

Vagueness of a particular objective. That, amongst other concerns, was the cause of the foul mood. A mission? A mission to install a *mission*? What? A Captain—whom we shall call 'Cadbury'—knew not, as his final preparations were undertaken to undock from the Regellian out base in Orion's Nebula and depart aboard the *Ydryl*. A new crew awaited, encased safely inside the hull of this newly constructed and more than sufficiently armed and manoeuvrable ship of the line. A predominantly Regellian ship of the vast, expansionary Orion Alliance... it would also have speed.

“Such short notice...”

And words equatable only in part to 'Swine' or 'Bastard' were muttered through sharp fang in the general direction of a Supreme Commander, despite its non-presence.

A short while ago in most perceptions of the passing of “time,” it had been threatened by Commander Zogby-Poll that Captain Cadbury be eaten by creatures of a larger and more predatory size than he, for the near ruination of certain diplomatic relations in and around the vicinity of Betelgeuse during an unauthorised excursion to there. For the mission that now lay ahead, it had been mandated clearly to not make such detours again, or suffer directly the consequences of 'extreme indiscretion.'

Hmm.

“Why, I ought to sodding well abrogate! *Casus Belli*! I ought to f...” his communicator cut him off mid-sentence with sounds, reporting to him of a tragedy aboard the *Ydryl*. New crew members already aboard, Spec-Ops technician Whisper67, Empathic Chief Medical Officer Antar, and Navigation Officer Sky(floating) have discovered the body of their Communications Officer, who has apparently zapped himself in the cranial mass. “*What?* Another suicide? Are you sure?” It would be the 27,000th reported across the Orion Alliance in the spacing of one Regellian monthhood.

“Yes, Captain. He's evaporated himself with a standard issue Hyper-Vortex Proton Disintegrator in a small library in his quarters. There is not much of a remainder for Antar to autopsy, but the general consensus among us so far is that this is a suicide. We're almost certain that it is.” informed Skyfloating. “He was the first on board and we have not been able to find a trace of any assailant through any available detection apparatus, only traces Visible_Villain left before he took his own life.” Sky's accent was carefully attenuated so the 70% Regellian Captain could properly understand his dialect, which was similar in nature but also very different at times.

“Thank you. I trust your judgement. Hold all non-crucial investigation until the rest of the crew is aboard. I'll be joining you all shortly.”

“*Yessir.*”

Would the death of a crewman before even undocking cause to further ill-omen this already far too egregious mission? he wondered to himself. And then he wandered back to his original forebodings.

“You've been assigned a new crew since most of your last were eaten as punishment for *your* own mistakes. Prepare. Board. Undock, then await further instruction” is all command had told him. But they forgot to say “*And brace yourselves!*”