank you for treating my subordinate. Please take care of the death certificates, Doctor...

Sharon: Rozas. Sharon Rozas.

Jan: Thank you. Doctor Rozas.

In the autopsy room, Erich has been placed on a cot in cold storage. Sharon is composing the death certificate on her monitor.

Sharon: Unnatural death in the U.M.N., case 1458. Erich Weber, 28 years old. ...Member of the 1875th Federation special-ops detachment squad. Cause of death was physical feedback from damage received from a security unit while inside U.M.N. virtual reality. Time of death was... !!

The power source of the freezer case crashes down and Sharon turns around in surprise. Before her eyes, the lid opens and Erich rises, pulling himself out.

Sharon: He revived!? That's not possible... his body should be completely dead! Calling all doctors to the autopsy room!! I'm afraid there's been a horrible mistake! You there! You are in need of immediate medical attention. It is inadvisable for you to try to walk! ...Hey! Wait!

Eddie: Doctor, hold on! Maybe we should call the police before we do anything else...

Sharon: And just let him leave the hospital? Under these circumstances!? Wait! You're in a very unstable condition right now!

Erich: ...No problem.

Sharon: ...

## Chapter 1.7 – Federation Police HQ

Galaxy Federation Police Special Investigation Corps Headquarters

Erich is surrounded by his relieved teammates.

Bugs: Erich! You're safe!

Melisse: We looked everywhere for you when we heard you weren't at the hospital! You didn't even go home... Where have you been all this time?

Erich: I'm sorry. I wanted to be alone so I could collect my thoughts. I was... distressed.

Lactis: Isn't it your responsibility as an investigator to report your situation to HQ? This kind of behavior isn't like you.

Elich: I'm really sorry. I'll be more thoughtful from now on.

Mikhail: Never mind that. Can't you guys just be happy? Erich came back to us! What do you think? Tonight sometime, a drink in honor of the return of our heroic warrior? I know a great bar a few blocks from here...

Lactis: Not so fast, Mikhail. He may have survived, but there are plenty of people who didn't. Moreover, not knowing the details of what happened isn't making cooperation with the Archon police any easier. It would be best to avoid behavior that could potentially rub them the wrong way right now.

Mikhail: Oh... R-right. Sorry.

Melisse: ...Have you seen the Captain yet?

Erich: Yes, he already came to see me.

Melisse: And? He probably didn't even react, knowing the Captain.

Erich: I dunno. Maybe he was a little surprised... but he's not one to show it on his face, you know?

Melisse: That's for sure.

Mikhail: But Erich! How the hell did you get out of that, anyway?

Melisse: I want to know too! We thought there was nothing we could do...

Lactis: ...Indeed. Will you at least explain what kind of trick you pulled?

Erich: A simple one, really. Just before I was deleted, I switched to a character double that I had prepared beforehand.

Mikhail: A character double...? You made something like that?

Erich: I am a special investigation corps operator after all. Wouldn't you expect me to be prepared for an emergency situation? Unfortunately, I lagged a bit while switching to the double and I still suffered some feedback injuries...

Bugs: That's my clever Erich!

Erich: Ha...

Erich's voice cuts out and he holds his head in his arms.

Mikhail: H-Hey...!? Are you okay?

Melisse: Not completely recovered yet?

Erich: Y-Yes... maybe that's it.

Melisse: Don't push yourself. You were out all night, weren't you? Why don't you go home and get some rest?

Mikhail: Yeah...

Lactis: Wise advice.

Erich: But I haven't made my full report to the Captain yet...

Bugs: We'll take care of it. At any rate, you should go home.

Erich: Really? Well, in that case I'll go get some sleep... since I don't know when the next incident will occur.

Melisse: Erich...

Bugs: U-Um... Are you really okay?

Erich: Yeah, I'm okay. No problem.

Archon Police Station, Chief's Office

McCallum: This affair with the Goodwill Ambassadors... I'm concerned that it was just a plot for Voyager to meet one important person. Make sure you go over the dive logs thoroughly. It's possible Voyager left some evidence of his presence behind.

Jan: ...Yes, sir.

Archon Police Station, Locker Room

On his way back from the Chief's office, Jan pokes his head in the locker room and sees Erich gasping for breath and covered in sweat.

Erich: Haaah.... Haaaah..... Haaaah.... Haaaah..... "I heard... a loud voice from the temple... haaaahh....haaaahh... saying to the seven angels, 'Go, pour out the... seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth'..." [Revelation 16:1]

Jan: ...?

A small mark appears on Erich's neck as he injects himself with something.

Erich: Ahh...

Jan: Erich...?

Erich: !!

Jan: Erich! What did you just do!?

Erich: Ah, Captain... this? It's just a health supplement.

Jan: Nutrient Lamdagist A...?

Erich: You think this is a narcotic?

Jan: ...I'm sorry. The number of public servants abusing U.M.N. drugs is increasing and becoming quite a problem. I jumped to conclusions.

Erich: No, I think it's natural to try to understand the behavior of your subordinates. Although getting surprised by your boss is bad for the heart.

Jan: I'm sorry if I startled you. I was just talking with the Chief. But are you feeling all right?

Erich: Yeah, I'm fine, thank you. I'll be okay.

Jan: ...

Erich: ...What?

Jan: No, it's nothing. ...You overdid it a bit this time, you know.

Erich: I know. Thank you for your concern, Captain. ...But for now I'd like to get a bit of rest.

Exiting the locker room, Jan sees Erich off. He runs into Sharon in the lobby.

Sharon: ...Oh hello, Captain.

Jan: ...Doctor Rozas. Thank you for the death certificates. Your expedience was helpful. Do you have some business at the station?

Sharon: Business? ...Not really. I just came to return your subordinate's death articles. They've been cleaned, but...

Jan: Death articles? Of someone under my command? Or one of the Archon policemen?

Sharon: Ah, forgive me. I forgot you're with a special unit. Isn't... Erich Weber your subordinate? How does he look? Were you there when he went into cardiac arrest? I'm a bit concerned, as a doctor...

Jan: I suppose you don't have many patients who recover from cardiac arrest, do you?

Sharon: Actually quite a few, but a corpse getting up from the freezer and picking off his own name tag? That was a first. I told him that

further examination was necessary, but he never came back. I hope he's not suffering the after-effects of overexposure to the U.M.N... has he shown any signs of unusual behavior or temporary catatonia?

Jan: Well, he seems a little mentally unstable, but not drastically changed.

Sharon: ...I hope that's true, but...

Jan: As a police officer he is exemplary, but when it comes to relationships with others he is quite wary. Going to the hospital might be hard for him...

Sharon: Oh, the examination would bother him?

Jan: No, I don't mean that he's difficult to treat... it's a little more complicated than that.

Sharon: You're... a surprisingly interesting person, you know. I'm not shy, but I feel like I should watch out for myself...

Melisse: Captain! Ah...

Jan: This is Doctor Rozas. She's in charge of the emergency room at the police hospital. She handled the casualties of the Goodwill Ambassador kidnapping incident the other day.

Melisse: Nice to meet you. ...Captain! We have new orders. They're at a nursing plant in Draper. The criminal has broken into the central mainframe inside the building. The trace logs of the facility's observational realian were extremely damaged, but Lactis has been working to repair them.

Sharon: A nursing plant...?

Jan: Any details about the perpetrator?

Melisse: The logs were more corrupted than we expected. We couldn't get any details on the access point. But in the sections we could repair, we found a 'dummy program' that he set up. Based on the decay

pattern of the protection on that program, we've calculated that there is a 98.28% chance that the perpetrator is Voyager.

Jan: ...I see. Then we should hurry! Let's find Mikhail and have him ready the level 1 armament. If necessary, we may have to engage in real-life combat this time.

Melisse: Understood!

Jan: Doctor Rozas. This... matter of Erich. I'll report anything unusual to you.

Sharon: ...

Jan: ...What is it?

Sharon: ...He's after young lives again.

Jan: Voyager... He's sending us a message...

# Chapter 1.8 – Child Care Facility

In the car, en route to the nursing plant.

Melisse: I'm sorry, but I couldn't hate this bastard more right now!

Mikhail: Relax, Melisse.

Melisse: It's just irritating that this whole ridiculous affair isn't over with yet. Voyager is the worst enemy mankind has ever known!

Mikhail: ...Seriously, cool your jets already! Besides, we don't know for sure yet that it's Voyager...

Melisse: But just like last time, he's after young children again... How can I not be angry about that!? What do you think, Captain?

Jan: Great strength can come out of anger, but so can great evil... When it comes to accomplishing your mission, it's better to remain calm.

Lactis: I agree with the Captain. It's certainly true that your passion and courage make our team stronger, but... it's also true that at times that passion isn't worth the risk.

Melisse: I... see. But, the Captain...

Mikhail: The Captain is special. He always keeps his cool... makes you wonder if he even has feelings at all!

Jan: Oh really?

Melisse: ...Captain? Have you always been this way?

Jan: I'm not sure. Maybe so...

The scene changes to Sharon at a church.

Priest: My child... What it is that you desire?

Sharon: I'm not asking for world peace, but... I do pray that fewer young children will senselessly lose their lives.

Priest: You desire eternal life...?

Sharon: ...No, I don't think long life is the only way to happiness. I just want our society to feel the same concern for its children that I do for my own son.

Priest: ...

Sharon: Every morning I wake up and hear about some new tragedy on the news. I lost my husband once. I can't bear to see that kind of loss repeated over and over.

Priest: You desire eternal peace...?

Sharon: ...Yes. For my son to be protected... that is the peace that I want.

Priest: If you desire to bind this contract between you and God, then you must offer up the soul of the person most dear to you. When that is done, you will be given eternal peace.

Sharon: Contract? Father, I don't really understand what you're saying, but... virtue shouldn't need compensation...

Priest: Your actions will open the way to God...

Sharon: ...

## Child Care Facility

As the investigators make their way into the facility lobby, an automated announcement comes on.

Announcement: Welcome to Jacob Medical Imprinting, Draper Division! Our company works day and night to cultivate a new humanity to carry on the society of tomorrow!

Jan: ...?

Announcement: How about a special child produced in one of our company's artificial wombs? Full-time counselors select genes from the parents and imprint them. Imagine having the child of your dreams, guaranteed. Not married yet? No problem! With our system even bachelors can...

Jan: Child salvators... [German for savior]

Lactis: ...It's pointless. A savior... is more than some person who was born out of too much genetic manipulation. Now there are even high government officials who were made in a cultivation plant like this. Imprinted humans are the basis of a completely homogenous nation. Though a commune managed by people with a single ideology can't really be called a nation. In that kind of warped hierarchy, humans are... How do these children envision the future?

Jan: ...

Lactis: Why are you laughing? Captain?

Jan: No, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to laugh, but... here you are, a superhuman, lamenting the state of humanity.

Lactis: ...

Jan: These children know their own role when they enter society. Perhaps fortunately, they don't question the fate that's been laid out for them.

Lactis: But it is a man-made system, after all. What if something goes wrong?

Jan: Even if one of them were to go astray, it wouldn't be that child's fault. It's our own, for creating the system in the first place. I just pray that we're never given the opportunity to become aware of that...

Lactis: You mean... karma? Do you believe in reincarnation, Captain?

Jan: Whether or not it exists, I believe people should have a chance to atone for their sins. If that time is death, then finding the path to salvation is still their responsibility.

Lactis: Yet in this era, even death can be taken away. You and the others have to register to be donors.

Jan: ...The Life Recycling Act.

Lactis: Yes, that most efficient use of human resources. After all, a government backed by the Yuriev Institute's 'salvators' can't abide their laws enforced by people with this primitive 'human rights' nonsense. And what can I, an artificial human, say about it?

Jan: Even in death you can't achieve salvation... is that what you're getting at?

Lactis: ...Well, what if you're not even permitted to die? When then?

Jan: Ahh, I don't know. I can't do anything but confront that when the time comes. Right now just I hope the situation never presents itself.

Melisse: Captain! Could you come over here for a moment?

Words are appearing on the monitor Melisse is looking at.

“And the bowl was poured onto the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.” [Revelation 16:3]

Jan: ...This must have some connection to what that female diplomat said... Mikhail!!

Mikhail: I'm on it. I got a copy of it from the facility's backup data. ...Oh, Captain! I've confirmed multiple life signs in the incubation room. They're very weak. They must be embryos! Please take care of them!

Jan: Understood. ...You heard him. This mission will be different from what you're used to... we have to be careful!

Incubation Room

There are embryos inside many of the artificial wombs.

Bugs: According to the displays on their chests, it seems that these children are already...

Melisse: Oh... it's too much...

Jan: Mikhail!!

Melisse: ...

Jan: Hey, Mikhail!! Respond!

Mikhail: ...I can hear you...

Jan: What's the status of the children!?

Melisse: Even without seeing their life signs... I know these are not the expressions of sleeping babies. These children are already...

Jan: I see...

Mikhail: It's as she says.

Lactis: ...Children again?

Jan: Mikhail...

Mikhail: ...Yes?

Jan: Send a request to the Archon Police... have them collect these children. They're... all dead.

Mikhail: U-Understood...

Jan: We'll trace the intruder personally! We're going to need an operator for the diving device. The way is clear. Get here as soon as possible!! ...Is Erich there?

Mikhail: Hey, Erich! The Captain's calling! ...Hey! Erich, what are you up to?

Erich: Ah, uhh... yes?

Jan: We're in the middle of a mission! What are you doing!?

Erich: My apologies... Something was bothering me about the trace logs from the nursing plant, so I ran a few tests. Seems to have been my imagination though.

Jan: We're having Mikhail join us here. ...Trace any intruders to the central mainframe. Perform the log transmission and provide backup!

Erich: ...Understood.

Jan: Also, ready armament level 6 for the dive!

Erich: I'll start preparations immediately...

Bugs: ...Erich... he's doesn't really have it together yet, does he...

Jan: Mikhail... respond on a secure connection.



Mikhail: ...Y-yes?

Jan: ...I believe Erich might be experiencing some after-effects of his ordeal. Can you keep an eye on him?

Mikhail: ...Yes sir. I'll keep him company while he's transmitting the level 6 armament. I'll join you after that.

Jan: Good.

## Chapter 1.9 - Virtual Reality: Central Mainframe

In front of the facility's central mainframe.

Mikhail: Sorry to keep you waiting. Please wait a moment while I set up the dive beds.

Jan: I see. Go ahead.

Mikhail sets up simple cots for the dive.

Mikhail: Phew... all done.

Jan: Sorry about the trouble. ...What's Erich's condition?

Mikhail: He seems to be in very good shape. Maybe it was just was a bit of fatigue earlier?

Jan: I hope so. I'm probably just overthinking things.

Lactis: So what's our destination?

Jan: The central mainframe's primary logout point. We're going to track the perpetrator from there. Everyone, get ready.

Mikhail: Okay, going in? Contact me when you've achieved your objective. I'll have everything ready for your retrieval.

Jan: Got it. Let's get started.

Virtual Reality: Central Mainframe Access Point

Jan: Is this it?

Lactis: Yes. The criminal logged out from here.

Jan: Is it possible to trace him?

Lactis: The trace itself won't be a problem. However, if he withdrew completely and escaped in the real world, it will be difficult to find him. I hope he's still there.

Jan: Then we have to hurry.

Lactis: Right.

Lactis begins his analysis of the mainframe.

Jan: See anything?

Lactis: No, I can't confirm any evidence of access. Did he already get away...?

Jan: Were we too late?

Mikhail: Captain! Good news!

Jan: What is it?

Mikhail: The intruder is currently attempting another hack. He's online!

Jan: He's still here!?

Mikhail: That must be a dummy point. I'm sorry, I was careless. I was paying attention to the trace logs and didn't notice he was connecting. His location is north of where you are now.

Jan: Understood. Trace him as long as you can.

At another access point in the central mainframe.

Jan: Analysis.

Lactis: ...

Jan: Lactis! Are there any signs of Voyager?

Lactis: As you might expect, nothing.

Jan: Mikhail! There's no evidence of him here. What now?

Mikhail: Strange... until now the course of his movements was easy to follow, but... when you arrived there, it just disappeared.

Jan: It disappeared? Without us even seeing him log out...

Lactis: What's this?

Jan: What? Did you find something?

Lactis: I believe it is information from the embryos. ...This can't be right.

Jan: Explain.

Lactis: Specifically, it's data from their brains. This looks like the substantia nigra pars compacta... in the ventral tegmental area... information from the hippocampus was lost!? ...I'll check one of the other embryos. This one too!? ...And this one too!! This is not good. All of them...?

Melisse: That sounds bad...

Jan: You mean the information from their brains was lost?

Lactis: These embryos. It's not just their brains that are strange... it's more fundamental than that. Whether it's prenatal or postnatal is unclear, but it's in their basic genetic structure... a severe defect in the stem cells is appearing!

Jan: Can you make a backup?

Lactis: Doing it now... but it's exceeding my personal capacity!!

Jan: Mikhail! Make a copy of the information from Lactis!

Mikhail: Understood. Opening a connection to Lactis... !

Lactis: Hurry... exceeding maximum capacity... !

Mikhail: Wait... what's going on? Lactis! Cut the connection immediately! I repeat, cut the connection immediately!

Lactis: ...?

Lactis appears to have been disconnected from the mainframe.

Jan: Lactis! Are you okay?

Lactis: I'm... alright. However... the system seems to have locked up in the middle of the connection. Be careful!

Jan: Something's coming!

Battle with Baldur.

Everyone logs out and gets up from their dive beds.

Jan: Mikhail! Did you recover that data?

Mikhail: The trace log was corrupted en route, so I'm not sure I was able to get it... but even if there was feedback, there should be some clean pieces left. However... it's impossible to perform an analysis from this machine. What should we do, Captain?

Jan: ...I see. It seems that all we can do is head back to headquarters and try to analyze that data. There might be a clue to Voyager's next move in it.

Lactis: ...Indeed. Judging by the span between the ambassador incident and this one, he isn't likely to give us much time. But how does Voyager always know what we're doing? From interfering with the data transfer to the swift deployment of that security unit, it's as if...

Jan: ...It's as if he's watching us from nearby.

Lactis: Yes. I have that feeling too.

Mikhail: A-Are you kidding? From the moment you entered that room I was running a very detailed trace. I'm certain that no one but us accessed the mainframe....!!

Melisse: But that macrophage didn't come out of nowhere...

Jan: I don't want to think about it, but... Voyager might already have the whole U.M.N. in his hands.

Erich: Captain! There's some interesting data in the trace logs we collected. There's evidence of an attempt to interfere with the data transfer to Lactis...

Mikhail: Ridiculous! There was nothing like that in those logs...

Erich: Wasn't there a backup error in the portable computer terminal you were using...? Also, this is an access point to the imprinting central mainframe. There's probably residual corruption in the trace.

Mikhail: Are you... saying that I falsified the data hack from Voyager!?

Erich: ...No one said anything of the kind. I'm just saying that it's a possibility, that's all. There really is evidence of some kind of interference in the data I have.

Mikhail: ...

Jan: Calm down, both of you. Can the trace data be trusted?

Erich: Yes. It's an extremely minute interference, but I was able to find traces of the release of the extermination program...

Mikhail: Captain! Do you really suspect...?

Jan: I don't distrust you. However, if Erich has discovered some new evidence, we should take a look at it.

Mikhail: I... don't make mistakes like that... !

Jan: Either way, let's go back to headquarters and get started on the analysis. Mikhail! I want you to repair and back up the data concerning the embryos. Let's hurry! I'm going to recommend to the Chief that all U.M.N. connections be restricted until after the Pilgrimage Council.

## Chapter 1.10 - Epilogue

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Special-Ops Headquarters, Chief's Office

Jan: Chief. Right now this is a race against time.

McCallum: I know, I know. But you're asking too much. I can't just suspend all U.M.N. activity on the advice of a single investigator. The risk is too great.

Jan: But this isn't just Abraxas's problem anymore. Anyone using the network is a potential victim of Voyager. And furthermore, he never leaves any evidence behind. It's impossible to predict who and when the next victim will be. Until the Pilgrimage Council, we should restrict U.M.N. access, even the government...

McCallum: ...Even the government!? Think carefully about what you're saying. Even if it were just the civilian computer terminals, economic losses would be extreme. And you want the government terminals shut down too!?

Jan: Of course! If Voyager is still connected to the Descendents of Nestorius... his ultimate goal might be the Pilgrimage Council. Government computer terminals provide the easiest access to data that could threaten the conference...

McCallum: ...Listen. Jan. Try to understand... the Federation is really trying to achieve some political reconciliation with the Immigrant Fleet. Moreover, the U.M.N. has become an indispensable tool in the negotiations. Surely even you can accept that?

Jan: Isn't the Pilgrimage Council being targeted for that very reason? It's being targeted because it is necessary and indispensable. While you accept that risk, more and more people are becoming involved.

McCallum: That's what makes the Council so important.

Jan: ...But this is Voyager we're talking about.

McCallum: I don't think you understand... Well, it's beyond my power anyway. I'll see about delivering your proposal to my superiors, but it'll probably get the same reaction. I'll give you whatever resources you need in the meantime. That's the best I can do for now.

Jan: Thank you very much.

McCallum: In any case, I appreciate your hard work at the child cultivation plant. I want you to hand the case over to one of the other investigators and take a little time off.

Jan: You're asking me to entrust an auto mechanic with heart surgery?

McCallum: Jan. You and your team are a very well trained unit. Your enthusiasm for your job is wonderful, but the other departments should have a chance to prove themselves too.

Jan: "Leave it to the professionals" ... so that's how it is.

McCallum: Next week the Immigrant Fleet is holding a party sponsored by the Torres Foundation. The Federation has been invited and we've been asked to provide security. This party is unofficial and has only been discussed in this room. Should Voyager catch wind of it... well, what do you think? There's still time. You might be able to set something up before then...

Jan: Understood. By the way... were your superiors the ones behind reassigning our mission?

McCallum: No. That was simply my own judgment.

# Chapter 2.1 - Virtual Reality: Boat Party

Virtual Reality: Extravagant Passenger Boat, Great Hall

An unofficial party between the Galaxy Federation and the Immigrant Fleet is taking place. On a platform, the Immigrant Fleet's Patriarch Julius is addressing the invitees and gesturing dramatically.

Julius: Up until this moment, there has been a great wall between us. Even though we are both seeking the way to a better world, feelings of distrust caused us to turn away from one another. In you, we saw persecutors, and in us, you saw heretics. But I am going to swear something to you, here and now. Those things we saw in each other were only illusions.

There's something I've heard people say - that we have been keeping the wealth to ourselves. And I'll admit it's not entirely untrue. We are beginning to recognize our own weaknesses. Together, let us recognize that we are all people who desire peace!

At the Pilgrimage Council we will share in a historic moment. The way to a common good is now opening up in our souls. And this neutral Abraxas will be known throughout all the cosmos as the land of peacekeepers!

In a corner of the hall, Jan and the others are watching.

Lactis: Pretty melodramatic speech...

Jan: It does seem like there's something beneath those apparently kind words.

Melisse: Now he's shifting the topic to the Torres Foundation. Why?

Lactis: Do you know anything about the Foundation?

Melisse: I hear they do various kinds of charity work, and that they have particular interest in refugee relief and providing provisions for the Immigrant Fleet. But... they also seem to get special privileges, for some reason.

Lactis: It's because the Torres Foundation is the bastard child of the Federation and the Immigrant Fleet.

Melisse: What do you mean?

Jan: The Torres Foundation quickly gained the confidence of the Federation by offering political mediation services from an objective, independent standpoint. However, their roots extend all the way to the heart of the Immigrant Fleet. Looking back on the history of this planet, it's not all that surprising... This meeting might be for the benefit of the Fleet.

Lactis: But lately Voyager, who we should be pursuing, has shown quite an interest in politics. As far as he's concerned, this momentous event is the perfect opportunity to get VIPs from both sides in one place... Right, Captain?

Jan: Indeed. And holding the ceremony in the U.M.N. of all places. You'd have to be pretty oblivious to danger...

Melisse: But that's our chance. If we can stall him here...

Jan: That's the idea. Still, this mission is completely unofficial. Officially, we're just here to defend against any unforeseen circumstances. Exercise discretion.

Melisse: The VIP he's most likely to target is Irene Torres, 47 years old, female. She's the president of the Torres Foundation.

Jan: So the civilians are just decoys?

Lactis: Almost certainly. Mikhail has created an anti-hacking protection program. If Voyager so much as touches that woman, it will open a bypass and we'll intercept him directly. If we're lucky, we won't have to worry about a confrontation at all...

Jan: That's good. Let's make it our top priority to avoid combat. Mikhail! We're going to track Irene closely. If you detect any signs of hacking, start up the bypass immediately and run a trace if possible. Have Erich prepare the level six armament for Bugs. Lactis and Melisse, you're with me. Look carefully for any unusual behavior in the partygoers!

Jan begins patrolling the party hall and recognizes one of the attendees.

Sharon: Oh? Hello there, Captain. Are you here on business today?

Jan: Doctor Rozas... you were invited too?

Sharon: They invited the doctors who saved the lives of the ambassadors the other day. Since it's work-related, I couldn't really turn it down.

Jan: You should leave as soon as possible.

Sharon: Why? Do you think something is going to happen here?

Jan: I'm sorry, but I can't really answer that.

Sharon: Something involving the party? Wouldn't it be best to evacuate?

Jan: I'm not certain that anything will happen. However, I think it would be best if you weren't here.

Sharon: You're worried about me?

Jan: No... it's not... I'm just indebted to you for my subordinate...

Sharon: Your face... it's surprisingly expressive right now. Actually, I'm glad I ran into you here. I...

Jan: ...Yes?

Sharon: I'm worried about something.

Jan: Ah, yes, the incident with Erich...

Sharon: You already know what I'm referring to?

Jan: You... you're right. Well then, what is it that you're worried about?

Sharon: I heard about the child cultivation plant on the news. Is it related to what happened with the goodwill ambassadors?

Jan: You're referring to the incident at the plant? We're still investigating, so I'm not really at liberty to say.

Sharon: I see. It's okay if you can't talk about it. But something was nagging at me, so I thought I'd mention it. There are hundreds of government personnel who were born in cultivation plants. But the one in Draper seems to be special.

Jan: Special...?

Sharon: The plants that produce government personnel use only the best genes, selected from all over the galaxy.

Jan: So I hear.

Sharon: But the embryos in the Draper facility were made from the genes of natural-born Abraxian donors.

Jan: The Goodwill Ambassadors were also all Abraxians...

Sharon: The common denominator among the victims...

Jan: ...is that they're all Abraxian children.

Sharon: It's just a feeling, but I hope I was able to help. Now, I think I should get back to my colleagues.

Jan: Thank you. I want you all to log out as soon as you can.

Sharon: Thanks for the warning. It wasn't that great of a party anyway. I'll go ask my coworkers if they want to go out for drinks.

After seeing Sharon off, Jan continues patrolling. Then, in the middle of the party, Irene suddenly grabs her head with her hands. A number of other people begin to do the same.

Irene: Ouuuaaaaaaaaa-!

Jan: !!

Melisse: ...! Voyager?

Lactis: Calm down. We have countermeasures...

Jan: Hey! Stay with us!

Frank: You! What the hell are you doing? Police investigators? What do badges like you want... huh? Ah...ahhhhhhhhh...!

Jan: ...!

Irene: "T-The bowl... "

Jan: ...!?

Irene: "The bowl... upon the rivers... and fountains of waters..."

Jan: ...What is she saying?

Irene: "The bowl... was poured... upon the rivers and fountains of waters... and they became blood." [Revelation 16:4]

She collapses, still muttering the strange phrase.

Jan: Hey! Are you okay!?

Lactis: ...Captain. These words...

Jan: It's Voyager! Mikhail!

Mikhail: Yes!

Jan: Did you construct the bypass?

Mikhail: Of course!

Jan: And the trap?

Mikhail: Good to go! As soon as he started hacking I closed off his escape routes... I expect less than 30 minutes before he arrives at the dummy logout point at B-254-328!

Jan: Alright, we'll head towards point B-254-328. How long before he notices the trap?

Mikhail: You should have about 40 minutes.

Lactis: 40 minutes. That'll be tight.

Jan: Then let's hurry. Mikhail, what's his original access point?

Mikhail: Currently finding the origin of the trace logs. 5 seconds, 4, 3, 2, 1... okay! Got it! It's close. A suburb of Archon, ward B7, A31!



Jan: Relay that address to the Archon police! When we perform the compulsory logout, take him into custody immediately. You and Erich, provide assistance!

Mikhail: You won't be disappointed! I got a copy of the party hall program beforehand and analyzed it carefully. Voyager's playing right into my hands!

Jan: Good. Commence pursuit of the suspect immediately.

## Chapter 2.2 - Virtual Reality: Mikhail's Trap

Jan and the others move to the area of the trap.

Jan: What are the coordinates of our current location?

Mikhail: Point B-254-301. The dummy logout point is at an isolated location about three kilometers to the north.

Lactis: ...Was this horrible color scheme your idea?

Mikhail: If you can't say anything nice... It's supposed to distract the suspect as I draw him to our false exit. It's an Oriental motif from the era of Lost Jerusalem.

Melisse: Where did you get such old-fashioned data? Ugh, he's sure to give up once he gets a whiff of this moldy smell.

Mikhail: Very cute. I'm so happy you understand me.

Jan: ...Three kilometers to the north. It won't be long before he notices the trap. We don't have time to mess around!

Melisse: Yes sir!

Jan: Mikhail! Can you clearly see the path to the dummy point?

Mikhail: Sir Mikhail's machinations are perfect! ...At least, I wish I could say that...

Jan: Is there a problem?

Mikhail: We have very little information on Voyager's abilities. I said we had 40 minutes, but if he's already realized that this is a trap...

Jan: What do you think he would do?

Mikhail: If he had prepared an ambush attack, you'd already be in trouble. Worst case scenario, you'd have to fight a large-scale macrophage. You should always be prepared for the worst.

Jan: I agree. Bugs! Take the lead. Set your program disruption sensors for a 500-meter sweep. Lactis will secure an escape route. Beware of a program rewrite. Let's go!

Later.

Mikhail: ...Captain! Can you hear me!?

Jan: What's wrong?

Mikhail: Perimeter surveillance around the dummy point has detected the suspect's access! The plan is going well so far.

Jan: ...I see. Continue monitoring the situation.

Bugs: What? What the??

Jan: What is it?

Bugs: My sensors have detected a program rewrite!

Jan: It's coming! Mikhail, confirm the rewrite!

Mikhail: Hang on, something weird is...

Erich: What the hell...!?

Jan: What's wrong, Erich!

Erich: Interference in the virtual space!

Mikhail: What are you saying!?

Erich: The program is being rewritten at a very high speed!

Mikhail: That's impossible! There's nothing we can do from here!?

Erich: It's no use, I can't patch it fast enough! Large quantities of macrophages are emerging. Captain, get ready to fight!

Jan: Erich! The connection is lagging...

Mikhail: ...Captain. I... believe the delay... is caused by someone intercepting... the communication. Try connecting... from the computer terminal... inside the perimeter wall.

Jan: Understood. ...So we have to get to the perimeter without assistance. Make up a vaccine to keep the macrophages at bay!

Mikhail: Yes sir! I'll do it while... you get to... the peri... meter wall.

Jan: How long until the vaccine is complete?

Mikhail: For the completed vaccine to be ready, about 20 minutes... In 20 minutes... I'll be able to release it...

Jan: Do it in 15.

Mikhail: That's... impossible.

Jan: Are you saying even you can't do it?

Mikhail: Of course not! I'll release it in 14 minutes, 59 seconds!

Jan: Do it!

Jan arrives at the perimeter and sits down at the terminal.

Jan: Mikhail, can you hear me?

Mikhail: You made it to the perimeter! Good work.

Jan: How's the vaccine?

Mikhail: Ready to release in three minutes. It's just enough to hold them off of you for a while, so don't expect too much. If he attempts another large-scale rewrite...

Jan: It'll be enough, you did well. What's the current status of the macrophages?

Mikhail: I lost sight of them briefly, but I was able to pick up the trace again.

Jan: I see. Can you confirm their heading?

Mikhail: Erich is working on it. Erich, what's going on with those units?

Erich: Captain, they're being extremely quiet.

Jan: I don't like the sound of that. Find out if there are any concealed in our vicinity.

Erich: Roger. Currently, I can't see any enemies in your area. They're scattering and moving at a very high speed...

Melisse: Wait just a minute, does that mean ...

Bugs: If we follow the macrophages, we'll find the suspect?

Lactis: ...Captain, take a look at this.

A sensor flickers in the distance.

Jan: Mikhail. One of the sensors on the perimeter wall is reacting. The target must be nearby.

Melisse: It's like Hansel and Gretel's breadcrumbs.

Mikhail: Even if he knows that area is a trap, he has to withdraw from the logout point we used. He's in our hands nows!

Jan: ...

Mikhail: I restored the communication signal. I should be able to connect to you even if you leave that terminal. I'll report if there's any change.

Jan: Lactis...

Lactis: Yes?

Jan: Don't you think there's something strange about this?

Lactis: This is too sloppy for Voyager?

Jan: ...Yeah. He released security units, but they left sensor footprints. Seems more like the work of an amateur.

Lactis: You don't think the criminal here is Voyager?

Jan: Or maybe Voyager is baiting us.

Lactis: Either way, there isn't time for hesitation. Right now we should hurry.

Jan: Indeed...

Jan and the others come across a large macrophage.

Battle with Garm.

Bugs: That unit sure was huge~

Jan: This is too slow for Voyager. As I thought, it's...

The shadow of a person emerges from the crumbling form of Garm.

Melisse: Captain, a shadow!

Lactis: Is it Voyager?

Jan: Mikhail. A figure just appeared here, confirm!

Mikhail: ...

Jan: Mikhail! Can you hear me!?

Melisse: Captain, let's follow it! It's getting away...

Jan: Melisse, wait. Mikhail! Mikhail!!

Mikhail: Ah! Captain, I'm so sorry!

Jan: What the hell is going on! The target is on the move! Report!

Mikhail: S-Sir! Something big just happened here!

Jan: What?

Mikhail: According to correspondence from the Archon police, they've located the suspect!

Jan: Is it Voyager!?

Mikhail: Whether or not he's actually Voyager is under investigation, but we have confirmed the man's identity!

Jan: Who is it?

Mikhail: He's...

Jan: What? Answer me!

Mikhail: The man's name is Klaus Torres.

Jan: Torres? As in the Torres Foundation?

Mikhail: He's the son of Irene Torres, the woman who was attacked earlier!

Jan: Are you serious!?

Mikhail: Klaus Torres, 24 years old. It seems he's currently working as a system programmer in a Torres Foundation surrogate birthing facility...

Jan: Surrogate birthing? Is it related to the Draper facility?

Mikhail: That's also under investigation. It's very likely. Anyway, he's committed numerous misdemeanors and minor offenses. As a teenager he was caught several times and finally exiled from the family at the age of fifteen. In the process he forged a relationship with the Descendants of Nestorius.

Jan: The Descendants of Nestorius? Why would an Abraxian be involved with a right-wing Federation organization...?

Mikhail: It is strange... he doesn't seem like the fanatic type. There are too many random, unplanned petty crimes. At any rate, the Foundation had no choice but to expel Klaus. Maybe he was an obstacle to Irene Torres's political agenda.

Jan: So this was all about a personal grudge?

Mikhail: Turning to crime where love is lacking... it's a common pattern. Oh! I'm getting a visual feed of Klaus's room from the Archon police. Patching it through to you.

Jan: This is...

Mikhail: Captain, can you see it?

Jan: Ah, that's Klaus's room?

Mikhail: Yeah.

Jan: Anything to connect him to Voyager?

Mikhail: The writing on the wall is in a language from the era of Lost Jerusalem. It's a very barren room. Looks like hypodermics are scattered around the bed.

Jan: What do the words say?

Mikhail: "The bowl was poured on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood." [Revelation 16:4]

Jan: That phrase...

Mikhail: Yes.

Jan: Irene said that same phrase at the party.

Mikhail: So this guy is the real Voyager after all?

Jan: No, I'm not convinced of that yet. But the same message was left at the Goodwill Ambassador incident and the Draper facility. I'm certain that there's some connection between Voyager and Klaus. But one thing is bothering me.

Mikhail: What's that?

Jan: No matter what the circumstances, the message always comes from the victim.

Melisse: That's... That's true. Usually, leaving the message is the victim's...

Jan: Is Erich there!?

Erich: ...What is it?

Jan: The Goodwill Ambassadors and the embryos from the nursing plant... and now Klaus. Look for a common denominator.

Erich: Understood.

In the operating room, Erich gets up from his monitor.

Jan: Mikhail, reply on a secure connection.

Mikhail: What's going on?

Jan: Earlier you said there were hypodermics scattered around Klaus's bed. Can you zoom in on them?

Mikhail: Sure, one moment... how's this? That's the highest magnification I can get.

The same medicine that Erich used in the locker room appears on the screen.

Jan: ...!!

Mikhail: What's wrong?

Jan: No, it's nothing. Complete the compulsory logout and bring him in.

Mikhail: Well, there are some problems...

Jan: Problems?

Back in virtual reality.

Jan: What kind of problems?

Mikhail: Problems with the compulsory logout...

Jan: What exactly?

Mikhail: I can't salvage his consciousness. He's refusing the logout. With some special program or chemicals... However he's doing it, all feedback to his body is being blocked.

Jan: He's staying here of his own accord?

Melisse: Captain. The consciousness lock... it's the same as with the ambassadors!

Jan: Is there a possibility Klaus will delete himself? He... might not be Voyager.

Lactis: Voyager's scapegoat?

Jan: If so, then the real Voyager has escaped to someplace entirely unknown to us...

Mikhail: Captain, what should we do?

Jan: Seal the dummy logout point. We'll go looking for Klaus while his consciousness is here.

Mikhail: Dead-end tactics? While the real logout point is sealed, you guys won't be able to get out either.

Jan: It's not so he can't escape. It's so no one can get to him. We won't have to worry about any outside influence.

Mikhail: Understood. Temporarily closing off all external access routes.

## Chapter 2.3 - Virtual Reality: Rooftop

Jan and the others catch up with Klaus on the top of a building.

Melisse: Yes... we got him!

Jan: Klaus Torres?

Klaus: ...

Lactis: There's no escape. Come quietly...

Klaus: "And I heard the altar respond: 'Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.'" [Revelation 16:7]

Jan: ...?

Suddenly, an enormous macrophage appears behind Klaus.

Bugs: Captain! Look out!

Jan: An enemy...!?

Battle with Egil.

Jan: Checkmate. We've sealed the program. There's nowhere for you to go.

Klaus: ...

Jan: You're under arrest on charges of illegal access to the U.M.N. and mind control through the U.M.N.

Klaus: ...

Jan: You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

Klaus: "The bowl was poured on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood." [Revelation 16:4]

Jan: ...?

Klaus: "Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: 'You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.'" [Revelation 16:5-6]

Melisse: Is he losing it?

Klaus: "And I heard the altar respond: 'Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.'" [Revelation 16:7]

Jan: Torres. Do you understand what we're saying?

Klaus: Oh, I understand. The words you're saying... and the words he's saying...

Jan: Who's 'he'? Is it Voyager?

Klaus: He wants blood! Oh, not your blood. The blood of angels!

Jan: Blood... why?

Klaus: Ahh, only a person who inherited the blood of angels is given audience with him. That is his desire. And that blood is flowing in me! Even me, a person from a spoiled, rich family...

Melisse: Captain, this man is in a very dangerous state of mind! Disconnect him!

Jan: Wait, Melisse...

Klaus: I'm going to the promised land. I'll obey his commands...

Jan: The promised land...?

Klaus: Ahh, the place that rejects no one. The place where no one will bother me. Those Goodwill Ambassador brats should already be there by now...

Jan: You, too... Voyager really has...

Lactis: Captain, be careful. Suicide in virtual reality is just as deadly as in real life.

Klaus: I'm going now. What, you jealous? You guys should have a ticket there too. And then he'll cut it and you'll be left with just the pieces... Yes... you look like you have enough of the right qualities.

Jan: Hey! Wait!!

Klaus: We'll meet again someday.

Jan: !

Before their eyes, Klaus jumps off the roof.

Archon Police Station Briefing Room

Jan is sitting on the edge of a diving bed and the others have gathered around him.

Melisse: Another... another person is dead!

Jan: ...

Lactis: ...Captain.

Jan: ...?

Lactis: Do you think that man was Voyager?

Jan: Perhaps not. Did you hear it too? I think he was just another person being used by Voyager. What about you?

Lactis: Well... from what we know of Voyager so far, it's not unlike him to end a life that's been cornered.

Mikhail: ...Yeah. And from an operator's perspective, I don't think that Klaus guy could have hacked into the party alone.

Melisse: ...But isn't Klaus the son of the president of the Torres Foundation? Is it possible that he had help from someone inside the Foundation?

Mikhail: Klaus was exiled from the Torres family nearly ten years ago. Consequently, he would have been kept far from any Foundation insider information. And...

Melisse: And?

Mikhail: The pattern of the trace log from the program rewrite clearly shows the influence of a third party. I thought I could see Voyager's hand at work. It's no more than a feeling, though.

Melisse: A feeling, huh...

Jan: No, that feeling... might be right.

Melisse: ...Oh?

Jan: According to Mikhail, the construction process of that virtual space was identical to that of the program the ambassadors were held in. He was able to make the trap because he analyzed the logic behind the program's composition.

Erich: Same construction process, same approach... probably the same person. It's true of us, and it's true of him.

Melisse: So is it possible that Voyager is one of the developers of that virtual space?

Mikhail: We've already looked into that. We didn't find traces of any authorized developers in the records...

Jan: There's a strong possibility that the person who captured the ambassadors leaked details of the construction process to Klaus. That person is probably Voyager.

Melisse: If Klaus could hear him...

Mikhail: Everything that guy knew was erased when he died.

Melisse: We lost the only lead we had... now it's back to square one.

Mikhail: Dead men don't talk. It's sad... he was just a petty criminal who was used and thrown away.

Erich: No, we can't say that for sure...

Mikhail: What, petty criminal?

Erich: No. He might not talk, but we can still listen. His memories are preserved inside his brain.

Melisse: Dive... into a dead man...?

Jan: Is that possible?

Erich: Yes. His body will be perfectly preserved for up to 48 hours after death.

Melisse: It's illegal to dive into a corpse! It's far too dangerous!

Jan: It may be dangerous, but if it's our only lead then we have no choice.



## Chapter 2.4 - Dead Man Dive

Federation Hospital Autopsy Room

Jan and the other investigators are paying a visit to Sharon to discuss diving into Klaus's brain.

Sharon: ...So you're saying you want to dive into a dead man? As a doctor, I can't allow that. When you enter the nervous system of a corpse, there's a risk you'll be influenced by information from their degenerating vital systems. In other words, you could be dragged down into death as well. Not to mention that it's illegal without special permission.

Jan: Getting the proper clearance would be very difficult. We don't have time.

Sharon: ...

Jan: This man might not be Voyager.

Sharon: You mean the real one is still out there?

Jan: Yes.

Sharon: ...You get 45 minutes. Medically, that's the longest I can guarantee your safety.

Jan: I appreciate your cooperation.

Sharon: Don't thank me just yet.

Jan: ...?

Sharon: You might already know this, but you'll need a suitable device to monitor the dive. Equipment from the Federation Police forensics lab would be sufficient.

Jan: So we have to move the body?

Sharon: Ah, transporting it without permission will be tricky. If someone finds out that the body isn't here...

Jan: Can we buy some time?

Sharon: Thankfully it's late. Only myself and two guards have access to this room. They just came by for the midnight patrol... I believe you're safe until the next one at 2 a.m.

Jan: Right now it's 12:15... It'll take us a half hour to get to the dive room. Round trip, that's an hour... and the dive limit is 45 minutes. Again, just barely enough time.

Sharon: Again?

Jan: Just something from earlier. We'll return by 2 o'clock. I don't want you to get in trouble.

Sharon: Wait.

Jan: What is it?

Sharon: I'm coming too.

Jan: ...!?

Sharon: I have an acquaintance in the forensics department, so I can quickly explain to him that this is for an important experiment.

Jan: That doesn't mean you have to get involved. Even just buying us time here is more than enough.

Sharon: I'll just lock the room in its current state. My colleagues are often lazy and do the same thing.

Jan: Why are you helping us?

Sharon: As a doctor, I can't just sit back while you undertake such a dangerous dive.

Jan: Are you sure?

Sharon: Yes.

Archon Police Station, First Floor Lobby

Mikhail: Phew. We finally made it here. If we can get the body to the briefing room...

Jan: Yeah. But let's proceed carefully. We'll have to be quiet while we're inside the station.

Erich: We're supposed to get to the briefing room without being seen by any other officers?

Jan: Exactly.

Mikhail: Captain, that's crazy! Even on the night shift there's still people all over the station!

Melisse: Yeah... It'll be pretty hard to get all the way to the briefing room without being seen...

Bugs: Melisse, how can you be so faint of heart? We'll find a way!

Mikhail: Well, if someone sees us, they'll get a manager and it'll be game over. So I guess we don't have much choice...

Jan: My thoughts as well. We don't have much time... so let's just do it!

Avoiding the attention of the other officers, they make their way to the briefing room.

Jan: Looks like no one saw us. Alright, Mikhail, prepare for the dive at once. Erich, ready the level 6 armament for Bugs.

Mikhail: Got it. Leave it to me.

Erich: Understood.

Jan: Thanks... both of you.

Sharon: I've said it before, but diving into a dead body is very dangerous. Please keep an eye on the time.

Jan: Yes, I will. I'm sorry... we've been so much trouble for you.

Sharon: Don't worry about it. I don't want to see any more victims either.

Jan and the others dive into a virtual rendering of Klaus's mind.

Jan: This place... I've seen it somewhere before...

Mikhail: Strange. It looks just like the virtual reality trap that I created! It's probably the case that it just recreates the last distinct memory before death, but this is the first time I've seen a dive into a dead man...

Melisse: It seems the data has been damaged in places...

Sharon: Be careful. Parts of the scenery will be missing where the cells are decaying. If you touch those places you may not be able to log out safely.

Melisse: We... had to log in to a place where the memories are disappearing...

Jan: This entire world is Klaus's consciousness at the time of his death... Mikhail, where is Klaus now?

Mikhail: In order to investigate his memories, you'll have to find his shadow.

Jan: His shadow?

Mikhail: His shadow. The shadow is the undeveloped self that is repressed during a person's lifetime. As the cells decay, Klaus's social persona will slowly disappear. But the feelings that he repressed while he was alive will remain.

Jan: Where is it?

Mikhail: I can't give you specifics. Try to imagine it as a literal shadow.

Jan: I see. Are there any previous cases of someone making successful contact?

Mikhail: I found a paper from T.C. 4400... since then there have been a total of 1,513 port-mortem dives. 88 of them were successful. The other 1,425 dived out after encountering some life-threatening danger. Of the 88 successes, 21 of them reported seeing the shadow in person. And of those, only 3 were able to successfully collect data from it. The other 18...

Jan: What happened?

Mikhail: The data collector's mind was contaminated.

Melisse: ...

Lactis: What's wrong? This isn't like you. Were you upset by that story?

Melisse: A little. But it's not...

Lactis: It's not... what?

Melisse: With the development of communication, people who are separated by light-years can share vast amounts of information... and what's more, with the development of the U.M.N., people can even

share feelings and sensations. But... thinking that we can share death seems a bit arrogant...

Lactis: The ability to govern life and death should be left to the gods...?

Melisse: Not quite. I don't know if that's the power of the gods... but...

Lactis: But?

Melisse: I've thought about this before. Somewhere far away, and a long time ago... I wondered, before we're born into existence, does our consciousness exist as part of an all-encompassing mind? A consciousness that exists everywhere, and the moment we accept life, we're torn away from that circle. "Joining the circle once more." Maybe that's the true purpose of existence...

Lactis: But you can't enter the circle while you're alive...?

Melisse: Right. I thought that the only way in was to sever your connection to your own life... Remembering that now, I think that what we're doing is a violation of the Golden Rule.

Lactis: As a realian, even my consciousness is manufactured. Maybe it's just a human trait to think about those things.

Jan: Lactis, Melisse! Are you ready?

Melisse: Y-Yes!

Mikhail: Ready? Starting the timer in one minute. Whatever happens, return within 40 minutes. If we lose communication, or if there's some unexpected complication, I'll perform a compulsory logout from here.

Jan: Alright, everyone confirm.

Melisse: Confirmed.

Lactis: Affirmative.

Bugs: Confirmed~!

Jan: Okay, the objective is Klaus's 'shadow' self. Taking into account time for interrogation, we have thirty minutes to find him. Everyone, move quickly!

## Chapter 2.5 - Virtual Reality: Klaus's Mind

Around the corner of a building, the scenery changes suddenly to a narrow alleyway. Klaus is there with three men.

Jan: What's this? It looks like Klaus...

Mikhail: No, that's not Klaus's shadow. More likely it's a projection of some memory fragments.

Jan: Wait, I can hear something.

Klaus: Look, we had a deal.

Unknown: My apologies. It seems you've gotten used to this line of work. Even after all this time, such a passion for harvesting.

Melisse: ..."Harvesting"? What kind of harvesting?

Lactis: Melisse, keep your voice down. We don't want to disturb this fragile memory!

Klaus: Wait. I've worked hard. When do I get to see him?

Unknown: Him? He's a very busy man. You can't meet him face to face...

Klaus: ...Busy?

Unknown: Naturally. He's dealing with all of the 'neural narcotic programs' you brought in.

Jan: Neural narcotic programs...

Klaus: Hey, I had a deal with him! I want to see him now! Come on, please!

Unknown: I said you can't see him. Or do you want out?

Klaus: ...Hmph.

Unknown: I'm sorry. How about... when the time comes, I'll try to arrange for an audience.

The memory projection disappears and the scenery changes to that of a town. They continue searching and come across three children playing in a park.

Melisse: ...Children? Is this another piece of Klaus's memory?

Jan: Possibly...

Amy: Hey mister, come play tag with us!

Lactis: They can see us? Captain, what should we do?

Jan: Interfering with the remaining memories could be dangerous, but it might be related to Klaus's shadow...

Jake: You coming?

Nicholas: Hurry up~!

Jan: ...There's nothing else we can do. And we're running out of time.

Playing tag.

Jake: You guys are soooo cool! I wanna become a policeman!

Jan: Oh really?

Jake: Well, I guess we gotta go home now.

Jan: Wait a second. You kids wouldn't know anything about a man named Klaus, would you?

Jake: Klaus... Klaus torments us.

Nicholas: That's why...

Amy: ...We need you to rescue us.

Jan: ...

Nicholas: Well, we're going now. Thanks!

The children disappear.

Melisse: Klaus torments them? What does that mean?

Lactis: Good question. I guess we'll just have to find out from Klaus himself?

Jan: Indeed. And we're running out of time. Let's hurry.

Virtual Reality: Klaus's Room

Klaus's shadow is sitting on top of a bed, the only furniture in the room.

Klaus: Who are you? Why did you come into my world? Ah, it doesn't matter. You're just bystanders anyway. Humans are nothing more

than raindrops streaming down a window. Don't get in my way. I've finally come to the end of the line.

Jan: Are you Voyager?

Klaus: Voyager? I don't know any Voyager. I was always alone. I never saw anyone.

Jan: Did you do what you did out of loneliness?

Klaus: Oh, I remember now. Voyager. The man who said he would give me peace.

Jan: Peace?

Klaus: Ahh... yes. That person... he was collecting... what was it? Neural programs. And he said if I helped him he would take away my emptiness. "Absolute peace," he said. Do you have that too? Loneliness that you can't bury? If you're human, you probably do.

Jan: Voyager said he would take away your loneliness?

Klaus: Yes. That's why I worked for him. And now I've finally found peace... the promised land he spoke of.

Jan: The promised land? Is this it?

Klaus: Here? You've gotta be kidding. I've grown tired of this disgusting place. Prejudice, betrayal, jealousy, hate... I'm sick of it. Good riddance.

Jan: Are there others like you?

Klaus: ...Are there others like me? Others with tickets to the promised land? Ah, I'm sure there are... he needs the blood of Abraxas to fulfill his goal...

Jan: The blood of Abraxas... what does that mean?

Klaus: Abraxas... is the Zo...har's...

Jan: What did you just say? "Zohar" ... what is that?

Klaus: "And the bowl was poured on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire." [Revelation 16:8]

Jan: Those words!?

Lactis: Careful, Captain! This is a new pattern!

Klaus: "And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory!" [Revelation 16:8] He... he defiled the name of God and deceived us!!

Jan: Who, Voyager?

Klaus: No! Why him? Why does he get to go to the promised land!? Are you saying he's worthy of salvation!? The man who covets the wealth of Abraxas and agitates the citizens... that Julius of all people should burn with light despite his greedy, vile existence!!

Jan: Julius? Mikhail, are you recording this!?

Mikhail: Yes, Captain!

Jan: Send it to headquarters immediately!

Mikhail: To headquarters? Are you sure? This is an illegal dive!

Jan: I don't care! We have to make sure Patriarch Julius is safe!

Mikhail: The Patriarch!?

Jan: I'll give you details later! Log us out now! Did you make a backup of the record!?

Mikhail: Yes... wait, this is bad!

Jan: What is it?

Mikhail: Klaus's remaining consciousness is acting very much like an extermination program! Look out!

The room goes dark.

Melisse: Aahh-!

Jan: ...!?

Jan turns towards Melisse's voice, and behind him two macrophages appear next to Klaus's shadow self.

Battle with Loki.

Jan: Klaus...

Melisse: Captain...

Jan: Klaus's consciousness is collapsing from the aftereffects of the battle!

Lactis: The time limit is in 10 minutes!

Jan: Mikhail, recover... a-ah...

Lactis: Captain?

Melisse: Captain!?

Jan: I'm... f... ine... a-ah... aaagh!

Jan falls to his knees.

Melisse: Captain! Stay with us!!

# Chapter 2.6 - Virtual Reality: Escape

Out of the darkness, Jan as a child appears with his mother.

Jan (Child): Mom, why isn't Dad coming home?

Ingrid: Because his job is to protect the city. He works to protect everyone.

Jan (Child): Then, why are you always crying?

Ingrid: Because Dad isn't coming home.

Time passes.

Jan (Young man): Mom, what did Dad die for?

Ingrid: For the safety of the people, Jan. So that he could carry out his mission. That's what a policeman does.

Jan (Young man): I can't remember his face, Mom. I can't remember what kind of person he was. Because he was never there. Mom?  
Mom... where are you?

Jan runs into the darkness, chasing after her disappearing figure, when he comes across another person.

Jan (Young man): Uncle Sean...

McCallum: Jan, your father was a brave man.

Jan (Almost present day): I aspire to maintain the public order and serve the people.

McCallum: Jan, do you still feel proud of your father?

Jan: Y-Yes.

McCallum: Your father was a brave man. But sometimes I wonder.

Jan: ...What do you mean?

McCallum: He protected the people, but at the expense of his family's happiness. I wish... he had been a more cowardly person. As his friend.

McCallum walks away into the darkness. Confused, Jan chases after him.

Jan: Chief! Please wait! Chief...

Mysterious Voice: Stop. Don't chase that shadow. [Though the portrait accompanying this voice is blurred, it is recognizable as chaos.]

Jan: Who's there!?

Mysterious Voice: Waiting beyond that shadow is the eternal prison of the soul. That is... a cold death. Your memories will not give you peace. You should know... There are people that you must protect...

Jan: People I must protect? As a policeman I protect the public order...

Mysterious Voice: No. Special people you must protect... not as a policeman, but as you yourself. ...Also, the place where you are now is not a world that needs you. It is...



Jan: Who... are you...?

Mysterious Voice: ...

Jan wakes up back in Klaus's room.

Bugs: Captain! Oh thank heavens, we were so worried!

Melisse: Captain!

Jan: Where am I... This is Klaus's consciousness! Patriarch Julius is in danger! Let's get out of here immediately. Mikhail...!

Mikhail: With the destruction of Klaus's ego, the decay of his consciousness has accelerated! I can't make out the details of the logout point anymore...

Jan: What about Erich!? If you work together, you must be able to...

Mikhail: W-Well, Erich is currently confirming the Patriarch's safety...

Jan: ...I see. Then we'll just have to find the logout point ourselves. Mikhail, we'll contact you when we get there. Be ready to recover us!

Mikhail: Roger!

In the briefing room.

Mikhail: Captain! Come in!

Jan: What is it, Mikhail?

Mikhail: Captain! You were right! Everyone is in a panic here! The Patriarch...

Jan: ...?

Erich: Patriarch Julius has been assassinated!

Jan: I knew it! How did it happen?

Erich: Neurological injuries from a brain jack! Seems like it happened during a split second when the secret service men weren't watching.

Jan: ...And the assassin? Did he leave any trace logs?

Erich: Yes. But they've instituted martial law and it's out of our jurisdiction. Additionally, it's protected by AAA-class security. I snuck into the central government mainframe to confirm my suspicions... I wasn't wrong. It was Voyager.

Lactis: The Descendents of Nestorius... are they behind this? Things weren't looking good for them.

Erich: Perhaps. Voyager knew we were occupied at the boat party. And with our attention turned toward Klaus, he could crack the security codes to get close to Julius.

Jan: I wonder if pressure from the right wing is what caused the Chief to reject my recommendation to shut down U.M.N. access...

Melisse: It can't be! Someone inside the police force is conspiring with Voyager!?

Jan: Judging by the situation, it seems very likely.

Mikhail: Either way, the station is in a frenzy over the assassination! At least no one cares about what we're doing... Ow-! Scratch that, Chief McCallum seems to care...

Jan: ...I see. We're running out of time here... let's proceed with the search for the logout point.

Mikhail: Roger.

Inside an alley, they come across Klaus standing alone.

Jan: Klaus? Part of him is still here, even with his consciousness breaking down?

Klaus: ...Say, isn't there something here you need...? You can go back to your world from this place.

Melisse: The logout point! Why are you helping us?

Klaus: There's something I want to talk to you about.

Bugs: ...Something about him is different from before.

Lactus: Indeed. Like a part of him fell away...

Jan: What was it you wanted to say?

Klaus: It's about 'that person'... no, Voyager.

Jan: Voyager!?

Klaus: ...Ah, I know how you feel. He used me too. ...Hah, there isn't time to say it all. After I died, I became aware of so much. If I had met you all sooner, I might have been more aware.

Jan: What did Voyager tell you!?

Klaus: He said he would lead me to a land of peace. I was to hand over people addicted to the endorphin drugs. He said the Zohar would fix everything. But there is no land of peace. What exists there is the eternal prison of the soul...

Jan: Prison of the soul? Are you the person that reached out to my mind earlier?

Klaus: ...Reached out to your mind? No, that wasn't me. You're the ones who reached out to me. You experienced my world. That young woman felt sadness at seeing my memories...

Melisse: Me...? That was just... common compassion...

Klaus: Common, huh? It would be nice if that were true. But even that small gesture made me happy.

Jan: Please tell us! What in the world is the 'Zohar'...

Klaus: You should leave here quickly. I can't hold it together much longer...

Jan: Hey!

Klaus: The Zohar... is... !!

Klaus suddenly changes and his aggressive side emerges.

Jan: !!

Melisse: Is Klaus's consciousness splitting in half!?

Jan: Be careful! ...This isn't the same person!

Second battle with Loki.

Jan: Damn... Who's there! ...Is someone there? Klaus!? Is that you!?

Jan is plunged into darkness once more. Before his eyes, a shadowy figure wearing a white cloak appears.

Jan: ...Who the hell are you?

Voyager: You too are a person that desires peace...

Jan: Are you... Voyager?

Voyager: If you like, I'll give you what you desire... eternal peace...

Jan: Wait! I want to ask you...

Voyager melts into the darkness. The figure of Erich appears in his place.

Jan: Erich? How did you get here?

Erich: ...

Jan: Hey! Erich, where are you going!?

Erich disappears and Jan is returned to virtual reality.

Jan: Erich!!

Melisse: Captain?

Jan: Where's Erich?

Lactis: Erich? Isn't he with Mikhail?

Jan: You didn't see him too? Erich was just here...

Lactis: Captain, please calm down. We found the logout point. Let's log out first.

Jan: You're right... I'm sorry. This is Klaus's final act of kindness. Let's appreciate it and get out of here.

## Chapter 2.7 - Intoxication

After escaping from Klaus's mind, Jan and the others go out to dinner with Sharon.

Sharon: Tough night, huh?

Jan: I'm really sorry you got caught up in all of this...

Sharon: It's alright. The Chief was pretty good at dealing with moving the body. And since you got your confession, it all turned out okay, right?

Mikhail: Sorry to ruin the nice atmosphere, but isn't there something you wanted to ask the doctor, Captain?

Jan: Ah, yeah. If you could look at this...

Sharon: Hm? Some kind of hypodermic? A tranquilizer or something?

Jan: We confiscated it from Klaus's room. The contents seem to be a new kind of narcotic.

Sharon: ...And?

Jan: Ingredients, effects... anything would be good. Can you check up on it for us?

Sharon: Wouldn't it be faster to analyze it at the station?

Jan: Right now we can't trust anyone in the force. I want someone I can rely on to analyze this drug.

Sharon: Does that mean I'm someone you can rely on?

Jan: It does.

Sharon: ...Thank you. Lately we've had a surge of overdose patients, so I'd be glad to do it.

Jan: Thank you.

Sharon: So many people clinging to dangerous substances like this... it's a sad time we live in.

Jan: Klaus said he did what he did because he wanted to be at peace. Absolute peace brought about by the Zohar... but what is the Zohar?

Melisse: Couldn't it be this new narcotic? But... what's the point of a false peace obtained through drugs?

Erich: I don't know if it's true or false, but only the individual person knows whether or not they can find purpose there. Nowadays everyone wants some kind of peace. They might be happy just to find something that gives it to them, even if it is artificial.

Jan: It's strange that he talked about his loneliness with unfamiliar outsiders like us. He had to die before he could open up to someone else.

Sharon: Ironic, isn't it? If he'd only gotten a little help while he was alive...

Mikhail: I don't know... Loneliness is a feeling everyone experiences, but I think it's ultimately up to you to find a way to deal with that feeling. What do you think, Captain?

Jan: ...

Mikhail: Captain?

Jan: Ah, yeah... I don't know. Right now, I'd rather just enjoy my drink than think about the suspect.

Melisse: Captain, that's weird coming from you... are you drunk?

Jan: No, I never drink enough to get drunk...

Sharon: Still working on your first one?

Mikhail: Man, if it only takes three-quarters of a glass, you're hopeless. Kind of a lightweight, huh?

Sharon: Is that so? I feel a little bad for giving him a strong one...

Melisse: Captain? Are you okay? Ah – he fell asleep.

After sleeping it off, Jan wakes up to the face of a little boy.

Jan: Where am I...?

Joaquin: Hey mister, you're a policeman, aren't you? It says on your badge you're a special investigator.

Jan: ...And you are?

Joaquin: I'm Joaquin. Hey, will you tell me a crime story?

Sharon: Joaquin, it's time for bed. Don't ask our guest so many questions!

Joaquin: O-kay. Hey, are you that guy Mom called "a very interesting person"?

Sharon: Joaquin! Joaquin, um... this person is just an acquaintance from work.

Joaquin: Reeceally?

Sharon: You know I decided not to get involved with another policeman.

Joaquin: Because Papa died and left us?

Sharon: ...That's right. So let's find a nice man with lots of free time and a desk job. Now go to sleep, sweetheart.

Joaquin: O-kay. Night, Mom.

Sharon: I'm sorry he woke you. Here, water and some medicine for intoxication.

Jan: Is he... your son?

Sharon: Yeah. He's at that age where they ask questions about anything and everything.

Jan: Your husband was killed in the line of duty?

Sharon: It was a riot in the immigrant ward. ...Are you also at that inquisitive age?

Jan: ...I'm sorry. Thank you for the blanket and the medicine. I should probably get going.

Sharon: If you go home now, you'll be arrested for drunk driving. Why not rest here until the medicine takes effect?

Jan: It's strange...

Sharon: What?

Jan: I think you're both very interesting people too.

## Chapter 2.8 - Epilogue

In a dimly lit-room, one man kneels, facing the back of another man.

Cardinal: Patriarch Julius is dead, and the Zohar is as good as ours... yet certain obstacles have not been completely removed. What shall we do?

Sergius: Obstacles... You mean Dmitri Yuriev?

Cardinal: ...Yes.

Sergius: Don't worry about the Federation. They have no idea how to use that power.

Cardinal: And his vanguard... shall we let him go for the time being?

Sergius: The person Yuriev is using to collect the 'factors' of the people of Zohar? What was his name... Voyager? He's of no concern.

Cardinal: He is not aware of our involvement...?

Sergius: ...No. I'm certain that Voyager thinks the Julius incident was just another commission from Yuriev.

Cardinal: But inside the Federation, people are becoming more and more aware of the Zohar. If Voyager continues to act as Yuriev's vanguard, it is possible he will discover our involvement...

Sergius: Even if he does, he's no more than one stray dog. I don't think it's within his power to interfere with our actions. Additionally, even if Yuriev somehow collected enough factors, he wouldn't know what to do with it. Controlling the Zohar is the god-given right of the people of Zohar... our pure-blooded race. That's why Julius was in the way. Understand...?

Cardinal: Yes... I understand.

Sergius: Everything should be in order. At the Pilgrimage Council, the ignorant people of the Galaxy Federation will know the true greatness of our Immigrant Fleet. Until then, it's up to us to protect the Zohar... you're dismissed.

Cardinal: ...Yes, sir.

# Chapter 3.1 - Time Off

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Special Investigation Corps  
Headquarters

Mikhail: ...So, what happened that night?

Jan: That night...?

Mikhail: You don't remember? Probably just playing dumb. Of course, you don't normally drink. The Captain was pretty charming, right Melisse?

Melisse: Oh, yeah! It was funny to hear you talk so much. By the way, that night... where did you go with Doctor Rozas, hmm?

Jan: It was nothing... I walked her home in return for her help.

Mikhail: What does that say, that our drunken Captain walked the doctor home...

Erich: Indeed. It would appear he rather favors her.

Jan: Hey, what's that supposed to...

Lactis: ...That's enough, guys. Captain, the word that Klaus mentioned - 'Zohar.' I believe the organization behind the distribution of the endorphin drug program is the Descendents of Nestorius. Now that we know Voyager is interested in it, we may be able to gain an advantage by eliminating the Descendents. But how do we do that?

Jan: Ah, yes... You're right. We should proceed with investigating the Descendents, but...

Lactis: ?

Jan: ...We've had nothing but urgent missions since we arrived on Abraxas. You must be tired. How about taking a little time off?

Lactis: Thank you. I appreciate your concern.

Mikhail: Really? Then who wants to go get something to eat? Captain! Want to come along?

Jan: Actually, I have a previous engagement...

Mikhail: A previous engagement? This is getting more and more suspicious... maybe the Captain has a thing for widows?

Lactis: Mikhail!

Mikhail: Just kidding, just kidding! Hey, Erich, you coming?

Erich: Me? Actually, Bugs has seen a lot of action lately. He needs maintenance... I'll stay behind.

Bugs: I'm sorry for the trouble~!

Melisse: It's alright, Bugs! Wouldn't you be lonely if Erich came along?

Bugs: Uh-huh... But, someday it would be fun to go out to dinner with everyone too!

Melisse: Heh. Well, I'm in. What about you, Lactis?

Lactis: I'll accompany you as well. To make sure you all get back to work afterward.

Melisse: Huh?

Mikhail: Tch! I just wanted to get drunk and enjoy my night off...

Jan and Joaquin have just finished dinner at Sharon's house.

Joaquin: Hey, Captain!

Jan: I don't mind if you call me Jan.

Joaquin: Nah, Captain sounds cooler! So anyway... what do you think of Mom?

Jan: ...!

Joaquin: Don't you think she's the loveliest woman in the world?

Jan: Certainly. Your mother is a wonderful person.

Joaquin: Not like that! Actually... I was hoping you'd fall in love with her.

Jan: Why's that?

Joaquin: ...

Jan: Joaquin, do you... want a father?

Joaquin: ...Yeah.

Jan: I understand how you feel, but... it's more complicated than that.

Joaquin: We're not good enough?

Jan: That's not what I meant. You're both wonderful... so wonderful that I don't mind at all if you rely on me like a father.

Joaquin: Then what's the problem? Of course I want a father. But I also want someone to protect Mom.

Jan: Someone to protect her?

Joaquin: I can't... protect her myself yet.

Jan: Joaquin... that's not true. You make your mother happy just by being yourself.

Joaquin: No... She tries to hide it from me, but Mom... she cries sometimes.

Jan: Even so, that doesn't mean that just anyone will do.

Joaquin: But out of everyone I've met so far, you're the best one!

Jan: ...

Sharon: Now, what this secret conversation between you two?

Joaquin: N-Nothing! It's guy talk. Captain, don't tell Mom!

Sharon: Joaquin. Are you bothering the Captain?

Jan: No, it's okay... we're just having a little man-to-man discussion.

Sharon: Oh, no girls allowed?

Joaquin: Yep!

Sharon: I see. Well then, looks like I'll just have to eat this dessert myself.

Joaquin: Ah-! No fair-!



# Chapter 3.2 - Veritas Liberabit Vos

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Briefing Room

Erich: ...How's it going over there?

Mikhail: Not a trace. I've looked in the accounting books of every network company even remotely involved with the Taka Sect for some connection to the people circulating the endorphin drug program... but even where I do find something, there's not so much as a mention of the 'N' in 'Nestorius'!

Jan: How is that possible?

Erich: ...

Mikhail: Pretty fishy, huh. You would expect an organization powerful enough to make a name for itself in the galaxy-spanning Immigrant Fleet to show up somewhere... wouldn't you? Even investigating the networks turns up nothing but idle gossip. If only I could find some clue to lead us to the heart of the matter...

Jan: What about the local network? If you can access it...

Lactis: Erich and Mikhail have tried accessing the Federation's local network several times, but every time they're blocked by some unexpectedly extensive security protocol. With enough time, Mikhail could probably break through, but if we waited for that...

Jan: ...Voyager would take advantage of our delay.

Lactis: What should we do...?

Melisse: Captain. I was thinking... something one of my sources said comes to mind...

Mikhail: "One of your sources" ... you sure you're not talking about yourself?

Melisse: Shut up, Mikhail.

Mikhail: Telling me to shut up won't...

Jan: What is it? Just say it.

Melisse: Veritas might know something. If I could get in touch with them, maybe...

Lactis: Veritas?

Jan: Veritas Liberabit Vos – V.L.V. for short. "The truth will set you free." It's the name of an anti-U.M.N. organization.

Melisse: Right. This series of incidents has taken place entirely in virtual reality. Taking that into consideration, I'm sure they're conducting their own investigation. Especially since Voyager is known for brutal crimes in the U.M.N. - I can't imagine they would overlook that!

Jan: You're right. These latest incidents would be quite suitable for demonstrating the evils of the U.M.N. to the public. However, Veritas was formed to oppose the U.M.N., so I expect it's not possible to contact them through the network...

Melisse: ...

Jan: I suppose you'll just have to do it the old-fashioned way.

Melisse: So you... approve?

Jan: If you can keep it a secret, yes.

Melisse: Understood. A friend of mine from police academy is currently enrolled in the third division. According to a message from

him, there appears to be a high-ranking Abraxian government official among their members. Given the situation, maybe we should try and reach him.

Jan: The third division... the peacekeeping division? They certainly are in this deep. Okay, go ahead. But things being as they are, I'm not going to let you go alone. Mikhail!

Mikhail: Yes!

Jan: Go with Melisse, provide support.

Mikhail: Understood. ...Is it really okay to contact Veritas?

Jan: Do you have a better idea?

Mikhail: N-No...

Jan: Exactly. Erich, while Mikhail's gone, can you handle operation alone?

Erich: Sure. Though processing power might drop a little due to his absence.

Mikhail: Hah, listen to that. Not even a doubt that he'll be okay on his own... Hey, Dewey! Listen, can you take care of this guy while I'm gone?

Dewey: Yes, sir.

Mikhail: I'm leaving it to you! There, now you can devote your attention to Bugs, right?

Erich: Thanks... I think.

Mikhail: I'd be a little nervous if it were a mission in virtual reality, but since we're going in the real world, Dewey should be able to handle operation. Hey kid, I'm vouching for you, so don't screw up!

Jan: Melisse, Mikhail, this is an underground organization you're contacting. Don't get in over your head. We'll be on standby here. If you make any progress, contact us immediately!

## Chapter 3.3 - Sharon

At Sharon's house.

Sharon: I analyzed a sample of the drug you gave me... I think I've identified its effects.

Jan: I'm sorry to be such trouble. I never wanted to get you so involved...

Sharon: Oh, don't apologize. It's a doctor's job to oppose the development of new drugs.

Jan: I'm sorry.

Sharon: There, apologizing again. Listen, all humans are caught up in something bigger than themselves. It's up to each individual to decide what to do. You don't just... spread trouble wherever you go.

Jan: I'm sorr... wait, no... I apologize too much, sorry. Ah, no, I did it again...

Sharon: You know what?

Jan: ...?

Sharon: You're a gentle person. But you're afraid of hurting people who are close to you. It's as though something horrible happened, and you shut off your heart.

Jan: That's...

Sharon: It's just a feeling I have. I was the same way after my husband died. Even though there's a brightly colored world out there, I sought refuge in a world of ashes.

Jan: Sharon...

Sharon: I'm sorry. It was just idle speculation. About this narcotic... it's not functionally different from other drugs. Upon administering it, it binds to receptors in the brain and causes a pleasant sensation. But...

Jan: But... what?

Sharon: This particular drug has the added effect of hyperstimulation of the limbic cortex.

Jan: Stimulation of the limbic cortex? That would diminish the restraint of instinctive behavior. Is that the only difference from normal drugs?

Sharon: ...Yes. My concern is that the people of the Immigrant Fleet are trying to develop the limbic cortex, as the Abraxians once did. The ability to control instinctive behavior also develops in the hypothalamus. And that part of the brain produces opioid peptides that cause pleasure and craving.

Jan: So it gives you an endorphin high. Then you're saying that Voyager could use the narcotic on himself to satisfy his own craving. But Voyager's actual goal is to 'harvest' the program...

Sharon: ...Yes, I've wondered about that as well. What could he mean to accomplish by 'harvesting' it? While I was investigating the victims of the narcotic, something occurred to me.

Jan: What is it?

Sharon: The origin of the Abraxian people. Once upon a time, the people of the Immigrant Fleet called us by a special name...

Jan: A special name? This is the first I've heard of it.

Sharon: That's not surprising... I've only heard it once myself, from my grandmother. I had completely forgotten it until this most recent incident. The name they gave us was... "the people of Zohar."

Jan: The people of Zohar!?

Sharon: As a child I didn't understand the meaning of that name... but I remember my grandmother explaining it to me. It was something about a people who were united by their faith.

Jan: ...

Jan's communicator starts ringing.

Jan: What is it?

Melisse: The information we got from Veritas is better than I expected! I basically learned the whole story of the Descendents of Nestorius. And guess who's behind them!?

Jan: Hold on... is this connection secure?

Melisse: Relax... Mikhail made a specially customized line. It's absolutely impossible to tap.

Jan: Alright... then, the patron of the Descendents is...?

Melisse: ...Dmitri Yuriev.

Jan: Dmitri Yuriev? The government representative? I've heard he carries a lot of clout among the Federation's 'salvators.'

Melisse: The one and only. It's no wonder we couldn't find any real information about the Descendents. The organization itself is a front for Yuriev's so-called "activities." We were looking for something that doesn't even exist.

Jan: I see. That could be trouble. I'll return to the station immediately. That information from Veritas... should be handled carefully. Return to HQ, and make sure that you're not followed!

Melisse: Understood. Oh, Captain! Is Doctor Rozas there?

Jan: ...Uh, yes. How did you know?

Melisse: Just a hunch. Could you ask her about the lost data from the nursing plant?

Jan: Oh, that...

He hands the communicator to Sharon.

Sharon: Melisse? The equipment at the hospital is undergoing maintenance, so I haven't made much progress beyond thinking about it. But it should be ready at the beginning of next week and I can resume my investigation then.

Melisse: Thank you, Doctor Rozas. Well, I'll see you at the base, Captain.

Jan: Acknowledged. ...Wait, before you go, can you put Mikhail on?

Melisse: Mikhail? Okay, switching to him now.

Mikhail: Ah, Captain! Did Melisse tell you about Yuriev?

Jan: Yes. Are any government officials besides us aware of this?

Mikhail: ...Possibly. Right now I'm pretty sure the only people that know are the people that heard it from Yuriev's own lips... even though we were able to find out the truth, I don't think any of our colleagues have figured it out yet.

Jan: Alright, but now that we know it's only a matter of time before they notice what we've done. Until then we can't afford to engage in combat.

Mikhail: Got it. We'll get back as soon as we can.

Jan: And about Melisse...

Mikhail: ...I know. I thought you might worry about her! You know, sometimes she seems as moody as a little girl, but at the core she's a reliable young woman. I wonder if the degree to which she acts on to her own convictions is right. ...But she has me firmly by the reins, so...

Jan: ...Do me a favor. Take care of her.

Mikhail: No problem! That's our Captain. Whatever happens, you always care for your subordinates! See you at the station!

Jan ends the communication and sits down in a chair.

Jan: ...Phew.

Sharon: You must be very busy.

Jan: ...

Sharon: What's wrong?

Jan: It's nothing. I'll just be nervous until I'm sure Melisse and Mikhail are home safely.

Sharon: You really do care for your subordinates. Well, why don't we talk about something light until you can relax?

Jan: Something light? Like what?

Sharon: No altruisms, just gossip or something.

Jan: I see. Well, there is something I wanted to ask you. Your name is Sharon, right?

Sharon: My name...? This is a topic of interest all of the sudden?

Jan: I've heard that it was the name of something a long time ago. There was a beautiful land by the name of Sharon...

Sharon: Yes, it does derive from that.

Jan: It's written that it was a land of eternal peace. That in all the desert, it was the only place brightly colored flowers would bloom.

Sharon: Hmm... When you put it so nicely, it makes me smile.

Jan: When I'm near you... you and Joaquin... I feel happy. That... that ashen world you mentioned... I feel as though I'm emerging from it.

Sharon: ...

Jan: Even I don't completely understand this feeling. But...

Sharon: Hey, this is starting to sound like a confession of love...

Jan: To the rest of the world, maybe it is. I'm sorry, I can't say it very well...

Sharon: ...You're sorry?

Jan: Damn, I did it again...

Sharon: Well... without apologizing, will you let Joaquin and I look out for you?

Jan: ...!

Sharon: Day and night?

Jan: Yes... please do.

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Chief's Office

McCallum: You're getting married!? You!?

Jan: Thanks for the vote of confidence.

McCallum: I'm sorry, I didn't mean any offense. I was just surprised. You always kept people at a distance after what happened with your parents.

Jan: Chief...

McCallum: Everyone's way of life is different. You walk a different road than your parents... I'm sure you'll do well.

Jan: Thank you.

McCallum: Doctor Rozas... I've heard she has a little boy...

Jan: She does. Why do you mention it?

McCallum: His father was the same age and rank as you when he died.

Jan: You said I walk a different road than my father. I fully intend to survive.

McCallum: I hope so... good luck to you both.

Jan: Thank you very much.

## Chapter 3.4 - Honeymoon

As he leaves the Chief's office, Jan's team crowds around him.

Mikhail: Congratulations!!

Jan: W-What!?

Melisse: It's not obvious? Your engagement, of course!

Jan: Where did you hear about that!?

Mikhail: ...Captain? We're special investigators from the Federation police, sixth division! You can't keep secrets from us...

Lactis: It's because you drilled intelligence gathering procedures into us so much. If you've got to blame anyone, blame yourself...

Melisse: Lactis is right! Pretty sly, sneaking your name into the family register like that. When's the ceremony?

Jan: Well, it's her second marriage, so something small is probably best...

Bugs: According to old movies in the databank, women dream of having a beautiful wedding dress!

Melisse: Definitely. It would be a shame to forego the celebration just because it's the second time!

Jan: Really... well, once things calm down, a party might be... Listen, if there's any change of plans, I'll let you know.

Jan departs, half running away.

Melisse: Ah~ Honestly, I'm a bit jealous!

Mikhail: Hey, hey, what about me!? You know, if you married me we could make a great family!

Melisse: Whatever. I'm attracted to men like the Captain... you know, the strong, silent type.

Mikhail: Come on... go on a date with me? We'll look out over Archon at night, touch our wine glasses together...

Melisse: You never give up, do you? That's why none of the girls like you!

Lactis: Honorable defeat...

Mikhail: No problem! It's that kind of tempestuous relationship that gives rise to feelings of love!

Lactis: ...I really don't understand human thinking sometimes...

Erich: Don't feel too bad. Even other humans can't understand this guy.

Mikhail: Hey!!

Jan's first holiday after getting married. Jan, Joaquin, and Sharon are sitting around the table.

Joaquin: Umm... umm... Papa?

Jan: What, Joaquin?

Joaquin: Hehe...

Jan: What is it?

Joaquin: You really are my papa now!

Jan: ...

Sharon: What's wrong?

Jan: ...It's just that... I always thought of myself as a person with little emotion, but... maybe I was just allowing myself to be heartless.

Sharon: That's not true. Both you and my late husband were hurt because your hearts were too kind. Because there are too many bad things in this world.

The doorbell rings.

Jan: That must be the delivery.

Sharon: What is it?

Jan: Shh, it's a surprise for Joaquin.

Delivery Man: Package for a Mr. Sauer, care of the Nexus Corporation.

Sharon: Thank you.

Delivery Man: Certainly.

Sharon: What's inside...?

Jan: Joaquin... take your package outside and open it up.

Joaquin: For me? What could it be?

Outside, a very happy Joaquin is holding an artificial dog in his arms.

Joaquin: Thank you, Papa!

Jan: Ahh... I wish I could have gotten you the real thing, but... I just couldn't get one...

Joaquin: No, this is great! He's so cute! Hey, what's his name? Does he already have one?

Jan: It's Nexus 6.

Joaquin: Isn't that his model number? That really makes him sound like a robot.

Jan: O-Oh, I guess so...

Joaquin: Hmm... I know, Nex! If you shorten Nexus 6 you get Nex! What do you think? Papa?

Jan: Y-Yeah... that's a good name...

Joaquin: Really? Okay, Nex! Let's go!

Jan's communicator starts ringing.

Sharon: Who's it from?

Jan: Looks like the Chief.

McCallum: Jan, I'm sorry to intrude, but there's been a development in the investigation. I know it's your day off, but could you get to the station as soon as possible?

Jan: Understood. Is Voyager up to something?

McCallum: I can't give you details now. Just come as soon as you can.

Jan: Okay.

Joaquin: ...

Jan: I'm sorry. I have to go.

Joaquin: But you said you'd spend the whole day with me today...

Sharon: Joaquin... your father has an important job.

Joaquin: It's okay... even I know that Papa's a busy person.

Jan: Joaquin, until I come home, I want you to think about what kind of house would be good for Nex.

Joaquin: A house for Nex...?

Jan: Yeah. On my next day off we'll go to Archon and buy the materials to make a doghouse for him.

Joaquin: Really? ...Promise?

Jan: This time I won't let you down.

Sharon: That call from Mr. McCallum... he didn't sound quite right.

Jan: Yeah. I thought so too.

Sharon: I have a bad feeling about this... Please take care of yourself.

Jan: Don't worry... I'll be back tonight.



# Chapter 3.5 - Chief's Office

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Chief's Office

The special investigation corps has been summoned there.

Jan: ...You're closing the investigation!?

McCallum: Yes, it's an order from above. By 20:00 today, the detachment squad to Abraxas is to completely and indefinitely freeze their investigation of Voyager. You and your team are on standby until further notice.

Jan: Do you realize what you're telling us to do?

McCallum: I am well aware of the consequences of suspending the investigation. However, this is a direct order from the Director. He spoke to me personally...

Jan: Chief, you must know that this is the result of some kind of political pressure!

McCallum: I know! I am aware of that! But without some proof, even I can't do anything about it. ...I'm sorry. Right now I just don't have the power to help you.

Jan: What if...

McCallum: ?

Jan: What if we identify the person putting on the pressure?

McCallum: What are you saying?

Jan: If we could prove that Dmitri Yuriev was behind this string of incidents, would you petition to reopen the investigation?

McCallum: What are you saying!?

Jan: If the patron of the Descendents of Nestorius was Yuriev, a member of the Communications Promotion Committee, under the direct control of the Federation Council... would it be possible to reopen the investigation?

McCallum: ...Would you care to explain this?

Jan: Melisse...

Melisse: I'll relate the details. We have information from a reliable source that the Descendents of Nestorius is a fictional organization that was created for "a certain purpose" ... Yuriev is in contact with Voyager through this organization. We believe he is trying to harvest the endorphin drug.

McCallum: ...A certain purpose?

Melisse: We are currently investigating his intentions, but there's one special word...

McCallum: ..."Zohar." You know, last term Yuriev's name appeared on the Public Safety Commission's board of directors. Are you saying he's the one behind this?

Jan: I'm sure the suspension of our investigation is just a ploy to protect his reputation. ...Chief, even knowing that, are you still going to order us to discontinue?

McCallum: I expected there was someone behind this political power play, but Yuriev... he might be a bit of a problem. Listen, Jan. For the time being, leave this matter to me. Stand by at home until the situation changes.

Jan: But...

McCallum: That's an order! Got it? If what you said is true, the entire Federation is rolled up in a very big scandal. This is not the time for rash behavior.

Jan: ...

McCallum: ...Take a break for a little while. Did you really plan on working right through your honeymoon? Joaquin and Sharon will be delighted that you're home. ...Right?

Jan: B-But this is...

McCallum: I'll go to the Director's office to recommend that he reopen the detachment squad's investigation into Dmitri Yuriev. That's all I can do for now. Got it?

Jan: ...I understand.

Another officer enters the room, passing Jan and the others on their way out.

McCallum: ...I'm on my way to see the Director. Can it wait?

Gary: Planning to go tell the Director that Dmitri Yuriev's been naughty?

McCallum: ...!! How the hell do you know that!?

Gary: Nothing against you of course, but I can't allow you to interfere with Yuriev's agenda... My sincerest apologies.

McCallum: !!

Yuriev is leaning forward with his elbows on the table, looking thoughtful.

Beside him is a woman.

Zora: Those police dogs... seems they sniffed you out somehow.

Yuriev: Yes, it looks like I underestimated them. I thought if I let Voyager loose it would be enough to keep them busy, but even after I made arrangements with the highest departments in the police force, they still figured it out...

Zora: The collection of the endorphin drug... shouldn't we stop for a little while?

Yuriev: Don't be stupid. The power of the Immigrant Fleet is the problem. Their numbers are enough to gain an overwhelming victory over the Federation... although their rivalry with us was nothing more than a ploy to get the Zohar into their hands. Now that Julius is dead, Sergius will almost certainly try something at the upcoming Pilgrimage Council. Before then, we have to bring forward the most superior specimens of the people of Zohar... the salvators...

Zora: Whether I'm talking to you or someone from the Fleet, it always comes back to the Zohar. If you ask me, you and Sergius don't seem all that different...

Yuriev: Are you saying I want the Zohar for my own self-interest? Ha, how small-minded... It has the power to point the way to Lost Jerusalem. After escaping from "the horror," I have no choice but to cling to that power. Only it can save me from a prison of fear!

Zora: Okay okay, you don't have to get so upset. I understand that you don't want to stop harvesting the narcotic. I just wanted to make sure before the big show starts. ...So, do you want me to take care of the policemen?

Yuriev: Go ahead. Do it however you like. It's time to put those mutts down...

Zora: Ah, such strong words from you. Fine. I'll put on a show beyond your wildest expectations. You can prepare for the Pilgrimage Council without worrying. I won't need much time to take care of those "puppies", no matter how much they scratch.

Yuriev: ...Good.

## Chapter 3.6 - Criminals

Galaxy Federation Police Station, Briefing Room

Jan: ...Has anyone seen the Chief?

Erich: Not since our conference with him the other day... He's gone?

Jan: No, and he hasn't been in contact with the station.

Erich: Maybe some trouble with the Director? With the situation as it is, it's possible he felt the need for discretion... Are you afraid the information we gave him has leaked out?

Jan: ...You could say that.

Luis: Which one of you is the detachment commander Jan Sauer?

Mikhail: ...Who wants to know? Isn't it rude to ask questions without introducing yourself first?

Luis: That so? Guess I'll just have to be rude then.

Luis steps forward and shoves Mikhail aside.

Mikhail: What the- !?

Lactis: !!

Jan: I'm Sauer.

Luis: So you're McCallum's little prodigy.

Jan: Where's the Chief!?

Luis: My name is Ernest Luis. As of today, I've been appointed Chief of special-ops unit #1875.

Jan: Chief? What happened to Chief McCallum!?

Luis: McCallum is currently under arrest by authorization of the Director.

Jan: What!? Why!

Luis: For acts of terrorism against the sixth division - the department of telecommunications. ...McCallum's not the only one. Melisse Ortus, Mikhail Ortmann, Erich Weber... I have a warrant for your arrest.

Erich: On what grounds?

Luis: Erich Weber. Charged with the possession of an illegal narcotic and the corresponding virtual drug program.

Erich: ...

Luis: Mikhail Ortmann! Charges of illegal access to the U.M.N. ...Melisse Ortus, violation of codes of engagement during the Goodwill Ambassador kidnapping incident. And additionally, contacting and accepting information from a known U.M.N. terrorist. You really are just a bunch of criminals, aren't you? What kind of training is that from your superior officer... Take them into custody!

Jan: You can't arrest us without evidence...

Luis: Evidence? You can't see the arrest warrant addressed to you? Conspiring with McCallum, threatening the Director... Restrain them now.

Jan: Dammit!

Jan and the others are taken away by Archon police officers.

The operators under Mikhail's supervision approach them.

Dewey: Mikhail... please take this. It's a copy of a strange access log we found in the U.M.N. records.

Mikhail: What am I supposed to do with this? They're taking us away!

Dewey: You guys will think of something! Hurry, before the new Chief sees!

Mikhail: You didn't tell him!? Hey, I knew I taught you guys something after all!

Dewey: Quiet...

Luis: Mikhail Ortmann! What's the holdup!?

Lactis: Wait!

Luis: Lactis? The intelligence gathering realian... there are no charges against you. Believe in your friends' innocence... while you can.

Vector Industries, Wilhelm's Office

A realian is kneeling reverently behind Wilhelm.

Kayla: There are new developments regarding Dmitri Yuriev...

Wilhelm: Yes, he's rather impatient, isn't he?

Kayla: I wonder if we should intervene...

Wilhelm: No, there's no need to worry. I know what Dmitri is after. After all, he is the only survivor of "the horror." Besides, Lactis is with the investigator. I'm sure he'll choose to go rescue them on his own.

Kayla: So the police are acting in accordance with the Compass of Order?

Wilhelm: Indeed. Well, there is one unforeseen difficulty.

Kayla: Difficulty?

Wilhelm: Actually, it's an interesting story...

Kayla: Is that a good thing?

Wilhelm: It's not a problem. Certainly the investigator's soul burns with a radiance beyond compare. However, he is not the only one to burn so brightly...

Kayla: I see. You intend to deploy the realian carrying our "Canaan" to the star system and have him search for humans with the "factor"...

Wilhelm: ...Yes. They are of utmost necessary in order to weave the threads of Zarathustra. For that reason, we'll wait a bit longer before getting "Canaan"... no, Lactis, involved...

Kayla: Then I shall resume monitoring the "Canaan" model realian.

Wilhelm: Please do. ...Now, there are some things I must attend to. Would you leave me alone for a little while?

Kayla: Yes, sir.

Wilhelm: ...Yeshua. Going so far as to get help from others to obstruct me isn't like you... Still, if that's what you intend to do, I too have something in mind... While you hide in the shadows, I will see to it that things get done my way. ...But I am content to wait... for the day when you will once again return to the stage...

## Chapter 3.7 - Cathedral

Sharon is in a church, kneeling before a priest.

Priest: What is it that you desire?

Sharon: Happiness for my son and safety for my husband.

Priest: Your husband is already gone...

Sharon: I have a new partner, someone who has given hope to my son and I.

Priest: Do you wish to protect this person's life?

Sharon: Yes. I pray he doesn't get caught in the calamity surrounding the Zohar.

Priest: Calamity? ...The Zohar is not a thing that invites calamity.

Sharon: You seem to be familiar with it. Father, what is the Zohar?

Priest: Why do you want to know...?

Sharon: If I know what it is, I can protect my husband from the calamity surrounding it...

Priest: ...The Zohar is called to this place by God. If you still wish to make a contract with God, you should attend the upcoming gathering of pilgrims...

Sharon: I still don't understand the meaning of this contract. But... the Pilgrimage Council. If I go there, will I learn what the Zohar is?

Priest: ...

Sharon: ...And if I attend the Council, will it be possible to meet you, Father?

Priest: What do you wish to accomplish by talking to me...?

Sharon: There are things I want to ask you.

Priest: Are you prepared to ask those questions, even at the expense of eternal peace?

Sharon: Yes... To protect the people that I love.

Priest: Because you possess the way of God... you will be able to see me at the place of the pilgrims' gathering...

## Chapter 3.8 - Federation Prison

Galaxy Federation Police Detention Center

Lactis comes to Jan and the others in their cell.

Lactis: Captain...

Jan: Lactis?

Lactis: Hurry, get ready to leave! The Federation squad's sixth division, as well as the Archon police, are already under Yuriev's control. If you stay here your lives may be in danger.

Jan: Our lives... The Chief! Is the Chief safe!?

Lactis: His location is still unknown. They've put new security on these computer terminals...

Jan: ...I see. Can you remove it?

Lactis: I'll find a way. I have a talented partner, after all.

Bugs: Erich!?

Lactis: "He" took care of the security codes for us.

Jan: ...I see.

Bugs: Erich!! I'm so glad you're safe!!

Erich: Bugs. Are you okay?

Bugs: Yeah~! I was put into standby mode in the hangar, but Lactis came and started me up. They put a level restriction on my armament, but... oh, don't worry! We brought everything you need for real-life combat!

Erich: You did well. Thanks, Lactis.

Lactis: Of course. However, when they notice you're not in your cell, security will be everywhere... we'll just have to break through it. Be ready for some combat.

Jan: Even if we do manage to escape, they'll probably send someone after us immediately... it could be a problem if we can't stay hidden. We'll have to conceal the fact that we're resuming our investigation of Yuriev. ...Melisse! Is it possible to get in touch with Veritas?

Melisse: I'm not sure if it's possible or not, but I can lead us to the contact point.

Jan: ...Please do. Yuriev is looking to upset the balance of power with the Immigrant Fleet. The next major incident will most likely take place at the Pilgrimage Council... The specific date hasn't been decided yet, but we probably don't have much time. We have to shed some light on Yuriev's real intentions before then.

Making their way through the guards and the security system, Jan and the others come to a small room. They find McCallum inside, badly injured.

Jan: Chief!?

McCallum: I'm sorry I wasn't able... to speak to the Director...

Jan: It's okay, let's just get you to a hospital!

McCallum: Just what I'd expect from Sauer's son. So reliable... but you can't save me now. Forget about me and escape...

Jan: Why are you giving up so easily!?

McCallum: Jan... let me see your face. You've become a splendid man... a true legacy of your parents. I don't... have any regrets.

Jan: Don't talk. Your wounds will open up...

McCallum: What's this...? The ever-calm Jan Sauer is shaking? Think of your subordinates first. Go, get out of here!

McCallum dies in Jan's arms.

Jan: Chief...

Melisse: It's... hopeless...

Jan: What is?

Melisse: The real enemy here is the ever-turning wheel of politics. The Chief has been killed, and we can't trust anyone in the police force. It's too much, it's impossible to continue this investigation! It's not just Voyager anymore...

Jan: ...Melisse. Stay here.

Melisse: Stay... here?

Jan: Yes. A person who's lost sight of the right thing to do is no longer fit to be a policeman. Our mission is to find and arrest criminals. Whoever they may be, anyone that threatens the safety of the people is a criminal. Got it?

Melisse: Captain...

Jan: I'm going after Voyager. I will find him... for the Chief.

Melisse: ...

Jan stands up from McCallum's body and starts to walk away alone.

Melisse: Captain!

Jan: ...

Melisse: I'm the only one that can contact Veritas. Let me guide you.

Jan: Please do so, Melisse.

Bugs is walking at the front of the group with his sensors on. Suddenly he stops.

Bugs: I have confirmed an obstacle in front of us!

Jan: An obstacle... it is a person?

Bugs: I'm not sure...? I'll adjust my sensor settings. A person? No, it's a battle robot! Stance is... aggressive!

Jan: Analyze it!

Bugs: Yes sir~! It is... a Murdock Industries combat support robot, model number SY-810, designation Freya!

Erich: SY-810!? That's a support robot from the same series as Bugs!

Mikhail: What's that mean?

Erich: Bugs is Federation-issue equipment. That they would have the same type here is extremely strange...

Bugs: Captain, get into formation! It's coming!

Battle with Freya.

Jan: Well, we got out of the prison somehow... Melisse. Take us to the Veritas hideout!

Melisse: Understood. Please follow me!

Bugs stands before the wreckage of Freya, deep in thought.

Bugs: ...

Erich: ...Bugs.

Bugs: Erich. Will I be like this too someday?

Erich: You mean, dead? Bugs, are you scared of being scrapped?

Bugs: To me, the concept of fear is a mystery. But I can deduce that humans feel afraid of death.

Erich: Death is the same to us as disposal is to you. From the moment we're born, we're counting down to death. No one can escape it. Maybe we humans are being scrapped too... from the world.

Bugs: I suppose someone made out of artificial parts like me could live any number of years. When I think about it that way, maybe we're luckier than humans... If you could completely control the deterioration of your bodies, maybe you could conquer death too.

Erich: Well, humans try very hard to do that. Very hard...

Bugs: Erich...

Erich: Hey, we're lagging behind. Let's catch up.



## Chapter 3.9 - Veritas Hideout

Jan and the others have arrived at the Veritas hideout.

Alexei: You guys sure do take good care of this machine here!

Jan: Thank you for assisting us on such short notice.

Alexei: Don't worry about it! ...But it's a pretty strange story, ya know? A Federation police captain, now a wanted man!

Jan: ...

Alexei: Ahh, it's not like it's a bad thing. Frankly we could use some folks like you on our side.

Mikhail: Hey hey! This doesn't mean we're your buddies now, y'know...

Melisse: Mikhail! Think before you speak... we're on our own now! We need all the help we can get if we're going to stop Yuriev. Is that what you say to people who are trying to help us even in spite of the risk!?

Mikhail: ...

Melisse: Apologize!!

Mikhail: I'm sorry.

Alexei: Ahaha, don't worry! In your shoes I'd probably say the same thing. You guys can hang out here until things cool down!

Jan: I wish the circumstances were better...

Alexei: Hey, I said I'd take care of ya! Just relax. Wanna drink?

Jan: Actually, I'm trying to cut back.

Mikhail: Right now I want to know if there's any new information on Voyager. Know anything?

Alexei: Shit, you're a persistent lot, aren't you? Okay, fine... From what I know of the Federation police, Yuriev is putting a lot of pressure on the sixth division. Because of him their effectiveness is deteriorating. ...And no matter what era it is, if air-headed commanders run off with their own agendas, their subordinates will wander. Case in point: It is the recently enthroned Sergius XIV, not Patriarch Julius, who will be leading the Pilgrimage Council. If he hurries, it could be two, maybe three days from now... and that fool Yuriev is a snake hiding in the grass...

Jan: What about Voyager? Are there any new developments with him?

Alexei: Ahh, the Net Preacher...

Jan: The Net Preacher?

Alexei: Yeah, that's what we call him. They say that when someone dies in the U.M.N., their consciousness is stored on file... I don't think he killed those people himself.

Mikhail: You don't think he killed them? ...Then who the hell did?

Alexei: Voyager offered them the world they wished for. Sounds kinda like heaven, doesn't it? Ahh, I don't really know, but... it sounds like he's using the U.M.N. for evangelizing. So, we call him the Net Preacher.

Erich: Get to the point.

Alexei: Oho! This one's in a hurry, isn't he?

Mikhail: Don't be offended. That's just how he is.

Alexei: Fine, the point. Lately there's been a rash of copycat crimes. The police are clueless, but according to our own investigation, the

only one that can be attributed to Voyager himself is the incident at the nursing plant.

Jan: ...Nothing we didn't already know.

Alexei: Don't jump to conclusions! That's all we know about the crimes, but... we've obtained some interesting information regarding his identity!

Jan: Interesting information?

Alexei: Uh-huh. Do you know why Yuriev is using the cerebral narcotic to control Voyager?

Melisse: Why?

Alexei: Honestly, we were surprised too, but apparently Voyager's brain... what was it? The prefrontal lobe, I think. He has some kind of congenital impairment in that area!

Jan: The place where working memories are produced...?

Alexei: Well, I'm no doctor, so I can't tell you the details, but... it seems that using the network all the time allows him to preserve short-term memories.

Jan: It's certainly possible that using the network supports his brain functions, but what does Yuriev have to do with that? I don't see the connection.

Alexei: Oh, there's a connection alright! According to our younger members, Voyager has the development of those damaged synapses to thank for his incredible compatibility with the network... Maybe he's no Net Preacher, but the rumor that he can enter and exit the U.M.N. at will might not be entirely untrue. So, knowing that, Yuriev keeps tabs on him by way of a purified form of the narcotic. That's all we know so far. We have no idea why Voyager started dealing with Yuriev.

Jan's communicator starts ringing.

Alexei: ...Eh? Someone calling?

Jan: Sorry, it's my communicator. It's from Sharon...? Sharon, are you all right?

Sharon: That's my line. I heard at the hospital that you were suddenly arrested, but that you escaped.

Jan: And then...?

Sharon: I told them I didn't know anything. What in the world happened?

Jan: The Chief... has been killed.

Sharon: Mr. McCallum!? My god... why?

Jan: Amidst the string of Voyager-like incidents, we discovered the truth about the Federation government's involvement. Then, the Chief...

Sharon: Was it murder...?

Jan: Yes. Sharon. I wanted to ask your opinion on the Voyager case...

Sharon: Well... Actually, my investigation into the traces Voyager left in the network was stopped as well, but...

Jan: Voyager has...

Sharon: A congenital impairment in his prefrontal lobe?

Jan: You found it too?

Sharon: People who leave traces like that have certain special abilities. They leave a unique pattern... their bodies are composed of an extra element than usual ... and they can see a place called the "domain of

complex numbers.” Also, people with a prefrontal impairment like Voyager seek out vast amounts of information and stimuli. Much like an addict. And there’s one more thing... other people with the same condition have organized a syndicate. The stream of information flowing through the net is being purified and circulated...

Alexei: That’s what our people said! They heard that people like Voyager are gathering and forming some weird group! Apparently they’re charging outrageous prices for the narcotic, not that I have a problem with that. And what’s more, when members of that group enter the U.M.N., they leave a unique log pattern!

Jan: ...Is that true?

Sharon: Yes. It has been proven that only people with this prefrontal impairment leave that distinctive pattern...

Mikhail: Wait!

Jan: ...!?

Mikhail: Doctor Rozas? Just now, you mentioned a unique pattern?

Sharon: Yes, a pattern characteristic of the syndicate of people with the same condition as Voyager.

Jan: Did something occur to you?

Mikhail: A big something! Just before we were imprisoned, an Archon police officer named Dewey gave me a little going-away present.

Lactis: Dewey? That operator?

Mikhail: He said he found a strange pattern while monitoring the police internal network. He made a copy on a disc and gave it to me.

Jan: Really! Then if we can analyze the disc, we can identify Voyager’s pattern!

Mikhail: Right! Maybe Voyager is closer than we think!

Erich: But if it’s one of the syndicate members, couldn’t that pattern have been left by anybody? Won’t it be difficult to prove it was Voyager just from that?

Mikhail: No need to worry. I’ll squeeze the police force’s U.M.N. terminals a little and the answer will come out!

Erich: ...

Jan: Begin the analysis immediately! Mikhail, I hope you’re right!

Mikhail: Got it!

Jan: Sharon... I’ll want you to confirm the results of our analysis... can you stay on the line until then?

Sharon: ...Sure, no problem.

Jan: Thank you. Mikhail! Are you going to perform the analysis alone?

Mikhail: I’ll do it with Erich. Right?

Erich: S-Sure...

Mikhail: ...Huh?

Jan: What’s wrong?

Mikhail: The disk is jamming. It’s not accepting the analysis...

Jan: A problem with the computer terminal?

Mikhail: No, this terminal is even newer than the ones we used at the station... Someone must be obstructing the disc access through the network...

Lactis: A hacker!? Erich! Is that true?

Erich: ...Like Mikhail said, we’re being attacked from outside.

Jan: How?

Alexei: Strange... The periodic security checks didn't report a problem... and the self-diagnostic program woulda alerted us if there was a hacking attempt...

Sharon: What's the commotion...?

Jan: Just some technical difficulties... why, what's wrong?

Sharon: There's commotion here too! The police just brought in an emergency case... apparently they believe it's one of Voyager's victims...

Jan: Police information? How'd you get that?

Sharon: I overheard it from the ambulance driver.

Jan: Interesting. Can you hear anything else?

Sharon: It seems they found some strange letters written on the wall in the victim's room. Other than that, nothing... I'm sorry. They're taking him into operation. It doesn't look like he's going to survive, though. I can't give you an exact time, but I might be able to get some more information by this evening...

Jan: Are you going to be okay?

Sharon: Yeah, do you know Block 53?

Jan: Yes.

Sharon: After the operation is over, I'll go there.

Jan: Okay. We'll meet at Block 53. But don't do anything rash.

Sharon: Now really... would I be fit to be your wife if I did something like that?

Jan: I'm sorry... You might be followed by the police. Just be careful when you leave the hospital.

Sharon: I will. Until later, then...

Jan: Mikhail! Is that disc analysis going to take a while?

Mikhail: I don't know! With the hacking attempt, it might be two or three more hours!

Erich: I'll support Mikhail as long as it takes! Please take Melisse and Lactis and go to Doctor Rozas. I've also finished Bugs's maintenance. I'm sure he'll be helpful. Bugs. Can you go?

Bugs: Leave it to me~!

Jan: Good. Lactis, Melisse, Bugs! Let's go to Block 53!

# Chapter 3.10 - Block 53

Abraxas, Suburb of Archon

Bugs: Captain... we're fugitives now...

Jan: Yes. There might be Federation police officers around. We have to avoid them as much as possible!

Melisse: Yes, sir!

Archon, Block 53

Sharon welcomes Jan and the others.

Jan: Sorry we're late.

Sharon: ...It's okay, what matters is that you're safe. I'm relieved you got here all right.

Melisse: We're getting pretty good at being fugitives!

Sharon: Heh... seems that way.

Jan: The victim from earlier, what was the cause of death?

Sharon: ...Overexposure to the U.M.N. He was only 18 years old... Also, the letters written in his room... it would have been difficult to take the evidence directly, so I brought this instead.

Jan: ...What is it?

Sharon: A translation. Is that helpful?

Jan: "Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds..." [Revelation 16:10-11]

Lactis: As usual, a quote in an ancient language about some kind of bowl...

Jan: Are you familiar with the source?

Lactis: The Archon police were still looking into it, but I preserved records of the alphabet itself in my internal database.

Melisse: Wait a second! We might be able to analyze those records at the Veritas safehouse!

Jan: With the equipment they have, we might be able to analyze it faster than the Archon police. Lactis! Transfer that data to Mikhail and Erich right away!

Lactis: Yes, sir! ...Hm?

Jan: What's wrong?

Lactis: Mikhail and Erich. They're both refusing the connection.

Jan: All right, just keep trying to get through. Sharon, did you find anything else at the hospital?

Sharon: The victim left the same pattern as Voyager in the U.M.N. access log. And...

Jan: ...And?

Sharon: ...I don't know if this is directly related to Voyager or not, but during the autopsy on the young victim, we found something extremely unusual.

Jan: These past few months, I've experienced a lot that's 'extremely unusual.' I can't really say I'm surprised.

Sharon: Indeed. But I wonder about this... From the tissue samples we collected, his estimated age was... well, just looking at the tissue, he appeared to be over 150 years old.

Melisse: 150 years old!?

Sharon: Yes, but according to the register he was an 18-year-old boy. I'm not sure of his exact age, but I'd say the margin of error is plus or minus 10 years. And that's not all. There were tissue samples very similar to his in hospital storage.

Melisse: So was that boy Voyager? Or one of the others like him?

Sharon: I don't really know... If he's the former, then the matter is settled. But if he's the latter, then we've found evidence that people with the same condition as Voyager are forming a syndicate. Whatever the case, they're all very special people...

Melisse: Could it have been a dispute amongst their group...?

Jan: Considering the writing left in his room, probably not. In all the Voyager incidents we've seen, he leaves that writing at the scene of the crime. ...He's choosing his victims. If it were something like an internal dispute, I don't think he would leave that writing behind. By the way, about the 150-year-old tissue sample... is it possible for a human to keep living in that condition?

Sharon: I suppose it's possible, if there was constant production of a substance that could control the metabolic rate...

Lactis: Wait a moment, Doctor Rozas! Think about it in a different way. Controlling the functions of the brain and controlling the deterioration of the body are essentially the same thing.

Sharon: Well, even in theory, they both present significant difficulties. If I someone really had put it into practice, I would have no idea how they did it unless I asked them myself...

Jan: However, those tissue samples do exist.

Sharon: I don't even want to think about it. Perhaps the owner of that tissue is a monster beyond our wildest imagination...

Lactis: ...There's a good possibility that the owner is Voyager.

Sharon: It's a possibility, yes... But we need some other evidence to conclusively prove that it belonged to Voyager.

Jan: Yes, we need to know for sure. Right about now, Mikhail should be...

Jan's communicator starts ringing.

Sharon: Hm? Someone receiving a private message?

Jan: It's me.

Mikhail: C-Captain? I-I'm sor...ry.

Jan: How's it coming?

Mikhail: I s-stopped the analysis... I know who Vo-Voyager is...

Jan: Who is it!?

Mikhail: T-That's...

Jan: I know you're upset, but why don't you try to calm down a little?

Mikhail: I can't say it here. If I don't tell you personally...

Jan: You can't say? Why not?

Mikhail: Somehow, somewhere... somewhere... we have to meet up someplace other than here...

Jan: Okay. Meet us at point KC-537 in 30 minutes?

Mikhail: 30 minutes? R-Roger!!

Lactis: Strange, isn't it? When I called from here earlier, there was no response...

Jan: Yes... It's also strange that he used a private line. It seems...

Lactis: ...?

Jan: Ah, it's nothing. Sharon... that monster. Find out who the tissue donor was.

Sharon: The donor is protected by law. It's a matter of privacy. But I'll see if I can somehow find the records.

Erich comes in.

Jan: !

Lactis: Erich!!

Erich: Is Mikhail here!?

Jan: He said he discovered Voyager's identity...

Erich: Yes. Mikhail was going to contact you himself, so he told me to go on ahead.

Jan: I wonder why?

Erich: I guess he was in a big hurry...

Jan: I see. Let's meet up with Mikhail immediately!

## Chapter 3.11 - Revelations

Jan and the others make their way to the meeting point.

Mikhail emerges from a nearby hiding place, looking unsteady on his feet.

Jan: Mikhail!?

Melisse: Captain!? Please wait!! Something isn't right...

Erich: Mikhail! Do you understand? It's us...

Mikhail: !!

As Erich steps forward, Mikhail takes out a gun and starts firing wildly.

Bugs protects Erich.

Lactis: What the! Mikhail... what the hell are you doing!?

Mikhail: ...Captain... We... We are... already.... already... done for... I understand... you can't know... Voyager...

Jan: ...We can't know Voyager?

Mikhail: ...Yes. This is... the end... of everything!

Battle with Mikhail.

Afterwards, Mikhail has collapsed. Jan holds him in his arms.

Jan: Mikhail!! How could this happen!?

Mikhail: It seems I was somehow... brainjacked. ...Captain, be careful... Voyager is... close...

Jan: Mikhail!!

Melisse: Mikhail! Weren't we... weren't we going to enjoy the night view of Archon together? Now... Now we...

Jan: ...

Federation Hospital, Communication Room

Sharon sits thoughtfully before a communicator screen.

Eddie: Did the call go through?

Sharon: No, it seems to be having trouble connecting.

Eddie: How about the holo-terminal there?

Sharon: I'll try that. Thank you.

Eddie: Then I'll go on ahead...

After making sure Eddie is gone, Sharon sits at the terminal.

Sharon: Let's see here...

"There's something I want you to tell Melisse... the other day she requested information on the lost data from the child care incident. It's not much, but this is what I found.

I think it's connected to the production of thyroxine. I'm not sure if it's thyroxine specifically, but it's some kind of thyroid hormone. These typically serve to control metabolic rate, and they're also an essential part of embryonic brain development. According to the data extracted from the children's brains, it's very likely that it was used to prolong their lifespan in much the same way as Voyager's endorphin drug. If so, isn't it also very likely that the owner of that tissue sample is Voyager? Well, please pass that on to Melisse.

Jan... I'm going to attend the Pilgrimage Council. If something comes up, get in touch with me there. You might oppose my participation, but I have to see the Zohar for myself. It might be relevant to your investigation. Please stay vigilant... Captain."

Bean: Doctor Rozas! I identified the tissue sample you gave me this morning. I'll just put the results here.

Sharon: Thank you. I'm sorry to ask so much.

Bean: It's okay. By the way, what the heck is it? This tissue sample... I've never seen anything else like it.

Sharon: Maybe... a monster.

Bean: A monster?

Sharon: Just kidding.

Bean: Ha ha. ...Well, I guess I'll be going. You've been working late a lot, haven't you? You should go home! Is your son okay on his own?



Sharon: It is hard on him. Thank you. I'll head home when I'm done...

Bean: Well then... have a good night, Doctor.

Sharon: ...Thanks, you too.

Sharon sends her mail.

Sharon: Phew... More and more this seems like an encounter with a monster...

Sharon picks up the tissue sample report from the table. She looks at the page and suddenly steps back.

Sharon: This... this can't be...

Underground Organization Veritas, Secret Hideout

Jan: ...How is Melisse?

Erich: I think she's calmed down a lot. She was very close to Mikhail... so I think it was a big shock...

Jan: I see...

Erich: What's wrong?

Jan: You don't think it's strange?

Erich: You mean... Mikhail?

Jan: Mikhail was attacked right after he figured out Voyager's true identity. But why didn't Voyager come here first?

Erich: Maybe it was a problem with Mikhail? He wouldn't have brought a gun if he didn't expect to see Voyager there.

Jan: You don't trust Mikhail?

Erich: I don't know. But... you've become very emotional at the deaths of your subordinate and your boss.

Jan: So...?

Erich: "You should only be thinking of numbers and tactics." ...Isn't that what Chief McCallum always said?

Jan: ...I suppose you're right.

Erich: "The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." [Revelation 16:12]

Jan: ...?

Erich: Just a little prayer. For Mikhail...

Jan: You have bad taste in prayers. That sounded like Voyager.

Erich: Voyager? Maybe he says the same prayer.

Jan: Prayer? Voyager is a killer.

Erich: Of course... Well, I should probably get some rest.

Jan: ...Yes, this affair is far from over. You should save your strength.

Erich: Tomorrow the Pilgrimage Council begins...

Erich leaves and a message appears on the terminal.

Jan: Mail? It's from Sharon...

Sharon: "Did you get my message earlier? I just got the results of the tissue sample analysis. We collected an identical sample on the day of the Goodwill Ambassador incident. The owner was... Erich Weber."

Jan: ...What the...

Melisse: ...What's wrong?

Jan: Where's Erich?

Melisse: I passed him earlier... I think he was on his way out. Why?

Jan: ...That bastard! Erich is... Erich is Voyager!

## Chapter 3.12 - Erich

Cathedral, Pilgrimage Council

Sergius stands at the podium, addressing the assembly.

Sergius: After Julius took the papal seat, his cowardice drove our Immigrant Fleet down the path of weakness! The infidels of the Galaxy Federation do not know that this wave of weakness has been abated! Now, at this very moment, they are planning to take the sleeping power of the Zohar from the holy land of Abraxas. But there is nothing to fear. Because the Zohar will always be with us!

The Zohar rises behind Sergius. It casts a golden light over the interior of the cathedral.

Sharon: The Zohar... Somehow, I feel as though... a long time ago... that light...

Jan and the others are in room containing only a dive pod. There is strange writing on the wall.

Jan: Erich... No, Voyager...

Lactis: Looks like he just dived...

Melisse: If only Mikhail were here... Bugs!! Can't you somehow force Erich to log out?

Bugs: Currently attempting to do so! But the dive module is refusing my access! He must have rigged the logout settings beforehand...

Jan: What reason could he have to go back in there... Why!?

Melisse: Captain, this writing...

Jan: What is it? Is it consistent with the writing left with the other victims?

Melisse: This time... there are two!

Lactis: Does that mean two more victims?

Jan: "Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." And also... "Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'It is done!'" [Revelation 16:12, 17]

Melisse: "It is done"... Erich never intended to log out! Could he have already killed those people?

Jan: It can't be... This is an announcement that he plans to kill from within the U.M.N.? Erich's body is beginning to deteriorate. After that it will be too late. Prepare to dive immediately. Our objective is to apprehend Voyager... no, Erich!

Virtual Reality: Erich's Brain

Jan: What the... my field of vision keeps shifting! Is this the influence of the remaining drugs in his system?

Lactis: I believe so. If we stay here too long our limbic systems may suffer similar effects.

Melisse: Over there... what is that?

Melisse approaches one corner warily. There she finds the consciousnesses of countless people, in the form of human embryos.

Melisse: !!

Lactis: He... stored all the souls of the people he killed here... What a twisted hobby...

Bugs: ...

Jan: Bugs! I want you to secure a path of retreat!

Bugs: ...

Jan: Bugs!! Are you listening?

Bugs: Yes I am! But... do we really know that... that Erich is Voyager?

Jan: Now that Mikhail is gone, we don't have an external operator to provide support. Only you can do this.

Melisse: ...Bugs. Before, I might have felt the same way as you... but he isn't the Erich you know anymore. You have to help us, for the sake of the Erich you loved.

Bugs: ...I understand. I'll expand the range of my forward sensors and secure an escape route.

Melisse: You can do it, Bugs...

Jan: Lactis!

Lactis: Yes, Captain!

Jan: Check for self-diagnostic programs... in particular, look for emotion circuits that might not be tainted by Voyager's consciousness.

The Erich that cared for Bugs... it's possible that he still has some tricks up his sleeve.

Lactis: Understood.

Erich appears while Jan and the others are searching through his brain.

Erich: Thank you for coming...

Bugs: Erich!

Lactis: Why are you here?

Erich: I've been... Yes, I think I've been waiting for you for a while. So that I could tell you the truth.

Jan: The truth? Voyager... no, Erich. There's something I have to know.

Erich: I understand. You want to ask whether or not I'm really Voyager, right? ...It's hard to explain. Honestly, I'm a little confused myself. It's true that Voyager does exist. That being the case, it's not wrong to say that I am Voyager. Still, the me you knew was somewhat different, am I right?

Jan: ...What are you trying to say?

Erich: I have to tell you about Voyager's origin. You probably already know that I have a congenital brain disorder. Well, ever since I was a child I've compensated for it by constructing working memory inside the U.M.N... Consciousness. The boundless sea of the network. The dazzling energy of information passing by. It shined with the radiance of a jewel... Before I knew it, I had become a slave to information. Do you know what happens to people who take in too much information?

Jan: Seeing you now, I think I get the general idea. You were a netholic...

Erich: A harsh name... but accurate. I tossed aside the shackles that kept my thirst for information in check. I couldn't stop the rapid growth of my curiosity, and I discovered that existence.

Jan: That existence? What is it?

Erich: U-DO...

Lactis: ...U-DO?

Erich: It started with a trivial event. Driven by my curiosity, I invaded the U.M.N. root data.

Lactis: You mean you hacked into the U.M.N.'s core structure? Isn't that dangerous!?

Erich: It is. Even I knew it was a stupid thing to do. That place is a Pandora's box that must never be opened by humans. With every second that passes, the program's structure evolves. Trying to understand it, I dove over and over, day and night, until I couldn't even recognize my own existence anymore. There was something between me and that far-off structure... I became convinced it was something like 'the end of the world.'

Jan: Was that 'U-DO'? Did you... obtain it?

Erich: Of course not! There is nothing that could contain U-DO. No, that was the end of the world.

Jan: ...

Erich: It was U-DO that convinced me. U-DO is the truth behind the negative information flowing through the U.M.N. The inability to understand it was unbearable to a netholic like me. I was constantly plagued by nightmarish visions of U-DO.

Jan: The antiexistence of truth lurks in the deepest part of the root structure of the U.M.N.... but to people carrying on their normal lives, there's nothing more than empty space beyond their own surroundings... Is that what you realized?

Erich: Yes. And so I had nightmares. The U.M.N. is part of a network system that applies the rules that define the universe we live in... no, the existence we know as the universe. What would you do if a part of that system represented the death of the world?

Jan: ...The death of the world?

Erich: U-DO is that thing. I was presented with a choice... remain a bystander of a vanishing world, or become someone who can bring new possibilities to it. It didn't take me long to decide. By becoming U-DO's terminal – its eyes and ears – I tried to escape from the death I saw at the end of the world. 'Voyager' is a voyager on the sea of the net. Part of my contract with U-DO... was to speak to a certain man...

Jan: Dmitri Yuriev...

Erich: Quite right. Yuriev was the first 'voyager.' He too was tormented by U-DO and the end of the world. Actually, thinking about it now, maybe it's really 'the origin of the world.'

Melisse: ...W-What are you saying? Isn't the U.M.N. is supposed to be something that gives hope to humanity...!

Bugs: It's not true! Erich, say it's not true!

Erich: Bugs, the things I do are for salvation... By becoming Voyager I can give people rest without them having to see the horror of death. I want you to understand...

Erich disappears.

## Chapter 3.13 - Contract

Jan and the others pursue Erich into his mind, until he appears again.

Melisse: Erich...

Erich: ...

Melisse: Answer me... maybe we can protect you from U-DO!

Bugs: Erich! Please tell the truth! You didn't really want to become Voyager, did you?

Erich: ...I don't know. Maybe I... just wanted to run away.

Melisse: Run away...?

Erich: U-DO brought me visions of death. I just wanted to run away from that. That disorder I was born with, that constant feeling of loneliness... and the things in the farthest recesses of that loneliness. I chose to become U-DO's terminal in order to escape from that.

Melisse: ...That's it? I can't believe you would go so far as to become U-DO's terminal, just because of something like that!

Erich: ...Heh. You're a gentle person. If I had met you twenty years earlier, maybe even I would have taken a different path... but, fate is cruel. And I met Yuriev first.

Jan: You and Yuriev... different motives, but the same objective?

Erich: Yes. I felt that my identity was fading into the network. My greatest fear was to dissipate into the collective unconsciousness. Dmitri Yuriev... He was my sole companion, and the only person who really understood my feelings.

Bugs: ...Your sole companion!! Wasn't I your companion too?

Erich: Bugs... you have many wonderful friends, don't you? You're... you're too good for me...

Bugs: ...

Erich: Now then, it's nearly time for me to go. It seems 'I' have started to act... 'I' plan to use the blood of the people of Zohar to finally fulfill my contract with U-DO.

Melisse: What are you saying? Aren't you right here?

Erich: The me that is here is just a wisp of my consciousness. To use an old-fashioned word, a piece of my conscience... perhaps. When the other 'me' starts to act, I will probably disappear completely.

Jan: One last question.

Erich: ...?

Jan: Is U-DO the end itself?

Erich: Well, that depends on who you ask. That's what it was for me, but every person's reason for living is different. In a world ruled by emptiness, death is given to everyone equally. Voyager exists to escape from that...

Erich vanishes.

Bugs: Erich...

Melisse: ...Bugs.

Bugs: ...Captain?

Jan: ...?

Bugs: You loved the Chief like a father... right?

Jan: Yes.

Bugs: Family... it's a foreign idea to robots, but I think Erich was like my father.

Jan: ...

Lactis: Bugs. You really loved Erich that much?

Bugs: Yes. Whatever Voyager is, Erich will always be my Erich! Just like he protected me once, I have to protect him too!

Lactis: Protect... Erich? A-Ah, ahh-!!

Lactis suddenly grabs his head with his hands, moaning.

Jan: What's wrong?

Mysterious Voice: Protect... him!

Lactis: ...Who's there!?

Melisse: W-What's going on!?

Mysterious Voice: You cannot stop Voyager now. Lactis... protect 'Canaan' with all your strength!

Lactis: Who? I don't know any 'Canaan'!!

Mysterious Voice: 'Canaan' is... inside of you...

Lactis collapses, still holding his head.

Melisse: !?

Jan: Lactis!! What is it? Who are you talking to?

Jan runs over to Lactis and helps him up.

Jan: ...Lactis?

Lactis: I'm sorry, Captain.

Jan: ...Are you okay?

Lactis: Yes. Maybe some kind of program is interfering with my autonomic nervous system. However, if Erich's story is true, Voyager is already beginning his next move...

Jan: Yes, but where...?

Lactis: From what Erich said, I have a strong feeling that he's trying to use the power of the Zohar to fulfill his contract with U-DO. He's probably looking for a large number of the people of Zohar concentrated in one place, and planning to obtain a large supply of the cerebral narcotic...

Jan: ...The Pilgrimage Council!? Dammit!!

Melisse: What's wrong?

Jan: Sharon was going to attend the Pilgrimage Council!

Melisse: Doctor Rozas!? But why?

Jan: ...She is also one of the people of Zohar. We have to stop her!

## Chapter 3.14 - Pilgrimage Council

Cathedral, Pilgrimage Council

Sergius: Now... let us pray. People of Zohar, the chosen ones. When your prayers reach the ear of God, the Zohar will open its inner eye. The great light shining from that eye will shoot through the vile Federation and cleanse their impure minds!

Sharon: This... prayer ritual... Surely the Patriarch isn't trying to brainwash us? No, that's not it. This light. And this sound. It's faint, but I have a memory of it. Yes, the 'us' of long ago...

Joaquin: Mom...

Sharon: Joaquin!? I told you to stay at home with the babysitter!

Joaquin: When Papa didn't come home I wanted to come look after you.

Sharon: Thank you. But when the prayer ceremony is over you're going home. I'll call someone...

Suddenly the light from the Zohar starts to flicker and becomes a bright white color. Looking up, Sharon and Joaquin see a man wrapped in a white cloak.

Sharon: Who's there...? You're...

Jan and the others have dived out and returned to the Veritas safehouse.

Alexei: You're just in time! There's a holomail for you! I wanted to open it, but... I wanna be someone you guys can trust...

Melisse: ...Thanks for looking out for us.

Jan: Holomail... from who? ...Lactis! Do you detect any viruses?

Lactis: None that I can see. Shall I open it?

Jan: Please do. Alexei! I need a private line! Do you have one I can borrow?

Alexei: Sure, use this one!

Melisse: Are you calling Doctor Rozas?

Jan: Yes. I hope she responds... Dammit! No answer!

Lactis: Captain!!

Jan: ...? This mail...

Bugs: It's Erich!

Erich: "And the bowl was poured on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." [Revelation 16:12] Heh heh heh... It would be best to be on time for the Pilgrimage Council... What will you do, Captain?

Melisse: ...! What the hell is this?

Jan: He's calling me out. Sharon and Joaquin's lives are in danger!

Cathedral, Pilgrimage Council

Sergius: Just a little longer. A little longer and our dearest wish will be granted... the eye of the Zohar will open, and it will illuminate the path to God. Then, the Federation's salvators will... that man will...

Carter: Your grace! The Zohar...!

Sergius: What!?

Bathed in the Zohar's light, the attendants of the Pilgrimage Council one by one begin to writhe in pain. Then their cries are silenced.

Carter: Your grace! ...They're all disappearing!

Sergius: What's going on!? This... There's no mention of anything like this in the scripture! Is it Voyager!? Is he after the Zohar? No, that's impossible. Only we, the chosen ones, can handle the power of the Zohar! It can't be... it can't be that U-DO... U-DO is supporting Voyager? But that's...!

Carter: Your grace, it's dangerous to stay here!! Hurry, find shelter!

Sergius: ...Dammit! The salvators... Dmitri Yuriev! Is he trying to open the way to Lost Jerusalem!?

Dmitri Yuriev's office.

Yuriev is holding his head in his hands.



Zora: What's wrong? You don't look so good...

Yuriev: T-The Zohar has... been activated... I... can feel it.

Zora: What!?! You mean Sergius opened the way!?

Yuriev: No, that's not it. ...The way is not yet open. Voyager... He called out to U-DO... The fool...

Zora: ...?

Yuriev: Voyager. As we speak, he's diffusing... into the cosmos...

## Chapter 3.15 - Voyager

Cathedral, Pilgrimage Council

Jan and the others arrive at the crumbling cathedral.

Jan: Are we... too late?

Melisse: This is... There should be tens of thousands of people gathered here. How could they all be gone after such a short time?

Jan: Where's the Patriarch? Is he gone too?

Lactis: Either he got away, or he was caught in this disaster too...

Jan: Is this the work of Voyager again? Where is he!?

Melisse: I'm not detecting him in our vicinity.

Jan: How is that possible...!

Suddenly the cathedral starts to shake.

Melisse: !!

Jan: What's happening?

Lactis: A local paradigm shift is occurring. This space... normal space cannot maintain these conditions!

Jan: What are you saying? That normal space is aligning with virtual space!?

Melisse: The whole church... No, the Zohar, is it responding to U-DO?

The space around them starts to flicker violently. When the light settles, the interior of the church has changed.

Jan: It seems to have stopped. But...

Melisse: Doctor Rozas and her son...

Jan: Y-Yes... No. Right now we have to focus on capturing Voyager...

Melisse: What are you saying!?

Jan: !?

Melisse: We... No, you have to think of Joaquin and Sharon first right now! If you were such a cold, mechanical person, who could only think of tactics at a time like this... I couldn't follow a captain like that!!

Jan: Melisse... Thank you. I have good subordinates...

Jan and the others make their way through the altered cathedral.

Bugs: Captain, wait! I'm detecting a large number of macrophages below us! And their size is....!!

Jan: What's wrong?

Bugs: T-This can't be...! I'm detecting... Sleipnir, Auduhmla, Baldur, Garm, Egil, Loki... a group like that could easily defeat us!

Lactis: Damn! So many units of that size appearing at once...

Jan: Yes. But we've beaten these guys before. We can do it again.

Melisse: Besides, Sharon and Joaquin might be there... Let's go!

After the security units are destroyed, the space around them begins to distort.

Melisse: A change in space!?

Bugs: !!

A large macrophage appears.

Lactis: Looks like we'll have to beat this guy if we want to get through.

Jan: Sure does... let's do it!

Battle with Alkyoneus.

Voyager: So this is the Zohar. It's beautiful... What an appropriate place for me to achieve my objective! Take heed, souls that are imprisoned in my mind! You shouldn't miss this! Oh, don't be so solemn... we're about to become an existence you can't even imagine! My preparations are complete! Look, oh great Lord! Oh great U-DO! Grant me your power by the terms of our contract!

Sharon and Joaquin are kneeling in front of the Zohar. An impassable barrier surrounds them.

Jan: Sharon! Can you hear me? Dammit! Sharon!! Listen to me, Sharon!

Voyager: "And the bowl was poured on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." [Revelation 16:12] ...Are you ready to accept the way of God?

Sharon: Yes. If it is to weave eternity... if it is to fulfill the destiny that the people of Zohar were born for... our blood cannot do better. Still...

Voyager: What? Say it.

Sharon: In exchange for our lives... is it true that you'll bring peace to the people we love?

Voyager: I guarantee it...

Jan: Sharon! He's manipulating you! This is one of Voyager's mind hacks...!

Joaquin: Mom... now we can be with Papa forever, right?

Sharon: Yes, we really can... we'll never lose him again...

Joaquin: I'm happy... Mom, I'm really happy.

Jan: Joaquin! Save Sharon! Sharon! Do you want Joaquin to die!? That dream, it's a lie! You can't be happy that way!

Voyager: Then let's go...

Sharon: Now, we'll never mourn anyone again...

Sharon and Joaquin are engulfed in light radiating from Voyager.  
Blood flows from their collapsed bodies.

Jan: Sharon... Joaquin...

Voyager: Well well, Captain. You didn't make it after all, did you?

Jan: Why!? Yuriev betrayed you! You don't need to harvest the cerebral narcotic for him anymore! Why are you doing this!?

Voyager: Yuriev? I'm no longer involved with the likes of him! If I carry out my contract with U-DO I'll have nothing to fear anymore. So...

Jan: !?

Voyager: I want you to give me your power!

Jan: What!?

Voyager: With your soul I can fulfill my dearest wish. Such a lonely, noble soul is perfect to seal my offering...

Jan: Voyager-!

Melisse: Captain, look out! The barrier is expanding!!

Jan: ...Dammit!

Voyager: I suppose you're not going to be so kind as to just hand it over? ...I understand. It might be a bit violent, but it seems the time has come to settle this personally.

Battle with Voyager.

## Chapter 3.16 - Curtain Call

Bugs: Erich!!

Voyager: ...!?

Bugs: Stop already!! Don't you know what you're doing?

Voyager: I haven't fallen so low that I need lectures on morality from a robot. Listen, get out of here. While you still can.

Bugs: ...While I still can? You've taught me many things over the years. The right thing to do, the wrong thing to do... but right now, I know that what you're doing is wrong!

Voyager: Bugs... do you want to be scrapped?

Jan: Stop it! Bugs!

Bugs: Seeing this completely different Erich... no, Voyager... I do want to be scrapped! But I'm not dead yet. When I die, I want to die with Erich...

Voyager: Oh, you think you're going to kill me? Do you really think you can do that? That's fine... go ahead and try. I'll burn into your memory that you're nothing more than a machine.

Bugs: Thank you...

Voyager: ...Wha-!?

Voyager lashes out at Bugs. Bugs intercepts the blow and charges at him with a suicide attack.

Jan: Bugs!!

Voyager: ...What a stupid thing to do. What can a little support robot do to me... Ah, ahhhhh-

Jan: Voyager!! You're...?

Voyager: T-This minor setback doesn't mean I'll let you get away!! You're going down with me, Jan Sauer!!

Battle with Voyager.

The space around them continues to bend until it only contains Voyager and the Zohar.

Voyager: You've stalled me long enough... Oh, Lord!! By our contract, come forth!

U-DO: ...

Voyager: What's wrong!? Lord, answer me! U-DO! U-D00000000!!

Wilhelm: It's pointless, you know. He won't respond, no matter how much you yell.

Voyager: Who are you?

Wilhelm appears behind Voyager.

Wilhelm: He's already fulfilled his goal, you see.

Voyager: Fulfilled his goal? I haven't fulfilled anything yet!

Wilhelm: He learned what he wanted to know. As far as “existence” is concerned, the concept of eternity is not necessarily indispensable.

Voyager: Eternity isn't necessary...!? Then...

Wilhelm: He learned this through your existence. He just wanted a confirmation... In other words, your contract was doomed from the beginning.

Voyager: ...Who... are you?

Wilhelm: I'm your new partner. And if you'll let me, I can make you very happy...

Voyager: I don't need a partner. With my own mind I can voyage forever on the sea of the U.M.N....

Wilhelm: That's quite a bluff, isn't it? I don't think those are the words of a man who was betrayed by Yuriev and had his contract revoked by U-DO before my very eyes...

Voyager: ...You, why are you...!?

Wilhelm: If I offer you the things that they couldn't, perhaps you'll consider joining me?

Voyager: What do the likes of you have to offer me?

Wilhelm: I've been watching you for a long time... the dazzling radiance of your consciousness. Yes, we'd make a good team, wouldn't we? Don't you realize... you won't have to worry about your inferiority complex anymore. This is what I'm giving to you. A new world you haven't even imagined...

Voyager: That existence... is even more powerful than U-DO?

Wilhelm: That depends on you. If you cooperate with me, I'll help you out too. So, what do you think?

Voyager: ...I have no choice... do I.

Wilhelm: ...I'm so glad to have your cooperation.

Voyager's white cloak turns black.

Wilhelm: Now, what should we do next?

Voyager: Want me to bring Sauer here too?

Wilhelm: Really? Well, then I leave it to you.

Voyager returns to normal space.

Voyager: Hey, Jan Sauer. I've gotten my strength back... now for a little demonstration!

Jan: ...!!

Battle with Voyager.

Voyager: So, Jan. Things are gradually coming to an end. And you never want to answer the curtain call alone.

Lactis: S-Stop it!!

Jan: ...?

Voyager: ...Heh. Did you remember something you have to do... “Canaan”?

Jan: ...Canaan? Lactis!! What... who are you? You can't be... with Voyager...!?

Lactis: ...N-No!! Of course not, Captain!

Voyager: No? Now really... you can't deceive me anymore. Didn't he also command you to search for humans with the "factor"? Like myself... and Jan Sauer!

Jan: Me...?

Lactis: Captain!! Don't listen to him!

Voyager: Even as you deny it, your instincts... no, you don't have instincts. Your basic root systems are telling you otherwise, aren't they? Sauer is dispensable now...

Lactis: ...T-That's...

Voyager: "Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'It is done!'" And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great." [Revelation 16:17-21]

Lactis: ...

Voyager: Ha... My contract with God ended in failure. Now those words are nothing more than a requiem to send your souls off to their prison. So, what are you going to do? You have only two choices now. Take my hand and accept his proposal...

Jan: And... choose to be the same as you?

Voyager: I won't force you. But I guarantee you'll be able to transcend the notion of 'death.' Of course, the decision is yours to make.

Jan: You're promising me eternity...

Lactis: ...Captain!!

Jan: In a world... without Sharon or Joaquin...

Lactis: His words are a trap!

Voyager: Is that so. If you turn down his offer I will have to kill you... so there's really only one choice.

Jan: A choice, you say?

Voyager: Come now, there's nothing to mourn. The people I killed are always with me. Inside of me, their hearts will never fade. You could say it's a kind of nirvana. You should join too. You could be with the people you love forever... At the very least, it would be peace.

Jan: That's a false life. I don't call shreds of memory 'living'.

Voyager: Where do you draw the line between truth and fiction? Coming to a miserable end in the world you call reality, or obtaining peace in the world of your consciousness. It's a simple choice. Really, your mind is almost made up. What you intend to do with that gun? You're in my world now. I make the rules here. Do you really think you can fight me with something like that?

Jan: You deceived Sharon and Joaquin. You used their deepest grief and promised them a false peace... You covered up your own fear by playing with the fears of others...

Voyager: No one can refuse eternal peace...

Jan: You're just manipulating my mind!

Voyager: Quit this futile resistance... Come to my side!

Jan: ...I refuse.

Melisse: Captain, stop---!!

Jan holds his gun to his head and pulls the trigger.

Melisse: Nooooooooooooo!

The fact that I couldn't stop the suicide of Jan Sauer haunts me even now. However, I never thought for a moment that his reasons for what he did were wrong. Maybe instead of wanting him to survive, I really just hoped that he would defy Erich. The Captain's body was quickly recovered. After he was registered at the body bank, the biomedical company Ziggurat Industries came and took him for... recycling.

News of the Zohar's activation caused the entire star system to become interested in owning it. Because of that, the Federation's salvators took it forcefully from the holy land of Abraxas. Before long, riots had broken out, until on Yuriev's counsel the Federation imposed a military sanction on the Immigrant Fleet. Patriarch Sergius XIV went on the network to publicly blame the Federation. The careful relationship that Patriarch Julius forged between the Galaxy Federation and the Immigrant Fleet amounted to nothing.

As for Yuriev, he appears to have left the political stage to found an institute to research U-DO.

Also, Planet Abraxas was renamed to Michtam and put under strict surveillance by the Federation.

I've come to think that the awesome technologies of the U.M.N. are nothing more than useless dead weight. I've learned that finding truth in all the information there is like finding a needle in a haystack. Alexei from Veritas taught me this.

I wanted to know the truth, so I decided to leave the Federation police and Alexei took me in. I realized that I had settled into my new role at Veritas. Eventually I succeeded in organizing a full-blown anti-U.M.N. resistance, and I became the strong leader that I always wanted to be.

I called this new organization "Scientia". The truth will set you free... however, I learned a lot from this whole affair. Before you look for salvation in truth, you must question what truth really is.

It's a strange story... Once, I was a member of the Federation police, but now I command a resistance movement of millions of people across the star system.

I wonder what Erich was looking for. What was the "end of the world" that he saw? Was he a preacher, like Alexei and the others said? Is the moral of the story that... we didn't pay him what he deserved, so he became the pied piper of Hamelin? Where has he taken me? Maybe the Captain's soul, which so resolutely refused the sound of that flute, is roaming somewhere too. If so... I want to prepare a better world for when his heart is freed from that bewitching sound, and he returns to us. I think that's what everyone would have wanted.

T.C. 4669

--Melisse Ortus

Ziggurat 8 is activated.

The End



With the release of Xenosaga III, we now have canon interpretations of the Japanese names. In order to avoid confusion, I have changed all instances of the original names to the new canon names. Here is a short list of the original names mapped to the new ones:

Meris Orthas -> Melisse Ortus

Michael Oltman -> Mikhail Ortmann

Elrich Webber -> Erich Weber

Bagus -> Bugs

Sharon and Joaquin Rosas -> Sharon and Joaquin Rozas

Ernest Lewis -> Ernest Luis

Sean McCollum -> Sean McCallum

Irene and Klaus Thole -> Irene and Klaus Torres

Keila -> Kayla

People of the Zohar -> People of Zohar

Neurochemical narcotic program -> Endorphin drug program

Child care facility -> Nursing plant

Anti-intruder unit -> Macrophage

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