

Awakening Aboard the Anastasia

A short science-fiction horror gamebook written by Jeremy Miles Johnson for the
2022/2023 Lindenbaum Prize Competition.

Section 1: Drifting

0.01 Drifting Peacefully

You can't have been asleep long, but it feels like the dream you were having went on forever. Now, you can't remember anything about it. You stretch, but touch nothing. You are floating inside a spherical metal chamber. The only lights are the stars shining in through the one porthole and a soft green glow coming from the control terminal.

What is happening? Where am I?

Pain explodes in your head. It feels like someone is driving an iron spike through your skull. You clench your jaw until it passes. Eventually, only a dull ache remains. You drift until your bare hip grazes the wall. It's cold, and you're hungry.

- **Look out the porthole ► 0.04**
- **Check the computer terminal ► 0.07**

0.02 Approaching the Cargo Hold

The pod maneuvers around to the stern of the ship. The cargo bay doors are open slightly, just enough that you might be able to slip in. The computer, however, disagrees and halts the pod. You disengage the piloting assistance and take over manually. You approach and hold just outside the bay doors to gauge the situation. The pod will fit, but just barely.

The bay seems mostly empty, except a dark mass at the far side resting on the deck. And something is floating nearby just outside the bay doors. You press your face up to the porthole to get a better look. The object rotates until, for a moment, it's facing your direction. It's a human skull. Then, a small blast from one of the stabilization thrusters hits it and flings it out into space.

You maneuver the pod gingerly between the cargo bay doors and into the ship. You raise the pod up as you drift forward, preparing for the artificial gravity to kick in. Even so, it comes on much faster than you anticipated. The pod drops. There's a clang as it collides with the cargo deck and you fall to the floor. Then, there is a hideous screech as the pod scrapes to a halt. You lie on the floor, stunned. As you regain your senses, you notice a soft hiss somewhere near your head. There's been a breach in the pod. You won't have long before the air runs out. Certainly not long enough to access the bay controls remotely, seal them, and restore oxygen to the entire cargo hold, if that's even possible. You stand and pilot the damaged pod up off the deck and then fly it haphazardly toward the cargo bay airlock. You breathe deeply and quickly to hyperoxygenate your blood in preparation for what you're going to have to do next. It's your only option, really.

- **Enter the vacuum of space ► 0.08**

0.03 Repairing the Cargo Bay

The access panel in the cargo bay hangs from the wall by a single bolt. What could have done this? Esme's been in her quarters and Neil has been on the bridge since long before this was detected. It seems implausible, but maybe it blew itself out somehow.

It's too dark to work under just the emergency lighting. You leave and return with lights and tools. You prepare your work area, then remove the bolt. You place the panel on the ground beside you. Now you can access the damaged conduit. You discover strange gouges in it like nothing you've seen before. You disconnect it, and fit some salvage to replace it. It'll only be temporary.

That's when you notice those same strange scratches on the panel as well. This didn't just blow on its own. You hear something skittering behind you. You turn, but you've been working under bright lights, and you can't see anything out in the dark of the cargo hold. The hair rises on your arms, and you bend down to pick a piston ring compressor to defend yourself with. But, before you can grab it, you feel a sharp pain at the back of your neck. You reach back and feel something there, a long, fleshy appendage. You grip it with both hands and pull hard. When it doesn't budge, you reach forward and grab the compressor.

There's a twinge in your neck followed by a wet crunch, and then nothing. The heavy tool clangs against the deck, and you collapse in a heap.

- **Hope someone will find you ► 0.06**

0.04 Looking out the Porthole

You push off from the wall with your left hand and glide toward the porthole. You see an unbroken field of stars, but as you near the window there is a void. The closer you get, the bigger it grows until you realize the mass blotting out the stars is a large object.

Again! Dark shape. Must get inside.

You shake your head. There's another explosion of pain and with it, a memory. It's the... starboard side of...a ship! The Anastasia. Your ship. It's a last-generation cargo ship refitted for deep space salvage operations. Squinting, you can make out the contours of the vessel. The cargo doors at the rear of the ship appear slightly ajar, and there's a dimple in the side of the ship facing you. An escape pod has been launched. It's the pod you're currently in. The Anastasia shrinks ever-so-slowly as your pod glides away.

Below the ship, you see the faint glinting of metal. Something is drifting away from the starboard side of the ship. It's another escape pod. Its booster rocket ignites and it accelerates away.

- **Check the computer interface ► 0.11**
- **Pilot the pod back to the ship ► 0.13**

0.05 Leaving the Airlock

This doesn't seem right. You get back in the pod. There is gentle hiss followed by a *ka-chunk* as the pod is sealed again. That sound churns up a memory and, with it, another throb of pain, which causes your arm to twitch. Your hand grazes the panel and one of the ships navigational thrusters springs to life. There's a terrifying groan of metal. The pod shudders in place for a second and then tears free from the mooring clamp. You bounce sharply off the wall of the pod as it lurches away from the ship. There's no way the pod is going to be able to dock at that port again, and it may not be able to dock at any now. That leaves only one choice.

- **Pilot into the cargo hold ► 0.02**

0.06 The Long Dark

There is nothing but darkness and emptiness that stretches on forever. Are you awake? Are you dead? How much time passes between each thought? Is it only a few seconds, or have stars flared to life, burned long, and collapsed in on themselves while you pondered this question? This strange limbo doesn't hurt. Not exactly. Your body floats: frozen, waiting, and ever-so-slowly crumbling away as dust.

- **Keep waiting, and wondering ► 0.12**

0.07 Accessing the Pod's Computer

You reach out to press against the wall with your right hand. Your arm is stiff and sore, and pain shoots up from your palm. You float across the open space toward the glow of the display panel. The green images and symbols on the screen are nothing but blurry gibberish. You close your eyes and concentrate. Your head pounds hard for a moment, but then relents. When you open your eyes you can read the display:

```
PCV1250078 ANASTASIA - ESCAPE POD BETA
Relative Trajectory from vessel: 1.05 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
Relative Distance: 46.3 m
Locating Beacon: Active
Oxygen: 34.58%
Nutritional Storage: 0.01%
Water Storage: 34.58%
Power: 99.47%
Fuel: 99.87%
```

The pod's distance from the ship is increasing very slowly. Next, you try to log into The Anastasia's computer remotely. Your fingers, particularly those on your right hand, ache as you first start to use the terminal, but they loosen up as you type. Finally you're confronted with the message:

```
Access code: _
```

The code dances on the edge of your consciousness. You grimace and struggle to remember. After a few moments, you can feel it slip away. You clear the screen.

- **Access your pod's navigation sensors. ► 0.09**
- **Pilot the pod back to the ship ► 0.13**

0.08 Taking a Big Risk

Adrenaline surges in you. You take one more deep breath and throw the hatch open. The air that's left rushes out of the pod, and you exhale to keep your lungs from rupturing. You clamber over the edge of the pod and sprint toward the access hatch. Every part of you hurts. Your skin feels like it's being pricked by thousands of needles, your eyes want to burst from your head, and the saliva on your tongue starts to boil away.

You reach the terminal beside the cargo bay access hatch. There's a warning on the screen that you clear. No time. The chamber depressurizes for far too long. Your head swims. The hatch slides open silently. You stumble in feeling disoriented, in pain, and desperate to take a breath. You reach for the terminal.

You paw at the panel, and the hatch closes. You need to restore the air, but the words on the panel make no sense. Your arm goes limp, and you fall.

- **The end ► 1.00**

0.09 Accessing Navigation Sensors

There's a dull throb at the base of your skull, but the longer you work, the less you notice it. It almost feels as though you're settling back into yourself again.

You bring up a detailed map of your surroundings. There you see your ship, PCV1250078. The ship is broadcasting a general warning.

STAY CLEAR - HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION

There's something else on the other side of the ship moving away from the ship at a much faster rate. It shows up as PCV1250078γ, another escape pod. You display its trajectory relative to the ship: 5.23 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude. After a few moments, it reaches the edge of the map and is gone. That might be worth noting if you need to go after them. The capabilities of the escape pod's computer and sensors are absolutely minimal; you don't see anything else. If you can't access the Anastasia's systems from here, there's only one thing to do. You are naked, and there's nothing in the pod to protect you from whatever has happened on the vessel. Fortunately, you're not afraid.

- **Pilot back to ship ► 0.13**

0.10 Entering through the Airlock

You clear the warning and attempt to open the door. A message appears on the screen.

Access code: _

There's that dull ache again. But you remember the code: *+3n3brus* You type the passcode into the control panel. The transparent barrier and the handprint disappear into the wall. You consider holding your breath, but decide that there's no point. Let's just try to figure out what is going on.

The time on the control panel is 23:35.

- **Go to *Section 2: Back on Board*. In that section, you will choose a single entry from the current time. It is now **23:35**.**

0.11 Accessing the Pod's Computer

You push off from the porthole's frame. The gentle pressure on your palm sends a brief jolt of pain up your right arm. You float across the open space toward the glow of the machine. At first green symbols are just blurry gibberish. You squint and concentrate. It hurts, but as the words come into focus the pain relents. The display panel shows:

```
PCV1250078 ANASTASIA - ESCAPE POD BETA
Relative Trajectory: 1.05 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
Relative Distance: 46.3 m
Locating Beacon: Active
Oxygen: 34.58%
Nutritional Storage: 0.01%
Water Storage: 34.58%
Power: 99.47%
Fuel: 99.87%
```

The pod's distance from the ship is slowly increasing.

Your fingers ache as you use the terminal. You try to log into the Anastasia's bridge remotely, but you're confronted with the message:

```
Access code: _
```

You struggle to remember, but the code dances just on the edge of your consciousness. Eventually, you can feel it drift away. You're not going to be able to remember. You just might, however, be able to access the other escape pod's communication system.

```
PCV1250078 ANASTASIA - ESCAPE POD GAMMA
Relative Trajectory: 5.23 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
Relative Distance: 837 m
Locating Beacon: Active
```

The other pod's distance increases rapidly until the connection is lost. As long as you remember that trajectory, you should be able to track them down.

- **Access your pod's navigation sensors ► 0.14**
- **Pilot the pod back to the ship ► 0.13**

0.12 Blood Everywhere!

OhmygodOhmygodOhmygod! My arm is gone! It's just gone!

Blood spurts from the ragged stump that ends just below your right elbow. You try to flex fingers that are no longer there.

"Neil! Hold your arm high and get over here!" shouts the captain. She grabs a transdermal injector and places it against the side of your neck.

It hisses sharply. You feel calmer. The captain fits a tourniquet over the end of your arm and it clamps down stemming the flow of blood. Esme starts talking, but not to you, so you sit there and look around the medical bay. There are shelves up high that you've never noticed before. There's an air vent next to them. Also, the back of your neck feels strangely cool. You reach back with your remaining hand. Something wriggles at your touch.

"Neil!" The sound of your name brings your attention back to Esme. "Keep your arm up! Get your fingers away from that! My god, Neil! Get onto this bed and lie face down. I'll see if I can extract it." You stumble to the bed and slump over onto it. You let out a sigh.

- **The end ► 1.00**

0.13 Piloting Back to the Ship

You issue the command to bring the escape pod to a halt relative to the Anastasia. Your nude form slams against the wall and is held pressed against the cold metal for several seconds. When the pod is finally stopped and you can move again, you maneuver yourself back to the terminal, and plot a trajectory to the ship. You make sure to limit the pod's maximum acceleration this time.

You won't be able to dock with the escape pod's launching port again. Once a pod is blown, they have to be inspected and reloaded in space-dock. That just leaves a ship docking port...wait...the cargo doors are, or might be, open just enough to slip in that way too.

- **Dock at the forward airlock ► 0.15**
- **Try to enter via the cargo hold ► 0.02**

0.14 Accessing Navigation Sensors

There's a dull throb at the base of your skull that seems to run down your arm all the way to your fingertips as you operate the console. But as you continue to work, the pain relents and the fog in your head starts to lift. In a strange way, it almost feels as though you're settling back into yourself again.

You bring up a detailed map of your surroundings. There you see The Anastasia, PCV1250078. It is broadcasting a general warning:

STAY CLEAR - HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION

There is nothing else nearby on the scanner, and the capabilities of the escape pod's computer and sensors are absolutely minimal. If you can't access the ship's systems from here, there's only one thing to do. You are naked, and there's nothing in the pod to protect you from whatever has happened on the ship. You could wait out here in space and hope for rescue, or you could go back and try to figure out what happened. You're not afraid, and anything is better than just floating naked in the dark for what could be days.

- **Pilot the pod back to the ship ► 0.13**

0.15 Docking at the Airlock

Your escape pod pulls up alongside the Anastasia. It thrusts to align with the docking port on the side of the ship. After a few delicate maneuvers, the spherical pod shudders, and with a muted *thwunk*, it makes a connection. The hatches slide away and dim light pours into the pod. Your eyes adjust and you see a thick, mostly transparent containment barrier in place just inside the ship. A bloody handprint seems to hover in the air. In reality, it clings to the other side of the barrier. You float toward it, and as you cross the threshold of the ship, gravity gently appears. Your feet drop down to meet the textured floor until finally you are standing just inside the hull of the ship. You press your left hand against the glass, covering the print on the other side. A cramp seizes your other arm. You clench and relax your right fist a few times until it subsides.

There's a panel on this side of the barrier that you might be able to use to override the locks. It shows:

Unknown Biological Contamination - Please Take Appropriate Precautions.

You look down at your nude, emaciated body. You're not sure what precautions you could possibly take in your current state.

- **Try to override and open the door ► 0.10**
- **Leave in the pod and try the cargo hold ► 0.05**

1.00 Am I Dead?

You gasp and cough. You're on the floor of the cargo bay's airlock. Your skin is covered in dark specks and splotches from burst capillaries. If you blacked out before you could repressurize the chamber, why are you alive? Is there someone on board who saved you?

You stand up and look through the hatch into the darkness of the cargo bay. The face of the ship's engineer, Embu, stares back at you. You gasp and stumble away. No, it's just your reflection; you must just be oxygen-deprived. At any rate, you look awful. Your face is blotchy and the whites of your eyes have completely turned red. You don't feel great, but you don't feel nearly as bad as you look.

The dented escape pod rests on the deck of the cargo bay. It looks like it's just some more salvage now. Loading equipment stands against the wall, and you can just make out the edge of that dark mass that you saw before.

You won't be able to close the bay doors and repressurize the cargo hold from here. You'll have to go into the ship. The terminal here shows:

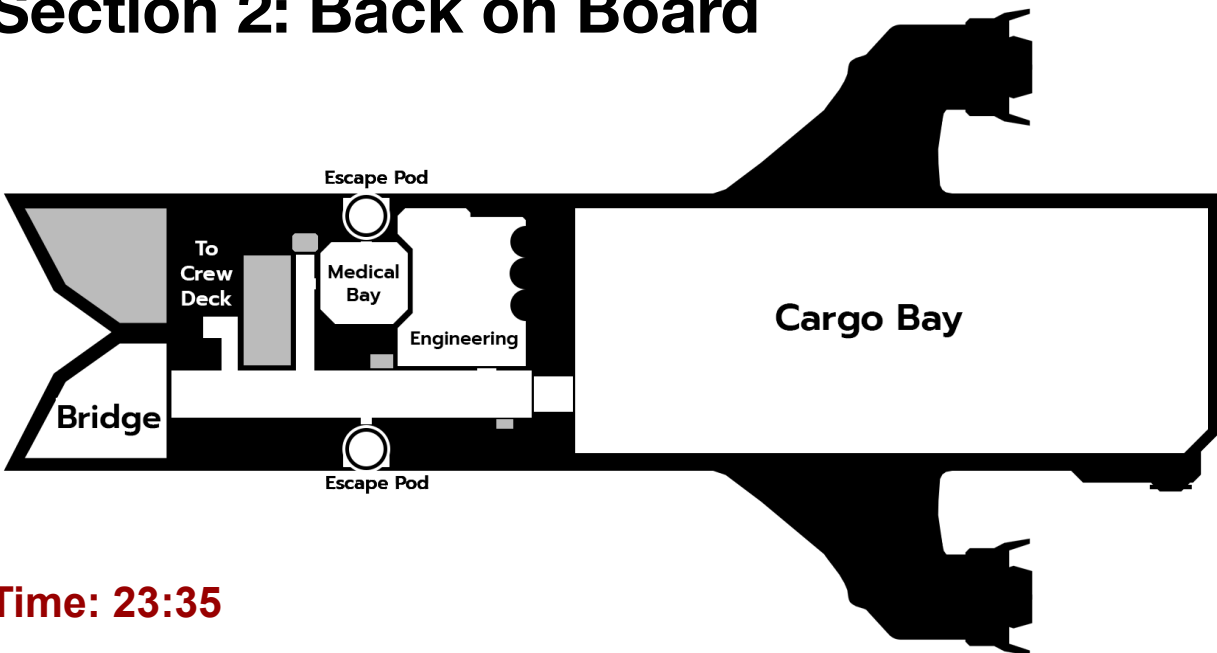
Unknown Biological Contamination - Please Take Appropriate Precautions.

You clear the message. Your eye twitches slightly as you recall your access code: +3n3brus The door opens.

The terminal shows that it's 23:35.

- **Go to Section 2: Back on Board.** In that section, you will choose a single entry from the current time. It is now **23:35**.

Section 2: Back on Board



Time: 23:35

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Back on Board**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:35 - Back on Board

The interior of the ship is dimly lit. The Anastasia is on emergency power. You pad down the corridor, peering around corners and down the halls as you go. You slide in something cold and slick, a coagulating pool of blood. You drag your foot along the floor for several steps, wiping most of it off. You pass a storage closet. There's a slight itch in your head as you remember something. You go back. Inside are some emergency odds and ends: tools, a first aid kit, cleaning supplies, and a few single-piece uniforms. You find one with the name "Neil" emblazoned on it—your name. You step into the suit and zip it up. You take another one down, belonging to "Embu" and use it to finish wiping the blood off your foot. There is a map of the ship on one of the wall panels.

- **It is now 23:40.**

Time: 23:40

- **Choose one entry from: Medical Bay, Bridge, Engineering, Crew Deck**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:40 - Medical Bay

A trail of blood leads down the hall into the medical bay. Blood is pooled on and around one of the beds. Reddish-brown handprints cover the various open cabinets.

You feel a tiny lance of pain and the sense that this is strangely familiar. Bloody boot prints lead toward the hatch of Escape Pod Gamma, the pod directly accessible from the medical bay. It's gone.

You check the terminal. There are medical records for three crew members: E. Anami, E. Calderon, and N. Anaton. That last one—that's you. A wave of dizziness comes. You catch yourself on a sticky, blood-soaked bed rail. When it subsides, you take a partially unspooled roll of gauze from the counter, and clean your hand off.

You check the terminal to see if you can help jog your memory a little more.

CREW MANIFEST

- Esme Sofia Vanessa Calderon - Captain, Medic, Crane Operator - Quarters 303 - Home Unit: 103426C12
- Embu Lamar Anami - Engineer, Welder, Cook - Quarters 301A - Home Unit: 100001F29
- Neil Thomas Anaton - Pilot, Navigator, Communications - Quarters 301B - Home Unit: 100226A06

Audio Recording from 23:22 Available

You play the recording.

“This is Esme Calderon, captain of the salvage vessel, Anastasia.” You recognize that voice. In fact, it feels like you can almost recall those exact words. “We discovered something unusual near LDJ-50. It's not included in my logs. I've got one crewman seriously injured, and another dead.” Esme speaks fast and sounds out-of-breath. “For anyone who finds this, we are leaving in an escape pod. I have instituted a ship-wide biohazard lockdown. I would have initiated a self destruct except for the engines...Neil! Keep your arm up! Get your fingers away from that! My god, Neil! Get onto this bed and lie face down. I'll see if I can extract it.”

There is no more. You leave the medical bay to explore the rest of the ship.

- **It is now 23:45.**

23:40 - Bridge

Your palm opens the door to the bridge. The room is dark except for the lights coming from the terminals.

You walk up to the terminal at the pilot's station. Operating it feels completely natural. You take an inventory of the ship. The engines are offline, the cargo bay doors are ajar, two of the ship's three escape pods have been launched, and the ship has left behind a homing beacon. It would be a few hours' journey back to it. You attempt to activate the engines, but they've been shut down for repairs in the cargo area. You do what you can. You close the cargo doors and repressurize the bay. Then you bring up the information on the escape pods and beacon.

PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD BETA - Launch Trajectory: 1.05 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD GAMMA - Launch Trajectory: 5.23 Azimuth, 1.71
Altitude
PCV1250078 - BEACON 002A - Direction: 3.14 Azimuth, 1.57 Altitude

You scan for crew on board. There is only one person on the ship, and they are on the bridge. Some of this might be worth remembering.

- It is now **23:47**.

23:40 - Engineering

The door to engineering, where the ship's most sensitive systems are housed, stands open. There are tools strewn about. You...were working on something. You are Embu Anami, right? No! You're not. You're the pilot not the engineer. What a strange thing to be confused about. It seems like Embu is in the middle of repairing something. The engines are shut down.

You verify all of this on an engineering terminal. There's currently an exhaust conduit removed in the cargo bay, which is exposed to space. The only place to close the cargo hold and repressurize it is on the bridge and the Anastasia isn't going anywhere until that repair is completed.

You leave engineering to explore elsewhere.

- It is now **23:45**.

23:40 - Crew Deck

- Remember the current time. Go to *Section 3: Crew Deck*

Time: 23:45

- **Choose one entry from: Medical Bay, Bridge, Engineering, Crew Deck**
Then proceed to that entry. You should choose an entry other than the

23:45 - Medical Bay

Blood is everywhere. There are splatters, drips, hand and boot prints, and even drying pools of it. Something bad happened here.

You check the terminal. There are medical records for three crew members: E. Anami, E. Calderon, and N. Anaton. That one—that's you. A wave of dizziness hits you. You stagger and catch yourself on a sticky, blood-soaked bed rail. You take a packet of gauze that has tumbled out of one shelf, and wipe the blood off.

You check the medical terminal. Maybe that will jog your memory.

CREW MANIFEST

- Esme Sofia Vanessa Calderon - Captain, Medic, Crane Operator - Quarters 303 - Home Unit: 103426C12
- Embu Lamar Anami - Engineer, Welder, Cook - Quarters 301A - Home Unit: 100001F29
- Neil Thomas Anaton - Pilot, Navigator, Communications - Quarters 301B - Home Unit: 100226A06

There is a recording. You start it. It is audio only.

"This is Esme Calderon, captain of the salvage vessel Anastasia." You recognize that voice. In fact, you recognize those words. "We discovered something unusual near LDJ-50. It's not included in my logs. I've got one crewman seriously injured, and another dead." Esme speaks fast and sounds out-of-breath. "For anyone who finds this, we are leaving in an escape pod. I have instituted a ship-wide biohazard lockdown. I would have initiated a self destruct except for the engines...Neil! Hold your arm high and get over here! Get your fingers away from that! My god, Neil! Get onto this bed and lie face down. I'll see if I can extract it."

There is no more. You leave the medical bay to explore the rest of the ship.

- **It is now 23:50.**

23:45 - Bridge

The bridge is dark except for the lights coming from the terminals.

You sit in the pilot's chair and take an inventory of the ship. The engines are offline, the cargo bay doors are ajar, two of the ship's three escape pods have been launched, and the ship has left behind a homing beacon. It would be a few hours' journey back to it. You attempt to activate the engines, but they've been shut down for repairs in the cargo area. You do what you can. You close the cargo doors and repressurize the bay. Then you bring up the information on the escape pods and beacon.

PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD BETA - Launch Trajectory: 1.05 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD GAMMA - Launch Trajectory: 5.23 Azimuth, 1.71
Altitude
PCV1250078 - BEACON 002A - Direction: 3.14 Azimuth, 1.57 Altitude

You scan for crew on board. There is only one person on the ship, and they are on the bridge. You may want to take note of some of this for when the engines are back online.

- It is now **23:52**.

23:45 - Engineering

Something in here was left unfinished. The door stands open, there are tools strewn about. It seems like the engineer...Embu is in the middle of repairing something. The engines are shut down, which means that the Anastasia isn't going anywhere until that work is completed.

You verify all of this on an engineering terminal. There is a section of conduit under repair in the cargo bay, which is under vacuum. The only place to close and repressurize it is on the bridge.

You leave engineering to explore elsewhere.

- It is now **23:50**.

23:45 - Crew Deck

- Take note of the time. Go to *Section 3: Crew Deck*

Time: 23:47

- **Choose one entry from: Medical Bay, Cargo Bay, Engineering, Crew Deck**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:47 - Medical Bay

Blood is everywhere. There are splatters, drips, hand and boot prints, and even drying pools of it. Something bad happened here. A trail that leads up to an air vent. Its cover looks torn off. There's a strange rumbling in the vent. Isn't there? Or are you imagining it? You hear it again. Somehow you almost feel like you can remember hearing something like this before.

You check the computer terminal. There are medical records for three crew members: E. Anami, E. Calderon, and, you, N. Anaton. You bring up the manifest.

CREW MANIFEST

- Esme Sofia Vanessa Calderon - Captain, Medic, Crane Operator - Quarters 303 - Home Unit: 103426C12
- Embu Lamar Anami - Engineer, Welder, Cook - Quarters 301A - Home Unit: 100001F29
- Neil Thomas Anaton - Pilot, Navigator, Communications - Quarters 301B - Home Unit: 100226A06

There is an audio recording. You play it.

“This is Esme Calderon, captain of the salvage vessel Anastasia.” You recognize that voice. In fact, you recognize those words. “We discovered something unusual near LDJ-50. It's not included in my logs. I've got one crewman seriously injured, and another dead.” Esme speaks fast and sounds out-of-breath. “For anyone who finds this, we are leaving in an escape pod. I have instituted a ship-wide biohazard lockdown. I would have initiated a self destruct except for the engines...Neil! Hold your arm high and get over here! Get your fingers away from that! My god, Neil! Get onto this bed and lie face down. I'll see if I can extract it.” It's like you've heard this all before.

That's the end of the message.

- **It is now 23:51.**

23:47 - Cargo Bay

You stand on the cargo deck and breathe deeply. The deck is strewn with various damaged pods, satellites, and other salvage. It's dark except for one area where lights have been set up. Someone has taken down a wall panel, removed a section of exhaust conduit, and set up a work area. Tools, replacement parts, lights, and everything stand on a huge dark stain. It's almost black, shot through with tiny cracks, and is flaking off. You're pretty sure that's vacuum-desiccated blood.

Just behind it is a collection of dark objects with strange, curved lines and sharp edges. They're almost translucent. They seem... calming, really. You chip away some of the dried blood with your toe before you finish replacing the section of conduit. With that done, you should be able to restore the ship to full power.

- **It is now 00:04.**

23:47 - Engineering

The door stands open, there are tools strewn about. Embu was in the middle of working on something. You see a shadowy figure move at the back of the room. Is there someone here? You back toward one of the terminals while you scan the room. You check the computer in glances, while still trying to watch the room. The engines are shut down. An exhaust conduit in the cargo bay has been removed. The Anastasia isn't going anywhere until that work is completed. You never were very handy. Or were you? It almost feels like you've done this sort of thing before. It doesn't seem like a terribly difficult repair. You back out of the room and close the door.

- **It is now 23:51.**

23:47 - Crew Deck

- **Take note of the time. Go to *Section 3: Crew Deck***

Time: 23:50

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Bridge, Crew Deck**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:50 - Bridge

The bridge is dark except for the glow coming from the terminals.

You sit down in the pilot's chair and check the state of the ship. The engines are offline, the cargo bay doors are ajar, two of the ship's three escape pods have been launched, and a homing beacon was deployed some time ago. It would be a few hours' journey for a fully-functional Anastasia to get back to it, but the engines have been shut down for repairs. You do what you can do from this station: you close the cargo doors and repressurize the bay. Then you bring up detailed information on the escape pods and beacon.

PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD BETA - Launch Trajectory: 1.05 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD GAMMA - Launch Trajectory: 5.23 Azimuth, 1.71
Altitude
PCV1250078 - BEACON 002A - Direction: 3.14 Azimuth, 1.57 Altitude

You may want to remember a couple of these for when you get the engines running. You scan for crew on board. There is only one person on the ship, and they are on the Bridge. You hope the scanner is working properly. There's nothing left to do on the bridge so you go to where you might be able to do something.

- **It is now 00:02.**

23:50 - Crew Deck

- **Take note of the time. Go to *Section 3: Crew Deck***

Time: 23:51

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Cargo Bay**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:51 - Cargo Bay

You stand on the cargo deck and breathe deeply. One of your shoulders feels stiff, but it doesn't seem serious. The cargo hold is mostly dark but the deck is strewn with various damaged pods, satellites, and other salvage. Someone has taken down a wall panel, removed a section of exhaust conduit, and set up a work area. Tools, replacement parts, lights, and everything stand on a huge dark stain. It's almost black, shot through with tiny cracks, and is flaking off. You're pretty sure that's vacuum-desiccated blood.

Just behind it is a collection of dark objects with strange, curved lines, and sharp edges. They're almost translucent. They seem... calming, really. You flake away some of the dried blood with your toe before you finish replacing the section of conduit. With that done, you should be able to restore the ship to full power.

- **It is now 00:04.**

Time: 23:52

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Engineering, Cargo Bay, Crew Deck**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:52 - Engineering

The door stands open, there are tools strewn about. It seems like Embu is in the middle of repairing an exhaust conduit elsewhere. You see a shadowy figure move at the back of the room. Is there someone in here? You back toward one of the terminals keeping your eyes wide. You check the computer in a series of darting glances. The engines are shut down, which means that the Anastasia isn't going anywhere until that repair is completed. You should be able to finish the work, even though you have never been very handy. Have you? You back out of the room and close the door.

- **It is now 00:02.**

23:52 - Cargo Bay

You stand on the cargo deck and breathe deeply. One of your shoulders feels stiff, but it doesn't seem serious. The cargo hold is mostly dark but the deck is strewn with various damaged pods, satellites, and other salvage. Someone has taken down a wall panel, removed a section of exhaust conduit, and set up a work area. Tools, replacement parts, lights, and everything stand on a huge dark stain. It's almost black, shot through with tiny cracks, and flakes off easily. You're pretty sure that's vacuum-desiccated blood.

Just behind it is a collection of dark objects with strange, curved lines, and sharp edges. They're almost translucent. They seem... calming, really. You flake away some of the dried blood with your toe before you finish replacing the section of conduit. With that done, you should be able to restore the ship to full power.

- **It is now 00:04.**

23:52 - Crew Deck

- **Take note of the time. Go to *Section 3: Crew Deck***

Time: 23:55

► **Choose one entry from: Bridge**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:55 - Bridge

The bridge is dark except for the lights coming from the terminal screens.

You sit in the pilot's chair and take an inventory of the ship. The engines are offline, the cargo bay doors are ajar, two of the ship's three escape pods have been launched, and the ship has left behind a homing beacon. It would be a few hours' journey back to it.

You attempt to activate the engines, but they've been shut down for repairs elsewhere.

You do what you can. You close the cargo doors and repressurize the bay. Then you bring up the information on the escape pods and beacon.

PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD BETA - Launch Trajectory: 1.05 Azimuth, 1.71 Altitude
PCV1250078 - ESCAPE POD GAMMA - Launch Trajectory: 5.23 Azimuth, 1.71
Altitude
PCV1250078 - BEACON 002A - Direction: 3.14 Azimuth, 1.57 Altitude

You scan for crew on board. There is only one person on the ship, and they are on the Bridge. You hope the scanner isn't malfunctioning.

- **It is now 00:02.**

Time: 23:57

► **Choose one entry from: Cargo Bay**
Then proceed to that entry.

23:51 - Cargo Bay

You stand on the cargo deck and breathe deeply. One of your shoulders feels stiff, but it doesn't seem serious. The cargo hold is dark but the deck is strewn with various damaged pods, satellites, and other salvage. Someone has taken down a wall panel, removed a section of exhaust conduit, and set up a work area. Tools, replacement parts, lights, and everything stand on a huge dark stain. It's almost black, shot through with tiny cracks, and is flaking off. You're pretty sure that's vacuum-desiccated blood.

Just behind it is a collection of dark objects with strange, curved lines, and sharp edges. They're almost translucent. They seem... calming, really. You flake away some of the dried blood with your toe before you finish replacing the section of conduit. With that done, you should be able to restore the ship to full power.

- **It is now 00:09.**

Time: 00:00

- **Choose one entry from: The Hall from the Crew Deck**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:00 - The Hall from the Crew Deck

You wipe your forehead and your hand comes away smeared with blood. The headache is back too. You've learned a lot, but it's not yet clear what exactly happened, and the ship's engines are still offline. You are stumbling down the hallway away from the crew deck when a coughing fit overtakes you. You manage to quell it, but not before hacking up a lot of blood and something that could be a chunk of lung. You just need to rest for a minute. You sit down in the hallway and doze off for a while.

The communications system crackles and you hear, "Cargo Vessel Anastasia, this is the Federal Patrol vessel Damocles. Prepare to be boarded." You open your eyes in a panic.

They know! They know, they know, they know! Something inside you is screaming. You make a shambling dash toward the medical bay. You crash into door frames and bounce off the walls leaving smears of blood wherever you come in contact. You feel the tell-tale shudder of another vessel docking with your ship.

You seal the door to the medical bay, and input your Access code. You program the bay to depressurize and then for the doors to the empty pod bay to open, which will expose this room to space. This is suicide, but for some reason, it doesn't feel like it. The room begins to hiss, your ears pop, and blood begins to ooze from your pores.

You feel something twist and snap in your neck, and you fall to the floor. You can't feel a thing below your jaw. Over the hissing of depressurization, you hear a sickening ripping of flesh and crunching of bone. Finally, the air is gone and everything is silent. The pod door slides open. Something covered in gore darts past your face, across the room, and leaps into the void of space.

You smile. No matter what happens, at least the Anastasia's most precious cargo will be safe.

The End.

Time: 00:02

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Cargo Bay**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:02 - Cargo Bay

You stand on the cargo deck and breathe deeply. One of your shoulders has started to feel stiff, and your knee does too. It's odd, but it doesn't seem that serious. The cargo hold is mostly dark. The deck is strewn with various damaged pods, satellites, manifolds, casings, and other salvage. There is one well-lit area against the forward wall. Someone has taken down a wall panel, removed a section of exhaust conduit, and set up a work area. Tools, replacement parts, and lights, rest on a huge black spot covering the floor. You approach. The dark spot is covered in tiny cracks, and it flakes off at the lightest touch. You're pretty sure it's a vacuum-desiccated pool of blood, probably a whole person's worth of it.

Just beyond the work area is a collection of dark objects with strange, curved lines, and sharp edges. They seem... calming, in some way. You haven't ever been great with your hands, but you think you can manage this repair. You turn your back to the strange salvage and finish replacing the section of conduit with the modified piece lying nearby. You replace the panel and dust your hands off. With that done, you should be able to restore the ship to full power.

Your body feels stiff.

- **It is now 00:14.**

Time: 00:04

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Bridge, Strange Salvage**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:04 - Bridge

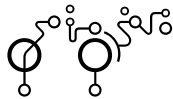
You limp back to the bridge. One of your knees isn't quite cooperating, but it's okay. It's probably the stress of this whole affair. You sit down at your station and prepare to initialize the engines. The controls are locked, and only the captain can unlock them.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see the flash of something darting along the wall. You get up and check, but there's nothing there. It's probably nothing, but it would be nice to get the engines back online, and turn the lights on. You know Esme pretty well, maybe you can guess her access code, go find her, and be the hero.

- **Go to Section 4: Bridge Terminal and find ACCESS.**

00:04 - Strange Salvage

You cross the cargo bay toward the collection of translucent material. It feels both strange and also familiar. You go to one of the pieces and put your palm on it. Warmth fills your body and a strange symbol appears in your mind. It's like it's trying to tell you something.



After some time, the image fades. You try to burn it into your memory. It feels like something is calling to you. It's time to go to the bridge.

- **It is now 00:10.**

Time: 00:09

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Bridge, Strange Salvage**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:09 - Bridge

You limp back to the bridge. One of your knees isn't quite cooperating, but it's okay. Probably the stress of this whole affair. You sit down at your station and prepare to initialize the engines, but the controls are locked. It looks like only the captain can unlock them.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see the flash of something darting along the wall. You get up and check, but there's nothing there. It's probably nothing, but it would be nice to get the engines back, and all the lights on. You know Esme pretty well, maybe you can guess her access code, go find her, and be the hero.

- **Go to Section 4: Bridge Terminal and find **TERMINAL**.**

00:09 - Strange Salvage

You cross the cargo bay, toward the collection of translucent material. It feels both strange and also familiar. You go to one of the pieces and put your palm on it. Warmth fills your body and a strange symbol appears in your mind. It's like it's trying to tell you something.



After some time, the image fades. You try to burn it into your memory. It feels like something is calling to you. It's time to go to the bridge.

- **It is now 00:14.**

Time: 00:10

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Bridge**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:10 - Bridge

You limp back to the bridge. One of your knees isn't quite cooperating, but it's okay. Probably the stress of this whole affair. You sit down at your station and prepare to initialize the engines, but the controls are locked. It looks like only the captain can unlock them.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see the flash of something darting along the wall. You get up and check, but there's nothing there. It's probably nothing, but it would be nice to get the engines back, and all the lights on. You know Esme pretty well, maybe you can guess her access code, go find her, and be the hero.

- **Go to *Section 4: Bridge Terminal* and find **TERMINAL**.**

Time: 00:14

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Bridge, Strange Salvage**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:14 - Bridge

You limp back to the bridge. One of your knees is no longer cooperating. You sniff. Your nose has started to run a bit too. You wipe it with your uniform sleeve, and realize that your nose is actually just bleeding. Probably the stress of this whole affair. You sit down at your station and prepare to initialize the engines, but the controls are locked. It looks like only the captain can unlock them.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see the flash of something darting along the wall. You get up and check, but there's nothing there. It's probably best if you could get the engines back online, and turn all the lights on. You know Esme pretty well, maybe you can guess her access code. Then you can find her, rescue her, and be the hero.

- **Go to Section 4: Bridge Terminal and find COMPUTER.**

00:14 - Strange Salvage

You cross the cargo bay, toward the collection of translucent material. It feels oddly familiar. You walk toward one of the pieces and put your palm on it. Warmth fills your body and a strange symbol appears in your mind. It's like it's trying to tell you something.



After some time, the image fades. You try to burn it into your memory. It feels like something is calling to you. It's time to go to the bridge.

- **It is now 00:17.**

Time: 00:17

- ▶ **Choose one entry from: Bridge, Strange Salvage**
Then proceed to that entry.

00:17 - Bridge

You limp back to the bridge. One of your knees is no longer cooperating. You sniff. Your nose has started to run a bit too. You wipe it with your uniform sleeve, and realize that your nose is actually just bleeding. Probably the stress of this whole affair. You sit down at your station and prepare to initialize the engines, but the controls are locked. It looks like only the captain can unlock them.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see the flash of something darting along the wall. You get up and check, but there's nothing there. It's probably best if you could get the engines back online, and turn all the lights on. You know Esme pretty well, maybe you can guess her access code. Then you can find her, rescue her, and be the hero.

- **Go to Section 4: Bridge Terminal and find COMPUTER.**

Section 3: Crew Deck

There are four rooms on the crew deck. None are marked. Two doors are on the left side of the hall, **301A** and **301B**, **302** is at the end of the hall, and **303** is on the right side.

Select two (2) rooms from the list to visit. when you are done, go to **Leaving the Crew Deck** at the end of the section.

► Choose 2 entries from: **301A**, **301B**, **302**, and **303**. When you have visited both of them, proceed to **Leaving the Crew Deck**.

Room 301A

The door to 301A slides open. It's a narrow space with a bunk on one side, and a combination toilet, shower, and sink area at the back. Have you been in here before? The sheets on the bed are clean, but discolored, probably grease stains. There are numerous technical manuals and one battered old cookbook stacked against the wall. The wall is covered with pictures of people with familiar faces. This one of your mother with...with Embu. No, wait. That's...that's Embu's mother. What an odd mistake.

There is a terminal on the side opposite the bed. You sit. It's still logged in. Embu was in the middle of looking at technical specifications on the ship. There are two documents. One is the Anastasia's ship maintenance log, another is a personal letter for someone named Gil.

In the maintenance log, there's one entry from this morning:

Notes: Exhaust conduit section 26-318 damaged in cargo bay. Directly accessible thru panel on forward wall, port side. Part - Navionics 30008673X - Exhaust Pipe Assembly. Acceptable temporary replacement among recent salvage. Engines shut down from bridge. Must repair b4 restart. Operating on stored power. Beginning repairs 08:06. Estimate: 5 hours.

Yes. That's right. You can remember shutting the engines down...this morning, was it? You find little else of interest for several weeks, just routine inspections and maintenance. You move on to the letter.

Dearest Gil,

I know I said I would be back soon, but I don't know how soon. We discovered something strange in the cloud around LDJ-50. It's like a slab of black glass a kilometer long. It's not like anything I've seen before. I think it's some kind of machine, but it's not Fed tech, and not Rep stuff either. Whatever it is, it seems like it could have been there for hundreds or thousands of years. We grabbed some loose debris and marked the location. Don't tell anyone about this, ok?

This morning, one of the exhaust conduits ruptured in the cargo bay. I've been working near the debris, and it's unnerving. I'm sure it's just my imagination.

Give Sylvie all of my love, and I will update you on my rotation when I know something. Oh and could you water my plant? The entry code to my place is 4tHW4L1.

Love, Embu

You poke around a little more, but there's not much else of interest.

You leave the room. If this was your first room, you may go to one more, otherwise proceed to [Leaving the Crew Deck](#).

Room 301B

The door opens, and the familiar scent of incense hits you. Esme gave that to you as a gift. You look around for your shoes, but you don't see them anywhere. Where could they be? Guess it's bare feet for a little while longer. You pass your bunk, perfectly made, and take a look in the mirror. It's your face, but you hardly recognize it. There is a painting on the wall, and a few pictures of people, some of whom you remember, and some you don't. There's a woman with loose brown curls, dark eyes and a kind smile. You pluck the photo from the wall and flip it over. Simone Anaton. That's your mother's name. You look at the image again. You don't recognize this woman.

You sit down on the bunk and activate your terminal. You log in and check for recently-accessed files, but the only thing that comes up is the flight log. You take a look at the last few entries.

- 17.11, 07:35 - Engines Shut Down. Problem with thermal radiation and exhaust. Awaiting repairs to continue.
- 16.11, 14:35 - Fed Patrol. Questioned about deviation from submitted flight plan. Close call, but Esme talked our way out of inspection.
- 13.11, 05:20 - Salvage. Exciting, unknown materials. Could be worth a lot. Had to go into the buffer zone near LDJ-50. Disabled trace while outside designated salvage area. Hopefully nobody picked us up.
- 08.11, 10:23 - Salvage. Derelict science vessel. Already stripped. Took pods, thruster housing, and a few other replacement parts.
- 06.11, 06:54 - Launch from Odysseus station. Sweep of outer edge of Dorias system, along edge of Fed space. Now that fighting has halted, should be relatively safe. Pickings will not be slim.

You think about that patrol vessel again, and a wave of anxiety passes through you.

You step back out into the hallway. If this was your first room, you may go to one more, otherwise proceed to [Leaving the Crew Deck](#).

Room 302

The room at the end of the hall is wide with a table and chairs in the middle of it. A simple kitchen space and pantry wraps around the back wall. For the first time since you've been awake you realize you are hungry. In fact, you are absolutely starving. You rush to the pantry and throw open the cold storage area. Immediately you seize a half-full can of crushed tomatoes, and practically pour it down your throat. You open a jar of pickles and grab fistfuls which you push into your mouth. You choke down lumpy masses of half-chewed food down. It's hard to imagine when you last tasted something this delicious. You drink the brine and drop the container on the floor. You then reach for a container of liquefied egg product. You pour it straight down your throat. So delicious. You slump down beside the open storage case and let out a sigh. You doze off.

You awaken seated at the table with your head resting on your arms. You feel energized.

You close the cold storage door and leave the mess hall. If this was your first room, you may go to one more, otherwise proceed to [Leaving the Crew Deck](#).

Room 303

This is a somewhat large room. A bed sits off to one side. There's a familiar smell here, very familiar. The room is in disarray, as if someone were in a hurry. The door to the shower area stands ajar at the back of the room. There is a chair that sits in front of a desk with a private terminal. These are the captain's quarters—Esme's quarters. That smell, it's her smell.

You sit down at her desk and activate the terminal.

Access code: _

You don't know Esme's access code. You do know that despite being a brilliant, take-charge person, she can also be absentminded. On a hunch, you look around her desk. You move a picture of a young girl, and beneath it is a small note with *J3nn1f3r* on it. You type it into the terminal and you're in. Esme is not going to like this. On any other ship, you'd be fired, or worse.

The only thing she's accessed on the ship's computer is a copy of *Moby Dick* and the Captain's Log. You read the entries from this mission.

- 17.11, 23:21 - GENERAL ORDER: ABANDON SHIP (auto)
- 17.11, 23:21 - GENERAL WARNING: HAZARDOUS BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION (autogen)
- 17.11, 07:00 - We've blown an exhaust conduit in the cargo bay. I've shut down engines to await repairs. Fortunately it looks like my engineer can make some scrap parts work until we complete our mission and get back to space dock.
- 16.11, 14:00 - A Fed patrol apparently picked up our activity at long range and stopped us to investigate. We explained and they let us pass without incident.
- 13.11, 05:00 - We picked up what we thought was a weak distress signal in the buffer zone near LDJ-50. Despite violating Fed space, we investigated. It was apparently just an EM echo off the debris cloud.
- 08.11 10:00 - We've come across a derelict old BER86 research craft. It was already pretty picked-over, but there were some useful bits, so we grabbed those. Details can be found in the cargo bay inventory.
- 06.11 07:00 - We're embarking from Odysseus Station on a salvage mission in the Dorias system. You can find details in the submitted flight plan.

You look around the room for a bit longer, before stepping back out into the hallway. If this was your first room, you may go to one more, otherwise proceed to **Leaving the Crew Deck**.

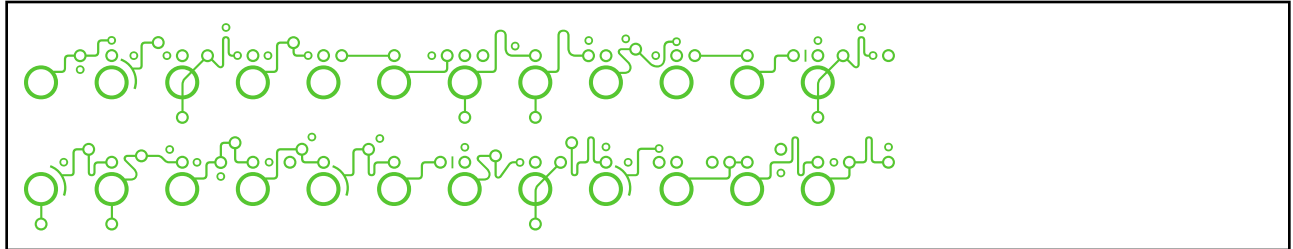
Leaving the Crew Deck

Increment the time you came on deck by ten minutes (:10) and go to the appropriate time in the previous section.

Section 4: Bridge Terminal

COMPUTER

You activate the captain's station and the following appears on screen:



You squeeze your eyes closed and when you open them the screen reads:

Level 3 Biohazard Precautions are in place.
Access code: _

"Here goes nothing," you whisper.

- Type `+3n3brus` ► **Computer01**
- Type `4tHW4L1` ► **Computer02**
- Type `J3nn1f3r` ► **Computer03**
- Type `5+3D'5` ► **Computer04**
- None of these seem right. ► **Computer05**

Computer01

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

User not authorized. Please enter the Access code of a user with at least Level 3 authorization.
Access code: _

A drop of blood falls and splatters on the screen. You wipe it away. You stare at the screen for a while, but nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

Engines online.
Autopilot engaged.
Please enter a trajectory: _

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

Computer02

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

User not authorized. Please enter the Access code of a user with at least Level 3 authorization.
Access code: _

A drop of blood falls and splatters on the screen. You wipe it away. You stare at the screen for a while, but nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

Engines online.
Autopilot engaged.
Please enter a trajectory: _

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.


- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

Computer03

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

Computer04


You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
Access code not recognized.  
Access code: _
```

A drop of blood falls and splatters on the screen. You wipe it away. You stare at the screen for a while, but nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and


remember 

Computer05

A drop of blood falls and splatters on the screen. You wipe it away. You stare at the screen for a while, but nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

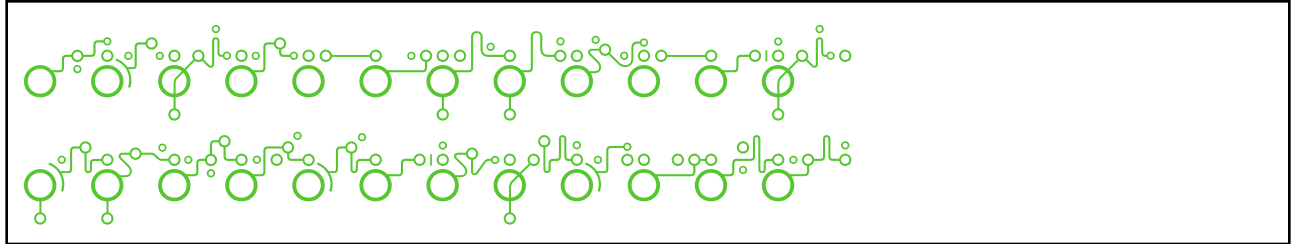
A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

TERMINAL

You activate the captain's station and the following appears on screen:



You squeeze your eyes closed and when you open them the screen reads:

Level 3 Biohazard Precautions are in place.
Access code: _

"Here goes nothing," you whisper.

- **Type +3n3brus** ► **Terminal01**
- **Type 4tHW4L1** ► **Terminal02**
- **Type J3nn1f3r** ► **Terminal03**
- **Type 5+3D'5** ► **Terminal04**
- **None of these seem right.** ► **Terminal05**

Terminal01

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
User not authorized. Please enter the Access code of a user with at least Level
3 authorization.
Access code: _
```

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.
Autopilot engaged.
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

Terminal02


You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
User not authorized. Please enter the Access code of a user with at least Level
3 authorization.
Access code: _
```

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.
Autopilot engaged.
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory*

and remember 

Terminal03

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind: ○ | It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and remember ○ |

Terminal04

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
Access code not recognized.  
Access code: _
```

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and


remember 

Terminal05

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

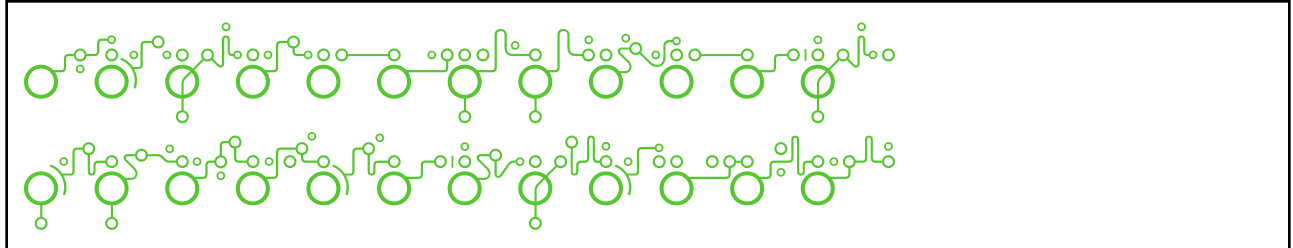
A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

ACCESS

You activate the captain's station and the following appears on screen:



You squeeze your eyes closed and when you open them the screen reads:

Level 3 Biohazard Precautions are in place.
Access code: _

"Here goes nothing," you whisper.

- Type *+3n3brus* ► **Access01**
- Type *4tHW4L1* ► **Access02**
- Type *J3nn1f3r* ► **Access03**
- Type *5+3D'5* ► **Access04**
- None of these seem right. ► **Access05**

Access01


You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

User not authorized. Please enter the Access code of a user with at least Level 3 authorization.
Access code: _

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

Engines online.
Autopilot engaged.
Please enter a trajectory: _

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

Access02


You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

User not authorized. Please enter the Access code of a user with at least Level 3 authorization.
Access code: _

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

Engines online.
Autopilot engaged.
Please enter a trajectory: _

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory*

and remember 

Access03

You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind: ○ | It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and remember ○ |

Access04


You enter the code and wait. The screen shows:

```
Access code not recognized.  
Access code: _
```

A drop of blood splatters on the screen. You sniff. Your nose is bleeding. Using the sleeve of your uniform, you wipe the screen and then stare at the words. Nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind:  It somehow feels very important.

- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY** in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and

remember 

Access05

You stare at the words on the screen, but nothing comes to you. You sigh and put your head down and try to think of what to do next.

You doze off for just a bit. And when you awaken, you find that the screen shows:

```
Engines online.  
Autopilot engaged.  
Please enter a trajectory: _
```

A strange symbol appears in your mind: ○ | It somehow feels very important.

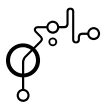
- Go to the first entry, **ENTER TRAJECTORY**, in *Section 5: Enter Trajectory* and remember ○ |

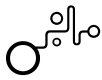
Section 5: Enter Trajectory

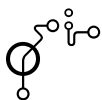
ENTER TRAJECTORY

You squint at the terminal's screen studying the letters and numbers. Strange. They barely make sense to you. You try to type in a trajectory, but it's difficult translate what's in your mind to the keyboard. You find, however, that if you think in terms of these strange symbols, you know just where you want to go.

Azimuth
(second symbol)


0.00 


1.05 

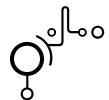
3.14 

5.23 

Altitude
(third symbol)

0.00 

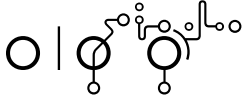
1.57 

1.71 

Then you realize something. The symbols combine! It makes an odd kind of sense to you now. You realize that if you take that previous symbol, and place it first, choose the symbol for the Azimuth and place it second, and finally add the symbol for the Altitude... That will be the trajectory you want.

You know the three symbols. You burn them into your memory, and then you enter the trajectory hoping nothing gets lost in translation.

- **Choose a trajectory by combining the previous symbol, the symbol for Azimuth, and finally the symbol for Altitude. Find that combination in the heading of one of the following entries.**



Your fingers translate those symbols to a trajectory the computer can understand almost without thought. The engines hum as they come alive. The ship rotates and begins to move. The stars in the window turn into long streaks as you head to your destination. The vessel. Somehow that vessel feels more like home than this one does.

Something isn't quite right. Your trajectory is taking you near LDJ-50, but not directly toward it. You halt the ship and issue a correction. It's easy enough to do now that you can see the target on sensors.

You reach the cloud near LDJ-50. The excess matter around you collapses your ship's warp bubble, and forces you to pilot the ship the last hundred thousand meters or so with thrusters.

You fly dodging debris until eventually you see the beacon appear on the scanner. Unfortunately, at the far edge of your scanner you see something else too: another ship. It's also moving toward the beacon.

You hail the ship.

"To the approaching craft. This is the Anastasia. We have claimed this salvage."

"Anastasia, this is The Chi Jih. We see your beacon, but it appears to us that you have abandoned this site. We have as much claim as you."

"Chi Jih, perhaps we can reach an agreement."

"We're listening."

"This vessel is too large for either of us to salvage properly today. If you are willing, we can begin by dividing a number of salvage items equally between us, and settle the matter of the large object later. Let us start with a number of organic, disc-like structures located in and around the large object. We have collected several, and they appear to have a biomolecular structure like nothing known. We sold the one at Odysseus station for a good sum, in fact, that's why we've returned despite not being ready to haul away the big fella here." You hope you didn't oversell it.

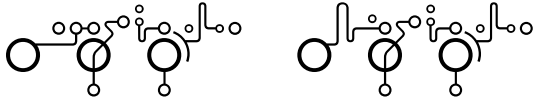
"Okay, Anastasia. We will begin by collecting these items together. But, the large structure goes with whoever can tow it away first."

"Fair enough."

The ships meet beside the hulking dark monolith. You watch them begin to collect the disks. Your giggling turns into a fit of coughing up blood. You've not got long left to live, but it doesn't matter.

You feel something writhe inside of you. Soon it will leave to go and create a fresh puppet. And not long after that, the others will make puppets of their own. And then your people will control both vessels.

The End.



Your fingers translate those symbols to a trajectory the computer can understand almost without effort. The engines come alive, and the ship rotates and begins to move. The stars turn into long streaks. You are traveling back to your destination: the vessel. Somehow that vessel feels more like home than this one does.

Something isn't quite right. Your trajectory is taking you near LDJ-50, but not directly to it. You halt the ship and issue a correction. It's easy enough to do now that you can see the destination on sensors.

When you reach the cloud around LDJ-50, dust and debris collapses your ship's warp bubble, forcing you to pilot the ship the last hundred thousand meters or so using thrusters.

Beads of blood form on your skin. You see the beacon on the scanner along with something else: another ship. Someone is already salvaging.

How long have they been here?

You hail them.

"This is the salvage vessel Anastasia. We have claimed this site."

"Anastasia, this is The Chi Jih. It appears to us that you have abandoned this salvage. We claim it under interstellar law. Be warned, we are prepared to defend it."

You wait. After several minutes the Chi Jih opens communications again. You hear a familiar chittering. Well, it feels familiar, but when you think about it, you can't remember ever having heard anything like it before.

"Are you like me?" you ask, unsure of what it is that you're asking.

"Yes. We are in control of this ship."

You smile. You feel a twinge in your neck, and you tumble limply forward, slumped over the console. You hear the wet sound of flesh ripping and sinew snapping, then a dark shape with many legs strides past you, dripping gore.

You are filled with a sense of accomplishment, and then everything goes dark.

The End.



The ship shudders as the engines come alive. The stars in the window stretch around the Anastasia as you slide through space.

You hang your head and doze off. When you awaken, the biohazard warning has been disengaged.

You shiver. You might have a mild fever, but it's probably nothing to worry about. You wait. Finally, the ship shudders and the stars compress back into points as the warp bubble collapses. There's generally too much traffic around Odysseus station to get very close.

"Odysseus Station, this is PCV1250078 Anastasia inbound, request docking."

"Anastasia, you are cleared to dock at port 12. Release control, and we will guide you in. An inspector will meet you at the dock."

"Roger Odysseus Station."

The station takes control until the ship settles into her designated docking port, and the door slides open. A woman with a grey uniform steps on board. She's looking at her inspection pad. "I see you have a crew of three aboard..." She pauses and looks up at you. "...Mr. Anaton?"

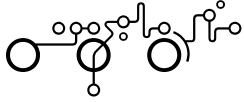
You smile. "Please, call me Neil. Let me give you the tour. The Cargo hold is this direction. I assume you want to start there."

"That would be fine." She takes a step in front of you and you walk toward the cargo bay. She's engrossed in her checklist but then she slows for a second after passing by a small bloody smear on a bulkhead.

You strike while she's distracted. You hammer one fist hard against her temple. She stumbles forward and falls to the ground, face-first.

There's a sharp twinge in your neck, and you collapse in a heap over the top of her. You are unable to move or feel your limbs. A sickening tearing sound comes from behind you. You should be scared, but you aren't. Then a large spider-like creature steps over your head and thrusts its tail into the base of the inspector's skull. You lay there watching helplessly as it eats her. A mass of human flesh begins to grow around the creature's abdomen. The last thing that passes through your mind is shock at just how fast the mass is growing.

The End.



The ship shudders as the engines come alive. The stars in the window stretch around the Anastasia as you slide forward through space.

You hang your head and doze off. When you awaken, the biohazard warning has been disengaged.

Was this room always so bright? You wipe your eyes. Your hand comes away covered in blood. The headache is back too. You sigh, and stumble over to the captain's station. You dim the lights and check the scanner. The stars compress back into points and the Anastasia shudders as the warp bubble around the ship collapses due to the traffic around Odysseus station.

You reach for the console. Beads of blood cover the back of your hand.

"Odysseus Station, this is PCV1250078 Anastasia inbound, request docking."

"Anastasia, you are cleared to dock at port 12. Release control, and we will guide you in. An inspector will meet you at the dock."

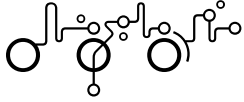
"Roger Odysseus Station."

You look at your reflection in the panel and see a grim visage looking back at you. There is no way that an inspector is going to let you onto the station looking like this. And, a few steps into the ship, and they're going to know something is wrong. You aren't completely sure why, but you know you can't have that. You stop at the weapons locker on your way to the air lock.

The ship settles into her designated docking port, and the door slides open. A woman with a grey uniform steps on board while looking at her pad. "I see you have a crew of three aboard..." She looks up and her eyes go wide. You shoot her, and she falls to the floor. Alarms on the station begin blaring.

There's a sharp twinge in your neck. You collapse in a heap, unable to move or feel anything. Some many-limbed thing tears from your body and darts into the space station just in time clear the hatch. You lie there staring into the inspector's lifeless eyes until everything goes dark.

The End.



The ship shudders as the engines come alive. The stars in the window stretch around the Anastasia as you slide forward through space.

You hang your head and doze off. When you awaken, the biohazard warning has been disengaged.

Was this room always so bright? You wipe your eyes. Your hand comes away covered in blood. The headache is back too. You sigh, and stumble over to the captain's station. You dim the lights and check the scanner. Odysseus station is in front of you, and between you and it there's a Fed patrol ship. The Anastasia shudders as the warp bubble around the ship collapses and the stars compress back into points.

Your comms crackle and then you hear, "Cargo Vessel Anastasia, this is the Federal Patrol vessel Damocles. Disengage your engines or you will be fired upon."

They know! They know, they know, they know! Something inside you is screaming. You make a shambling dash toward the medical bay, crashing into door frames and bouncing off the walls leaving smears of blood whenever you come in contact.

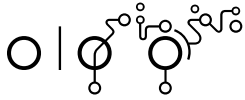
"This is your last warning, Anastasia. Disengage your engines immediately."

You seal the medical bay. You type in your access code, which now just appear as some strange symbols in your mind. You set the bay to depressurize and for the doors to the empty pod bay to open. That will expose the medical bay to space. The room is filled with hissing and your body is racked with pain.

There's a sharp twinge in your neck, and you fall to the floor, you no longer feel a thing below your jaw. Over the hiss, you hear a sickening ripping of flesh and breaking of bones until the air is gone and everything goes silent. The pod door slides open. You see something covered in gore dart across the room and leap into the void of space.

Even if the Anastasia is destroyed, its most precious cargo will be spared.

The End.



Your fingers translate those symbols into a trajectory the computer can understand almost without effort on your part. The engines hum as they come alive. The ship rotates and begins to move. The stars in the window turn into long streaks as you head back to your destination: the dark structure. Somehow it feels more like home than the Anastasia one does.

You approach the cloud surrounding LDJ-50. The excess matter in the region collapses your ship's warp bubble, forcing you to pilot the ship the last hundred thousand meters or so using thrusters.

You deftly dodge debris until you see the beacon on the scanner. Its signal is purposely weak so it can only be picked up by someone nearby. You continue.

You see the dark hulk outside the window. You maneuver the ship until the cargo bay is facing the vessel and you are within on a few meters from its hull. You set the autopilot to hold a position next to the massive structure, and you go to the cargo bay. You slip into a space suit. As you do, you leave streaks of blood all over it. Even the gentle scraping of the suit against your skin is enough to tear open small wounds. You won't have long, but there should be enough time.

You seal the door, depressurize the cargo bay, and open the bay doors wide. You strap yourself into the seat on the interior crane arm and slide forward through the doors and out into open space. You use the claw to bat some debris away, and then deftly grip a tiny ridge on the side of the otherwise perfectly smooth monolith. You move it aside, revealing a hole that you could just barely put a fist into. Then, you rotate the claw end out of the way and bring the laser cutter online. You aim it directly into the port and activate it. You wait and drift into unconsciousness.

You are awakened by chest spasms that turn into a coughing fit. When you're done, the inside of your helmet is splattered with blood.

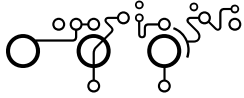
Not much time left.

The laser is still running. It's hard to say how long it has been going. You crawl back down the crane and climb off so that you are standing at the edge of the ship's gravity inside the cargo bay. Something begins to glow inside the massive structure. It looks like a blue flame inside a block of obsidian.

You smile. You've done it. There's a sharp twinge in your neck and you go limp falling forward out of the gravity of the ship and drifting vaguely toward the glow. You hear your flesh ripping inside the suit, and then the suit rips open catapulting your useless husk back into the ship. You catch a glimpse of something that looks like a spider the size of a dog, but with a spiked tail. It leaps toward that ship through the vacuum of space.

You smile to yourself.

The End.



Your fingers translate those symbols into a trajectory almost without effort on your part. The engines hum as they come alive. The ship rotates and begins to move. The stars in the window turn into long streaks as you head back to your destination: the dark structure. Somehow it feels more like home than the Anastasia one does.

You approach the cloud around LDJ-50. The excess matter in around you collapses your ship's warp bubble, forcing you to pilot the ship the last hundred thousand meters or so using thrusters. You deftly dodge debris until you see the beacon on the scanner. Its signal is purposely weak so it can only be picked up by someone nearby. You continue. Unfortunately, at the far edge of your scanner you see something else: another ship, and it's moving toward your beacon too.

You hail the ship.

"To the approaching craft. This is the Anastasia. We have claimed this salvage."

"Anastasia, this is The Chi Jih. We see your beacon, but it appears to us that you have abandoned this site. We have as much claim as you."

"Chi Jih, perhaps we can reach an agreement."

"We're listening."

"This vessel is too large for either of us to salvage properly today. If you are willing, we can begin by dividing a number of salvage items equally between us, and settle the matter of the large object later. Let us start with a number of organic, disc-like structures located in and around the large object. We have collected several, and they appear to have a biomolecular structure like nothing known. We sold the one at Odysseus station for a good sum, in fact, that's why we've returned despite not being ready to haul away the big fella here." You hope you didn't oversell it.

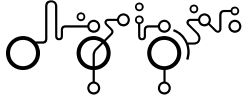
"Okay, Anastasia. We will begin by collecting these items together. But, the large structure goes with whoever can tow it away first."

"Fair enough."

The ships meet beside the hulking dark monolith. You watch them begin to collect the disks. Your giggling turns into a fit of coughing up blood. You've not got long left to live, but it doesn't matter.

You feel something writhe inside of you. Soon it will leave to go and create a fresh puppet. And not long after that, the others will make puppets of their own. And then your people will control both vessels.

The End.



Your fingers translate those symbols to a trajectory almost without effort on your part. The engines hum as they come alive. The ship rotates and begins to move. The stars in the window turn into long streaks as you head back to your destination: the dark structure. Somehow it feels more like home than the Anastasia one does.

When you reach the cloud around LDJ-50, dust and debris collapses your ship's warp bubble, forcing you to pilot the ship the last hundred thousand meters or so using thrusters.

Beads of blood form on your skin. You see the beacon on the scanner along with something else: another ship. Someone is already salvaging.

How long have they been here?

You hail them.

"This is the salvage vessel Anastasia. We have claimed this site."

"Anastasia, this is The Chi Jih. It appears to us that you have abandoned this salvage. We claim it under interstellar law. Be warned, we are prepared to defend it."

You wait. After several minutes the Chi Jih opens communications again. You hear a familiar chittering. Well, it feels familiar, but when you think about it, you can't remember ever having heard anything like it before.

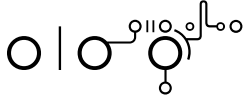
"Are you like me?" you ask, unsure of what it is that you're asking.

"Yes. We are in control of this ship."

You smile. You feel a twinge in your neck, and you tumble limply forward, slumped over the console. You hear the wet sound of flesh ripping and sinew snapping, then a dark shape with many legs strides past you, dripping gore.

You are filled with a sense of accomplishment, and then everything goes dark.

The End.



You enter the trajectory, and the ship rumbles to life. It turns, folds itself into a warp bubble and barely seems to move before catching the other pod. It's transmitting a distress call.

Esme's on that escape pod, you think.

You approach, and turn the Anastasia so that you can grab the escape pod with one of the exterior salvage arms. The arm reaches out, grabs it and then brings it up to the docking port with delicate precision.

The port connects with the pod. You run down the hall to greet her. The pod door slides open and you see Esme's face. You smile, but she just stares at you in horror. She's covered in blood, and at her feet is someone else. It looks like...it's another you, but badly injured. Their head is wrapped in bandages, and one arm is missing from the elbow down.

Esme grabs a pair of medical scissors and charges toward you. There's a plasma pistol in your hand. *How did that get there? I never picked up a gun.*

Without thinking, you fire at her, and she collapses at your feet. She's not dead, but she won't last long. You step over her to get to the other Neil. You shoot him several times.

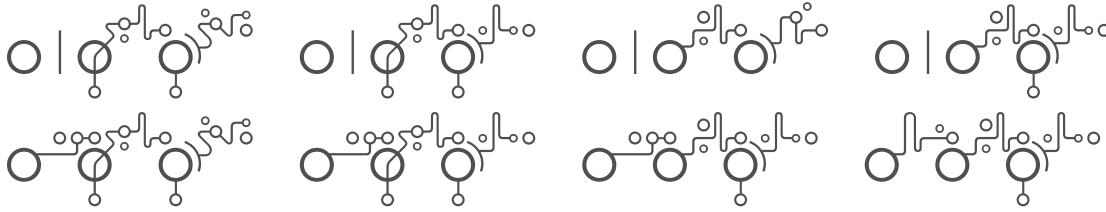
You turn back around to find the woman you love, lying on the floor. There's a sharp twinge in your neck and you collapse. Your ears are filled with the wet sound of raw flesh tearing and sinew popping. You can't move, so you just watch. A dark, spider-like creature the size of a dog strides into view. It crawls on top of Esme and impales her in the neck.

The two of you will be together, even if it is just inside that creature's mind.

You die smiling.

The End.

Awakening Aboard the Anastasia by Jeremy Johnson



Your fingers glide effortlessly over the controls while you concentrate on the symbols. The ship shudders as the engines come alive. The stars in the window rotate slowly and then they stretch around your ship as you slide through space.

You hang your head and doze off. When you awaken, you notice that the biohazard warning has been disengaged.

Was this room always so bright? You wipe your eyes. Your hand comes away covered in blood. The headache is back too. You sigh, and stumble over to the captain's station. You dim the lights and check the scanner. You're no longer sure what you're looking for out here, but you see something you are definitely not looking for, a Fed patrol ship. The Anastasia shudders as warp bubble around your ship collapses. The stars condense back into points.

Your comms crackle and then you hear, "Cargo Vessel Anastasia, this is the Federal Patrol vessel Damocles. Disengage your engines and prepare to be boarded. If you do not disengage, you will be fired upon."

They know! They know, they know, they know! Something inside you is screaming. You stand up and make a shambling dash toward the medical bay. You crash into door frames and bounce off the walls leaving smears of blood wherever you come in contact.

"This is your last warning, Anastasia. Disengage your engines immediately."

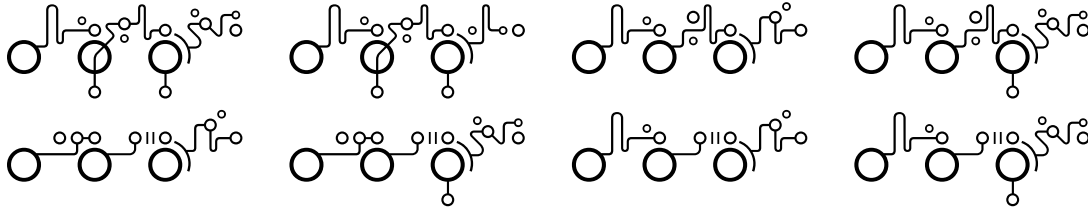
You seal the door to the medical bay, and input your Access code. You program the bay to depressurize and then for the doors to the empty pod bay to open, which will expose this room to space. This is suicide, but for some reason, it doesn't feel like it. The room begins to hiss, your ears pop, and blood begins to ooze from your pores.

You feel something twist and snap in your neck, and you fall to the floor. You can't feel a thing below your jaw. Over the hissing of depressurization, you hear a sickening ripping of flesh and crunching of bone. Finally, the air is gone and everything is silent. The pod door slides open. Something covered in gore darts past your face, across the room, and leaps into the void of space.

You hope it will be safe in the darkness. Before you black out, you see the flash of weapon fire.

The End.

Awakening Aboard the Anastasia by Jeremy Johnson



Your fingers glide effortlessly over the controls while you concentrate on the symbols. The ship shudders as the engines come alive. The stars in the window rotate slowly and then they stretch as the Anastasia slides through space.

You doze off. When you awaken, you find the biohazard warning has been disengaged.

Was this room always so bright? You wipe your eyes. Your hand comes away covered in blood. The headache is back too. You sigh, and stumble over to the captain's station. You dim the lights and check the scanner. Nothing. No wait. There is something. A ship, but it's not running a transponder. It's a raider.

After a few seconds, you're close enough that your proximity to one another drops you both out of warp. It easily catches you. Raider ships tend to have massive thrusters for just this reason.

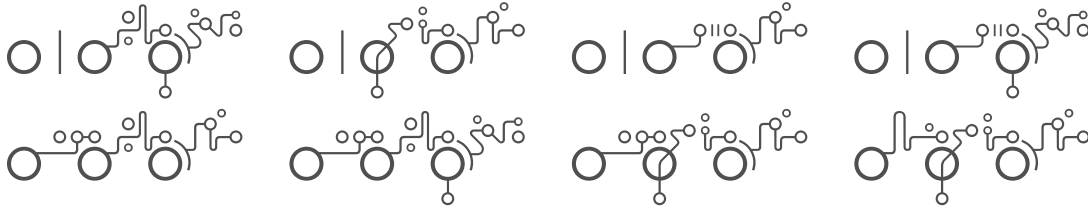
They give your ship a broadside of anchoring cables. The Anastasia shudders. She's been captured.

You start giggling, and soon it turns into a full-bellied, gurgling laugh. Then, there's a twinge in your neck, and you fall to the floor, paralyzed. Something shifts inside your body, wrenching and tearing its way out. There's a sickening tearing sound and your head shifts around against the floor for a few moments. You can see from the corner of your eye, a large, spider-like shape with a long tail emerging from a bloody gash in your body. It clambers up the wall and into a vent.

A few seconds later, someone in a black space suit enters the bridge holding a pulse rifle. The person moves forward and then stops when they see you. You give the person a bloody smile and you can see their eyes go wide behind the glass of the helmet. A dark shape drops down from the vent behind them.

The End.

Awakening Aboard the Anastasia by Jeremy Johnson



Your fingers glide over the controls while you concentrate on the symbols. The ship shudders as the engines come alive. The stars in the window rotate slowly and then they stretch as your ship slides through space.

You hang your head and doze off. When you awaken, you notice that the biohazard warning has been disengaged.

Was this room always so bright? You wipe your eyes. Your hand comes away covered in blood. The headache is back too. You sigh, and stumble over to the captain's station. You dim the lights and check the scanner. Nothing.

This can't be right. You have failed. You're not sure what you've failed, but you feel a deep sense of shame and guilt. You stare at the monitors a while longer. Surely, what you're looking for is out here. Something stares back at you from the screen, a reflection, but not yours.

You shut down the engines. For all you know, you're heading away from the important thing, and if you're going to survive and get back to your people, you'd going to need to find someone new.

Wait, what?

You shake your head. You don't feel hot, but you are sweating. Then you notice that the dark spots forming on your suit are a deep red.

You activate a distress beacon and lie down on the floor.

There's a sharp twinge in your neck, and you hear the sickening sound of tearing flesh, but you don't feel a thing. A spidery form the size of a dog strides past your face. It is dripping gore. You watch it stalk down the hallway.

You lie on the floor unable to move until the world fades.

The End.

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