

ALTERNITY "THE LIGHTHOUSE" SESSION SUMMARY

3/14/2010

Bruce comes in from Dallas to take part in the game. He has a snazzy new haircut and various complicated semiconductor related complaints. We all taunt him in good humor.

The Characters

A Team

- Captain Ken Takashi, the Concord Star Force commander of the Lighthouse - Ernest
- Taveer, the mechalus engineer - Bruce
- Haggernak, the weren (Wookiee) Concord Administrator (cop) – Tim
- Rokk Tressor, station greeter and CIB agent – Chris
- Martin St. John, station pilot - Patrick

B Team

- Gerard Pepin, Borealin ambassador (liberal professor) – Tim
- Markus Oroszlan, warlion bartender of the Corner and former shock trooper – Ernest
- Lambert Fulson, Rignunmor trader
- Ten-zil Kem – Void*Corp (Microsoft) ambassador – Chris
- Lenny the T'sa (lizard on meth) ambassador - Patrick

The *Lighthouse* is in the kroath- (and Thuldan-) infested Vieron system. Please note that "dhros" are cute space cat/bunny creatures that live in the station's air ducts after a crating mishap. They thrive despite Martin St. John's attempts to exterminate or sterilize them, and Captain Takashi's attempts at immortalizing them in the new Grid art form of the "LOLdhros". That will become important later.

Spies Like Us

Lighthouse pilot *Martin St. John* is sitting in a 23rd century soda shop drinking a sarsaparilla when he notices two men in suits giving him the hairy eyeball. He checks them out casually; they have sensor gauntlets and dark glasses. He listens to their conversation and hears them say, "Do you think he suspects us?"

"No, you're being paranoid - once the eggs in his drink get into him he won't have any more suspicions!" St. John blanches and tries to call security on his communicator, but only hears a foreign language. He casually gets up and wanders out of the shop carrying the drink; the men leap up to follow and one pulls a mass pistol. He tries to draw his stutter pistol but it's not there – he can't remember why. He runs and finds himself fleeing through a dark warehouse type area. He hears the voices of men trying to cut him off through the shelves. He finds a garbage bin to hide in but a man in black comes out of the trash

to strangle him, emitting a bizarre scream that sounds like his alarm clock. He awakens in his bunk to find that his sheets are wrapped tightly around his neck and that he is sporting a huge erection.

Captain Takashi is drinking Kyoto Uji tea and doing his morning T'ai Chi exercises. Klaus *Otterschmidt*, Concord auditor, bursts in. "I've found your spy! I have proof here on this data crystal!" Takashi continues his tai chi and says "Thanks, I'll make sure and review it."

"No, you need to look at it now! It's a member of your staff!"

"Unlikely," says the Captain.

"You have an unhealthy attachment to your crew. But we're not here to discuss your shortcomings."

The Captain pops in the data crystal and it shows Martin St. John bringing orphans to work. "Yes, that's the definition of "Bring Your Orphan To Work Day," says the Captain.

Otterschmidt declares this has to be investigated, that the station is at risk, that he can remove the Captain from his position, et cetera. The Captain thanks him for bringing this to his attention and bids him a good day.

"You're not going to do anything?"

"I'll get right on it."

"We'll see about that!" He stalks out.

St. John comes out of his quarters and his uniform's very tight around his neck. Now he can't breathe for a long minute! He tries to head to the sickbay, but Otterschmidt and three marines are on the elevator and take him into custody for spying. He protests his innocence but goes with them.

The Vieron Chamber of Commerce Welcomes You

Meanwhile, *Markus Oroszlan*, *Lambert Fulson*, *Ten-zil Kem*, Kem's assistant *Shane*, *Ambassador Pepin*, and *Lenny* are headed down to Tavira on Corazon del Fuego to sell arms. The Thuldian engineer *Kiera Armitage* approaches Markus and says that she wants to come down too. "It might be dangerous," says Markus.

"I'm a Thuldian! I laugh at danger. And they don't need us on station any more, the missiles are well integrated now. We'll probably be reassigned soon."

Markus grunts and shrugs.

"Well don't get upset or anything!" huffs Armitage.

Once she boards, the men hypothesize about what she's upset about to the warlion. "She wanted you to want her to come along!" "No, she wanted you to want her to stay on the station!" "No, she needs more frequent sex!" Markus begins growling under his breath and the others scatter.

We board up and head down. The pilot, *Number Six*, takes the *Golden Idea* down to the planet. A 400m across and 100m high dome covers the settlement, protecting it from the harsh planetary environment. Three of its four airlocks have been welded shut. The ship slips into the docking bay while large weapons track its progress.

"Where's the cantina, space bitches!?" says Ten-zil as he marches down the gangplank. Commodore Pfender, who is there to greet them, ignores the outburst. Her legionnaires form a lovely martial line for the PCs to walk by. She shows Pepin, Lenny, and Kem to the visitor's center. It is a relic from the days

when they thought Old Space powers would be coming to court/invest in the colony. 1960's style pictures line the walls proclaiming the merits of "Industry!"

"I'm really not high enough to deal with this," thinks Pepin. The mayor of the town, Isaac Levy, is there to speak with the three ambassadors. He is a hugely muscled gill-bearing mutant. Ten-zil tells the mayor that they can evacuate anyone that needs to go. He says that most people don't want to go anywhere, but there may be some takers.

Pepin, Lenny, and Ten-zil Kem speak with the mayor. Pepin proposes an alliance with the Boralins. "Science!" he declares. The mayor likes the cut of his jib. Lenny goes on a tour and sees the local zoo, which has bears, gazelles, snails, and other scarily prosaic animals, dating back to the original Sothvek colony. "If these bears adapt to the local gravity, no picnic basket would ever be safe again," he contemplates.

Ten-zil asks for a price menu of local ore, and asks for data on the kroath. He also inquires about any odd activity on the station. The mayor treats him to a history lesson on the involved history of "Six Flags over Vieron", where it was first Sothvek, then Alitarian/Thuldans, then independent, now kinda Thuldans... Ten-zil offers up Shane to interview anyone who has had kroath interaction for "weird behavior." The mayor says that mining is at a virtual standstill because of the kroath menace. He also asks for access to their computer network, which the naïve mayor allows him. Ten-zil finds some traces of hacking and calls up Taveer to help out. They determine that the Thuldans have been info-tapping the network looking for any internal spies. They rig the system to pass on any alerts to themselves as well.

Pfender talks with Markus and Fulson. She asks if they can come talk to her armorer down on the ground level – it's 2.8 g's down there, which the heavily muscled Markus is OK with but Fulson needs a Rascal scooter to drive to be able to move around. While there, down in the small shopping district, they see a woman – unenhanced to all appearances – babbling to herself. Markus inquires about the crazy homeless lady. Commodore Pfender says, "She's only been here about a year..."

The woman runs at Markus and grabs him and says "It's coming! It's horrible! We'll all die!"

Markus tells her, "Don't worry about the kroath. We'll bomb them back into the stone age, or whatever it is that their technology is based on. The ooze age maybe?" He looks over at Lambert Fulson for validation, but the trader is lolling his head in his Rascal like he's Steven Hawking due to the high gravity.

"It's not the kroath! It's a big tentacle smoke monster! It follows me everywhere!" Legionnaires restrain her.

At the armorer, we cut a deal of "ore for guns" and head back out. The crazy lady is back and is talking to her red glowing crystal. "Oh, we have to check this out," says Markus. As they approach, she begins to scream. Lambert Fulson tries to turn on the charm and talk her down, but she starts shooting lightning from her eyes at him! He zooms away on his Rascal, juking back and forth to avoid electrocution. She jumps into the air and flies down an alley!

"Well that is unusual," thinks Markus. He runs after her, yelling "Wait! I am intrigued by your ideas and would like to subscribe to your newsletter!" She has landed in the alley and some other homeless lady tries to comfort her, and gets electrofried for her trouble. Markus tries to give her a simmer-down shot

to the solar plexus but just breaks his hand against her psychic shield. Lambert kicks the Rascal into high gear and zips in to the alley.

Ten-zil Kem, who is elbow deep in the computers, sees the security alert, and brings up a local camera. He sees lightning zapping from what the locals refer to as “Blowjob Alley,” and sees Fulson’s scooter careening into it. “Security alert on level three! Scramble all elevators! Code CX4!” Kem, Lenny, and Pepin run for the elevators to go help out.

Markus tries to talk to her. “Wait lady, we don’t want any trouble. We want to talk about the smoke tentacle monster you told us about!” She fires off a lightning bolt that just grazes him and sets all his hair on end (and as a warlion, he has a lot of hair). “I SAID, BITCH BE COOL!” he roars.

“Listen babe, you really need to calm down and come over here and sit in my lap.” Fulson oozes Jersey Shore charm in an attempt to soothe the psycho psychic.

The elevator arrives. Pepin rushes out and the high gravity kicks in on is fragile frame – he slides to a stop on his face bare meters from the lift door.

Fulson continues to sweet-talk the hysterical dame; she collapses in a sobbing heap. “Come on babe, you have to tell me about the crystal.” She’s still not making any sense. Pepin and Kem consider drugging her. “If only we could get her to my pleasure yacht...” says Pepin, but Markus interrupts with a firm “NO!” The small lizard (Lenny) claws at her clothes and comes out with an ID claiming she is one *Lucia Nieves*.

Markus checks the other woman who got zapped; she is not breathing! He immediately applies CPR and gets her heart started again but she remains unconscious. Lambert and Markus go to check out the crazy psychic woman’s quarters and the others take the two women to the infirmary.

Turns out she has been carving images into the walls of her quarters – fairly tentacle beast intensive. “The planet will die!” The rest of the place is pretty normal. Markus checks the refrigerator; standard bachelorette pad fare. He appropriates a beer. They search the whole place but don’t find anything.

Pepin psychically heals the injured woman and knocks out Lucia with some drugs. He tries psychometry on her and a weird series of images stuns him; he sees a four-armed yellow-skinned alien with a raiment of feathers.

Various Forms Of Treason

“Where the hell is my pilot?” Captain Takashi is demanding of his bridge staff.

“I thought you knew, sir, he’s in the brig. I thought it was by your orders!”

“Damn it, it must be that Otterschmidt guy.” Before he can delve into that, an incoming communication from Ambassador Pepin is brought to his attention.

“Captain! We caught a crazy psychic!”

“Does she worship donuts?”

“Uh, no, flying spaghetti monsters I think. I want to bring her and her victim on board the station but I thought you might have a problem with me bringing a psychic hooligan up.”

“If I did, I wouldn’t have allowed you on board the station either. Do you want to make the request of the Commodore or will you?”

Pepin says “Ooo me!” He does a reasonably incoherent job of convincing the Commodore but eventually gets everything arranged.

Haggernak is wondering why the station pilot is in his brig when we’re in a potentially enemy-intensive area. He goes to complain to Otterschmidt, who repeats his concerns about St. John. Takashi calls up demanding where his pilot is. Takashi tries to pitch a scheme where St. John gets lojacked and Haggernak investigates him but he can return to duty since we’re in a war zone. Otterschmidt froths at the mouth and says that Haggernak is guilty of insubordination and that he’s taking emergency command of the station from Captain Takashi.

“No, I don’t think you are.”

“Oh yeah, how are you going to stop me?”

“Mr. Haggernak, please place Mr. Otterschmidt under arrest.”

“Rightio!” He physically picks up the shrieking auditor and carries him toward the brig. When he gets there, however, the door won’t open. There’s a strange “whump” sound from inside.

Inside the brig, the lights all spontaneously break and it falls into darkness. St. John yells, “What is going on!?!” A light comes from the air shaft and a long shadow falls across the floor. The grate blows out and three dhros with glowing eyes step out and stare at St. John. He starts feeling choked up. Haggernak tries the door but it is held in place; he hears screams and gurgling from the other side. Hearing all this over the comm, Takashi tells the two marines on guard on the bridge “You’re with me!” and heads up to the brig.

Haggernak tries to batter down the door. He gets through just as St. John falls unconscious, bleeding from the nose. He roars and shoos the dhros away, thinking they’re an unrelated nuisance. They scamper back to the ventilation shaft; then they levitate up to the shaft and runs off. Taken aback, he calls the captain on the comm and says “Do we know of anyone who’s been training dhros to levitate?” The captain puts his hand over his comm and tells the marines to get their stutter weapons out, on the grounds that there may be hallucinogenic gas being pumped into the brig’s air system. Once there, they secure the area, check on St. John, and lock Otterschmidt in a cell.

“So what exactly is your problem?” inquires the Captain of the enraged auditor.

“You don’t remember me, do you? My family died during the attack on Olmec 9! And it was your fault! They gave you medals for it. MEDALS!!!” Ah yes, the rescue mission to Olmec 9 suffered over 70% casualties and rendered the planet’s atmosphere permanently toxic.

“I’m sorry about your family, but it’s clear your so-called findings are simply a personal vendetta against me. You’re going to have to stay here in Happy Fun Camp for a while.”

Pepin calls up the Captain and says “There are three psychic dhros in my quarters worshipping my paperweight. Does this mean anything to you?”

“Uh... Are they trying to choke you?”

“No... Are they choking other people?”

“Well, just Martin St. John, but they have a grudge against him.”

Pepin takes that at face value and goes to try to communicate with them. He uses his First Contact training to bring them carrots and talk to them. He determines they’re about as smart as squirrels,

despite their advanced psychic powers. The Captain sends a team down and asks Taveer to get a maintenance bot to seal off that air duct. Xenobiologist *Dr. Adun Zelnaga* is brought in to consult; he drugs some fruit and they feed it to the dhros. The paperweight is an alien artifact Pepin got as a gift from the Borealins on Silver Bell. The PCs muse for some time over how to dispose of the dhros and/or the artifact. A scheme of gifting them to the colony's zoo and making it their problem is shot down.

The Flying Spaghetti Monster!!!

Commander Segwui, sensor officer and one of the cadre of bridge bunnies that man the station's helm, contacts the Captain and says an unknown object has come in system and is heading our way. It will arrive in about 13 hours. "Take us to yellow alert!" Everyone rushes to the bridge. The object is giving off confusing readings; except for position and heading, all its size and mass and other metrics are fluctuating wildly. "Didn't someone tell me about a crazy psychic woman and her flying spaghetti monster? Wasn't it Pepin? Get them to the bridge!" Down in his quarters, Pepin rushes around trying to get the unconscious woman into a better dressed state and get her up to the bridge. "*Commander Hicks*, get the Commodore on the line." The Commodore says that they've detected it again but have never seen anything like it. The Captain scrambles three fighters out to get a better look at the thing.

Pepin and Lucia arrive; she is wearing a psi restraint collar. Upon interrogation, she says, "I came across the crystal as part of a shipment of artifacts that needed research from a super old hulk of a ship found derelict in deep space. This was on Armstrong. When I took possession of the crystal, something happened." She was contacted by some entity and it got entwined with her mind. She starts to glow and flip out, and claims the collar won't "stop it" any longer and that she needs the crystal to "hold it back." Pepin tries to sedate her but her powers are kicking in and the hypo bends against a psychic shield. We give her the crystal and send Pepin and Rokk Tressor to get her aboard Pepin's pleasure yacht. The *Lighthouse's* stardrive isn't recharged yet but the yacht, since it piggybacked along, has a full charge and can jump at a moment's notice.

The fighters get out to the sensor blip and it's a big smoke monster with maws and tentacles. They scatter and triangulate it and it looks like it's about 10 km across. They figure out how to lock missiles on it. The captain tries to hail the FSM again to no avail. He gives fighter Echo Three the go-ahead to fire a missile at the thing. The missile impacts with no effect; an energy blast fires from the FSM and disintegrates the fighter at extreme range. The pilot didn't even have time to eject.

Rokk Tressor gets a message from *Alex Racine*, the weird Thuldan general and friend of space vampires. He says the gardhyi left him some religious writings that speak of these things. The gardhyi fought another race called the falkri. The gods left hunters, the vrl'hok, to hunt down the falkri when they left the universe.

Rokk discusses more with the woman, who thinks the FSM and the creature she made contact with through the crystal are different. She describes a four armed yellow frog in a feathered headdress.

Also, their analysis shows she's a lot older than she appears. Pepin contacts her psychically and touches an entity of vast power. He gets the sense it's trapped in Lucia and wants out.

The kroath ships appear and attack the FSM. It rips them all a new one inside of five minutes.

Pepin accepts the falkri into his mind via the mind link. There's an immense light show between Lucia, the crystal, and Pepin. Rokk ducks out of the room. When it's all over, Pepin has super awesome psychic powers. He tries to meditate to communicate with the falkri. It says gardhyi are a client race of the evrem (flying psychic winged mouthless aliens).

Rokk and Lucia get off the yacht. Pepin flies out and psychically talks with the FSM. It makes alternate claims about the falkri and urges him to save his own life by just handing the thing over. Pepin says, "Well, you kinda seem like an a-hole to me. No deal."

An energy beam lances out and obliterates the pleasure yacht. The sex swing in the forward observation dome disintegrates in the blast of muons shortly before the rest of the ship. But then the FSM is enveloped in a golden field and explodes. The fighters find Pepin floating in space, still alive but unconscious! Rokk expresses concern about bringing him back on board. The Captain says we should, as his heroism may have saved the station, but puts Rokk on ticket-punching duty should he prove unmanageable. Meanwhile, Pepin hears the falkri's faint voice, saying he can still tap its powers in times of great need.

It turns out that Lucia was crazy even without the falkri in her mind. Apparently being in a non-psychic crazy woman's mind was a suboptimal situation for the alien intelligence.

Since the kroath ships are gone (we hope), we coordinate a ground strike against the kroath with the Thuldans.

XP Award: 4 for everyone! And a bonus 4 for Pepin being willing to sacrifice himself.