ACT 4: UNITE SYNCHRONIZATION

by calumTraveler

Summary

"You know what I'm looking forwards to the most, Carter?" He asks.

"No, what?" You ask back.

"Not having lived the same damn year three times over," he smiles, a rare, genuine one.
"Sure, I've lived it in different places, and gone to different places... but I don't know what's coming next after today and I'm EXCITED."

Notes

NOTE: Different Galaxy Chapters are marked "SG-1" and "ALT" respectively. (The Timeline SHOULD be caught up in this Act with no more hopping around.)

@NEWCOMERS: You don't have to know much about OBDUCTION, or STARGATE, or HOMESTUCK if you're unfamiliar with any of the given franchises included in the crossover. NECESSARY ELEMENTS of the original series are explained where plot relevant. If you're only just discovering this crossover, you'll probably want to go back to the beginning and start there. ^^;;

@OBDUCTION FANS: Sorry, no SPACE PINECONES this crossover. Planned worlds and their Species to be used are MARAY, KAPTAR, and SORIA. Kaptar and Soria have already featured heavily in ACTS 2 and 3, and the ARAI BEETLES are going to be a bit of a constant companion for JOEY CLAIRE. Expect the Mofang to keep causing trouble too.

@HOMESTUCK/HIVESWAP FANS: There's NO SBURB this crossover. Everything else is probably fair game. EXPECT NEW HIVESWAP TROLLS to Cameo/gain staring roles as they're announced on the TROLLCALL. (Tyzias, for example.)

@STARGATE FANS: RULE OF THUMB for Stargate Episode Numbers: if I'm SKIPPING NUMBERS in the sequence? It's because I didn't see enough NECESSARY BUTTERFLIES occurring to necessitate adapting the episode, and it otherwise would have just been a REHASH of the Canon TV SERIES EPISODE or they've been ENTIRELY BUTTERFLEY OUT OF EXISTENCE (SEE: Season 2's "Touchstone" - the plot just simply evaporated due to butterflies); this is due to STARGATE SG-1 being an EPISODIC TV SERIES, and thus MANY EPISODES end up not being connected to each other, but WHEN THEY DO, expect the connections to be ruthlessly pointed out. Also... expect me to MAKE SOME SENSE out of the SCIFI stuff when the original series writers were a TAAAD inconsistent with their rules. ACT 4 EDIT: I may also re-arrange Episode numbers to better suit a coherent timeline.

Finally, @EVERYONE: if I confirm reference to a random TV show or Video Game, it's
90% probably just me being a nerd and slipping a nod in where appropriate, and 10% it might be FORESHADOWING for something. It's probably NOT going to get added to the Crossover listing, though. I don't want it to bloat excessively.

Someone, you note with dull glee, had to be drunk when they printed this newspaper and didn't fact check that it's not A THURSDAY at all, but, in fact, a TUESDAY.

Yes, your name is JACK O'NEILL and this is where you get your ENTERTAINMENT these days. Reading the newspapers and laughing at all the FACTUAL INACCURACIES. That, and wondering what you're going to do for dinner for a bunch of kids who aren't yours and really shouldn't have been your responsibility.

Oh how the mighty have fallen.

It's been EXACTLY thirteen years since Carter rescued you from Hanka, and exactly TEN since you first ran into the ASCHEN CONFEDERATION.

Who knew Peace would be so boring?

It's also been SEVERAL OTHER anniversaries coinciding with this date that make you think that today in general is CURSED.

1998, you get one last disturbing message from Alternia saying how everything went to hell and that their only hope of stopping the Replicators was to blow up their own planet.

1999, Anubis starts ransacking the Galaxy, only to be brutally put down by JAYNI of all people, thus cementing her position as the new RA TIER LEADER of the System Lords.

2000, Apophis tried some shit, and got put down just as hard as Jayni did.

2001, Skaara goes and gets himself killed disarming a fucking NUKE. Ka'turnal dies by radiation exposure from trying to finish the job he started.

2002, the SGC goes public, and you get laid off.

2003, someone discovers an ANCIENT REPOSITORY OF KNOWLEDGE hidden somewhere on Earth and these idiots calling themselves "Ori" show up. Even the Aschen can't do anything about them at this point but somehow Jay-fucking-ni utterly wrecks their shit within hours.

2004, Roxy and Alec and Jane all go and get caught in a hit and run by a drunk driver and they DIE, leaving you and Carter with three kids to take care of.

2005, some cavern down in New Mexico becomes the hotbed launching point for an ALIEN INVASION involving these weird ass ant-headed, bat winged, sharped clawed monsters who can teleport at will.

2006, Jayni once again saves the Galaxy from some mad man named ESCHER, who's controlling
those aliens like slaves with mind control... and then takes over his army by stealing the "Tablet thing that you never learned the name of because CLASSIFIED INFORMATION."

2007, HAMMOND HAD A HEART ATTACK and DIED. (You call FOUL PLAY.)

2008, after a FATAL LANDSLIDE ACCIDENT involving the just recently elected president, VICE PRESIDENT KINSEY becomes fucking President, and, naturally, is endorsed by Jayni 100%.

2009, more Replicators from Thor's Galaxy, which Jayni, once again, brutally puts down as if BY MAGIC. The Aschen-Earth alliance can't even risk going against her without causing more harm than good. She basically rules EVERYTHING that isn't under the Aschen's watch at this point.

You can only wonder what the hell will happen this year.

That's when Carter comes home from her doctor's appointment with Carolyn Lam and tells you some utterly heart crushing news.

Yeah. July 27th is a hell of a day.

Your name is JOHN EGBERT. Today is neither your birthday, nor any other day worth celebrating. Today is the anniversary of your PARENTS DEATHS.

Your day to day interests typically include CARD TRICKS, PRANKSTER GAMBITS, the art of the PIANO, VIDEO GAMES (and the CODING THERE IN), and MAGIC. At first it had been that simple kiddy stuff they show on TV with magicians and what not.

Then, just last year around your 13TH BIRTHDAY, you made the WIND MOVE.

You weren't alone in the SUDDEN POWERS department, your cousin JADE HARLEY, and sister ROSE, also started showing signs of interesting abilities.

It's just as well that you've been living with the O'NEILLS, out in the middle of nowhere away from PRYING EYES. People spontaneously generating powers these days tend to be recruited into the INTER-GALACTIC ARMED FORCES, lead by the SYSTEM LORD NIRRTI- or as the O'NEILLS call her, JAYNI.

As previously mentioned, today is a SOMBER DAY, and so you take your TUMULTUOUS EMOTIONS and funnel them into the abilities you've been slowly honing and refining into something you can use.

You gather the breeze up along the shores of the lake- the lake supposedly without fish in it but you've seen a few in it anyways (or at least, you did before Rose started experimenting with her powers)- and you start swooping it around in a small gentle circle.

A calm life. A simple start.

Then, you begin twisting it, faster, and faster, gaining speed.
Losing the barely there figures in your memories of Jude and Cassandra and Davis.

Faster, faster still, dipping into the surface of the lake and drawing up water from its depths.

Losing your MOTHER, FATHER, and NANNA to a CAR ACCIDENT. Of all the things. A CAR ACCIDENT?? Something so mundane and everyday and not fantastical at all!?

The water begins spiraling upwards, condensing into a tornado, made of water.

There are days you just want to rage against the machine and--

"JOHN! STOP!"

And then your concentration is broken and the waterspout collapses back down onto the surface as the wind blows to a standstill.

And then your sister is pulling you back away from the shore by the arm.

"Wha- Rose?" You ask her. "What's...?"

"It's too dangerous today! They're going to be looking," she says.

"Who is?" You ask.

"Who else??" Rose asks, and then continues dragging you back to the cabin that the O'neills and you have called home for far too long.

Your name is ROSE LALONDE- it used to be EGBERT, but you've insisted on going by your mother's maiden name after she died. You're not sure why, but that name just feels RIGHT somehow, in this current world.

Your interests include KNITTING, PLAYING THE VIOLIN, researching EXOTIC WORLDS, harvesting FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE, and generally KEEPING YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER OUT OF TROUBLE.

Trouble like bringing down the eyes of the GOVERNMENT down on you like he was about to do just now.

You're not exactly sure why the US Government and the GALACTIC SYSTEM LORD COUNCIL would want SUPER POWERED HUMANS for, but you can honestly "bet" that it's NOT GOOD.

Not that you're a betting sort of girl. You mean "Bet" as in the kind of bets that "NIRRTI/JAYNI" has pulled off over the years. The kind that have EXTREMELY LONG ODDS and yet always work out in her favor.

EXACTLY.

To the Crossed T's and Dotted I's. Sometimes even before the INK HAS FINISHED DRYING.
What you mean to say is that while you don't know WHAT NEFARIOUS PURPOSES are to be had, you know that they're NOT GOOD FOR ANYONE.

Unlike your brother, but somewhat similar to your cousin, you can remember QUITE A LOT from when you were a baby. You remember JUDE HARLEY, and CASSANDRA FRAISER, and you've always kept some HEALTHY SKEPTICISM about your life as you've grown up.

Like the fact that your parents were BOTH killed in a hit and run? That your Nanna just HAPPENED to be in the car as well? That they ALL died in the same crash???

Yeah, there's no such thing as coincidences, in your book. Of which you have MANY. That is to say you keep Journals and Diaries and all sorts of interesting NOTES tucked away beneath the floorboards in your room.

KNOWLEDGE, and the acquisition there of, is your 'THING' if such a thing could be said to be a THING. Give you a book, you'll have it read within a day. Teach you a new word, and you'll be using it better than the person who taught you within two.

YOU ARE QUITE SURE that you won't ever have any FANCY BLATANT GIFTS like John and Jade do, and NEVER WILL for that matter.

As you drag your brother up to the Cabin, you spy JADE, kneeling against the door, with her ear pressed up against it, looking as if she's EAVESDROPPING.

John goes to say something, but you raise a finger to your mouth to shoosh him.

Then, you both kneel up against the door and listen in.

"Those bastards are sterilizing us," Sam says, indignant. "The Aschen doctors have been lying the entire time."

"I told everyone I didn't trust them," Jack reminds her. "But did anybody listen? No."

"Jolinar agreed with you, Jack, I was just too stupid to believe that..." Sam goes silent for a moment, then says, "I can't help but wonder if she might have been able to catch this before..."

"No. No 'what ifs', Carter," Jack says. "We went over this when Hammond died. We don't have any way to undo it. As much as we wanted to when we lost Teal'c and everyone else to Alternia... There's nothing we can do about it. We can't just use a solar flare as a big giant undo button without Gate access."

"We know Jayni's abusing time travel to do everything she's doing," Sam protests. "There has to be a way for us to do it. If we could just get off world..."

"And have to explain our trip away to Kinsey's Homeland?" Jack asks. "You know they'll NEVER buy the whole 'just on a vacation' spiel, even if we go to Hanka, and ESPECIALLY not with three kids with us who are eavesdropping on us right now!"

Oh. Well. Crap.
Your name is JADE HARLEY and now you sit at a table, cousins at your side, and PARENTAL GUARDIANS opposite you.

"So..." Sam begins. "How much did you hear?"

"We came in at forced sterilization," Rose offers, and glances at you with THAT look. The one that says 'let me do the talking and don't say anything.'

You know she only means her and John, but Rose is evidently trying to play her words cleverly to imply it was just all three of you.

The O'neills clearly don't buy it, but Jack just gives a half shrug and Sam nods.

"Alright, then you heard that Jack and I were trying to have a kid of our own, but nothing was happening." Sam says. "The Aschen Doctor I was going to said everything was fine, but after two visits and nothing, I got suspicious and talked with Carolyn, from the SGC, and-"

"And Dr. Lam confirmed that the Aschen are mass sterilizing whole swaths of the world population?" Rose supplies, looking as if she just got all the confirmation for a massive theory.

"Pretty much, yes," Sam nods. "How did you...?"

"A friend I talk to online told me that their guardian was noticing birth rates declining locally and did a search, and saw that, for the last few years, it's also been declining globally," Rose says. "I put two and two together."

"So the Aschen are killing everybody by keeping us from making more babies?" You ask.

"It's pretty smart when you think about it," Jack says. "What better way to conquer a planet than to let them just die out of old age?"

"Which is exactly why we need to do something about it," Sam says.

"But that just brings us right back around to the problem we were talking about when I noticed the kids spying on us," Jack says. "We don't have access to the Gate, and we can't use the Solar Flares to go back in time even if we DID know when the right flare was going to happen anyways. I mean short, of breaking the glass on a fire alarm in the Gate house, we don't have a giant red friendly button to press to get us access to the--!"

He stops suddenly, and a look of realization dawns on his face.

"D'oh!" He plants his hand to his forehead. "Break Glass In Case of Emergency."

"Yes," Rose remarks, "that is what they usually put on fire alarms these days."

"Not now, Rose," Jack waves her remark off and then heads off into his and Sam's bedroom, much to Sam's confusion.

"Don't look at me," she says when John gives her a questioning look. "I don't know what he just thought of."
"Aren't you two, like, always finishing each others sentences though?" John asks.

"We don't do that," Sam says, to which you make an 'eh' sound. "What? We don't, Jade."

"You do it more than you think," you say. "Just last night you guys were talking in half finished sentences while making dinner."

You've just about finished that sentence when there's suddenly a loud CRACK from the bedroom.

"Jack!" Sam rushes in, and a moment later you hear her yelling. "Jack O'neill! Why the hell are you tearing out the bottom of that desk drawer!?"

"I'm pulling a fire alarm!" is Jack's reply, to which you, Rose, and John all get confused.

Why would a fire alarm be hidden inside of a desk drawer?

A moment later, you get your answer as the O'neills return from their bedroom, and Jack is tearing open a letter that looks to be about ten or fifteen years old. He puts the envelope down on the table, and you can see that it reads something along the lines of--

"Jack, you've decided it's time to break the glass on this letter," Jack reads from the top of the Letter. "If you've been patient and opened it at the right time, this will help you set things straight. If you've opened it early, then another you probably already changed things and you're probably very confused." He laughs. "Thank you, Cassie, you clever girl you!"

"Cassandra left you this letter?" Sam asks.

"Not our Cassie, the Alternate one," Jack answers, "from the timeline Hammond didn't follow the letter he found in your vest."

"What? When did that happen?" Sam asks.

"Just after I got back from Hanka," Jack answers, "I visited the Quantum Mirror room and that world's Joey was trying to give this other letter to our Jude and Cassie that her Cassie had written for them. Joey gave me two letters, the one for them, and this one which had the criteria of...!"

He points at the envelope he discarded on the table. Sam picks it up and reads... "Contents: One Red Button." She looks to Jack, and says, "She figured out we'd need a way to use a Solar Flare Time Jump." Then, she realizes, "Wait. She sent these letters to us the day you got back? The day BEFORE the Quantum Mirror stopped working??"

"Exactly," Jack continues, reading from the letter again, "IF you're reading this when you're supposed to then the date should be July 27th, 2010! Either a TUESDAY OR A THURSDAY! HAHA!" he laughs- seemingly pleased with that specific detail for some reason. "Follow the instructions below and you should be able to stop the Ass-chen-" he holds the letter over to Sam when she gives him an odd look. "No, see, she wrote it exactly like that. Ass-chen."

"How the hell did she figure all this out?" Sam asks, mostly to herself as she and he read along the letter in relative silence.

A few more moments pass, then Jack looks at all three of you, and mouths out "one, two, three..."
before saying, "Carter? Am I reading this right or does-?"

"Cassie wants all four kids to go with us? Yes," Sam answers, "but we don't have Nepeta and it's not saying where we run into her, so-"

"How do we find her?" Jack asks.

"See!" John suddenly exclaims. "You're doing it again!"

"Yup," you nod. "Totally finishing each others sentences."

Sam and Jack pause at that, which gives Rose the opportunity to say, "And if it's our wayward Bird-Cat cousin we need to find, then all you have to do is ask."

"What do you mean by that?" Jack asks.

"Remember that online friend I mentioned?" is all Rose says, instead settling back into her chair, crossing her arms, and smiling smugly.

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**AUGUST 13TH, 2010.**

"Welcome to the Stargate Command Museum Tour," your name is DIRK STRIDER, and while you honestly have no idea how the hell you landed this job, you're not going to complain. "Please stay behind me the entire time and for the love of God, DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING. When I say we're walking, we start walking. And we're walking. And we're walking."

As you go through the standard bullcrap of leading people through the first few levels of the Base, you swear that you recognize some of the people in your tour group. The ones with the kids at any rate. Maybe they've done the tour before? Probably. You see so many kids dragging their parents through this tour that they all just blur together.

Soon, you come to a room with a MOCK UP of a silver mirror.

"Here we have the Quantum Mirror display, found on..." Like always you forget the name and just make something up. Nobody's complained, and one of the repeat customers who's done the tour regularly said it was a highlight of the tour. "PSM-TNG, this mirror allowed people to traverse from one world to another. It broke in 1997 for reasons unknown. Recently it was transferred and started undergoing research and repair at the Mckay-Zalenka Labs up in Canada, the mirror you see here is just a replica."

You see those kids and their Parents eye the Mirror with a look that's hard to place. Except, yeah, no, it's easy to place. That's the look of Parents thinking 'how easy would it be to steal the replica?'

They'll probably swipe something small by the end of the day, you'll bet.

"Annd we're walking," you say, deciding to cut the room short. "Next up we have the office of Legendary Explorer Jake Harley..."

Oh, there's a picture on the wall here, of the old man. That's why one of those kids looks familiar.
Must be a relative of his.

While you mumble facts about Harley's brief time in the SGC, you notice that a girl has slipped up among the crowd, and joined those kids and their parents. She's wearing some silly green coat that's way over sized for her and some stupid blue cat-hat that looks like it's seen better days. There's something in the face though. Maybe it's the motorcycle goggles over her eyes.

You pause as you swear you see the ears on her hat move, and you nearly have a flashback to the horrible night you got a baby dumped on your lap.

But that's impossible, all things considered. It can't be her cause you can see the girl's hair peeking out from beneath her hat and it's fucking BLACK, not Neon Green.

You conclude the tour of the office with an "And we're walking."

You get down to the Gate Room without too much hassle, and stare at the damned thing for a moment. Just sitting there with a permanent iris welded into place to keep it from operating.

"This is the Stargate that was found in Antarctica, not a replica. Don't get any ideas about going near it. In fact, don't even cross the yellow lines on the floor," you warn, "it's armed to the teeth with security sensors to prevent theft. And YES, we've had people try to steal it. It never ends well for them."

You glance back at those people that were bugging you, and you see a nostalgic look on their faces. All of them. Kids and parents alike.

...Did the used to work here, the parents? Kids... kids...

Kids on base?

"The Giza Gate is where everyone knows it is," you continue, "fucking piss poor excuse for an airport, if you ask me, with five times the security. But, anyways, yeah. This is where it used to sit. Teams went through it exploring the galaxy and causing shit and who the hell cares about any of that?" you ask. "You all just want to take your pictures, right? Alright, line up in front of the yellow line but DON'T CROSS IT and get your pictures." Fucking Tourists.

You look around and watch as people go do their photo ops... wait, where the hell did those people go?

...Damn it.

You know what, screw it. If they used to work here let them have their little fucking family reunion. It's not like you have any family left that wants to be around you. Nepeta made that pretty fucking clear when she ran away at the age of NINE.


You didn't want the girl in the first place.
Your name is ARGO LALONDE -- Or rather, that's your ALIAS and the one you've been living by for the last few years. Your birth name is NEPETA ARGO STRIDER, and honestly, it's a name you feel like you could go back to.

Jade and Rose and John are all hugging you now as you hide away in the abandoned CONFERENCE ROOM above the Gate Room.

Oh god, it's good to feel loved again after traveling alone cross country back and forth east and west again and again, never stopping for longer than a week.

Your PASSENGER is very much in agreement.

"So we're finally doing this?" You ask as your FAMILY break the hug. "We're scratching this broken record and setting things right??"

"We are," Jack O'neill says, smiling. "We've got a plan."

"We should probably skedaddle before Dirk back there realizes why we really slipped away," Sam Car- O'neill, you correct as you notice the rings- says.

"Wait, that was Dirk?" Jade asks. "Dirk Strider? Dave's brother?"

"Yup," you growl faintly. "That was him alright. Looked about as miserable as he did the last time I saw him too."

Bastard, wallowing in his own misery for years and years and years and not even stopping to think about how messed up YOU were by it all. Didn't even notice when you got that stupid cold that nearly killed you. Likewise, he didn't even notice your MIRACULOUS RECOVERY.

At least you had Rose, and John, and Jade... up until you had to run away to keep everyone safe. Stupid Aschen trying to capture you just because you happened to-

[Argo,] your PASSENGER interjects, tone warning.

Right. Right. Diverging tangents, rehashing history.

"But that's besides the point," You shake your head. "We do this right, we won't end up in this situation to begin with. Where are we going next?"

The answer, of course, was down to JACK O'NEILL'S OLD OFFICE- yes, he had one, years and years ago. Used primarily only for FILING PAPERWORK and writing MISSION REPORTS.

"Rose, keep an eye out for anybody, would ya?" Jack says, and he goes over to the desk and starts checking drawers.

"Yes, Sir, Uncle Jack, Sir!" Rose chuckles as she slides over to the door and opens it just a hair to peek out.

"So..." Sam pulls you into a one armed hug. "It's been a while, huh?"

Your Passenger hums in agreement, and you relay her emotions with a nod, "It really has been. Sorry we had to run away so suddenly, Sam."
"It's fine," She says. "I know you had to keep out of contact with everyone... Except for Rose, it seems."

"Sisters in changed last names," you say. "It was Rose's idea. Names so obvious that nobody thought we'd actually do it."

"That's definitely-" Sam stops as Jack rips out a drawer from his desk and tears off the bottom of it. "JACK! Seriously!? How many drawers are you hiding things in?"

Removing a ZAT GUN from that drawer's remains and placing it onto the desk, Jack O'neill just gives a look that says, "Far, Far too many" even as he says "Just these?" in a not so convincing tone of voice. Then, he takes another drawer, breaks it open, and then YET ANOTHER ZAT GUN joins the first on the desktop. O'neill gives them a quick power on/off test to make sure they still work and then hands one to Sam, and keeps the other one for himself.

[I'm honestly surprised nobody found those Zat Guns hidden in there before now,] your PASSENGER remarks.

'A-fuckin-greed,' you reply. What luck!

ZAT GUNS retrieved, you all head to that ONE SURFACE ACCESS LADDER that nobody ever seems to think to guard (Which you used to get in here in the first place) and ASCEND UPWARDS to the surface.

Security bypassed, you head to the O'neill's VAN, get in, and thus begin the LONG DRIVE UP NORTH to always snowy VANCOUVER, CANADA.

It's only once you're miles out from the Base and on the Highway that you dare relax and allow your passenger to take over.

"Hello, Sam, Jack," she says, "it's been a while."

"Hey, Jolinar," Sam says, turning back in her seat to look at you. A sad yet happy smile is on her face. "You've been keeping Nepeta out of trouble, right?"

"As best as I can," Jolinar says to them. "It's been hard avoiding the Aschen, but Nepeta's instincts have proven invaluable on multiple occasions. We haven't been caught yet. A few close calls, but nothing serious."

"That's great," Sam says, smiling. "Thanks for looking after her."

"It's no problem," Jolinar pauses, then says, "I see you two finally got married. I'm sorry I wasn't there for it. Congratulations. When was it?"

"2007," Sam says. "Nothing big or fancy. It was just us and a few friends. You didn't miss much."

"Still," Jolinar says, and you can feel her anxiousness. "I'm sorry I couldn't be there."

"I'd say it was just bad timing that Nepeta got sick when she did," Rose interjects, "but I think we all know that was no accident."
"Yes," Jolinar says, "we never got a chance to discuss it, Sam, but after spending a few weeks eradicating it on the run, I'm fairly certain that virus was engineered to take Nepeta out, or at least make her sick enough to warrant a Symbiote. That the Aschen came after us so soon after I started healing her..."

"Yeah, we kind'f figured that was the case," Jack remarks.

"What about the other Tok'ra?" Jolinar asks. "Have you heard from them after the Reetou resurfaced?"

"No," Sam shakes her head. "Nothing even from Selmak or Dad."

"Damn," Jolinar sighs. "That's... that's more terrifying to hear than I'd thought it'd be. I... could you give me a minute?" Sam nods, and then Jolinar goes quiet, returning control to you and once more becoming but a passenger.

"So..." you begin. "Anyone want to hear about these ex-criminals I ran into up in Portland?"

"Sure!" Jade nods, and you regale them all with a story about some people who provide LEVERAGE to those who don't have it.

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**AUGUST 20th, 2010.**

Your name is DR. RODNEY MCKAY, and you're frustrated at how simple of a problem it's been with the Quantum Mirror this entire time.

Essentially? THE BATTERY DIED.

Why? You're not entirely sure. It seems like something disrupted its connection to the GRAND UNIVERSAL 'ZERO POINT ENERGY FIELD' and then it just... drained out rather quickly.

You're pointedly ignoring the fact that the battery looks like a YELLOW CRYSTAL and instead are focusing on reconnecting the thing to an ASCHEN POWER SUPPLY. If this works, you'll have RE-ESTABLISHED communication with the MULTIVERSE AT LARGE.

You connect the wires carefully, positives and negatives all lined up in a row as best as could be done with TWO DIFFERENT TYPES of Alien Technologies, and...

There.

You flick the switch on the side of the mirror and... A SHIMMER! IT SHIMMERS!! YES! You pick up the remote and dial to one of a few PRE-SET COORDINATES you've memorized.

A moment later, you're staring into the very startled reflection of a FAMILIAR, but MUCH OLDER Cat Girl.

"Mckay?" She mouths- you've gotten better at lip reading- and then looks at the lab on your side.
"Aschen Technology? OH. FUCK!" Her eyes widen in horror- Horror? Why horror??- and then she suddenly SHUTS YOUR MIRROR CONNECTION OFF forcibly by slamming her hand down on a BIG SHINY RED BUTTON on a nearby table.

"...Well that was rude," you mutter. You wonder why she got scared of you using Aschen Technology- or how the hell she identified it on sight so quickly.

Still, a success is a success.

You pick up the phone and dial a number. "Hello! Dr. Ulfric? This is Dr. Mckay..." You frown. "RODNEY MCKAY. From Mckay and Zalenka Labs?" You resist the urge to groan. "The ones working on the Quantum Mirror Project." FINALLY. "Yes, I've made progress. I wouldn't be calling you if I hadn't. It's working again. Just a power supply issue."

There's suddenly a lot of screaming and shouting from outside, and you block it out.

"No. That's just the television," you say, tuning out something that sounds like a ZAT GUN- because seriously, where the hell would someone get a ZAT GUN these days? "Look, I've got the mirror working again. I can schedule a demonstration in--" Wait what?? "NOW? You're coming down for a demonstration NOW? I mean, I guess I can get the lab ready and everything polished but I- uh. Hello?"

...

You can't believe it.

"He hung up on me," you mutter, dismayed, moments before someone suddenly knocks on your lab door.

Urgh. Zalenka.

"Raddek!" You groan, going over to unlock the door, "Did you SERIOUSLY forget your keys again?" You open the door and- "This is the third time this week and- Oh. Hi."

"Hey," Jack O'neill says before waving with the object in his right hand.

"...Is that a Zat gun?" Your question is answered as O'neill presses the trigger.

**PCH-ZYU!**

Your name is JOHN EGBERT, and you can't believe Jack just shot DR. MCKAY!

"Alright," Jack says as he catches the man and keeps him from falling flat on his face. "Everyone into the lab." He grunts before throwing the man flat on his face onto the floor in the hallway.

"Why did you do that?" Jade asks as you all filter inside, and Jack locks the door behind you.

"Cassie said to in her letter," Jack answers, watching after Sam as she goes to check the Quantum Mirror.

"Wha...?" Jade stares out the locked door for a moment. "But why??"
"Don't know, don't care," Jack says. "Carter?"

"It looks like Rodney got it working again," Sam answers. "How many clicks did she say we needed to move it to?"

"Right," Jack takes out his letter and reads through it to the appropriate points. "Five clicks to the right from what Mckay left it on, blue button lit up."

"Five clicks," Sam counts under her breath as she twists the dial on the remote five clicks, and then presses the blue button, turning it on, and other colored buttons off.

The Mirror shimmers, and then resolves into the image of ANOTHER SAMANTHA CARTER standing on the other side of the mirror, standing there, arms behind her back, wearing a GREY AND RED UNIFORM you've never seen before, and smiling warmly, as if expecting you.

"And that's it," Jack says. "Now we send the message through and 'they take it from there.'"

"What message?" you ask. There's an awkward silence between Jack and Sam, and then...

"You four kids," Sam says. "You have to go through the mirror and we stay behind to sabotage it. Make sure that the Aschen can't follow you through and prevent you from changing the timeline, or wrecking any other worlds with the Mirror, for that matter."

"I see," Rose says, "you have to break the glass because it's an emergency."

"Exactly," Sam nods.

"But-" Jade begins. "You'll be stuck here!"

"Stuck is relative," Jack says. "Consider us more the last line of defense. A distraction, if you will."

"The Aschen will be too busy focusing on us here with the Mirror that they won't realize you four are going back in time to undo everything," Sam says.

"But that's a parallel universe," Jade points at the mirror. "That's not our past! That's someone else's present!"

"And the letter telling us what to do came from another universe to begin with," Jack says, kneeling down to Jade, and handing her the letter addressed to Jude and Cassie. "We trusted her instructions to get us this far. Can I trust you to deliver this message to Jude and Cassie when you see them?"

Jade hesitates for a moment, then nods, taking the letter. "We'll do it."

"Jolinar," Sam says, looking to Nepeta. "Take care of them for us, would you?"

"I'll do my best, Sam," comes the oddly voiced reply.

That's when you all hear a commotion from outside. ASCHEN SECURITY, most likely.

"Now go," Sam says. "We're running out of time. 
You stand there as Jade and Nepeta head to the Mirror, touch it, and vanish with a FWAHH!

"Why do you the people we love have to keep dying?" You ask, feeling tears in your eyes.

"John," Rose grabs your hand. "If we go back in time, they won't be dead."

And then, still holding your hand, before you can say anything else, Rose reaches out and touches the mirror.

FWAHH!

And then you're suddenly facing the other way.

You spin around, reaching for the mirror again, but it's too late.

Sam and Jack aim their Zat Guns at the Mirror and fire off and then the feed goes BLACK.

"NO!" You yell. "WHY!?!"

You fall to your knees, and start to cry, and it's only Rose and Jade hugging you that keeps you from using your WINDY POWERS at all.

"Hello, Jolinar," the other Samantha Carter says, and you take control to look up. Nepeta's not really in a mood to say much of anything right now anyways.

"Hello, Sam," you say back. "Where are we?" You ask, looking around.

"Welcome to the Odyssey," Carter says. "We're presently in Alternia's Galaxy, heading for the planet Haven to rendezvous with a Solar Flare."

"This is a future," you guess, "one that's the end result of us arriving in this time in this place, and then going back in time to change history from the events of our world so that they never happen. Make it so that the right timeline happens."

"Pretty much," Carter nods, looking bemused, and also a bit awkward with the other kids sitting there by the Mirror. "Although, at the moment, I guess you could say that which timeline is actually the 'right' one is up in the air. You kids could decide not to go back in time and that'd create the reality you just left, or some of you could stay and create something entirely new."

"Quantum mechanics really don't seem like an appropriate subject matter right now," you say.

"Fair enough," Carter nods. There's an awkward pause for a few moments, then, Carter says, "This is weird. Talking to you from the outside. Looking like you do."

"It's not so weird for me," you say. "I was just talking with another Sam but a minute ago."

That... stings just a little less than you thought it might. Still stings a lot but... not quite as much.
"No, what I mean is," Carter sighs. "Argo, she looks like the Nepeta I've seen grow up, except she never dyed her hair black... And at the same time," she looks over your host's body, as if reliving a memory. "She's... a little bit younger than she was the first time I saw her after she came back to Earth from Alternia, appearing out of nowhere and... well, spoilers, I guess."

"By going back in time and changing things, we're going to lose all of our future knowledge," you realize. "It will become null and void, and the only future knowledge that won't will be what you tell us right here and now."

"Which is going to be exceedingly limited," Carter nods. "We want you kids living your own lives, and not have to feel like you're bound to the actions you already took." She pauses, then adds, "We've got Karkat for that."

"...Who the heck is Karkat?" Nepeta asks, finally feeling drawn enough into the conversation to talk.

"I'll introduce you all once John's feeling up to it," Carter says, "for now, why don't you go over and be with your family for a bit, Argo?"

Again with that. You wonder if that's just her differentiating between the Nepetas she's known and the her that's just arrived, or something else?

"Okay," Nepeta nods, and she goes over to join the other kids around the mirror.

You sink deep into the background, and mull over everything you've just witnessed the last few days.

Your name is LT. COLONEL SAMANTHA CARTER, and sometimes you REALLY HATE TIME TRAVEL.

As you step onto the bridge of the *Odyssey*, you pause to stare out into the refracting light of the HYPERSPACE TUNNEL outside.

All the sheer chaos of all of the disasters that have accompanied this sight flash across your eyes. All the stuff long in your past and soon to be those kid's future.

There were good times mixed in with the bad, sure, but at the same time...

"Penny for your thoughts, Colonel Carter?" asks a familiar, gruff voice from the captain's chair.

"Nothing that we haven't talked about before, Colonel Vantas," you reply back.

The Alternian man in the chair turns, looking over his shoulder at you. Bright crimson eyes peer out from beneath a mop of messy black hair. His horns are likewise burred somewhere in that mess but are hidden away for the moment.

"They're finally here, aren't they?" Colonel Karkat Vantas asks.

"Silica's warning came just in time," you say. "I managed to get down to the Mirror just as they contacted our side."
"Lovely," Karkat grunts, and turns back to stare out the window. "Are the Past Me's ready to go back yet?"

"I've still got to introduce the kids to the youngest you," you say. "I saw the middle you scarfing down lunch in the cafeteria."

"Hah," Karkat laughs from the chair. "I remember that meal. The best damned fried chicken I've ever had. Maybe I'll go get some myself, in a bit... after Past me's vacated the area, naturally."

You chuckle, "Naturally."

Karkat Vantas is an interesting person, to say the least. Sent back in time twice by the same solar flare, a full THIRTEEN YEARS apart, each time. He never quite gets along with his other selves, with conversations almost always leading into an argument fueled by self loathing that he's put himself through this kind of torture.

"You know what I'm looking forwards to the most, Carter?" He asks.

"No, what?" You ask back.

"Not having lived the same damn year three times over," he smiles, a rare, genuine one. "Sure, I've lived it in different places, and gone to different places... but fuck it all down the throat and give me a NEW NUMBER! I don't know what's coming next after today and I'm EXCITED."

You think that over, then nod in agreement. "I think it's like when Jack was caught up in that time loop. Froot Loops every day for months on end."

"I remember that," Karkat remarks. "I've never seen a man eat a milk based wheat-paste so enthusiastically before."

You can't help but laugh at the Alternia-ism for Oatmeal. Even after all these years, it still gets to you every now and then.

"How long until we touch down?" You ask.

"Not too much longer," Karkat says. "I remember that we arrive at 6:12 P.M., Earth time."

"That's two hours from now," you point out.

"Yeah, like I said, not 'two' much longer," Karkat smirks at you.

Oh, that cheeky little Alternian.

"MAKE WAY, START A REVOLUTION! MAKE WAY, WE'RE GONNA HAVE FUN TONIGHT!" comes the loud singing from a certain dormitory.

Your name is KARKAT VANTAS, the MIDDLE, and you take a deep breath before you knock.
"MAKE WAY, START A REVOLUTION! LET LOOSE AND EVERYTHING WILL BE ALRIGHT!" Of course, he won't open the door because he's listening to music.

Here we go again, you shake your head, and tap in the pass code to open the door.

It doesn't matter how many times he'll change it to prevent such a thing, your YOUNGEST SELF is always doomed to failure because YOU WERE HIM and you REMEMBER ALL THOSE PASSWORDS ANYWAYS.

"ATTENTION PAST ME!" you barge into your room, and your past self doesn't even notice, because his back is turned to the door and he's still freaking singing.

You grab the headphones off of his head, and that gets his attention.

"Hey! What the hell!?" Your youngest twirls around, angry. "How did you get in here!? I thought I changed the pass code!"

"You did, 61812," you repeat the code you just used.

"How the- DAMN IT." He scowls. "Fine, what is it?"

"Your teammates arrived, and have settled in. You've got an hour to meet them, get used to them, and make it abundantly clear that you're just as uninformed as they are," you tell him.

"I *AM* Just as uninformed as they are," Youngest You says, glaring. "ALL *I* know is that you and some other version of me say I'm supposed to go back in time and- do what exactly? Just float around like a freaking Mainframe Bee without a flower to fuck?"

"Exactly!" You put a grin on your face. "I'm glad you understand the situation exactly as you need to know it! Now! Get dressed, pack up your things, and get your ass moving to the grub hall."

"You're not the boss of me," Youngest You protests, quoting another song he's gotten quite fond of recently.

"Let me guess, and I'm not so big?" You counter with a smirk, finishing the verse. Youngest You just doesn't seem to appreciate the fact that you've had this comeback coming since you first heard it all of RIGHT NOW ago.

"I hate Time Travel," he growls.

"Join the club!" You laugh, and exit the room.

"Before you meet your new team mate..."

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you feel anxious as hell as the other Sam talks to you all.

"We have some messages for you from your future selves, and your alternate selves," Sam continues. She looks like Sam, talks like Sam, but she's... HAPPIER? Happier, somehow. Even without the RING. You're not sure how that's possible. Just generally, happier than the Sam who just- who just
sent you here on the whims of an old letter.

"John," Sam begins first, "your future self says: 'Don't forget the movie Little Monsters.'" John chokes suddenly as he's about to take a sip from a bottle of apple juice. "...Seriously?" He stares at the bottle in hand very suspiciously.

"Your alternate self says," Sam continues, a smile on her face, "'Yes, we seriously mean that.'"

John gets a grossed out look on his face, then LAUGHS, for the first time since you arrived in this timeline, and for a good solid fifteen seconds. "Oh man! The other me's sure enjoyed the exchange on that gambit! Damn it, and I can't even get them back for it too because they'll see it coming. Hah! Tell 'em I said it was a good one!"

"Will do," Sam nods. Then, "Rose next."

"Alright," You sit up to attention.

"Your future self says," And Sam makes sure to read the exact words off of a note card. "'Don't forget to take time to enjoy the simple things. Find someone who doesn't care about where you came from or why you're there. We owe ourselves that much.'"

"I see," you muse. "With such a direct command, I suppose I can't force myself into an early grave by working myself to the bone."

Sam shakes her head, a small laugh coming from her mouth. "Moving on, your alternate self says: 'Take up Knitting. It's fun.'"

"Knitting?" You ask. "Is that some kind of passive aggressive hint that my future self is teaching my alternate self how to knit??"

"Who knows," Sam shrugs. "If she has been, it was while I've been out of the Galaxy."

Ah, now there's an interesting hint as to future events.

"Argo," Sam continues, "your future self says 'Stop dying your hair. That brand doesn't exist in this timeline. To continue down that path leads to nothing but bad hair days.'"

"Aw, man," Nepeta whines, taking running a hand through her hair- all dyed an ebony black presently. You'd wondered how she did that. "Seriously?? I mean, I guess I don't really need to keep doing it anymore anyways, but still..."

Sam smiles, "I've actually been there for a few of those, and tried making a few dyes myself. It... it didn't work out well."


"Your Alternate self said," Sam continues, "'Stay away from the stairs on January 6th.' And no, she didn't specify a year."

"...O...kay," Nepeta blinks. "I guess I'll avoid stairs on every January 6th for the next few years??"

"Finally, Jade," Sam looks to Jade, and says, with a somewhat sad smile on her face, "Your future
self says: 'Visit Abydos as often as you can. We didn't visit nearly as often enough before we had to go back in time.'

Jade considers that, then nods. "Sure. I'm game for that."

"Your Alternate Self says," Sam concludes, "'Please don't buy me a flute. I'm terrible at it. Get me something with strings instead, please.'"

"...Why would I give other me a Flute?" Jade frowns. "I know I suck at it."

John just snickers under his breath, and you side-eye him. Surely he's planning some kind of prank involving just this thing.

"That's it for messages from yourselves," Sam says. "Now, I've got one for all of you from me, personally."

"Okay," You say. "Lay it on us."

"Stay safe," Sam says. "Just because you're launching from a timeline where everything went mostly okay, doesn't mean things will go that way this time. If something doesn't feel right, don't take any risks that could lead to you dying, okay?"

You four say generally the same sort of "Of course we won't!" promise that you're all quite sure you'll be violating at one point or another.

A minute later, a tall man with grey skin comes walking in, dragging along an irate MINI-CLONE of himself, looking to be about your age.

"Everyone," the man says, "Meet Karkat Vantas, the Youngest. He'll be your teammate for the foreseeable future. Me? I'm Karkat Vantas, the Middle, I'll be your escort through the Wormhole, completing a mission, and then promptly absconding to Earth to do damage control." You raise your hand, and the man- Karkat Vantas- smirks. "And Yes, Rose, I am indeed his future self and YES there is an even older me wandering around this ship somewhere. But he's not important and he's not going back in time at all so guess what? He might as well not exist as far as you're concerned. So Forget About Him." The... Younger Karkat?... goes to say something but the other one derails it by just storming on head with dialogue, "Now if you'll excuse me, I've got an armory to raid and a mission to prep for.

With that, he gives a brief salute to Sam, and then turns on his heel and leaves.

"What just happened?" John asks.

"My older self is being an utter piece of shit, clearly," Karkat says, crossing his arms. "Makes me disgusted to think I'll ever grow up to become him. Pah!"

"Now, Karkat," Sam begins, "you know he's just as nervous about this time travel jump as you are."

"No, I don't," Karkat protests. "If he's feeling as nervous as I am, why the hell is he grinning like a chub-loon while bossing me around everywhere!?"

"Because that's how he remembers it from your perspective," you point out, and that wipes out all anger from the kid's face as he considers that fact for a few moments...
"...Huh." He blinks. "I guess that makes... sense?? Just... playing a part that the script's been written for. I can buy that." He pauses, then says, "So who the hell are you four?"

Oh, well, this is going to be fun to explain.

Chapter End Notes

SO yeah... "2010" goes differently in a way probably none of you expected. :33

Next few chapters will be under the ALT tag, and once we finish up the immediate arc, we'll jump back to SG1.
ALT:04x01: Time Skips for Everyone. (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

We now resume your regularly scheduled timeline.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and you and Mierfa have the DAY SHIFT all to yourselves.

That is to say, the Alternian equivalent of the DEAD OF NIGHT watchdog position back on Earth is all yours.

It's been an exhausing SEVERAL MONTHS. If you received Earth's reply message back on OCTOBER of last year, then that would put today at... eight months. A whole EIGHT MONTHS LATER.

A whole Eight Months consisting of your team doing nothing but relentlessly scouring the Galaxy for SUPERGATE CONSTRUCTION SITES, and finding NONE. Nothing worth writing home about. Bubkiss. Zilch. Zero Degrees Kelvin. Absolutely fricking NO sign of their construction project. Which, on the one hand, means you've had time to yourself to worry about the OTHER DAMASCUS SWORD hanging over your head. Or was it Damocles? Dammek-cheesed? Eh. It doesn't matter.

What DOES matter, is that you're sitting here in Trizza's old throne, Mierfa on your lap, and you're both just BASKING in eachother's presence. Oh, sure there's a bit of kissing involved too, and a lot of hair rustling, but.... mostly just being content.

And not thinking about the fact that your Pa was probably cloned from a freaking ELDRITCH ENTITY calling himself THE SCRATCH DOCTOR, who just so happens to work for LORD ENGLISH, a giant eldritch entity piloting a giant SNAKE MECH.

Thankfully, he's still in another Galaxy... although for how long you're not entirely sure. Replicators and Supergates and what not.

You... made sure not to let on with your worries directly in your LATEST TRANSMISSION back to Earth. You're not quite sure how well you masked it, though. Knowing Jude, he'd probably picked out everything wrong going on without you outright stating it from sheer conjecture alone.

You wonder, just ever so slightly, when they'll be sending another transmission back? Soon? It's been about three months or so since your transmission went out. Another three months from now?? That would be about the right frame of time for-

The room trembles for a moment, nothing violent, but noticeable just the same.... No. Damn it. You just jinxed yourself, didn't you?

"...Claire?" Mierfa breaks the warm and fuzzy feelings to look around. "Did you feel that?"
"I did," you frown as the room trembles yet again, mildly just like before. It feels like when you were dialing out with the Stargate to Earth the last time, with Salazl's shaking suppressors are in place. But that can't be it for a dial in. The amount of power for the short transmission burst the SGC sent didn't even make your Gateroom shake at all.

The room shakes again- and this time you hear the suppressors on the Gate squeaking.

"Fucking hell," you groan. "Mierfa, please tell me that was just the chairs."

"I'd be lyin if I did, Claire," Mierfa mutters, placing her forehead against yours as you finally hear it.

The Gate Alarms trigger and the sound of metal grinding against metal emerges from the Gate, and the subtle vibrations of the SHAKING SUPPRESSORS vibrating across the room.

THWUNK.

You and Mierfa jump over to your consoles, and as you raise the shield, Mierfa gets on the radio.

THWUNK.

"INCOMING UNSCHEDULED OFF WORLD ACTIVATION!"

THWUNK.

The Chevrons light up one after another, and you swallow as you gather up the mental energies you might need to use against whatever might be coming through the Gate if it's NOT Earth calling.

THWUNK. THWUNK.

But you hope. Oh GOD do you hope.

THWUNK. THWUNK.

The shaking barely increases. Salazl's suppressors are doing a wonderful job.

KA-THWUNK.

WAAAA WAAA!

The flash of light against the Shield appears with the KAWOOOSH and you hold your breath for a moment.

"ALTERNIA!" a girl's voice yells across the radio, "THIS IS SG-1 OF EARTH REQUESTING YOU LOWER ANY SHIELD OR IRIS YOU HAVE UP! WE'RE COMING IN HOT! REPLICATORS, I REPEAT, REPLICATORS!"

You immediately shut down the shield as you exhale your held breath.

"Fucking hell! Did she just say Replicators!" Mierfa asks.

"She did!" you answer, feeling your heart race as you wait. Oh! You should probably radio back
And then a floating pod comes through the Gate along with a VERY FAMILIAR BOY.

"What the-?!" You stare. "JUDE!?!"

"Joey!?" Your little brother stares up at you, relief and panic and disbelief in his eyes. Then, he remembers he's in front of the gate, and he drags that floating pod away from the event horizon before turning to stare back at the Stargate. "'Mon! 'Mon!"

The wormhole's event horizon flickers- and for a few moments it seems ready to collapse- before stabilizing.

"Mierfa!" you call over to your Matesprit. "Are we draining power?"

"No!" She answers. "The other side is providing all the power!"

What the hell?? You look to Jude for answers, but he has none to give, still staring at the Stargate with a pleading look on his face.

Then- a girl flings herself through the eventhorizon- landing on the floor with a WHUMP.

"CASSIE!" Jude rushes over to her and starts pulling her away from the Gate. Once she's on her feet, she's raising what looks like a hand gun and pointing it at the Gate. A second later, three more figures throw themselves through the eventhorizon- accompanied by a shower of flying debris- a few pieces of which are bruning as they land on the floor.

Something ELSE seems to have managed to make it through the eventhorizon before the Gate shuts down entirely. Something small, black, and glowing Red that-

**BANGG!**

-Shatters into pieces.

"Oh thank God," Jude breathes out as the girl lowers the gun she had on her. "Nice shot, Cass."

"Thanks, Jude," the girl says, then goes to check on the woman who came through the Gate. "Are you okay, Mom?"

"I'm fine, Cassie," the woman says as she gets to her feet.

"What the hell!?" yells one Okurii Leijon as she comes running into the room, accompanied by a few armed guards. All of them look like they just tore themselves out of the slime and got dressed far too quickly for any cleanup.

"Okurii!" You interject, running down the stairs to join her. "Earth dialed in. This is SG-1."

"Technically!" Says the guy with sunglasses as he gets to his feet. "A doctor, two kids, a guy from SG-2, and a guy from SG-1, but hey, who's counting?"

"...Do I even want to know what just happened?" Okurii asks.
"The short answer is Replicators, Ma'am," Jude says, stepping up to her, and offering his hand. "I'm Jude Harley, Joey's brother."

"It's a pleasure to meet you and I want all of that debris searched for Replicators before being disposed of!" Okurii says, ignoring the handshake, and strolling over towards the three other people. "You three! Welcome to Alternia. But if you were hoping to avoid Replicators, I'm sorry to say you made a really bad choice jumping ship."

"Hah!" the guy with the Sunglasses laughs. "Jumping ship!"

"That is a very appropriate choice of words," the guy who looks like he's made entirely of muscles remarks.

"I... Excuse me?" Okurii asks, glancing at the woman. "Am I missing something?"

"Just the fact that we crashed an Alien spaceship during re-entry," she answers.

You turn to look at Jude, looking a bit miffed at the declined handshake, and then ask him, with all the righteous fury of an angry big sister: "YOU. DID. WHAT!?"

Needless to say, you spend the next hour and a half releasing all that pent up BIG SISTER ENERGY that hasn't had a release valve for a SEVERAL YEARS.

Your name is DAVIS STRIDER. Major in the US AIR FORCE, member of the SGC team SG-2, destroyer of Replicator Ships, adoptive father to a crow-kitten baby, and now INTERGALACTIC AMBASSADOR from Earth to Alternia's KID RUN REBELLION.

You say 'kids' but of course quite a lot of them are around Joey's age, and let's see if she was born in 1980... She'd be... Sixteen? No, SEVENTEEN, because it's 1997. Shit, didn't she go missing in November of 94? And if the Gate Program fully started in December of 95... One, two, and it's July now... Two and a half years? She's been on Alternia for TWO and a HALF years.

You arrived in what turned out to be the MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT- even though it was day light out- and most of the people on the Rebellion's COMMAND STAFF just seemed content to leave you all sit under the watchful eye of JOEY CLAIRE until morning- or evening? Whatever, planetary differences.

What. Ever.

So, yeah. You stowed Thor's pod away in the Medical bay and now you're all just sitting in the local CAFETERIA as Joey argues with a the chef over what food to serve. The interesting thing is the language though.

"No! I don't care if it's Hotdog day tomorrow! Get some frozen Pizzas out right now!" She says- and you understand it as English. But, the thing is, she's definitely speaking in Alternian, and instead of "Hotdog" and "Pizzas" she said what directly translated as "Oblong Meat Product" and "Flavor Disks" before the idiom corrected itself in your mind.

Gotta love that Stargate translation magic.
"But it's Hotdog day!" the chef protests, and you sit up slightly to peer over the counter from back here. "The perfect temperature for Hotdog day is Sixty Five Degrees! I must cook them in advance to achieve this temperature before serving!"

Holy shit is that kid tiny, probably even younger than anyone else you've seen. And are his horns shaped like hotdogs?? Wow. But seriously, why is someone this young working as a chef in a crashed spaceship's kitchen?

"Diemen," Joey sighs, hand placed against her forehead with a slight growl to her voice. "Please. Just put on a Pizza to cook. They just fought REPLICATORS. They deserve that much!"

"...Well, okay," the kid says. "But if people complain about over cooked hotdogs I'll point them your way!"

And as he slips back into the kitchen, you hear Joey mutter under her breath, "The only one complaining about your hotdogs being overcooked is you, Diemen. Everyone else just thinks they're grossly under cooked."

...You'll avoid the hotdogs, then.

Joey heads back over to the table and sits down with you. "Sorry about that. Diemen get's a bit... uh... enthusiastic about his Oblong Meat Products." She says in proper English, saying the actual Alternian name for it. Interestingly, it doesn't translate over in your ears as "Hotdog."

"Well, we've all got our quirks," you offer.

"Did he mean Sixty Five degrees Fahrenheit?" Janet asks.

"Eruh, yes," Joey gets a grossed out look on her face. "Li'l Dude likes them RAW. It's the only thing he doesn't cook completely, though. So you don't have to worry about the Pizza or anything else being weird. Well," she frowns, "beyond being made with Alternian Ingredients, I guess. The Flavor Disks I've been ordering for the base are about as close to a normal Earth pizza as we're ever gonna get out here."

"Well, there's that, at least," you say.

"Yeah," Joey nods. "SO!" She then claps her hands. "What the hell have you guys been up to since your last transmission? I was honestly expecting another one back in reply to the last one we sent, but an in person visit's just as good, even if it happened because of a Replicator invasion."

Jude doesn't say anything, but you can tell he wants to. Kid's gone downright shy since Joey berated him for coming over the way he did.

"Well, it's been a lot of crazy stuff," Cassie decides to take the initiative and talk. "It's a whole story full of political intrigue and hunting for a super baby."

"...." Joey blinks. "Sounds like fun compared to the shit we've been doing," she says. "You guys decrypted all of our last transmission before coming here, right?"

"About seventy percent," Cassie says.
"..." Joey blinks. "...Seventy?" She groans, leaning back to glare at the ceiling. "Damn it, Salazl! Why the hell aren't you compressing them lighter?!!" There, she slips into Alternian again, seemingly on instinct. Your ears still hear it as English, though. She sits back up straight a minute later and then says, "So you don't know, then?"

"Know what?" you ask.

"We're running out of time to stop the Replicators from building their Supergate," Joey explains. "We've found whole planets just strip mined of resources- thankfully they were abandoned to begin with, but it's still terrifying just finding nothing but Swiss Cheese where a solid planet should be."

"Ouch," you grimace at the mental imagery.

"Perhaps it is a good thing we came when we did, then," Teal'c says. "A fresh set of eyes may be able to provide light on the situation that others have missed."

"Maybe," Joey frowns.

"I think we can do good here," Cassie speaks up. "But... I dunno, I just kind of feel weird. It's like we're bouncing between two outcomes right now and the universe isn't sure which one it's going to go with."

"You're a Seer?" Joey asks, surprised.

"A what?" Janet asks.

"A Seer," Joey turns to her and explains. "On Diaspora there's a group of Seers called the Blind Prophets-" Janet tenses up at that. "-and no, not all of them are blind, it's just a title they've had for centuries." Janet relaxes. "Anyways," Joey continues, "they're basically psychics who see future events. Sometimes clearly like a vision, sometimes they just get these prophecies they write down and sometimes they're poetic, and sometimes they're not. One of them warned us something bad was about to happen just minutes before we stumbled onto the Replicators first planet harvest."

"I don't think I'm psychic," Cassie says, frowning. "I just sort of know if something's bad's going to happen."

"Well," Jude finally speaks up, "you have had some pretty good predictions about stuff. I'd say that's pretty close."

"Maybe," Cassie shrugs. "At any rate, I... I think I can help you guys narrow it down, seer or not."

"I'm sure Okurii'll love hearing about that," Joey says, a smile forming on her face.

"So what's the deal with the Mini Hammond?" You ask. "She seemed kind of... off put that we woke her up?"

Joey gives you a questioning look. "Mini-Hammond? You mean Okurii? I guess she's kind of like a General, but she's more of a people person, really. Anyways, yeah, sleep is hard to come by these days."

"Really?" Janet asks. "How come?"
"The usual, Sopor Slime supplies running out, Nightmares start hounding people while they sleep," Joey runs off a list. "Plus there's running missions offworld at all hours. If my division isn't using the Gate for scouting, others are pushing forwards with the whole 'liberate the galaxy' thing."

"Others?" You frown, feeling odd about her choice of that word.

"You know," Joey says, "other teams. Like, um..." She muses fora second. "We don't have the team numbers, but me, Xefros, Callie, and Mierfa? We'd be SG-1, basically. Dammek, Daraya, Tyzias, Mallek? They'd be SG-2. We're the ones dealing with the Replicator stuff for the most part. We're kind of free form, though, and switch people around depending who's on break or who'd be more needed on a mission."

"So everyone else in the whole Rebellion would fall under other team numbers, science-y branches and what not," you ask, and Joey nods.

"Yup," she says. "It's kind of funny now that I'm thinking on it. That whole freeform style's pretty much the only thing that's carried over from it just being us out here in the desert. Okurii and Salazl went with us on occasion, but Sal's typically just keeping people from messing with the engine rooms, and Okurii's leading the whole Rebellion now and doesn't have time for field work."

"General Hammond makes the occasional excursion out into the field," Teal'c remarks. "One time he and Master Bra'tac flew a Needle Threader through the Stargate to help rescue the kidnapped members of SG-1 and SG-2 from-"

"Daaah-ahh!" You wave at Teal'c to try and get him to shut up. "They don't need to hear about that!"

Honestly, you don't know HOW Teal'c is as stoic as he ever is in a situation like this. You're feeling a bit in over your head if you're being brutally honest with yourself.

Your name is TEAL'C, and if you're being brutally honest with yourself, you're PANICKING QUITE A LOT on the inside. You're standing here, playing the part of the SILENT STOIC WARRIOR while Major Strider and Dr. Fraiser do the talking with Okurii about the situation at hand. Namely, WHEN to schedule a return to Earth.

Why did you agree to going along with this again?

...

...

You can't remember. Your short term memory must have been affected somewhat by the brief LACK OF OXYGEN caused by your air tank bursting. Well, you sure hope Major Carter had a good argument for why you should go and not her.

At least the 'Pizza' was good. Not the BEST, but you've had WORSE from the SGC Cafeteria.

Still, it's quite a strange scenario you find yourself in where the KIDS are the authority figures and the Adults are nowhere to be found.

Okurii Leijon is quite the NEGOTIATOR, speaking with a powerful intent behind her words that
remind you of General Hammond. In fact, Strider's remarks on her being something like a "Mini Hammond" are quite accurate, in some regards. Hammond has a way with negotiating much like this girl does, except this girl has a keen edge Hammond does not.

"We're in the middle of a two fronted war, Major," Okurii speaks. "As much as I'd love to get you all back home, I can't justify spending the downtime cycles that we'd have if we did a full powered connection just to get you back to Earth. Even if we connected to the Alternian Power Grid, the draw requirements would be so big we'd draw way too much attention from the people who don't like us rebelling."

"You mean the entire planet ISN'T in open revolt?" Strider asks.

"There are always those who stubbornly stick to the old ways, Major Strider," you speak up. "Even on Chulak where news of Apophis' death was celebrated, there were those who refused to admit things were changing."

Of course, those idiots weren't spared a second thought by Apophis when he attacked Chulak searching for the Harcesis.

"Okay, good point," Strider says. "So the fastest way to get us home is to make sure you have one less problem to deal with? Basically?"

"Pretty much," Okurii nods. "If I can sleep better knowing we knew exactly where the Replicators are staging their Supergate and could destroy it because of your team, I'll sing your praises every night up until someone does one better."

She actually said "every day" but curiously the idiom translated over. Yet earlier a similar transposition did not happen. It seems that there is some kind of intent behind the meaning of the words said that aids in the translation.

"If your girl is a Seer like Joey says she is though," Okurii says, "then take her to Seer Altair on Diaspora. See if they can't work out some way to 'see' where the Replicators are hiding the Gate." She pauses, then adds, "Also, do your 'ambassador' thing while you're there, that you mentioned earlier. Ostensibly Earth and Alternia are allies, but we haven't done any actual diplomatic work between us beyond shouting at each other across the universe. You play nice with Alternia's Allies, you play nice with us. We clear?"

"Crystal Clear, Ma'am," Davis replies with a nod.

Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and as you step through the Stargate again, you're caught off guard by how VIBRANT this new world is. Diaspora, Joey called it. It's PRETTY. All bright greens and deep reds. The sky is just so BLUE, too, and there's barely a cloud in it.

You're standing there at the Gate, staring at everything for what seems like an eternity.

Then, Joey taps you on the shoulder, and you snap out of it. The group that came through is already going different ways. The rest of your 'team' from Earth is heading into the town, but Joey and Mierfa are waiting at the Gate, seemingly waiting to see where you're going.
"You okay, Jude?" Joey asks.

"Just... it's so pretty," you say.

"Yeah, Diaspora's pretty neat," Mierfa nods.

"You gonna head to town, or wanna sight see?" Joey asks, clearly offering...

"You got somewhere in mind?" You ask.

"We were gonna go check in on the Arai colony before heading into town," Joey says. "Wanna come with?"

"Sure," you nod.

"So," Mierfa begins as you walk down the road. "Joey tells me you adopted a girl?"

"Oh, yeah," you nod. "Her name's Jade, she's just about... Turning 3 this December?"

"So about a sweep and a half?" Mierfa asks of Joey, who nods.

"Roxy's taking care of her, right?" Joey asks.

"Yeah," you say. "And Nepeta, Dave's kid, too. We kind'f have this set up system where if one of us is unavailable, one of the others takes the kids in."

Joey hums, sounding like she wants to say something but won't. It'd probably just be a rehash of the scolding she gave you last night.

And yeah, boy did you deserve it. You weren't thinking at all about Jade when you made the decision to jump aboard that one way ticket up to space and then to Alternia. All you were thinking about was getting a chance to see your sister again.

...Speaking of seeing your sister in person...

You decide to ask a question that's been bugging you, and since you're MOSTLY alone with Joey right now... Yeah. No better time to ask.

"So, uh... What spooked you so badly about who Khepri got Pa and Aunt Jane's D.N.A. from?" You ask.

Joey stops in her tracks and you and Mierfa both almost miss it and keep walking a step further.

"Jude," Joey breathes out. "You really don't want to know the answer to that."

"I do, actually," you say.

"I'm..." Mierfa makes her excuse, "just going to go up ahead and check the road for Giant Crabs. Be right back!"

And thus, she leaves, leaving you and Joey alone on the road.
"..." Joey sighs. "Fine, Jude." She turns to look you in the eyes. "If you really want to know so badly, I'll show you."

And then she reaches out with her left hand, places it against your forehead, and then there's a pulse of lime green light and--

SUDDENLY, you're looking through Joey's eyes at a screen, as a rather ANGRY MAN rips off a battered helmet and-

Holy Shit. Is that a Blue Texture Reskin of your PA??

-THEN you're back on solid ground on Diaspora, and Joey's withdrawing her hand.

"That..." You begin. "That was...?"

"The Scratch Doctor," Joey puts a name to the face. "Servant to Lord English, and as far as we can tell from rumors, still alive today even after nearly being blown out an airlock thousands of years ago. Apparently he's been chilling out on the outside of some jerks' spaceship for the last hundred years, and who knows what he was doing in between us shooting him out into space without a helmet and now. I'm not even sure we can actually kill the bastard at this point."

Well... that would explain how Pa was so young looking despite his age.

You don't really have anything else to say besides that, so you say that.

"Well," you say, "I guess that explains how Pa was so young looking despite how old he was."

"Yeah, probably," Joey shakes her head. "The worst part is, I don't know what that makes US."

"It makes us people," you say without hesitating. Joey frowns, and you quickly add, "no! Wait, hear me out!"

"...Fine."

"It doesn't matter what species we are. Human, Jaffa, Tok'ra, Alternian- we're still US, and we're all still just people in the end," you say. "So what if we've got a few bizzarro genes stuck in our D.N.A.? Nepeta has cat ears and crow wings and neon hair! Doesn't mean she's not still one of the most rambunctious little girls I've ever had to babysit!"

Joey gives you a look that says you didn't quite stick the landing with that explanation, but she sighs, and relents, "I guess you're right about that. Still, it means that fighting Scratch is going to be so awkward... He's like, practically our grandfather!"

"Well," you say, "sometimes we need to give our family a swift kick in the rear out the door!" Joey flinches- Oh, Right. "Sorry. Right. The whole Airlock thing."

Except if you remember that brief glimpse of a memory right, it was more of a SHIP'S FLIGHT BAY more so than an Airlock, but still.

Neither of you say anything for a few moments. You, personally, aren't sure what to say, really.

"Jude..." Joey begins, looking you in the eyes.
"Yeah?" You ask.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there for you," she says. "That Pa died because of me... I..." She reaches across her front with her right hand to grab at her left arm. "I'm sorry I yelled at you last night. I was out of line. I just..." She sighs. "I'm so scared that you coming here means you're never making it home."

Your response to that is to give her a hug.

"I'm the one who should be apologizing, Joey!" You tell her. "I shouldn't have come. I should've stayed behind, but- But Cassie was up there and I didn't want to lose her to Alternia like I thought I'd lost you! I was being selfish."

She wraps her arms around you into a hug, and says, "I think we've both been a bit selfish lately, huh?"

"Probably," you agree.

"Let's get moving," Joey says, breaking from the hug, and smiling. "Mierfa's probably wasting time practicing on a dead tree or something."

"Practicing?" You ask. The answer comes as you head down the road and see the girl whacking away on a tree with nun-chucks.

"You two good?" Mierfa asks.

"Yeah," Joey nods.

And thus, the three of you head to the Arai Colony and....

"HOLY SHIT!" you stare up at the LARGE HIVE within which a large beetle sits at the center-surrounded by dozens and dozens of smaller beetles. "When did you get a big one?!"

"It was in the last transmission," Joey says, "Um, about a week or so before we sent the broadcast to you guys? So it'd be near the end and you probably didn't get to it." She steps up to the large ARAI POLYARCH and pats an offered leg. "This big guy is Becquerel! Bec for short. We finally got him to grow up big and strong!"

The massive Arai Polyarch with its bright orange shell eyes you with GLEAMING GREEN EYES, and you feel a brush against your mind.

[Friend?]  
[Yes, he's a friend.] Joey says, except, definitely not with her mouth. [This is Jude, my little brother.]

[Matron's Brother. Welcome!!] You feel as if this Polyarch is smiling- or would, if it had the right mouth for it. [Greetings and Salutations!]

"Uh... Hi, Bec?" you offer. "Nice to meet you?"
'Bec' says, and you get the impression that if he (it?) were a dog, you'd be on the ground covered in slobber right now. As it is, there's a staggering kind of overwhelming presence that seems to be brushing up against you right now and you feel like taking a step backwards.

"Woah there!" Thankfully, Mierfa grabs you by the shoulder and keeps you from falling flat on your back. "Easy there."

"Sorry," Joey says to you, an apologetic smile on her face. "Bec's still not quite used to controlling his presence around people yet."

"It's fine," you squeak out as you feel the presence brushing against you back away.

"No, it's not. It means we've got work to do still," Joey says, while also broadcasting (???) to the Giant Arai Ployarch, [You're doing better. You didn't bowl him over like you did with Skylla. Just keep practicing on not shoving *everything* at people, okay?]

[Will Try Shall Remember Practice.]

[Good boy.]

You're honestly wondering why the hell you're even hearing this, since they're not talking at you directly.

"Oh," Joey smiles, a nervous one though, as if she heard your thoughts. "Sorry, that's 'cause I showed you what happened directly. I kind of just tuned you to Arai Radio, I guess?"

"Wait, did you hear me think that?" You ask. ...Test?

"Yeah, sorry," Joey smiles. [Tested!]

Oh.

Um.

That's...

"I'm not really sure how to respond to that," you finally say. But in your defense, it's been a really long day.

[That it has, Jude, that it has.]

Oi! Stop that!

[Make me!] Joey sticks her tongue out at you. [Okay, fine, I'll put a block up so you're not broadcasting everything.]

Well... thanks, you guess.
Joey doesn't reply, so you say it out loud, "Thanks?"

"You're welcome," Joey answers.

...This day just keeps getting weirder and weirder.

Chapter End Notes

This is what you get for not watching *ALL OF THE BACKGROUND LORE VIDEOS* before jumping headlong through a wormhole, Jude.
ALT:04X02: Carcinogens (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

In which things go sideways for a lot of people. (Part 2/3)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Your name is CASSANDRA FRAISER, and you're feeling just a smudge in over your head. Standing before you are a bunch of ROBED INDIVIDUALS, who, thankfully, you don't have to talk to just yet because they're busy trying to get some girl to go away.

"Miss Pyrope," the one you're told is called ALTAIR begins. "Just because you stared at the Alternian sun for too long doesn't mean you can join our ranks."
"But I'm BLIND!" The girl says, pointing at her RED SEARED EYES. "I'm a shoe-in for the Blind Prophets!!"

Taking that sudden declaration into account, you look at the way she's dressed and... Yeah. Oh. YEAH. She's Blind. Holy shit who let this girl dress herself? Bright red shoes, a puffy teal jacket with a strikingly TYEDYED TSHIRT beneath, and.... yeah. She's definitely wearing her pants backwards. Said pants are also covered in what looks like RED CHALK STAINS.

"Look!" The blind girl says, "If it's predictions you want I'll give you one!"

"Alright," Seer Altair crosses their arms. "Amaze us with your prediction, and if it comes true, you will be allowed to join our ranks."

"Alright!" The blind girl pumps her right fist into the air, then puts it up by her right eye as if trying to grab at a vision within her head. "Okay so! Here it comes.... Aaaaaannnnndd!!" She wriggles her fingers, squints her blinded eyes uselessly, and then- "HERE IT IS!" She snaps her fingers and then holds out her hand as if she's got something in it...

Which she doesn't.

"Today an army of Black Widows will raid the pantry for food today and a dashing cool kid will only be saved by a sharply dressed knight blowing in from left field and yelling at them and make them all shatter into billions of tiny pieces!" She proudly predicted.

"...I see..." Altair forces out, before sighing. "Alright, fine. If your army of 'black widows' shows up, we'll consider your prediction valid... Just what the hell are Black Widows?"

"I have NO IDEA!" the blind girl cracks a planet splitting grin.

...You guess Alternia doesn't have Black Widow Spiders, but Diaspora does? You look to your mother and she shrugs.

"Very well," Seer Altair says. "Come back tomorrow and we'll see if the prediction came true."
"Sweet!" And with that, blind girl turns and starts walking... directly at you. You go to step out of her way but she holds out her left arm and grabs you by your right shoulder and then, after following it down your arm, she lifts your hand up to her mouth and--

...and she licks your palm.

Ew.

"HUZZAH!" She cheers, far too loudly for her proximity to your face. "You're the girl from my dream last night!"

"...What?" You ask.

"Your hand tastes like the ashes of a fire resting on the surface of a bowl of lusus milk!" the girl grins. "You're the one alright! The Girl bathed in Hanka's Ashes who can find the Black Widow's hidden ring!"

Wait what the fuck?!

"...Wait, what?" Davis asks in just as much surprise at that declaration. You're sure that if Teal'c or your mother were here, you'd guess Teal'c would have raised an eyebrow at that statement, and Mom... she'd probably have tried to give the girl an exam on the spot for those burnt out eyes.

"Oh!" And then blind girl turns around to face him, while still holding your hand and forcing you to turn as well. "If it isn't mister Cool Kid! Herded any Cats lately?" She pauses, "Wait, no, shouldn't it be crows? Um... No, cats and crows? Both?" she scowls. "Whatever! Just make sure to give her a hug tonight when you get home."

"...What?" Davis asks, and honestly you're a bit shaken up too. How the hell did she-?

"AHHEM." Seer Altair coughs. "Miss Pyrope? You were just leaving?"

"Was I?" the girl asks, grinning as she continues to stare straight on at Davis. "I could've sworn I was only just arriving. Act Four, Chapter Two... or was it Three? Damned prologues are always hard to factor into the page counts."

"Miss Pyrope! You're holding up my other appointment," Seer Altair points out.

"Fiiiine. I'm going, I'm going!" And with that, Blind girl lets go of your hand and walks around you as if she were able to see just fine. "See you around, Ash-girl! Smell ya later, Cool Kid!"

"...Was it just me or did she just...?" You look at Davis.

"How the hell did she know that?" Davis asks back.

"I'm sorry for Terezi, just now," Seer Altair says, stepping forwards. "She's... a very unusual child. Asks every year to join the Prophets, but she's not a prophet."

"She's not?" You ask.

"Not a single one of her predictions have ever come true, just... more bizarre," Altair shakes their
head. "It got worse after she blinded herself. She always makes a point of pointing it out when she tries to join our ranks afterwards."

"Well, she knew a lot about us just from seeing, uh, us," Davis said. "Hanka is where Cassie's from and it's long gone, and I have an adopted daughter who's got cat ears and crow wings."

"...Curious," Seer Altair muses. "I was certain she wasn't a Seer, but if her insane ramblings have actually had meaning to you, then it's possible she is one."

"She also said something that has to do with while we're here," you say. "That I was going to find a hidden ring- which is to say we're here to see if I can help find the Supergate the Replicators are making."

"She meant Replicators when she said 'black widows'?” Altair asks, suddenly growing alarmed.

"Yup," Davis says. "Black Widows are spiders back home on Earth- deadly ones at that- and the Replicators have the same color scheme- black bodies with red lines."

"Perhaps..." Altair pauses. "Would you happen to know of an 'Empress who bombed so bad her ship went belly up over Abydos'?"

"Hell yes," Davis says.

"What about 'A black hole swam up a drain and nearly devours a mountain'?"

"We threw a bomb in its face to get it to go away," you answer.

"Oh no," Seer Altair laments. "I fear I've made a terrible mistake."

"What's that?" You ask.

"I had a vision of a poem," Altair says, "one of the lines of which was 'A Cassandra Truth ignored, and doom will fall across the board.'"

"...Cassandra is my full first name," you tell him.

A moment later, that's when you hear alarms sounding, and the sound of something LARGE flying overhead.

"Well, crap," Altair succinctly remarks.

"An Arrisolized Acid, You Say?"

Your name is DR. JANET FRAISER, and yes, you do indeed say that. You've got no idea how to treat Thor's Injuries, and so you've outsourced for different opinions. First, you asked the Nurses back on the ship that is Alternia's version of the SGC, and they suggested you ask Diaspora's top medic.

Said Top Medic is presently busy setting a BROKEN LEG given to a young child who STUPIDLY CLIMBED TOO HIGH up a tree and then fell out of it, and so you're talking to her assistant, a young woman no older than Cassie and Jude, wearing a black dress with an oddly GREY COLORED STARGATE SYMBOL hand painted over the heart.
"Hmm..." The girl, who as of yet has declined to introduce herself, muses over your question. "I would have to say that we've historically encountered beings who breath such a thing out in the Alternian Desert, however, breathing in an arrisolized acid is almost certainly a death sentence. If it gets into the lungs, and it's as powerful of an acid as you say as to melt through metal within minutes... your friend won't survive long once he's taken out of stasis."

"Thanks for your time," you sigh.

"It's been my pleasure," the girl waves as you leave, and join Teal'c outside.

"Were you unable to find a cure for Thor, Janet Fraiser?" He asks.

"Yes, Teal'c," you sigh. "Apparently Alternia's had some beasts who breathed something similarly caustic and acidic, and it's a death sentence for them."

"That is most unfortunate news," Teal'c frowns.

"That it is, Teal'c," you agree. "I wonder how Cassie's doing?"

An answer to nobody's question (Let alone yours) comes in the form of a LARGE SHIP suddenly flying over head and crashing down in the forest a long distance away.

"Hey!" The Burgandy Blooded Kid- XEFROS TRITOH- comes running over towards you with the Lime Blooded girl- CALLIE OHPHEE- trailing behind. "That was a Mofang Ship!"

"Replicators?" You ask.

"Maybe, maybe not," Callie says. "It looked like it sustained major damage, and couldn't deal anything back. I didn't see any weapon ports on it."

"It could be a civilian vessel," Teal'c suggests. "There may be people alive on board."

"Yeah, that was our thinking," Xefros agrees. "So we came to see if the Doctor was available or not to come with."

"The Doctor in there is busy with a kid who broke his leg," you say, "but I'm available if you need some experienced eyes."

"And if the ship has indeed been overrun by Replicators, I can be of assistance as well," Teal'c adds.

"Alright," Xefros nods, then looks around for a moment before flagging down the attention of an Arai Beetle. "Hey! Joey! We're heading to the crash site! Come find us when you can!"

The bug flares up its wings in confirmation. Huh. You guess Joey has a PRETTY IMPRESSIVE RANGE for seeing through the eyes of her bugs. You wonder how far it goes? Has she tested it?

"Okay, we're good to go," Xefros nods, then summons a couple of ALIEN RIFLES from some form of subspace pocket.

"Um..." You blink as he hands you and Teal'c the weapons. "Okay."
And so you head out towards the downed ship. By the time you made it to the outskirts of town, Davis had run up to join you, and Cassie, apparently had gone off to find Joey's group, completely unaware that she could have warned them about a (Now very seriously happening) Replicator incursion by waving down an Arai Beetle.

...Or maybe she does know but has her own reasons for talking in person? You suppose you'll ask later.

Strolling through the rapidly closing up market square, a certain Teal Blooded Blind Girl meanders from stall to stall, grabbing various items. A couple of metal chopsticks and a set of knives from an abandoned bowl of pasta. A bag of marbles from where some younger kids had left them. A large sledge hammer from where someone was building a fence. Woah! that nearly set her off balance for a moment, but she recovers, and scoops up the last item: a pair of FANCY SUNGLASSES from a rack of sunglasses, made of BRIGHT RED PLASTIC.

Thus armed, the girl known as Terezi Pyrope saunters her way up towards the Stargate, a grin on her face, and the red lensed sunglasses haphazardly skewed across her burnt red eyes.

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and you're feeling a bit nervous as you trail blaze your path through the forest towards the downed ship. By Callie's guesstimates, you're about half-way there when you stumble upon a family of battered up Mofang, who, for the first time in recent memory, seem absolutely happy to see Alternian kids out and about, and don't even care about the three other ALIENS accompanying you.

There's four of them, two adults and two kids. The man is leaning heavily into the woman, and looks to be bleeding from his head and leg.

"Oh thank god, sentient life!" One of them, the woman, begins. "See, Kids? I told you that was a settlement!"

The kids just nod in acceptance while the man mutters something about needing a lawyer.

"I'm a medic, we saw you crash. What happened?" Dr. Fraiser asks as she goes over to check the man's wounds.

"We were a Civilian Vessel from a settlement not far from here," the Mofang woman says, moving over to a tree so her husband could lean against it while Janet did her thing. "We thought, maybe we could hold out on our own, if there was no Stargate on the planet. Maybe Alternia would leave us alone. It just made us weak when our own Construction Drones turned against us."

"Construction Drones?" Callie asks, confused. "Do you mean the Replicators?"

"That's certainly a better name for them now, I guess," the Mofang woman shakes her head. "They were a civilian project that the Emperor ordered to be re-purposed into a Military weapon. Blasters and Swords that could keep fighting when their wielders were killed in battle. Then something went wrong. Some idiot pushed an update for the Civilian models meant for the Military Models, or some code conflict manifested, or someone deliberately sabotaged them. Whatever the case, the ones on
"Soria went insane. The whole planet was overrun and the surviving population was leaving for another galaxy, last we'd heard on the settlement."

"The Sorian empire's left the Galaxy?" You ask, surprised.

"They'd ordered all the settlement worlds to leave and to deactivate our Drones," the Mofang woman says, shaking her head. "Our mayor, and most of us in the settlement, decided we would be safe and out of the way if we just disabled the transceivers on our Drones. It worked, for a while. None of them went mad, none of them went insane... and then a ship landed on our planet and the MAD ONES came crawling out like a plague! Our Drones turned on us within a heartbeat and..." She chokes on a sob. "It's all we survivors could do just to steal an un-compromised ship and get off world. Except there were more ships. They shot at us and we ended up crash landing here on this world. Please tell me you have a Stargate so we can get out of here?"

"We do, yes," Callie says. "Was your ship compromised with the Replicators?"

"I... I don't know," The Mofang woman shakes her head. "The moment we stopped moving I got my husband and my children out of there."

"We'll go investigate the ship," you say. "See if there are any more survivors. Is there a name we give to say who sent us?"

"Thank you," The Mofang woman says, smiling. "I'm Ruukes."

"Ruukes," you repeat. "Got it."

"Janet?" Major Strider asks. "Can we move him?"

"It looks like a concussion to me," Dr. Fraiser answers. "His leg is banged up pretty badly, though. I'll give it some work and we'll get him moving."

"I'll stay here with you then," Major Strider says. "Teal'c go with the kids to investigate the ship. Smash any Replicators you see."

"I will do so with great pleasure," Teal'c says, readying the rifle you'd given him.

"Please, be careful!" the Mofang woman, Ruukes, says as you three gear up to move out. "If there are Drones- Replicators- onboard they might be going for the Power Core. If it's unstable--"

Both of her kids mime the sound of an explosion.

"-Er, yes, that," Ruukes says, nervously.

"Thanks for the heads up," Callie says, and with that, you continue on your way to the Ship.

"Cassie!" Your name is JUDE HARLEY and you nearly run into your friend on the road as you head back into town. "Woah! Slow down there!"

"Replicators!" She says. "We've got Replicators inbound!"
"Are you sure?" Joey asks. "That ship's infested?"

"No! Well yes! But No! Not THAT!" Cassie shakes her head. "They're coming from orbit! I can feel a wave of pur BAD coming from above us."

"...Well, Shit," Mierfa summarizes sufficiently.

"Mierfa," Joey begins, "take Jude and Cassie and get to the Gate and Radio Alternia. Let them know we might need to evacuate Diaspora at a moment's notice."

"NO!" Cassie yells. "We can't evacuate! That just makes the bad WORSE."

"She's right," Mierfa says. "If there are Replicators on the planet already, some might slip through the Gate while we're evacuating people."

"...Okay, fine," Joey says. "I'll just blow the ship up while it's entering the atmosphere with Hyperbeam."

"If you do," Cassie warns, "Make sure you don't miss and completely vaporize it."

"Yeah, I know," Joey smiles a kind of dangerous smile. "I've done this dance before."

"No! I mean vaporize EVERY ATOM," Cassie says. "Make sure that it doesn't even get a chance to break up in the atmosphere. It's just as bad of a result if a single piece survives as if we go to evacuate right now."

Joey frowns, then says, "Alright. I can do that."

You're not sure you like how easily she can commit to that kind of firepower.

"One last question," Joey begins, "is it better or worse if I do it from the ground, or in the air?"

Cassie mulls it over for a second, then says, "Best from from the air. You've got a better angle, I think."

"Good," Joey nods, then turns to her girlfriend. "Mierfa! Let's get to the Dragonfly we left here in case of emergencies just like this."

"I'll get you as close as I can, Claire," Mierfa answers, smirking. "Let's do another risky run."

Terezi Pyrope stands in front of the Stargate as it suddenly starts spinning to life. Chevrons light up in sequence in rapid fire as an incoming wormhole dials in. One Through Seven, and then the WAA WAA KAWOOOSH emerges.

The unstable vortex rushes towards Terezi- but falls short of her body by literally a solid one and three fourths inch. Terezi just grins to herself as a series of six SCHLORPS sound off in her ears.

"Hello, Your Honorable Santa Claus," she greets the tallest of the arrivals as she looks up and
impossibly locks eyes with him. The grin never leaves her face for a second. "I am but a humble elf come bearing gifts for your esteemed inspection before today's festivities can truly begin."

The unimpressed cherry blooded troll stares down at her for a moment, and then, grins as he says, "I guess Christmas must have come early then. Well Shit, time for me to put on my red suit and fake beard, and be fucking Santa Claus."

Behind him, five confused teenagers wonder just what the hell is going on.

"Hello??" Xefros calls out as you, CALLIE OHPHEE, he, and TEAL'C enter the crashed Mofang ship. "Ruukes sent us to check for survivors! Is there anyone here?"

Xefros takes point, leading you through room to room, clearing room by room, searching for Survivors or Replicators...

You, unfortunately, find NEITHER.

The ship's PASSENGERS AND CREW have been slain by Replicators, for sure, because they have LARGE HOLES carved through parts of their bodies that did not come from ship damage. As for the Replicators? Signs of them CHEWING THEIR WAY through the ship in places is evident, but there's no sign of the bugs anywhere onboard the ship itself.

"They've fled into the forest," you think you're going to faint.

"We've got to find them," Xefros decides.

"Indeed," Teal'c says with a grim nod.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and as Mierfa takes you HIGHER AND HIGHER, faster than you could fly on your wings alone, you feel your heart flutter with anticipation and fear and anxiety.

THIS IS EXACTLY WHY YOU DID NOT WANT JUDE TO COME TO ALTERNIA!!!

If he'd just watched the rest of those stupid videos he'd have seen you tell him that! He'd have seen you PLEAD AND BEG them to never send someone through the Gate to this galaxy ever again.

Stupid.

 Fucking!

REPLICATORS!!!!

You take sight at the ship entering the atmosphere above you- nothing but a bright red splotch of flames of re-entry heading down towards you.

You lift you left hand and let your rage BURN with all the fires of LIVE VOLCANOES ABOUT TO EXPLODE.

Well, you guess if there's one thing Jude coming here was good for...
IT'S GIVEN YOU A LOT OF RAGE TO POUR INTO THIS NEXT ATTACK.

"GET WRECKED!!!" You roar and unleash a massive FUCK OFF BEAM of red and blue alternating light straight upwards in a SWEEPING CONE SHAPE that catches that descending Replicator controlled ship and fucking VAPORIZES IT.

You know this because you feel the beam hitting resistance against the shields for all of one point three four seconds before that resistance of the shield snaps away, then there's just the ship, and that barely lasts .216 seconds before IT vanishes as well.

Then, you feel it coming up against a few more SHIPS, also on course for Diaspora, and you just let THEM BURN AS WELL.

Yes. BURN. BURN IN THE FIRES OF THE ANGRY WRATH OF AN OVER PROTECTIVE BIG SISTER, YOU STUPID FUCKING REPLICATORS!!!

GO. TO. HELL!!!!!

(If such a thing exists for machines like that.)

The sudden explosion of RED AND BLUE LIGHT from on high makes you stop and look up at the heavens.

Your name is DAVIS STRIDER, and for a moment, you imagine the view from space. Just this massive fucking huge cone shape of red and blue light spiraling away from a planet like a reverse Death Star.

"Holy shit," You gasp.

"Woooooaah!" The two Mofang Kiddos stare up as well.

"What is that?" The Mofang woman asks.

"I have no idea," you say, "but I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that some Replicators just got FUCKED."

"Davis!" Janet scolds you. "Watch your language around the children!"

You turn around to apologize to her, but stop as you see something small, red, and black in the tree behind her, rearing up for a jump.

"DOWN!" You yell, and snap up your rifle to fire off.

Janet and the Mofang family all do such as the Replicator leaps at you and you ONE SHOT IT.

SPANG! Pieces go flying- much larger chunks than the ones on Thor's ship, you note- and you think, for a moment that that might be the end of it.
That's when one of the buggers jumps you from behind and slams into the back of your skull, sending you tumbling to the ground in a daze.

You're stunned and dazed as you try to line up a shot on this Replicator- but then a bunch more land on the ground around it and there's no way you can hit them all, not as they all rear up to leap at everyone alive in front of them, and the one that attacked you first BEGINS TO LEAP---

Time stops for a moment.

You feel your heart stuck between beats, and you feel as if this is the moment that could decide history, if it hadn't been decided already.

And then as time resumes it's forwards march, a wave of LIGHT BLUE LIGHT washes over the Replicators and they all just FALL TO PIECES.

The one that leaped at you smacks against your chest as a bunch of metal pieces.

"...What the hell?" You get up to your feet, and turn to look in the direction of where the wave came from...

You see an ALTERNIAN GUY about your age wielding some strange kind of WEAPON, colored blue, and looking like a giant glass plate stuck to a cable decorated vase formed around the guys hand. You blink as the guy stares at you for a moment, a look of TOTAL ENJOYMENT OF THE MOMENT etched onto his face.

Finally, you just ask, "Who the devil are you?"

"Watch the fucking Language, Strider," the guy says, cracking a grin at you. "Because you might just get put on the Naughty List. But I'll let it slide and give you your present early anyways."

...The fuck? It's, like, JULY, isn't it?

A moment later, a young girl steps out from behind him and then bowls you over with a super tight hug.

You're standing in confusion as you look down and see... Cat Ears and Crow Wings, and bright orange eyes staring up at you and what the shit??? How the hell did Nepeta get to be like, ten years older in the span of a daaaaaaywaitafuckingminute.

"Time travel," you begin, completely unimpressed. "It's time travel, isn't it?"

"Yup!" your daughter wriggles her cat ears in delight.

"Got it in one, Strider," the unknown troll guy says, then, turns and smiles at Janet. "Doctor Fraiser. Good to see you again."

"Um.... sure, whoever you are?" Janet says, no doubt completely confused by this staggering turn of events.

"Names Vantas," the guy says, giving a salute with his free hand. "Major Karkat Vantas, Alternia-Earth Alliance, from the year 2010, at your service."
And honestly, so are you for the most part, but whatever. You wrap your arms around your daughter in a tight hug and try not to wonder what other surprises are going to be thrown at you today.

Chapter End Notes

SHIT. LET'S BE SANTA.
(Might not post much this weekend. Busy holiday and family stuff. Hope you all have a good weekend.)
ALT:04X03: Alternate Recipe (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

In which re-introductions are made, and Karkat mishears someone telling him not to do something.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you can't help but stare up at the sky for a moment in sheer awe and horror. This is the power Jade's AUNT/OLDER SISTER supposedly holds on her wrist. Red and Blue light swirling and exploding in the atmosphere. If you squint, you can barely see some flickering light at the base of the inverted cone- twin firing engines keeping some small ship afloat in the air.

Okay, moment's over. You've got a job to do, and that job is you and Jade following a RATHER ODD BLIND GIRL through town to the place where JUDE AND CASSIE are waiting for Jade to deliver a letter.

"Oi! Ash-girl!" The Blind girl grins as you round a corner. "I return bearing presents!"

The boy that's there doesn't even bother looking down from the light show in the sky. He looks exactly the same as you remember him from the last time you saw him. JUDE HARLEY. The girl looks like a deer in the headlights upon seeing you and Jade follow behind the girl. "Jude." She taps his shoulder. "Look!" CASSANDRA FRAISER, also exactly as you remember her from the last time you saw her, save that her hair's tied up in a pony tail at the moment and not let loose.

Jude turns to look at you, and you see his face scrunch in confusion before recognition dawns.

"What the-?" He blinks. "...Jade!??"

Jade doesn't say anything, she just throws herself at the boy and hugs him tight.

"What...? Rose?? Jade??" Cassandra stares. "How...?"

"Hello, Aunt Cassandra," you wave. "The answer is 'Time Travel.'"

It feels weird calling a girl your own age 'Aunt,' and it likely feels just the same hearing it for her.

"Aunt-?" Cassandra blinks. "Wait, will that would explain the-" And then suddenly she starts smiling, then grinning. "We've stopped bouncing between potential futures."

"We're not out of the woods just yet," Blind Girl suddenly chimes in. "Wait, no, that's somebody else that's not out of the woods just yet. Somebody should go into the woods and get them- Wait. No. We just sent somebody into the woods to get them out, right?"

"Yes," you say, "we definitely just did that." You look to Cassandra, and ask, "Is she always like
"Don't know," she answers, "just met her today."

"Ah." You nod, understanding. "Same here."

You wonder for a moment how the hell the older Karkat knew who she was then? But then you remember. Time Travel. He remembers her from being his younger self.

Speaking of, he and your brother are out in the forest right now as per the older Karkat's orders.

You wonder how they're doing? That answer will have to wait, though, because speaking of orders, Jude is opening up the letter that Jade had been given by Jack who had been given it by an alternate version of Aunt Joey, who had been given it by an alternate version of Aunt Cassandra and wow that is a long and rambling sentence that you almost didn't-

"CASSIE! DUCK!" Jude yells, and Cassandra does without hesitation.

A Mechanical Black and Red half-spider misses its target and lands on the ground right in front of you. It seems dazed for a moment, and that's all the time it takes for you to swing your leg forwards and punt the thing into the nearest wall.

It breaks apart on impact.

Nice!

"What was that?" Cassandra asks, going back over to Jude and Jade.

"A warning from another world!" Blind Girl appropriately surmises, and yet again, you wonder how the hell she knows that.

...You hope John and that Karkat boy are getting along without killing each other.

"Why the fuck does the older me get the cool weapon and all *I* get is a stupid prybar?" your name is KARKAT VANTAS and you're quite annoyed that your only means of DEFENDING YOURSELF is a stupid bronze red painted PRYBAR, one that your FUTURE SELF handed to you moments before rushing off in a different direction with the crow-cat-girl.

"I dunno," the human boy says, hefting a sledge hammer that looks much too heavy for how easily he's using it. "Maybe you'd break it if he gave you the fancy weapon? It did look like it was made out of glass."

"Oh, HA HA, very funny," you scowl. What was his name again? Whatever, you'll just call him what that blind girl called him when she handed him that fuck huge sledge hammer. "So, 'Not-A-Shephard'."

"That's so not my name," he says.

"Well I can't remember your name, and that one sticks out better," you protest.
"It's John Egbert," he says, and good, you make a note of that. John Egbert. ...Doesn't mean you're not going to troll him a little. Serves him and everyone else right for forcing you onto some stupid time travel stunt you'd apparently were already signed up for before anyone even asked you.

"Whatever. So. Not-A-Shephard," you continue on. "Do you have any idea what we're supposed to be doing out here beyond 'find and squash some black widows'?

"I'd guess we use some impressive feats of strength to squash some mechanical bugs?" John says, and you look at him.

"What?" You ask.

"That," he points at a nearby tree and you follow where he's point to see- Oh. It's bunch of fucking four legged metal spiders just... EATING through a tree.

"Well, fuck." You say. "That sure is a bunch of bugs that needs squashing." You pause for a moment, then ask, "How the hell do we hit them all without them running?"

"I think we can handle this easy enough," John says, readying his hammer like it's a bat, and says, "Batter up!"

...What the fuck is that supposed to mean? It's not like the bugs are just going to get knocked off the tree or some--

Suddenly, a SHARP BREEZE blows through the forest.

You don't know what the hell is happening but you ready the PRYBAR and get ready to swing it at something.

"And a swing batter batter!" With a smirk, the BREEZE TURNS INTO A GALE, and the SPIDERS are all ripped off of their termite-work and sent hurtling at you like they were pitched at you out of a BALL ACCELERATOR.

You and he swing your weapons and smash the weird bugs as they hurtle at you.

This is actually kind of fun!

...Not that you'll tell anyone about thinking that.

"So... we all died?" Your name is Janet Fraiser and you can't help but feel INCREDIBLY UNNERVED by how casually the facts are laid out to you by the LAST PERSON you ever expected to run into out here.

"Pretty much," Jolinar says through the time traveled Nepeta's mouth. "Everyone in Alternia, best as we could figure, and then a lot of people who worked at the SGC too. Anyone who got suspicious and didn't keep their heads down, essentially."

"That's horrible," you say. "And these Aschen were behind it all?"

"That's par the course from the encounters with them in the future," the one calling himself MAJOR KARKAT VANTAS says. "Course, I wasn't there personally as the current me. I will be there to do it, but I don't know a lot of the details beyond what's relevant to tell you right now."

"Time Travel being a cornucopia of confusing concepts aside," Davis remarks as he and the Mofang woman help heft her husband down along the trail. "Why wouldn't they fully brief you on everything before sending you?"

"Because I already went in blind twice from both perspectives save for this immediate mission, of which I only know so much about? And if I knew more I'd risk changing the timeline? THUS DOOMING the reality I came from?" Major Vantas offers. "Honestly, I was just as riled up as you are when I was a kid going through this for the first time. But you know what I realized the motivation was?"

"No, what?" Davis asks.

"It means I'm living in the moment and rolling with the punches and not second guessing anything," Major Vantas answers. "I'm not trying to micromanage every little detail, AND, the best part of all?" He laughs. "It means that as long as I'm not interacting with my past self, both of us have complete and total free will and we're not doing some freaky causality loop of 'where does the information come from'?"

"OH," Davis says. "Like what Joey was complaining about over dinner the other night. Where did the original information for the Alternian version of the Nine Chevron Gate Address for Earth come from? What's the original source for that information, and who carved it on that stone and left it behind on Haven beneath that tree?"

"Exactly! Information paradoxes like that are what we're trying to avoid here." Major Vantas snaps his fingers. "I, personally, STILL don't know where that address came from, or who put it there, and you couldn't get the answer out of me even if you pumped me full of truth serum!"

"But with the Aschen," You say, "you're not concerned about it?"

"The Aschen? That's the beauty of those four kids coming through the Mirror," Major Vantas says. "They've SEEN what happens when Earth forms an alliance with them, and thus, it's a perfectly valid warning with information from a confirmed source."

"What about the Replicators?" you ask. "You said you weren't fully briefed, but didn't you say you came back with a younger version of yourself already? Shouldn't you remember everything?"

"Y'see, besides the fact that I've- y'know- already done it, that's the beauty of why I was sent. Let's give today as an example," Major Vantas says. "The first time I lived through today? I was a particularly unobservant wriggler who slept through til night fall. The second time through? I'm out in this very forest right now with John breaking up stray Replicators! The third time? That's me, right here, right now, talking to you. Doing all the shit that just feels RIGHT, and outside of a few brief interactions with the second me?" he shrugs. "I only have a vague outline of what the hell I'm doing."

"But what about the Supergate?" Davis asks.
"Blissfully unaware, the med bay, and about to learn it first hand, in, like, a few days- er, depending on what today's date is, that is." Major Vantas answers. "In roughly that chronological order."

"I'm sorry," the Mofang woman Ruukes begins, "But did you say 'supergate'? As in, a giant Stargate?"

"Yup," Davis answers. "That's a thing the Replicators are building and nobody knows where or why."

"...Pardon my Alternian. Children, cover your ears." Her children do as such, and then Ruukes says, "What the fuck!? That's not in the Construction Drone's library at all. Why would they be building a giant Stargate!? How did they even get the blueprints for such a thing!?"

"One of life's mysteries," Major Vantas says, "of which I only have a vague impression of the true cause to."

"Which would be?" Davis asks.

"Some insufferable prick named 'Caliborn' did it," Major Vantas answers. "No clue who that even is, though. Yet. I'll pay better attention this time around."

"Promises promises," Davis snarks.

"Well, you know what they say, Strider," Major Vantas counters, "'Third time's the charm!'"

"And just how long have you been holding that one back?" Davis asks.

"Far too fucking long," Major Vantas answers.

Your name is JOHN EGBERT- and while honestly you might consider a RENAME at some point if you're going to end up living in the same time-plane-continuum as a younger, alternate version of yourself (Just to avoid confusion), that's a decision that'll wait for later. When you're not busy dealing a fatal blow to mechanical spiders with a large hammer, or, as the present situation suddenly demands, running into a couple of trolls and a familiar face you vaguely remember from your YOUTH.

"...Woah," you stare up at the tall, imposing wall of muscles. "You're Teal'c, right?"

The man raises an eyebrow, and intones out a very familiar, "Indeed."

"Um, Xefros?" The girl begins. "I thought there weren't any other humans in this galaxy?"

"I don't think there should be," Xefros- the boy- shrugs.

"That's because there weren't until just now," Karkat steps forwards. "My future self literally dragged my ass, his ass, and a few other asses back in time to stop some critical disaster that I can only assume involves the giant mech bugs we've been smashing?"
"I told you we heard the sounds of somebody smashing bugs, Callie" Xefros turns to the girl. "See? I told you!"

"Yes, you did tell me Xefros," the girl- Callie- nods. "Time Travel, huh?" She looks you over, then muses, "I'm guessing stable time loop?"

"Apparently," you shrug.

"What's your name?" Xefros asks.

"I'm John Egbert," you say. "He's Mister Beep Beep Meow."

"Wait what?" Karkat glances at you.

"You know, 'car-cat'?" you say. "Beep Beep, a car horn, and then a cat's meow?"

"Oh, is this revenge for me calling you 'Not-a-Shephard'?" He asks.

"Gee. Ya think?" You ask, sarcastically.

"John Egbert?" Teal'c begins. "As in the adopted son of Roxy and Alec Egbert, sister to Rose Egbert?"

"Oh, uh, yes," You say. "That's me exactly. Although, Rose goes by 'Lalonde' these days."

"I see," Teal'c muses. "It is a welcome surprise to see you in this place."

"And my name is KARKAT," Karkat says, "with K's, not C's. Karkat Vantas. No fucking title necessary- because I don't fucking have one."

"Well, okay," Callie says, smiling. "I'm Callie Ohphee, and this is Xefros Tritoh. You already know Teal'c. And if you're up for more Bug squashing..."

"Yeah," you nod. "Let's smash some more bugs!"

And so you all go find some more self-replicating mech-bugs and smash them to pieces.

It's a good day.

________________________________________

Your name is MIERFA DURGAS and you've only just barely landed the Dragonfly before Jude, Cassandra, and three other kids come running over- two of them Human. What the hell? Are they just crawling out of the woodwork this week??

"Joey!" Jude begins. "Time Travel! TIME TRAVEL!"

"What?" Joey asks, clearly confused.

"Hello there!" Blond human girl waves. "I'm Rose Lalonde, formerly Rose Egbert. I'm from the future."
"Jade Harley!" the other human girl says, and needs no further introduction, because Joey has shown you the pictures and you recognize the name and now that you can compare that you realize that this is definitely the SEVERAL ODD SWEEPS OLDER version of that tiny little wriggler.

"What the hell?" Joey asks, looking at you, concern in her eyes. "Why is it *always* time travel!?"

"That's not important!" Cassandra says, climbing up onto the side of the Dragonfly to show Joey a rather aged letter. "Look, read this line here."

Joey does so, and you look and read the one the girl's pointing at.

Oh.

This... this is good.

This could really be good.

And so you and Joey climb back into your seats and get buckled up and the kids wisely back away and you TAKE OFF towards the coordinates written down, and soon enough, you find Major Strider and Dr. Fraiser and a bunch of other people.

You don't even bother landing, and instead come along to a hover in front of the Alternian Male who you don't recognize.

"Disruption Gun! NOW!" Joey orders, and the man tosses up a rather complex looking weapon that Joey catches with her bracelet-powered telekinesis, and then places on her left hand. Unsurprisingly, the Bracelet seems to synch up with it pretty easily.

A nod from your Matesprit confirmed, you take flight upwards and upwards, until the entire forest and the crashed ship and the settlement are all within view below you.

"Flip us over!" Joey orders, and you do so- aiming so that the Dragonfly is now upside down.

The ground is now the sky, and Joey aims 'upwards.'

**PVWAAAOOOOOOOOO!** A wave of bright blue energy launches up/down towards the world below/above, spreading out wider and larger than it otherwise normally would- amplified by the Bracelet as it has been. **PVWAAAOOOOOOOOO!** Joey doesn't waste time and fires a second shot. **PVWAAAOOOOOOOOO!** And then a third, because there's no kill like OVER KILL.

And so you watch as wave after wave of blue light washes across the potential infected area, and....

And that's it.

You feel the blood rushing to your head and so you right the ship and begin your descent to check and see if the situation has righted itself.

---

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser and you feel the twisted knot of 'bad vibes' in your stomach ease
away with each burst of blue light that washes over the settlement, easing up massively each time until there's nothing left to fear.

It's done.

The Replicators are GONE... Well, from this planet at least. There's still the matter of the Supergate to find, and destroy, after all.

It's a short wait, but soon everyone is reunited and nobody's spread out far and wide doing different things and you get a decent feel for the entire situation.

A BAD END has been adverted- just one of many, however. There's still a few loose strings of BAD VIBES remaining, but those are already starting to feel trimmed back in intensity by this victory.

This. VICTORY.

It would have been a complete disaster if things had gone any differently. A bunch of bad timing, and bad coincidences... if it time travel hadn't gotten involved...

And as you listen to Major Karkat Vantas lay down the rules of his involvement in this time frame, the main sticking point you hear means that your events here in this galaxy weren't the problem, but just a means to an end to prevent something that's going to happen in the Milky Way, and in order to do that, first and foremost is the destruction of the REPLICATOR'S SUPERGATE so everyone can head home safe and sound.

And while you feel a bit annoyed that you very likely COULD have solved the problems here given enough time, time wasn't exactly on your side here, because SUPERGATE.

And yeah.

"That's part's up to me, isn't it?" You ask, eyeing Terezi Pyrope at a distance- who is harassing John Egbert and the younger Karkat Vantas for some reason or another. Right now, those three, along with Nepeta, Rose, and Jade, are getting a run down of the Alternian DHD Glyph system by Mierfa and Xefros. "I have to find the Supergate."

"Pretty much," Major Vantas nods. "Terezi over there may be a Seer, but she's... big picture, and not tiny details. She can weave a pretty picture if you can decipher her insanity, but she can't tell you which individual threads get caught up and knot on the needle. Also, there's the sticking point that she doesn't get REALLY good at predicting long term events until a few years from now. Right now? Her visions typically come within minutes of their happening. Don't tell her I said any of that, though." He looks you in the eyes, and says, "You though, Cassandra Fraiser? You're a fine tuned, haystack searching, needle finding magnet."

"Does that really count as 'Seer' though?" Jude asks. "It seems more... kinda intuition based."

"I do know there's a title you settle on, Cassandra," Major Vantas says, "but I'm not telling you it because that would count as a spoiler."

"I get the feeling we're going to be hearing that word a lot," Joey remarks. "'Spoiler.'"

"Indeed," Teal'c nods.
"Hopefully not too much, though," Major Vantas says. "That's why they chose me, or so I figure. I mean, there's three of me around right now. One in the Grub den, one over getting his ears blown out by Terezi, and the me right here, and those previous past me's just didn't know how to pay attention to anything. Like, watch..." He coughs, to clear his throat, then yells at his past self - "HEY! PAST ME! DON'T EAT THE HOT DOGS TONIGHT!"

"WHAT??" His past self looks back up. "I SHOULD *EAT* THE WHAT??"

"HOT DOGS! DON'T TOUCH 'EM!" Major Vantas yells back.

His past self eyes his future self oddly, then shrugs, and yells, "OKAY. WHATEVER."

Major Vantas turns back to you all and says, "He's totally going to eat hotdogs tonight no matter what anyone says or does to convince him otherwise and is going to regret it come tomorrow morning. Because he just wasn't listening at all right now, and will continue to not listen until it finally gets pounded into his head to listen. Please forgive his childish ignorance."

"Will do. Also, thanks for the reminder," Davis says. "I'm so skipping the hot dogs tonight."

"No problem. Things are nasty." Major Vantas grimaces. "I've got no clue how Xicali eats them."

It's on that note that Matron Porrim meanders over to your group, takes one look at Major Vantas, then his past self, and then says, "Oh, you poor boy."

The next thing anyone knows, she's got an arm around the man and is dragging him off despite his protests of startled surprise.

...True to the Major's words, though, the younger version of Karkat Vantas didn't even notice his future self being abducted by the Matron, which would explain why he wasn't prepared for her.

"...Anyone else want to skip through the Gate back to Alternia before she comes back?" Callie asks.

Your name is MAJOR KARKAT VANTAS, and with the sudden recollection of your Past Self retreating through the Stargate to Alternia with the excuse of 'The Major had things to discuss with the Matron,' you're resigned to sitting down across from the woman in her hut.

"Hello, Karkat," Matron Porrim says, smiling kindly in a way that freaks you out a little.

"How the fuck did you even recognize me?" You ask.

"Karkat," she says, narrowing her eyes, "there were only a hand full of Cherry Blooded trolls born in the last batch of eggs, and only one of them had your distinctive nubby horns. After I saw you there TWICE? It wasn't hard to put together."

"Bah! Foiled by my one identifiable trait," you curse.

"Now, tell me," she begins, "why would you put yourself through this?"
"I told them all that already," you say.

"Tell me then," she says.

"It's because I did it already and past me was an ignorant kid who didn't pay attention so I couldn't spoil anything," you tell her.

"That's not the real reason you're doing this, though, now is it?" the Matron asks you.

You hate this. You hate that she knows she can get away with treating you like an impulsive little wriggler and...

And she's right.

"Of course not," you say. "I mean, it's not the ONLY reason. It's a fairly important one. I'm bound to do this because I already did it. Twice. I have to do it for that reason alone, and yet..."

"And yet?" Matron Porrim smiles, smugly- no, maybe that's motheringly. Damned Jade Bloods and their matronly ways.

"...I feel like I didn't do things right the last two times," you say. "The first time through I was a snotty brat who didn't care about anybody but himself. Then I got picked up by my future self, put through a brief month of boot camp, and then sent back in time to relive it all again and I still feel like I was a slightly less snotty nosed brat who did some things alright and still made a fuck ton of mistakes because I just wasn't paying attention. And... urgh. Seriously? I should do this kind of thing with a Moirail."

"Did you have one?" She asks you.

"...No," you admit. "And I feel super fucking awkward thinking about relationships. I know my future self was dating someone but I never found out who. Probably for the best so I don't go into it thinking I HAVE to date whoever it is just because that's who I was dating and I remember dating... it's..." you sigh. "Damn it, this is why I hate time travel."

"So why do it?" She asks.

Why? WHY?? WHY??!!?! You just told her why three- two- four? ARGH, you can't even remember now.

...

"Why do it?" You ask in return, and she nods. "...Because that's the role that I was cast to play."

"Don't go meta on me, Karkat," Matron Porrim says. "I get enough of that cryptic bullshit from the Seers."

"It's the truth," you say. "I'm a one man play where I'm both the actor and the audience and the director. I might as well have been born to play this role. It's my job, love it or hate it."

"I see..." the Matron muses, then, she says, "Tell me, Karkat, what do you intend to do when you're done with this 'play'?"
You honestly don't know.

Your name is Jade Harley, and you can't believe you're standing on the deck of a REAL LIVE ALTERNIAN SPACE SHIP!!! Of course, it's crashed into the desert, but HELL YES! A DESERT! A REAL, LIVE, DESERT!

You haven't been to a desert since... Since...

...Since the last time you went to Abydos. Which... which was when you were FIVE, you think?? You just never got around to going back through the Gate again after the Aschen took over and...

Yeah. You need to visit more often.

Still! Desert! WHOO!

"Oh fucking English, there's more of them," says an irate voice as a female troll walks over to you. "Joey? Please tell me there's a reasonable explanation to this that isn't time travel?"

"You know me so well, Okurii," Joey answers. "I can't lie to you."

"So what is it?" 'Okurii' asks.

"It's parallel mirror universes AND time travel!" Joey answers.

There's a moment of silence, and then the girl laughs.

"Okay," Okurii says. "I honestly wasn't expecting that. Is there anyone else left to-" She stops, seeing that Terezi is among your number. "Is that fucking Terezi Pyrope? What is she doing here?"

"BUY ME DINNER FIRST!" The blind girl cackles.

"She's a Seer, Ma'am," Xefros pipes in.

"I thought she was insane!" Okurii starts. "She tried licking me when we were evacuating the population to Diaspora last Sweep and said I-"

"You taste like Red Eyed Olives!" Terezi pipes in, to which John tries to shoosh her by way of putting a hand over her mouth. She obviously licks him, because he withdraws his hand a moment later, shaking it rapidly and looking grossed out.

"Um, yeah," Cassandra speaks up. "But she knew things about events in Milky Way. And she saw the problem we had with the Replicators happening a minute before the ship crashed."

"...Replicators on Diaspora?" Okurii asks.

"Don't worry," Joey says, holding up the 'disruption weapon' that Major Vantas carried through with him. "We made them go BYE BYE."

"...What the hell is that?" Okurii asks.
"A Replicator Busting Weapon," Cassandra says. "It makes the Replicators fall apart."

"Major Vantas said we can reverse engineer it for the Megaship's weapons array," Mierfa adds.

"...Major Vantas?" Okurii echoes.

"That'd be my future self," Karkat says. "Also, I'm also a time traveler, but past me is a tiny grub on Diaspora right now, so... uh... might as well not exist, basically?"

"..." Okurii plants both of her hands against her forehead. "You know what. Just- write up the reports and leave them on my office desk and I'll get to them later."

"Sure thing," Joey says. And with that, Okurii heads down the stairs, muttering about 'not getting paid enough' as she turns down a hallway.

A few moments later, Xefros coughs politely, and says, "So, uh... did we ever figure out what we were going to do about room and board? We're already pretty tight on space here as it is."

"Oh, right," Callie nods. "We were going to figure that out when we got back from Diaspora, weren't we?"

"Cassandra and I can share a room," Dr. Fraiser says. "I'm sure Davis and Nepeta would like some time to catch up on their own, but I wouldn't mind sharing a room with them if we have to."

"Yeah, that'd be great," Nepeta says, nodding her agreement.

"Works for me," Davis agrees.

"Well," Karkat grouches, "I don't mind bunking with total strangers. Been grub-mates with FAR too many trolls growing up to be unnerved by that."

And then Rose piques up and says, "Jade, John, and I are all used to sharing a room after many countless years of sleepovers. We'll be fine with a single room if space is a problem."

Oh, thank you Rose. That could have been awkward trying to figure that out. You... As much as you're glad to see your BROTHER alive again... you're still not sure where you stand with him and you don't want to impose. And besides that... Well.

"I do not require much but privacy to meditate," Teal'c says. "If no room is available, I can share with the elder Vantas when he returns from Diaspora."

"I..." Jude pauses. "I can just find a couch somewhere and-"

"You can have my room, Jude," Joey says. "I'll spend tonight, or for how-ever long you're staying here, with Mierfa in her room." Then, a pause, and she adds, "Also, I can clear some extra room there and maybe move another bed in and someone else can bunk there if need-be."

"I'll go see what rooms are available right now, then," Callie says.

Soon enough, a few spare rooms are confirmed, and the arrangement ends up being: Teal'c got his own room for the moment, Jude and younger Karkat went to Joey's room, The Fraisers and Striders
got their own separate rooms, and you, Rose, and John got a room.

The beds end up basically just being backless couches that aren't thick enough to hold one of you comfortably, but that's just fine. You were going to shove them all together anyways, now you just have an excuse to.

That night you and your cousins curl up in bed and just VENT all the pent up emotions. The happy and the sad and the whole- the whole EVERYTHING that you've been experiencing the last few weeks.

Deciding to change history. Waiting for Nepeta to make her way to Colorado. Waiting for the day in Cassandra's letter to Jack to raid the Lab for the Quantum Mirror. Watching your GUARDIANS sacrifice themselves for your LIVES and there's no doubt in any of your minds that their sacrifice involved their deaths.

You three mourn the only way you know how. Close contact and tight hugs and just BEING THERE. And then you keep talking. About meeting the Karkats and meeting the other Sam. Traveling to Haven. Traveling back to Haven's past. Traveling to Diaspora. Reuniting with everyone here. Fighting REPLICATORS...

And you know that it's not over just yet, not by a long shot.

Your name is Jade Harley, and you get the feeling it's going to be a long year.

"Huh," your name is KARKAT VANTAS, and according to the calendar in JOEY CLAIRE'S BEDROOM (which you feel all KINDS of awkward thinking about long term staying here. You're DEFINITELY MOVING to another room as soon as one opens up), it's the 12TH LUNAR PERIGEE of Alternia's Orbiting Solar Cycle. Diaspora has a smaller solar cycle, somewhat closer to Earth's range, but it still maintained the tradition of the 12TH MONTH being the LAST, and similar to Earth, there was also a YEARLY FESTIVAL.

"What is it?" Jude asks, settling down on a bed with a HUSKTOP loaded with VIDEOS he apparently didn't get to see.

"It's the Alternian version of Christmas soon," you say.

"Huh," Jude muses. "Weird, it's only June back home."

"Well, yeah, Alternia's years are like, two point sixteen earth years combined," you tell him. "Obviously they're not going to line up all that well."

Still, you think that deserves some appropriate music selection as you dig out your headphones and the WALKMAN.

"...The heck?" Jude stares at it. "What's that supposed to be?"

"...An Earth made music player," you say to him. "What year are you from, Harley?"

"...1997." he answers truthfully, then asks, "You?"
"2010," you say, and then... "Oh. Right. Yeah. Okay. This is like, thirteen years more advanced than you're used to and also probably contains a lot of music I shouldn't have brought back in time." Shit. You're really already screwing over this whole 'don't corrupt the past with future information' thing.

"Well, I don't think there's any harm as long as you keep it to yourself," Jude says.

"Fair point." You then put on your headphones and wake the player and hunt down an appropriate track. Sure, it's of EARTH ORIGIN, but you know what? They happen to have some pretty good songs that don't follow Alternia's old fashioned, Empress Imposed DOOM AND GLOOM vibes. That gets tiring after a few years, you know?

"So this is Christmas, and what have you done?"

And with headphones secured, you head out around the ship for a walk.

"Another year over, a new one's just begun."

In the med-bay, Joey and an Alternian medic look over Thor's stasis pod, wondering over what they could possibly do to save the Asgard's life.

"And so this is Christmas, I hope you have fun."

In a room to himself, Teal'c settles in for a long night of MEDITATION.

"The near and the dear ones,"

In their respective rooms:

Janet sits beside Cassandra, massaging her daughter's shoulder as they both look over a large collection of STAR MAPS.

"The old and the young."

Davis and Nepeta sit across from each other on the floor, playing GO FISH with a set of ALTERNIAN PLAYING CARDS while they discuss all sorts of things about Nepeta's cross-country adventures.

"A very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Cuddled together, and having just fallen asleep, Jade and John remain unaware as Rose slips away and pulls a cover over the two of them like a worrying mother.
”Let's hope it's a good one without any fear.”

And thus, feeling restless, Rose exits the room to go wandering the ship.

”So this is Christmas. (War is Over)”

You come across Terezi in the Gateroom, staring blindly at the piece of technology like it holds all the answers to the universe.

”For weak and for strong (If you want it)”

She barely looks at you as you quickly turn around and go somewhere else.

”The rich and the poor ones (War is Over)”

Letting water run over her in the shower, Okurii tries her best to let the stress of a very long two days (and an even longer couple of months) blur away.

”The world is so young (Now)”

In Dammek's room, he and Callie discuss the adventurous day that just happened.

”And so happy Christmas (War is Over)”

In Mierfa's room, the girl is reading a technical manual on nunchuck usage that she's read a dozen times over already when Joey returns, looking exhausted, but confident that she has an idea how to move forwards on saving Thor.

Mierfa puts her book away quickly and goes over to give Joey a hug.

”For black and for white (If you want it)”

In a lab, looking over samples of the Replicator that made it through from Thor's ship, and comparing it to samples taken from Diaspora, Tyzias Entykk settles in for another sleepless night.

”For yellow and red ones (War is Over)”

Meanwhile, a certain blue blooded painter works on a new project, painting the visage of her friend
while she works.

"Let's stop all the fight (Now)"

She frowns, however, as she realizes she's running low on GOLD PAINT- not necessary for this picture beyond a few lighting fixtures on the wall, and easily replaceable with other colors. For now, she'll conserve what gold she has left.

"A very merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year"-

In the Cafeteria are Daraya, Mallek, and Xefros, talking over this and that, when Rose enters the room, and seems confused where to go at first.

Xefros waves her over, and she heads over to join them at the table, blushing only ever so slightly when Daraya gives her a smile.

"Let's hope it's a good one without any fear."-

She joins their conversation easily enough, and soon finds some common ground to stand on with them.

"So this is Christmas (War is Over) And what have you done? (If you want it)"

Jude continues to sit and watch over videos Joey had sent, but he'd missed seeing. One particularly emotional one regarding Bec's sudden evolution to Polyarch has him crying in joy along side his rightfully proud sister.

"Another year over (War is Over) A new one's just begun (Now)"

Meanwhile on Diaspora, the now eldest Karkat Vantas stares down at a room full of sleeping grubs-eyes transfixed on a small grouping of CHERRY RED BLOODED Grubs, and one with NUBBY HORNS especially- the Youngest of him, so unaware.

"And so happy Christmas (War is Over) We hope you have fun (if you want it)"

You, continuing to be the younger Karkat Vantas, enter the Cafeteria and meander your way up towards the food counter. People try waving at you, but you don't hear them thanks to your headphones.

"The near and the dear ones (War is Over) the Old and the Young (Now)"

You step up to the line, and ask the young Burgundy blooded troll for two OBLONG MEAT
PRODUCTS. The boy, Diemen Xicali by his name tag, is all too happy to oblige.

"A Very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year. Let's hope it's a good one, without any fear."-

You sit down at a table, and some bronze blooded girl waves at you, a panicked look on her face as you lift up a bun to your mouth. You're terrible at reading lips, but you think you vaguely hear her yelling over the music saying "WON'T"? Well, if she wants your oblong meat products she'll just have to get in line and order some herself because you're not sharing.

"War is Over if you want it, War is Over Now"-

You pointedly take a bite, and she stifles her protests.

That's when you feel how COLD it is against your mouth.

...

Eh, it's probably been sitting out for a while, you continue to eat it anyways. And then you eat the other one too, because why the hell not?

Later that night, Karkat Vantas would find himself stuck in the med-bay from an acute case of food positioning, and Diemen Xicali was then ordered to NEVER UNDER COOK HIS HOTDOGS AGAIN by threat of EXTRA LONG DOCTORS APPOINTMENTS by the lead nurse AND Dr. Fraiser.

Chapter End Notes

No matter what you celebrate, I hope everyone has had a happy weekend so far, and will have a wonderful day tomorrow, weather permitting.

Song choice was picked because I felt like it was an appropriately optimistic song. Here's hoping 2018's a good year that isn't quite nearly as frightful as 2017's been.
Your name is Okurii Leijon, and you blink at the two human girls standing in front of you with two different reports to give.

"Okay," you begin. "Since you BOTH came running up to me saying you had good news and bad news; Miss Cassandra, I can see Starmaps in your hand, you go first."

"Good news: I think I've found the rough location of the Supergate," Cassandra Fraiser says, laying out a section of mapped space that is most generally reminiscent of BLACK VOID. "Somewhere in this quadrant of space is where I get the most bad vibes about leaving it alone. Bad news, this area of space is, uh... really uncharted."

"Okay, so we'll send a scouting party," you say. "Joey?"

"Good news is," Joey smiles, "Over the last few days, me, Dr. Fraiser, and a few of our Nurses, pretty much worked out a solid way to revive Thor from his stasis pod. I'll clone him a new body and transfer his soul over to it."

"...And the bad news?" you ask.

"...I'm going to have to kill him by pulling him out of stasis in order to get a sample of his D.N.A.," Joey says. "But... I'd have to kill him anyways to get his soul out of his old body so... uh... less bad news more 'risky procedure that might go wrong'?"

"Okay, fair enough," you say. "Thor can keep for now, though, right?"

"He's still on Ice, yeah," Joey nods.

"Good," you nod. "We'll do what we can with the Replicators and their Supergate, then we'll worry about Thor." You look to the both of them, "Joey, Miss Cassandra, gather up people you want on an exploration team. Take the Astro Megaship out to that section of space and search it as thoroughly as you can."

"Right," Joey nods.
"I'm going out to buy more gold paint for a new piece, be back later!" Amisia says, waving to you as she steps out of your lab and leaves the door open behind her.

Your name is TYZIAS ENTYKK and you sigh. Damn it all. You appreciate her and Charun hanging around, especially since you've gone to all the trouble of TIME TRAVEL REVIVING THEM FROM CERTAIN DEATH, but damn it all, you'd forgotten how Amisia doesn't seem to know the meaning of the words "Personal Space."

At least Charun is still the peaceful, silent type.

You take a few moments to gather your bearings again, and--

"Tyziassss!" Callie comes sliding into your lab, an excited look on her face.

Damn it.

"Yes, Callie?" you ask.

"We've cracked it!" she grins. "C'mon! C'mon!"

And then you're dragged out of YOUR LAB across the ship to CALLIE'S LAB.

There's two weapons- identical in design philosophy but not in aesthetics: Two large gauntlet things with dishes attached to the front, one of glass like materials, the other solid metal. Suspended in front of each is a transparent box full of floating, kind of oddly shaped blocks, swirling around each other endlessly.

"What the heck are these?" You ask.

"These would be our closest approximation of Replicator Blocks," Dammek says, entering the room along side Daraya Jonjet and Rose Lalonde. "Without the replicating bits, of course. Based on your research from the last few days."

Ah. You thought they looked suspiciously like the attractive forces the Replicators used.

"So this is the 'raw non magnetic close to magnetic magic' I put in my report?" You ask.

"At its loosest, yes," Rose nods. "Like you put in your report, the Replicators from Thor's Galaxy are an evolved form of the ones from this Galaxy through whatever means happened. But that's worked out in our favor, because whatever Thor's Galaxy's Replicators were using before? It's not what they're using now. Not completely." She motions at the blocks in the boxes, and says "This is what we think the energy field Thor's Replicators are using, a sort of hybrid between some unknown attractive particle and the same energy fields the Mofang technology works on."

"And as you can see," Callie says, triggering the blue weapon by reaching in and pulling a trigger- PVWAAOOO! The blocks all fall to pieces- although you notice some ODD BLACK SPARKS of light occurring as it happens. "The Future Disruptor works just fine."

"But now?" Daraya smirks. "So does our version." She flicks the switch on a small detonator like device, and the metal version shoots out the PVWAOOO sounding wave and the floating pieces in front of it fall apart just the same- slightly more black sparks though.
"Okay," you say. "Is that it? Is that all you needed me for?" You ask.

"No," Dammek then removes the recreation of the disruptor device and hands it to you. "You're coming with me to take this, and our instructions for it to Cla'dia's ship yards to get this scaled up for the weapons systems on the rest of the Megaship series."

"Why do you need me?" You ask, frowning.

"'Cause the Megaship we have is going Replicator hunting," Dammek motions at the others, "and they're going to upgrade its dish arrays to emit the right frequencies for disrupting the Replicators during the hunt."

"Still not hearing why ME specifically," you point out.

"You've been researching the Replicator fragments, Princess Millia will want to hear about it," Dammek says and you sigh.

That's fair enough, you'll admit.

Your name is Jade Harley, and you have the unique experience of feeling INCREDIBLY USELESS while simultaneously feeling UNDER PRESSURE TO PERFORM.

Ostensibly, a bunch of people have gone off on a RECON ONLY MISSION, and you wish you could be out there with them, but as of right now, only ROSE has been cleared to go off world of your group of time travelers. Nepeta was cleared too, sure, but she's staying behind so Jolinar can finish writing a REPORT for her past self and the MAJOR CARTER of this time frame.

Cleared for what, exactly?

Power testing.

Right now, John is showing off outside the ship for the base's commander, OKURII LEIJON, to prove his worth. Wind, wind, wind, and more wind. John's a shoe-in for getting cleared to go do dangerous things.

You? Rose's powers are so much flashier than yours, though. You honestly don't think you'll get cleared for it. (Of course, Rose always says the same thing about her powers, and John about his-so... Maybe it's just in your close knit circle of family's tendencies to UNDERESTIMATE the things you can do? ...Nah. That's probably not it.)

"That's enough!" Okurii calls out, and John lets the miniature tornado of sand that he'd generated collapse to the ground. "Mister Egbert, you've got a lot of raw strength and potential. We'll have to do one more test out in space to see if you can carry it through or not, but for now, you're good."

"Thanks, Ma'am," John bows to her, then smiles at you encouragingly. 'You can do it, Jade!' He's thinking for sure.

And then Okurii turns to you, smiling. "Miss Harley, you're up."

And with a nod, you head out to where John was doing his thing, and wait for some guy named
Salazl to set up the targets you requested.

As you wait, you look back at the exterior of the ship/base. (Baseship?) You can just barely see Jude and Dr. Fraiser standing inside the ship, just through the large tinted windows. You wonder what they're going to feel about this?

"Alright, Miss Harley," Okurii begins, "how would you describe the simplest aspect of your powers?"

"Orbiting Dynamics," you say.

"Orbiting Dynamics, huh?" Okurii asks. "Show me."

And so you reach to your waist and open the bag of marbles that Terezi handed you the other day. With a deep breath, hands remaining gripping the bag, you lift up several marbles.

A flickering green aura fills the edges of your vision, likewise matching the aura around the multicolored marbles you're lifting up with your mind.

You lift your hands away, and put them on either side of the marbles. Slow and steady. Slow and steady, you put the heaviest one in the center, and start orbiting the others around it. A miniature solar system in telekinetic grip.

Once you get them going, all your powers do is keep them suspended out of Gravity's reach. They spin, and they spin, and they spin.

"Miss Harley," Okurii says, and even as you divert your conscious attention, subconscious focus is kept on the marbles to keep track of their positions and to make sure they're not suddenly going to veer out to the side. "How fast can you get them to go?"

"...Pretty fast, Ma'am," you answer. "I never tested how fast, though. Should I?"

"To your known highest speed," Okurii nods, and you refocus your attention to speed up the marbles to go faster and faster and faster, until you reach as fast as you've ever dared go. "How much damage can they do at that speed?"

You show this by throwing them at a target. There's a loud BANG, much like the echoing reverberation of a SHOTGUN REPORT, and the entire upper torso of the target is SHREDDED TO PIECES.

The Marbles, unfortunately, did not seem to survive the impact, and you report as much.

"How fast was that, Salazl?" Okurii asks.

"Impact registered a speed of 'bout sixty miles per hour," Salazl answers, looking up from a tablet. "I'd say any Replicators hit by that would be shut down immediately."

Holy shit. You had no idea the marbles were going that fast. You subconsciously update that orbiting speed to that level within your head.

"Miss Harley," Okurii continues, "did you feel as if you could go faster than that?"
"Yes, Ma'am" you answer with a nod.

"Comfortably?" she continues.

"Yes," You nod. "I mean, I'm pretty nervous about accelerating them faster, but that's not in a powers way. I know I can go faster than that."

"Let's see how much faster than that you can go before you reach that next personal nervous point," Okurii orders.

And so, you fetch a few marbles, and then speed them up to "Sixty," then start inching them up to the point you start feeling uncomfortable on a personal level. The marbles swirl like a mini cyclone of color coded destruction in front of you; you don't want to imagine what would happen upon impact.

"I don't feel comfortable spinning them up faster than this," you say.

"On a Powers Level?" Okurii asks.

You consider it... "I think I could go a little bit faster," you answer.

"Push it further," she says, and you do so.

You inch it up a bit higher and higher until you feel a bit of STRAIN trying to keep track of it all.

"I feel like I can't go any further without losing control- power levels. I- my head hurts just a little," you tell her.

"Fire them at any of the targ-"

You launch the colored meteoric projectiles at a target with a gasp of relief- not that you could hear it over how loud of a BANG the danged things made when firing off, nor over the small CRACK of the heat lightning that flares off from their departure point.

The target you aimed at basically disappears- and a large burst of SAND flies up in the far distance.

"...Salazl?" Okurii's voice is just a bit weak and you honestly don't blame her.

"...Excess of a hundred and fifty miles per hour," Salazl reports.

"Miss Harley," Okurii turns to look at you. "Never go above sixty miles per hour unless you absolutely need to destroy something."

"I don't plan on even going that high, Ma'am," you say, and your voice doesn't sound like yours on a good day, all meek and slightly dazed.

You've come to the conclusion that you are a potentially fucking nuclear shotgun just waiting to go off.
Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and you just got a disturbing glimpse at your future.

Jade- your Jade- the tiny little Jade back at home on Earth- could one day pick up a rock and throw it just as easily, just as fast, just as deadly, at anything she suddenly didn't like.

Could destroy a wall and make it look like a shotgun blast with nothing but some tiny marbles.

But beyond that...

"Well," Janet says from next to you. "That explains a little about what powers Sha're might have been manifesting."

"It does?" you ask.

"A telekentic grip that strong could pretty easily grab a necklace," Janet muses, "of course, that's assuming the power Jade has is the same one that her mother was manifesting. It could be something completely different."

Honestly, it's the GREEN GLOW around the eyes that has you concerned. Did Khepri use more D.N.A. from this "Doc Scratch" guy in her Abydos experiments? Could Jade have some of that raw, untapped power inside of her like you might? Like Pa might have had? Like Joey...?

...Now, more than ever, you're actually glad that you came here to Alternia. You're going ask Joey to help Jade train her powers. Both of them. Both the teenaged girl here on Alternia and the younger girl back on Earth.

"Tell Jade to come see me in the med-bay when she's done testing," Janet says, suddenly. "I want to make sure she didn't rupture anything inside her head from pushing her powers that far. I'm going to get a scanner ready, just in case."

She's right, you realize. Jade does look a little pale, and that might not just be from the shock of how destructive she could be.

As you head through the lightly populated streets of CLA'DIA'S NIGHT CLOAKED CITY, you decide you're as alone as you're going to be to ask a question. "So, I know it's not my place to judge," Your name is DAMMEK and it's totally your place to judge, "but this Amisia girl. You saved her during our last time travel stunt, didn't you?"

"...How the fuck did you figure that out?" Tyzias asks. Not even a 'So this is why you asked me to come' response. You knew she was smart.

"The way she's been hanging around your lab the last few months, mostly," you say. "That, and the way she's avoided talking with people about where she's been before now."

"Yeah," Tyzias sighs. "I buried a mug with a message on it in a cave. Told Amisia and Charun not to go into a mall before it exploded. They survived, then laid low. Does it matter?"

"Maybe," you say. "I've been looking out for ripple effects in the timeline since we got back. I've noticed a serial killer that's been about the last few sweeps that wasn't there before we left."
"A serial killer?" Tyzias frowns. "That could have been anybody new to the timeline with how we were saving people left and right."

"Maybe," you say, "but Amisia's a painter, right? Does she make her own paints?"

"She used to. We'd hunt some wild Lusus-beasts and she'd use their blood for paint," she says, "but she says she's been using synthetics since she and Charun went on the run." A pause. "Why?"

"That Serial Killer's M.O. was cutting people's heads off and draining their bodies for blood," you tell her. "Like they were going to use it for paint. They also traveled cross country. Going for Trolls who wouldn't be missed. People who lived alone."

"...Okay, that's... that's a little creepily similar to what we did for the animals, but-" Tyzias shakes her head. "I swear, she's not doing that. It can't be her." A long pause follows, then, "...How many people?"

"One of Every Blood Color, in random orders, atleast once every half Solar Sweep," you tell her.

"...Shit," she swears. "Even Violet and Purple??"

"Even those," you say.

"...Amisia always did like her purple hued landscapes," she says, sounding a little more concerned than convinced.

Still if it turns out she is something of a serial killer, Amisia Erdehn can wait until you get back from dropping off this disruptor prototype.

Your name is AMISIA ERDEHN you are not in a happy mood.

The nearest, sparsely populated GOLD BLOOD settlement via ring transport was a good few miles away from the rings themselves, but, again, was sparsely populated. It was more a LOOSE COLLECTION of Hives than a village or a town, with lots of FARM SPACE everywhere. That was good. It meant that they wouldn't notice when a neighbor suddenly vanishes.

What was not so good about it was the fact that most of the trolls here worked in the REBELLION now, and did NOT LIVE IN THEIR HIVES anymore, instead working on the 'ALL YOUR BASE'- a stupid name for a ship if ever you heard one, but hey, that was Trizza's doing, you guess.

Those who DIDN'T, well, they still seemed to be members of the REBELLION, just WORKING FROM HOME, as it were.

Home. You haven't had a HOME since you and Charun left your hives behind.

And here you are about to COMMIT MURDER just to get your hands on some PAINT.

You know there are stores that SELL IT now, actually. Some kind of SYNTHETIC PAINTS that don't require culling, since the whole REBELLION'S GIMMICK is the total opposite of the
Empress' wills. But you've tried them and those OIL BASED PAINTS just don't work. Neither do the things called ACRYLIC.

Not for your work. Your artwork that will last as long as the ANCIENT ARTS you've long so admired.

The lengths you go to for paint in the current market. Blah!

You'd rather not draw attention down on yourself from the Rebellion's forces, and if you kill and of their local workers here, well... you'll do just that. So you need to selectively check off the names on the list of people still here who AREN'T IN THE REBELLION and won't be missed if they suddenly LOSE THEIR HEAD.

You manage this feat by checking the REBELLION'S EMPLOYEE LISTINGS with THE STANDARD ALTERNIAN SWEEP CENSUS.

Unfortunately, there just doesn't seem to be anyone still living in this 'town' that-

Wait.

Waaaiiiit just a second.

This hive here, with the large tree and the multitude of bee hives. It SAYS its registered to a girl, in the census records, who died OVER TWO SWEEPS AGO. The lights ARE ON, but it's not on the Rebellions' records as being lived in by a worker.

You think you might have your target.

You check the seals on you IDENTITY OBSCURING GAS-MASK, and that your SIGN IS OBSCURED properly, then begin approaching from the nearest kitchen side window, where you see a GIRL working on fixing herself a meal.

Oh, she's a gold blood alright. You can see the GEMNIUS SIGN embroidered on her sun hat laying on the nearby hat rack, plus she's got those nifty little double horns that Gold Bloods all seem to have... or, well, you think she does. The way her hair is tussled up around the base of them it almost looks like the smaller ones might just be growths from the sides of the larger ones. Maybe a kind of Y shape?

Doesn't matter.

She shows the signs of being GOLD BLOOD, and you need paint.

You sneak over to the nearest door, and draw your POISONED KNIFE from your belt, careful not to cut yourself with the edges. Poison, of course, so you don't WASTE any BLOOD from large wounds.

You grip at the door knob for the side door, and you test it- twisting slightly to check if locked or unlocked.

...Unlocked? Oh, this girl is just tempting fate, isn't she?

You fully twist the knob and begin pulling the door open.
That's when a STRING SNAPS, and you hear an ALARM SOUND.

"OH FUCK YOU!" You yell as you watch the gold blood practically throw herself out a window and start running off into the distance towards one of the hives you know doesn't have anyone in it.

What the hell kind of paranoid gold blood leaves her doors unlocked but leaves the security armed??

Your name is TYZIAS ENTYKK, and as you and Dammek step back through the Alternian Stargate, you hear an ALARM SOUND. It's one you've never heard before, but Dammek recognizes it immediately.

"Hivekeep's hive just got broken into," he says, growling. "To the Rings! NOW!" and then he's dragging you towards the Ring platform.

You find your way there just in time to see Terezi finish dragging a couple of humans with her - Nepeta Strider and Dr. Fraiser, the Medic. "We've got a life to save!" Terezi says, a rare, serious tone on her voice.

It's with no argument that Dammek punches in a set of ring coordinates, and the lot of you teleport into a shed hidden away in a darkened field.

You've got a GROWING FEELING OF DISMAY that Amisia is behind this. Damn it, you really hope she wasn't lying when she said she was buying paint.

"Come out come out, wherever you are, Goldie!" you're Amisia again, a few minutes later, and you slip into the hive whose front door was conveniently broken down by your target. "I promise I'll make this quick!"

And then you step on something that crunches beneath your feet.

You glance down, lift your foot, and see that it's a HORN. A FAKE TROLL HORN. One of those TINY ONES from your Gold Blood target. You pick it up, and check the bottom and sure enough, there's GLUE RESIDUE on the bottom of it. Cheap Glue, at that. The kind that'd break away from skin without tearing it.

Your target had a fake set of horns??

Hrm. Maybe she's NOT a gold blood after all. Why go to the trouble of doing this, though? It makes little sense.

"Fake Horns?" You call out. "Really??"

You wonder what blood color you WILL get from this endeavor. You start sneaking around with a bit less cautiousness. If she were a powerful psychic rust blood, the girl would have fought. It can't be that MYSTICAL CHERRY RED, because those grubs get culled from hatching, and this girl would never have made it out of the Caverns if she were. Bronze? Could be she's trying to call in
animals...

Oh well, at this point you-

You stop.

You find the OTHER FAKE HORN stuck to a wall, forming the center dot of the CANNIUS SIGN made out of what looks like... like...

"Is that Detfoam?" You ask mere seconds before the whole wall explodes in your face.

The sound of an explosion from an uninhabited Hive draws the attention of several people who quickly change course from their one destination to another.

Ow.

You get back to your feet, finding your BLOOD APRON rather singed and your gas mask badly damaged. To the point you can breathe in the smoke just fine without it, anyways.

You throw the damaged thing off and pry out your SPARE GLASSES- oh. The lenses are cracked. Oh well, you'll wear them 'til you get this bitch. You don't care much for the BLOOD at this point. You don't really want LIME anyways, and this bitch has just made you ANGRY.

You think your ears are ringing... ow. Yes, definitely ringing.

You ignore it and start pushing forwards through the hive- finding a stair case, and starting ascending. Bitch has to be up here, to know when you were standing when you were infront of that wall.

Of course, if she's got the LIME PSYCHIC POWERS she might have sensed your presence there, but still. Nobody would use DETFOAM and not maintain a safe line of sight for the wireless detonator.

Nobody this paranoid, at least, would rely on psychic senses alone.

You stagger up the stairs- oh, ow. Okay, you think there's something sharp in your leg. Probably just a piece of wall. Your knife is still safely in your hand. You stagger up the stairs and grunt through the pain. Girl has to know you're coming. Has to.

You're gonna slit her throat and let her bleed out on the floor... wait. Shit. Poison. Well. Maybe she'll bleed out before the poison gets her.

You really should have some NON POISONED KNIVES the next time you do this.

You check an open door and peer into a... a... Ah. This is just a... an... Abolution Block? Yes. You nearly forgot the word there for a moment. Your head feels a little dizzy. Damned detfoam to the face. The shower curtain is lying on the wall of the abol... absol... bath tub??... Eh, it and its rod
dislodged from the explosion, probably.

You move onto the next room, never checking for the rod itself.

Next room is an abandoned storage room- abandoned of BEE HIVES. You see the sign of GEMPIO painted on a wall though. Gempio, Gempio... OH. That Zebede kid from the Gate Room. The super energetic one.

Hah. You hope he doesn't mind the mess you're making of his hive.

The ringing in your ears continues, and your only hint that someone has stepped behind you is that you see a shadow suddenly looming behind you.

You turn around, swinging wildly and get clobbered in the side of the face with a curtain rod.

Your glasses go flying, and suddenly everything goes BLURRY and you feel a sharp pain in your stomach.

...What?

You look down and see your own knife sticking out of your gut, cerulean blue and a spattering of lime decorate the wound.

Oh. Haha. You nicked her! You got the lime blooded bitch with the poisoned--

Knife.

"...Oh fuck," you mutter, dazed, before collapsing from your wounds.

"HIVEKEEP!" Dammek roars as you all enter the hive with SMOKE POURING OUT THE WINDOWS.

Your name is JOLINAR OF THE FUTURE, and you're not sure what reasons the BLIND SEER girl had for grabbing your host away from her job and dragging you, the good Dr. Fraiser, along with Dammek and Tyzias to this far away town.

Well, maybe it helps that your host has wings that can flap and send the smoke flying away, which she does, scattering the smoke away and clearing a path for all of you.

"TE-TERARCH!" you hear a weakened voice from upstairs call. "Uh-Up Hee... Here..."

You all head upstairs, and find the girl leaning against a wall, looking mighty pale.

There's another girl on the floor near by, looking dead to the world with that knife in her stomach.

"Oh, Amisia..." Tyzias mutters, going over to check on the girl- cautiously, though.

"Hivekeep?" Dammek asks, as he and the Doctor kneel by the girl leaning against the wall. "What happend? Are you okay?"
"N-No!" the girl grunts out. "Bitch ta-tagged me with- nnngh- Poisoned knife. Damn it. It hur-Hurts."

Poison? You suddenly have a nagging feeling, and your host lets you take over to look to Terezi.

"Your move, Medisnake," she says with a nod.

"I think I can help," You say, moving up.

'Good luck, Jolinar,' your host... no, Argo, Argo wishes you luck.

[Thank you,] you tell her.

"Jolinar," Janet looks at you, "we have no way of knowing if you can even survive a poison like this."

"And we don't have time to argue over it, Janet," you tell her. "Even if I die, I'll die eradicating that poison from her body." You then look the girl in her lime-blood shot orange eyes. "What does it feel like?"

"Nnhgh-" She grunts. "Blood... like Ice buh- but Burning. Ahhrgh."

A nerve agent, and it sounds like one you're familiar with, too.

You can do this.

"Do I have permission to kiss you?" You ask, both her and your soon to be former host.

'I don't mind, Jolinar,' Argo says.

"Hhh-Hah!" the girl grunts out a laugh. "Mah-magic hea- ealing ki-kiss?" She nods. "Ngh- no beh- tter way tuh... to go oooooowwww!!" She leans back in pain. "JUST PLANT ONE ON ME ALREADY!!" She yells out- a fully coherent sentence.

And so you do, bringing your hosts mouth up to the Lime Blooded girl's, and then, you trust Argo to do the rest. You disengage all your grips on Argo Lalonde's body, and then eject yourself out through her mouth into the alien girl's the moment their lips make contact.

You cut through the back of her throat and quickly wind yourself up around her spine, and then bite into the right spot.

'...What the fuck was that!?' you hear your new host's thoughts echo against yours. You do what you can to keep your minds separate, but damn it if the girl isn't poking and prodding against your mind.

[Please, let me work for a moment,] you warn her, trying to ignore it, and focus on saving this girl's life.

You reach out and pull up a FULL READOUT on the girl's body. Oh, yes, that's a fucking basic poison if ever you've seen one. One of the cheapest you've ever encountered back in all your years both as a Goa'uld and a Tok'ra. Fast acting, but easy to flush out without even damaging a Symbiote
You do so, and get rid of that poison with EXTREME PREJUDICE. You halt the nerve damage and quickly repair it. Honestly, you're a little surprised by how similar in genetic nature Trolls are to Humans in some respects. You shouldn't be. Oh, there are a few other little things you think you can tune up too in the process. You start fixing them up, and...

'...Um... hello?' the girl's voice echoes against your mind again.

You sigh, and speak.

[Hello. My name is Jolinar. I'm a Tok'ra who time traveled back in time to advert a disaster. I'm also saving your life. Poison aside, did you know you had a small blood clot forming in one of your legs? I'm clearing that out for you, along with fixing a few other things that might cause trouble long term.]

'...Uh... well, thanks for that?' the girl asks. 'You'll have to forgive me if I don't quite believe you though. I think I'm kind of hallucinating right now.'

[No,] you tell her, [you're definitely not.]

"Jolinar?" You hear Argo's voice ask, and you look up, meeting her orange eyes and neon green hair. "Everything okay in there?"

[May I?] you ask.

'...Uh sure, I guess,' she says.

"We're fine," you speak- but oddly enough you can't quite get the voice to echo. Oh well. You suppose that's just a quirk of the alien biology of the Alternian Troll Species. "New host thinks she's hallucinating. I'm clearing out the poison and a few other medical issues that could have caused trouble down the line. If it's alright with you all, I'll probably stay for observation for a couple of days just to make sure everything's alright, then, I guess I'll move back to Argo, if you'll have me."

"That's fine," she nods, and then helps you to her feet.

"Hivekeep?" Dammek asks. "Are you okay?"

'...Um...' the voice in your head begins. 'How do I...?'

You let her take back over.

"Er... uh... Hey, Tetrarch," she asks. "I feel like I just went from being thrown in a freezer to deep throating a live snake."

"That's because you did," Janet says. "Jolinar is a Tok'ra symbiote- she looks something like a cross between an eel and a snake."

"I'm not hallucinating, am I?" she asks. "I really just fucking swallowed a snake to save my life??"

"You're not hallucinating," Janet answers.
"Amisia's dead," Tyzias says, standing up, a grim look on her face. "She... she tried to kill you, didn't she?"

"Not the first time I've nearly been culled by a highblood for paint," your host spits out-literally, a small glob of lime blood from when you cut into her throat lands on the floor. "First time I almost died of Poison, though. Friend of yours?"

"I thought so," Tyzias answers. "Once. She said she was buying artificial paints now. Even after I went to all the trouble to save her life- she-" She sniffs. "I fucking thought she was done with making paint out of blood. Damn it. I should have known better."

"There's no way you could have know," Dammek says. "Time Travel's a risky endeavor at the best of times. It's a gamble. You never know what you're going to get."

[Amen to that,] you agree. You honestly never expected ANY of this from your time travel stunt. For a moment, you dwell, and your focus on blocking things out slips.

'Ooh.' Your host suddenly chimes in, and you feel her prying into those memories you accidentally just let slip. 'You're not kidding about the time travel. That's... oh. Oh wow.'

[Sorry, I didn't mean to let you see that,] you tell her. [I'm trying to keep our minds from accessing that much. I don't expect us to stay blended for too long. Emergency situations being what they are.]

'Actually, I-' she hesitates. 'I don't mind. If you stay.'

[What?] you ask.

'I don't mind. It's... I've lived a pretty lonely life.' Your host says. 'I get the feeling you have too, even with your last host here. I wouldn't mind the company for longer if you want to stay.'

[I-] you're not sure what to say and you don't get time to figure it out, because Argo links her arm with yours, and smiles.

"Hey, c'mon. Let's get you back to base," she says.

"Yeah," Dammek agrees. "It's probably not safe for you to stay here anymore, Hivekeep."

"You make a good point, Tetrarch," your host says, glancing at the cut across her shirt-stained lime and at the skin you healed just below it-good as new. "I... You already know by now, I guess. My blood color?"

"Yeah," Dammek nods. "Sorry. I know you liked to be secretive about that."

"I..." she sighs. "I don't think I have reason to hide it anymore. Times are changing. And you're right, I can't hide here anymore. I can't be 'Hivekeep' the secretive radio lady anymore. I..." she closes her eyes, and for a moment, you see nothing but blackness.

'I hope I'm doing the right thing,' she says to you, or perhaps to herself, as you feel her bow forwards.

Then, you're seeing the world again, staring at the floor for a moment, as your host introduces herself, "My name is Mikari Aiikho, Communication's specialist." She stands up, and smiles. "It's a
pleasure to finally meet you all face to face."

You think you've got a lot to think about.

Your name is ARGO LALONDE- formerly NEPETA STRIDER- and for the first time in YEARS, your mind is your own to wield. Your throat feels just a little weird, but the residual healing boosts Jolinar's presence gave you have healed over her exit wound rather quickly already.

Other than that....

You're of two minds. On the one hand, you miss Jolinar's presence. On the other... you're glad you no-longer feel like you constantly had a MOTHER HEN sitting on your shoulder watching everything you've ever done.

Jolinar was never meant to be with you this long. She was supposed to go back to Sam. You said you'd take Jolinar back, but... but...

The more time you have to think about it as you walk back to the ring transport platform, you can't help but wonder.

"Argo," the girl with Jolinar in her speaks- and it's more the formality to her voice more so than the booming echo that tips you off that it's Jolinar speaking. "May I talk with you in private when we get back to the ship?"

"Sure," you nod.

You wonder... is she thinking the same thing you are, now?

You return to the ALL YOUR BASE, and as soon as one of the nurses has given this girl, Mikari Aiikho, a checkup to confirm Jolinar got all the poison out of her system, you and her retreat to the room you and your so-much-younger Dad had been given to stay in.

Sitting on your bed together, Jolinar sits across from you, then begins.

"Mikari's offering to let me stay with her for longer," she says. "Would you be upset if I took her up on that offer?"

"No," you say surprisingly quickly and surprisingly honestly. What's more surprising is that Jolinar doesn't seem surprised that you said that. "I, Jolinar. I loved having you with me, but I-" You feel your throat feel weird. "I'm not sure I can take you back in without going back to all of that... that... Our time on the run with the Aschen. I liked when we weren't being hunted, but... when we were, it-" Now that you're really thinking about it you can't keep it back. "I- I think we could." You can't finish the sentence.

"I think this could be a fresh start," Jolinar can, however, and smiles, sadly. Not trusting yourself to speak, you just nod. "And I'm also thinking... I was the Tok'ra ambassador to Earth for so long as it was... maybe I can be the same again here, except for Earth to Alternia. I know you and the others probably want to return to Earth. But... I'm not sure if I can face seeing Sam, or my other self, again just yet... not wearing your face."
Yeah, that... "That was awkward enough with older Sam as it was," you agree.

There's a bit of silence between the two of you for a few moments, then...

"Mikari," Jolinar begins, "I think, I'll take you up on your offer for now. Until... until we Dial Earth back. That should give us enough time to figure out if... if we like this arrangement." She pauses, closes her eyes, and you can tell that the girl's back in control again.

"I'm okay with that," she says. "A Trial Run, right?"

"Yeah. A trial run." You nod, "That sounds good."

You're once more Tyzias Entykk, and you... you feel BETRAYED.

Amisia... of all the- why couldn't she just buy the fucking paints from the stores?

You find Charun in their room, and knock. "Charun?"

"Yeah?" They ask.

"...Did Amisia ever have you help her kill anyone while you were on the run?" you ask, and Charun's face lights up in horror.

"What the- No! She said she was buying paint from the stores, why? Did something happen?" they ask.

You feel your heart tremble with dismay. You're not going to have fun telling your friend about this...

Damn it all.

You're half tempted to use time travel to fix it all, but... but... You just wish Amisia hadn't poisoned her own knife. Maybe then you could talk to her about this shit.

Maybe you could have told her not to do any of this... But that's a what if you're not going to dwell on.

You already got into this mess to begin with by changing things. At some point, you're just going to have to live with the consequences...

Chapter End Notes

Yeah. it's pretty much a certainty that the old beekeeper from the concept art isn't going to be in Hiveswap proper, so... Uh...

YEAH. Time to make an OC to fill the void I thought was going to be played by a canon character... and turn all that MYSTERIOUS NOT KNOWING WHO THEY ARE into character traits.

"...And the swelling has gone down almost completely, which confirms it for me," Janet Fraiser says to you, JADE HARLEY. "Jade, I don't want you using your powers to that limit ever again."

"Believe me, Doc," you tell her, "I don't want ME using my powers to that limit ever again either."

"Alright," she pats you on the shoulder. "You can go now."

"Thanks," you nod, and then make a hasty escape from the Med-bay on the ship. You ignore the pointed grabs for your attention by the still waylaid Karkat Vantas, who you're told is being kept for observation for atleast a few more hours.

You join John outside the med-bay, and head down to the cafeteria in relative silence.

"So," he begins, "Doctor Fraiser say anything?"

"Just not to push myself to that limit like I did yesterday," you tell him. "She really didn't like the brain swelling."

"Ah, yeah, that's probably a good idea," John nods. "I could probably get wind going up to a point I get like that too, but... uh... I'm not going to test that limit so close to the ship."

You echo the sentiment of "that's probably a good idea."

"So, uh," John then continues, a bit nervously. "Did you hear back from Rose yet?"

"Nope," you say, shaking your head. "What about Nep? You seen her since Terezi dragged her away last night?"

"Once this morning, while you were in with Doctor Fraiser," John says. "She was talking with some other girl and looked busy so I didn't say anything."

"She was talking to another girl?" You ask, surprised. Sure, when you were kids Nep was always an outgoing girl, but... well. From what she told you about her adventures escaping the Aschen everywhere, you're just glad that she's getting back to her roots now that you're in the RELATIVELY SPEAKING "SAFE" PAST.

"Yeah, some girl with pointy horns like Terezi, but with some Lime-green colored sign," John
elaborates. "Why does everyone wear signs here again?"

"'Cause their blood is all different colors," you answer. "And that's the Alternian thing, I guess."

"Ah," John answers, and a few moments later, you both enter the cafeteria.

You see a few familiar faces, and a lot of UNFAMILIAR ONES too. Mostly the latter, though. Nepeta's sitting over at a table conversing with the girl John described.

Nep looks... a LOT more relaxed than you've seen her over the last few days. Why- she's not even wearing her hat!! Her cat ears are just out there and in the open and wriggling contentedly.

Then, Nep spots you, and waves you and John over, and you can SEE the relief in her eyes. Before she just seemed so guilty and sad and- Yeah. Something's changed. For the better, you think.

"I'll go get us some lunch," John says.

"Kay," you nod, and trust him to find something you'll like. With that, you head over to join your kinda-sorta-cousin at the table. You're not even really related to her by anyone through marriage or blood but the four of you have always thought of yourselves as cousins in one way or another. Like in that cartoon Lilo and Stitch!

You wonder if they'll make that in this timeline?

"Hey, Nep!" you grin, and sit down across from the girl.

"Hey, Jade," she smiles at you. "Sup?"

"There are three moons, Nep! THREE MOONS! Have you seen them??" You ask her, excitedly.

"Yeah, I saw them," Nep nods. "Got a really good look at them all last night."

"Hello," Mystery girl says, offering her hand. "I'm Mikari."

"Hi," you take it and shake it. "I'm Jade! Nice to meet you!"

"Speaking of last night," you begin- and Nep raises a finger.

"I'll tell you when John gets his butt over here," she says, and you nod. You notice that Mystery-Mikari here looks a slightly bit uncomfortable so you guess... she was involved somehow?

Probably.

"So, have you heard from Rose yet?" You ask.

"Sort of. Dad called in this morning, and we talked for a bit," Nep says. "Apparently they're almost done with the weapon retrofit, but they're going to be sticking it out for the rest of the search before coming back here."

"How long do you think before they come back?" You ask.

"I guess they'll be back within a day or two, it's not THAT big a chunk of space they're searching,"
Nep answers.

"What's not that big?" John asks as he sits down, a tray in hand with two bowls of what looks like cereal and two cans of some kind of ALIEN SODA.

"The space Rose and the others are searching," you answer, then, hesitantly try the cereal. ...Eh, it's alright, you guess.

"Ah, cool," John nods, and then goes to open the can of soda he bought. "Hope they'll be back soon."

"So, um," Nep begins right as John takes a sip of the soda. "Jolinar and I split up last night."

**Cue Spit Take!!**

...Except not. John doesn't react all that much beyond grimace at the taste of the soda. You... think you'll skip trying yours then.

"Sorry, what?" He asks, "That soda was pretty sour and I didn't hear what you said."

Nepeta repeats what she said before, and John blinks, nods, accepts the fact, then asks: "So where'd Jolinar go, then?"

"She's right here, John," Nepeta motions with her ears towards Mystery Girl Mikari, who smiles a bit nervously.

"...Oh," John says. "Well that makes sense. How come she jumped?"

"I got attacked in my Hive last night," Mikari says. "Intruder got me with a poisoned knife, I would've died, but Jolinar was able to get rid of the poison in time."

"So you're just you then?" You ask of Nepeta.

"Yup," she nods. "One Hundred percent Argo Lalonde."

...Huh??

"I've been thinking," Nepeta continues. "This... this whole time travel thing, it could be great for a fresh start, you know? There's the four of us in the present already, our 'past' selves, basically. And we're basically... uh, well, two months 'earlier' than we were when we left, so... why don't we reset our birthdays back that far too AND change our names so we're not using the same ones as our past selves? To avoid confusion, right?"

"I've been thinking something similar," John says. "Rose already changed her name after Mom died, and you were using that other name while you were on the run, right?"

Your cat-eared cousin nods. "Exactly. I was just thinking... we're basically different people from who we were already, who we kinda are right now?"

Changing your name... Changing your name...

"So what were you thinking about?" You ask John.
"Terezi keeps calling me 'Not a Shepherd' as part of her weird thing, and Karkat keeps doing the same, pretending he can't remember my name," John says, "so I'm thinking... why not make it so that's kind of ironic? Egbert to Shepherd. Shephard? Shepperd? Not sure on what spelling I'd go with yet, though."

"Maybe that's why Terezi's calling you that, though," Nepeta points out. "Could be she's seeing you under your future name and is adding the 'Not A' part because you haven't changed it yet?"

"Well that's dumb!" John remarks. "Why not just call me by the real name to begin with?" He smirks, "But, yeah, I like the idea of turning the joke back around on 'em. 'Hey! Not a Shepherd!'" He then says, mocking Karkat's slightly gravely voice. "'No!'" He then says in his regular voice, "'You've got it wrong! I'm TOTALLY John Shep.. Shep...!'" He stalls out. "Sheppard. Two P's, no H, and an A and not an E."

"What about you, Jade?" Mikari looks at you and- oh, no, there's something about her voice. Jolinar? Jolinar's asking you not Mikari. You wonder why she's not doing the voice thing?

"There's really only one alternative for me," you say. "If I'm changing it, I'm going with my bio-dad's last name."

"Jackson," Jolinar muses. "Jade Jackson. A bit alliterative, but I can see it working."

Jade Jackson, John Sheppard, and Rose and Argo Lalonde.

"I think that can work," You say.

"Well, let's see how we like it-" Nep- no, Argo- says. "A trial run, yeah? And if we don't like it by the time we dial back to Earth..."

A trial run, huh?

Your name is KARKAT VANTAS, and you're bored out of your mind.

You're stuck in the medbay of the ALL YOUR BASE because of those stupid oblong meat products and- urgh. Your stomach churns just at the memory. The only person you have for company is some olive blood stuck in bed just like you are- her body bound up here and there with bandages. One of her horns has a chunk taken out of it somehow.

Her name, as far as you've been able to decipher from the mumbled words coming from behind her similarly bandaged mouth, is POLYPA GOEZEE, and apparently a VOLCANO spat on her.

"Mry," She says, "Marmat."

You glance at her. "What?"

"Meach mh mroll mow mew muilf mh mire," she says, bandages muffling her words. "Mn mh'll me marm mh mighk."

Let's see here... "Teach a Troll how to... Build a Fire"? Yeah, Build a fire "and he'll be warm all
night."

...Oh HELL no. Not one of these puns. You've heard a dozen of these fire-themed things already.

You groan. "Nooo."

"Mek mh mroll mon mire mn mh'll me marm mor mah mesh mof meh's mife."

"SOMEONE GET ME OUT OF HERE!!" you yell out, hoping for someone to answer your prayers.

...None comes.

Your name is MAJOR KARKAT VANTAS, and you're loving the SHIT out of your current assignment.

"Knight to E-5," across from you, MAJOR DAVIS STRIDER moves a knight piece in a way you're not quite sure is legal. Oh well, you're not quite sure if half the moves you've made tonight are legal either.

Neither of you are calling the other out on it.

"Bah, I guess I'll just have to move my Bishop to... uh..." You scower the field for an opening and then just move the danged Black Bishop to somewhere. "Here. Where-ever 'here' is."

"Grrr," Davis scowls, glaring at the annoying Bishop. "You just had to sink my battleship, huh?"

"What?" you ask, smirking at him, not that he sees it, gaze transfixed on your Bishop the way he is. "We're playing Chess, not Battleship."

"It was a joke, Vantas," he says.

"I know it was, what does that make you?" You taunt back.

He glances up at you, and sees the smirk on your face. "What is this? Some kind of alien black flirting thing?" Out of spite he moves a pawn pitifully forwards one space.

"Oh, I'd never go Pitch for you, Strider," you say. "I respect you way too much for that. Besides," you capture it with your recently moved Bishop. "I'm not in this mission for Quadrant filling. I'm not going to chase anyone over some silly childish notion of 'serendipity.'"

"Fair enough," Strider continues to scowl as he returns to look at the board.

"Speaking of Romance, however," And then Rose Lalonde sits down next to you both at your table in the ASTRO MEGASHIP'S tiny-ass food hall. "Can I ask you a question, Uncle Davish?"

"Eh?" Strider glances at the girl, a faint smile gracing his face at the nickname. "Sure thing, Rose."

"I think I have a type," Rose says. "How do I know when what I'm feeling is attraction to a specific
person and not just to that type in general."

"Oh?" Strider gets a little bit nervous. "I guess that depends on the type."

"Jade," Rose says, and Strider's face goes red.

"Wh- What? Like Harley Jade??" He asks.

"No, you idiot," you tap the man on his shoulder with the recently captured pawn, and then point across the hall with said pawn. "Jade. BLOOD."

Strider turns his head and looks where you're pointing, and where you're pointing is as a table where several JADE BLOODS sit together, eating an early-meal.

Oh, the Jade Bloods. You remember them vividly from your last go-around. A small group of girls who, before the All Your Base crashed, and that entire cavern of Trolls moved to Diaspora, worked in the hatching cavern. Then, they decided to join the Rebellion and do this and that. They all went and did different things. Daraya Jonjet, for example, went and joined the offworld team roster and started making some EXPLOSIVE DEVICES... you think.

Truth be told, you didn't really pay that much attention to them, and actually tried to avoid their MOTHERING TENDENCIES whenever you could. You can't remember who did what specifically at the moment, and you're not even going to bother forcing it.

What you DO remember is that they were the girls that EVERYONE noticed when they walked by. They were just THAT FABULOUSLY DRESSED, or had their hair styled JUST SO. Everyone was either JEALOUS OF THEM, wanting to JOIN THE COVEN, or flat out just WANTED THEIR LOVE AND ATTENTION.

You guess human girls like Rose aren't immune to their charm ether.

"Oh," Strider says. "Yeah, that's gonna be tricky, Rose. Those girls are what people lucky enough to go to High School would call the 'Cheerleaders.' Girls want to be them, guys want to date them." He pauses, then shakes his head, and says, "Well, that's just what you see on TV, anyways. I suppose there were also guys who wanted to be them and girls who wanted to date them, but I never went to High School, so I'm not the best person to ask about this sort of thing. I have zero real world experience with how to approach a situation like this."

"I see," Rose muses, then looks to you. "Major Vantas, do you-?"

"Nope," you answer. " Didn't date anyone during my last two go arounds. I'm about as inexperienced as Strider here. Why don't you go ask Joey or Mierfa for advice."

"Ah," she nods. "Now there's an idea." And with that, she stands up to leave. "Thank you for the advice."

And thus, she leaves the room.

"...You know," Strider begins, "I'm really. REALLY fucking hoping that my lack of experience dating people didn't just screw her over in some way."

"I'm sure it'll work out for the best," you say.
"What," Strider asks. "Is that Future Knowledge or something?"

"Maybe it is, maybe it isn't," you smirk. "I'd be saying it just the same either way."

---

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you find Joey Claire and Mierfa Durgas staring out a window in a random hallway on the ship, whispering to each other about this or that. You'd hate to intrude if it were something personal... but...

"...Kalbur's requesting he take over sword operations for the Megaship, rather than working the shield and blaster," Mierfa is in the middle of saying. "...And after the way Dering handled the training simulation, I'm inclined to agree."

They're not.

"Yeah, that's not a choice that should have been made to begin with," Joey answers, "Tegiri definitely has the experience with the sword a lot of our pilots have been lacking, save Dammek. Make the switch, Ashler Dering to Shield, Tegiri Kalbur to Sword."

"I'll go notify them," Mierfa says, nodding, and then turning to leave. "Oh! Hey, Rose."

"Hello, Aunt Joey, Mierfa" you say, smiling at them.

"Hello, Aunt Joey, Mierfa" you say, smiling at them.

"Hey, Rose," Joey smiles and waves. "What's up?"

"I... uh... Could I have some romantic advice?" You ask.

Joey sends a panicked look Mierfa's way, and she nods, saying, "Alright, the notification can wait. What's up?"

Welp. You might as well just... spit it out. Rip this bandaid off.

"I think I have a specific type of girl I like," you say, "um, like... Jade Bloods, specifically?"

"Oohf," Mierfa grunts, and Joey laughs, a little nervously.

"So, um," you say, feeling so much more awkward going to people you barely know over people you did know personally, for some reason. You'd think it'd be the other way around. "How do I know what's just me noticing someone of my type and what's me actually being attracted to someone?"

Joey and Mierfa look at each other, evidently holding some kind of special, girlfriend-to-girlfriend-mind-only conversation between each other, until...

"Well," Mierfa begins, "I'd say the main thing is you want to spend time with one person in particular over anyone else."

"Yes!" Joey nods, "And if you really just sort of feel butterflies in your stomach when you're around that one person, that's a bit of it too."
"I see," you muse. "Anything else? Like, how do I go forwards with pursuing someone or...?"

There's a bit of a pause as both of their faces blush with their respective blood colors, and then...

"Um..." Joey scratches at her nose nervously. "I guess, see if there's stuff about a person you like more than just how they look. 'Cause that's really, kind of, all a type is? A specific sort of look you really like. If you're thinking about someone because of how they act or how they talk to you, more so than how they look... I think that's the important thing." She looks to Mierfa, "Can you think of anything else?"

"...Nope," Mierfa shakes her head. "I can't think of anything else."

...You get the feeling there IS something they're avoiding mentioning, but you're not going to press it.

You've got enough to think about right now as it is.

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and you think... you think you're homing in on it.

The SUPERGATE.

You've got a rising feeling of DREAD in your stomach as you get closer and closer to a certain spot on the map.

SOON, you'll find the SUPERGATE and be able to destroy it.

"Oh, well that's not good," Xefros Tritoh mutters from the pilot's chair. You look up from your navigation console.

"What's not good?" Callie Ohphee asks, peeking out from beneath a weapon console.

"Picking up some leaked core radiation," Xefros says. "It looks like we might have Reavers in the area."

Your DREAD LEVELS SPIKE, and for a moment you worry that you might have been chasing the wrong BAD VIBES.


"Ships are ships," Callie says, getting up from the floor. "Maybe the Replicators are using them for material transport? There aren't any Stargates near here, after all."

And then a console beeps, and Xefros scowls. "Damn it, what now??"

You can't help but stare up and out the window and watch as space sort of RIPPLES INFRONT OF YOU subtly.
"Full stop!" you order, feeling how bad things will get if you DON'T STOP.

Xefros, to his credit, stops the Megaship cold on the exact right spot. The space in front of the Megaship ripples and parts ever so slightly in front of you, revealing something HIDDEN BEHIND IT.

"Some kind of proximity based cloaking field," Callie frowns. "Xefros, launch a probe through it."

"Launching..." Xefros reports, and a few moments later, a holographic screen pops up in front of him.

You go over towards his console, and look.

"Is that it?" You ask.

"I'd definitely say we've found the Supergate, alright," Callie agrees. "It's further along than I'd hoped it'd be. They might be ready to dial in within hours."

"That's not all we found," Xefros grimaces, and points at the screen. "Reaver Ships," then to another point, "Mofang ships. Not attacking each other, and we have confirmed life signs on the Reaver ships."

"They're working together," you realize.

"They're going to bring Lord English back through the Gate," Callie says. "We need to stop this."

"I'm backing us away to a safe distance so we can contact Alternia," Xefros says. "Callie, Cassandra, go get everyone and let them know what we've found."

"Right," you nod. That's the best course of action.

"Damn," you name is OKURII LEIJON, and you can't help but be somewhat impressed by the REPLICATOR'S BUSYWORK. The SUPERGATE looks like it's almost finished- a Stargate taken up to SHIP SCALE. It looks like the bugs are working on welding one of the LAST CHEVRONS into place as you watch the live feed. "This is not good."

"Yeah, it's really not," Joey's voice comes through the speakers. "Should we engage?"

You take a moment to consider your options.

On the one hand... Giant Snake Mech.

On the other... possible Clown retaliation.

...

Screw it. That Gate needs to be shut down.

"Wait Three minutes for me to contact Cla'dia to see if the Delta Megaship is clear to launch, then
engage the Supergate," you order. "If we're lucky, the Delta is ready, and will be en-route to join you in the fight by the time you begin fighting. If not... I'm still going to risk sending it. We can't let Lord English back into our galaxy. That's a Price of Oblivion that I'm not willing to pay."

Chapter End Notes

Ahah. Yeah. I played a bit of a long game with that girl from the TrollCall leaks. >_<

...I didn't realize she was going to have a thing about setting herself on fire when I dropped hot lava on her back in Act 3, chapter ALT:02x11. I swear. I didn't. 0_0
ALT:04X06: A Cruel Angel's Thesis (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Like an Angel that has forsaken Sympathy...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Your name is TEGIRI KALBUR, and while most other TEAL BLOODS studied Law or Science, you studied THE ART OF THE BLADE. While Cerulean Bloods like ASHLER DERING played FLARP and pretended they were GREAT SWORDMASTERS using their FAKE WEAPONS that would break under the most TINIEST OF STRESSINGS, you were CRAFTING, refining and sharpening weapon after weapon in search of the ULTIMATE BLADE that only your hands could craft. One day, you will hold the highly vaunted title of MASTER CALIBURN- SWORD CRAFTER OF THE CENTURY'S TURN.

You're still not there yet, but your CURRENT PRIMARY BLADE, the VIOLET PLEZUON, is the strongest you've ever made- the lightest as well, even when sheathed.

Which makes it the PERFECT WEAPON to use as a stand in for the Astro Megaship's SWORD.

As you wield THE VIOLET PLEZUON, the Astro Megaship too shall wield its blade against the Replicators and the Reavers.

With each swing of your sword, you will DECIMATE YOUR FOES, but not your allies.

Even if your allies includes that Cerulian flop of a girl, ASHLER DERING.

So bad with even a DUMMY SWORD in A TRAINING SIMULATION, that she nearly poked her OWN EYE OUT.

Of course she glares at you with her one, non bandaged eye as if you'd been the one to do that to her. But you didn't do anything. In fact, you LET HER go ahead and try it despite the fact you could tell she was inexperienced.

An amateur got demoted to where she can be of use. There's nothing that you did personally beyond volunteer your own MANY YEARS of HONED SKILL to the people in charge.

If Ashler can't handle the heat, then she should stay off of the battlefield, and do her blubbering in peace and quiet.

Your name is TEAL'C and you've tasked yourself with the very important job of LEARNING ALTERNIAN COOKING STYLES. Primarily? Just for the fun of it. But also because you really don't have anything else to do.
You're not needed in space, and while you would like to help with the EMPIRE LIBERATION going on, the other teams have their members set, and you're kind-of already committed to liberating ONE galaxy as it is.

So. Food.

Food it is.

When you return to Earth, and when O'neill is finally back home safe and sound, you are going to trick him by claiming some of these Alternian dishes are TRADITIONAL JAFFA DISHES.

As Jane Egbert has taught you well, sometimes there is no greater pleasure in life than playing a joke on ones friends and family. Playing a joke with GOOD FOOD doubly so.

You're going to start off by rectifying the horrid mess that was DIEMEN XICALI'S "OBLONG MEAT PRODUCTS." It says so even right here in the kid's cookbook: COOK THOROUGHLY AT HIGH TEMPERATURE. And then it lists said high temperature. Why the boy continually seems to ignore that, you have no idea.

You eye said youngster, sitting at a table near the kitchen, but nowhere near close enough to do anything, but squirm in dismay as he watches you prepare a MEAT SLEEVE for the ground meat.

While you learn how to cook it right, you will also teach him how to do things right.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and you give the order. "Bring us in, Mallek."

And thus, the Transformed ASTRO MEGASHIP steps across the veil, sword and shield in hand.

Nobody on the bridge says a word as their eyes stare, transfixed on the viewsceen. Nobody dares breathe as all of the Replicator controlled ships and the Reaver Ships all stop what they're doing and begin turning towards the Megaship slowly, surely.

For some reason, the image of a BADLY COMPRESSED VIDEO FILE appears in your head of one of those clowns slowly. Just. TURNING.

"Shield raised," Xefros reports as the edge of the shield comes up to block the vision of the battlefield you've got on the viewscreen.

And then the targeting sensors all light up green, and Callie whispers out a, "Happy 12th Perigree, you stupid fucking bugs."

That's when you hear the roar of the PVWAAAOOOOO from the reconfigured scanner arrays on the shield echoing back through the ship's arm and through the rest of its hull.

You see the wave of blue light soar across space faster than it does in the air, and it passes over every ship, and then washes over the Supergate.
The Replicator Ships all stop moving forwards, and instead begin listing to the sides.

The construction work on the Supergate stops.

The Reaver Ships... do not stop.

The Supergate.... Does not collapse.

"I was afraid of that," Cassandra laments from her position next to Callie. "They didn't build the Supergate with the same energy fields."

"No, they didn't," Callie agrees. "And the Reavers will be in firing range in ten seconds!"

"We're going to have to go in close and cut it to shreds then," you say. "Mallek! We're going live combat. Kalbur! Get ready to put your sword skills to the test!"

You're Tegiri Kalbur, and you open your eyes. "I'm always ready," you report, and take up a stance at the front center- the others take up the load. "Let's go!"

And then you LUNGE FORWARDS with the Megaship, swinging its sword with expert skill straight through the shields and hull of the closest ship that wasn't expecting you to move so suddenly.

It explodes as you move onto the next ship, slice- BOOM! And you swing into the next ship- another one goes BANG. And then you hit the next- BOOM- and then the next- BLAM!- and then the NEXT_ BOOM_ and the next- BANG- and the next- BANG- and another two- BANG BOOM!- and a few more- BOOM BANG BLAM!- for good measure.

And then you've destroyed them all and you're free to move onto the SUPERGATE.

You come up to the massive ring and bring down a sweeping cut against the section that was just recently being worked on--

It cuts, YES! IT CUTS!!!

You swing around and deliver another cut that sends a CHEVRON FLYING LOOSE.

Then you go in and start cutting up the rest of it.

The Replicators were dumb enough to use the same basic hull plating to protect this thing as were on all the Alternian and Mofang ships.

While they were playing around with their TOY BLOCKS, your allies were BUILDING THE ULTIMATE SHIP DESTROYING WEAPON.

While the clowns were waffling around in the black, your allies were rising up against the SHEER TERROR that the idea of a Clown represents and now you turn them into what they truly are now and forever more.

A.
Soon you've finished your slicing job, and the pieces of the SUPERCATE remain floating in space.

Hah. As if you really needed the DELTA MEGASHIP to defeat this-

That's when a ship suddenly emerges from hyperspace and rams into the Megaship chest first and OW. Are you going to feel that one in the morning. Some of your fellow Pilots are DAZED from the sensory feedback and aren't able to get back up to their feet just yet, that Mallek guy among them, though not quite so near the edge as to be useless. He's already getting back to his feet and nearly trips over your sword.

...It's then you realize you dropped your sword, twice over. A glance outside confirms it- the weapon is spiraling away lazily, already out of reach.

"FUCK!!!!!!" Ashler cries out. "I dropped the shield!"

...Well. At least you're not alone in that respect. Damn it.

"WHAT THE!?! You're Joey Claire, and as you look up at the viewscreen, your heart races faster and your eyes widen.

Standing on the bow of the ship that just RAMMED YOU is a man in a white space suit with a stupid. FUCKING. CUEBALL HELMET.

"Oh FUCK US!" Callie cries out. "Why did it have to be Scratch again!?"

[You.] Scratch's voice roars against your mind, calm, yet enraged. [Dare. TO DELAY MY WORK!?]

You feel a surge of panic welling up inside your heart. You're not ready for this. You're not ready to fight him again. You're---

Xefros grabs your hand as you start to panic, and you feel grounded. Well, as grounded as you could be on a space ship but still the point is-

That's when a SLEEK, BLACK TRIANGULAR SHAPED SHIP suddenly swoops in from left field, and then begins firing lasers and all sorts of other weaponry at the Alternian ship that just rammed you. Unsurprisingly the Alternian ship quickly begins firing back at them-- and also beginning to laser at you as well, when it can spare a shot.

"Need a Hand?" surprisingly, it's Okurii's familiar voice that calls out over the ship to ship radio.

"The Delta Megaship is here to fight!" comes Dammek's voice as well. "Looks like we got here just in time!"
"Yeah! Nice timing!!" you grin, then request for them to: "Get this sorry excuse for a spaceship out of our grill!!"

"ON IT!" Both call out, and then the DELTA MEGASHIP transforms, twisting from a triangular shaped thing into a fighting robot with Gatling guns for hands. Then, it swings around mid flight and power kicks the Alternian Ship straight out of the Astro Megazord's chest and into a Supergate fragment.

[DESTROY THESE PESKY TRANSFORMING SHIPS!] Scratch's voice sends a chill down your spine.

Naturally, that's when a few more REPLICATOR CONTROLLED MOFANG SHIPS emerge from hyper space and begin firing down on both Megaships.

"Guys!" Mallek's voice calls over the radio. "We lost the sword and shield in the impact, we'll have a hard time fighting back like this without our disruptor array or sword."

"You won't need to!" Your name is OKURII LEIJON, and you, Dammek, and Skylla stand on the control bridge of the Delta Megaship. "We're going to combine the ships and use the arrays in that formation!"

"Oh HELL YES!" you hear Joey call out. "Mallek! Shift us and Prep for combination!"

And with that- you and Dammek and Skylla will the Delta Megaship to break apart into the component pieces, flying them around as the Astro Megaship shifts briefly back to Spaceship mode to gain some distance away from the rain of fire, and then shifts back to robot mode- save for its arms remaining folded to the back.

You can only imagine how cool this NEXT PART will look from the outside.

The Delta Megaship's legs slam down over top the Astro Megaship's legs, forming bulkier armor- the bridge piece collapses down over the head, forming a new helmet, and the rest of it slides down over the damaged chest. What was once the BACK now become arms, and what were once the arms transform into shoulder mounted DISH ARRAYS.

And then your minds link up with all of those in control of the Astro Megaship, and the formation is truly complete.

"ASTRO DELTA MEGAZORD, ONLINE!" Dammek roars out.

The man known as the Scratch Doctor just stares- confounded for a moment. "They... Combine?? Who the hell designed such an inefficient form of transformation!?"

And then it hits him as he senses that PRESENCE he'd felt ages ago.

"The BLOOD PLAYER!" He growls. "You...! Of course you'd design something like this!!" He then roars into his radio, and into space, ordering the Replicator ships under his control to do his will:
"[DESTROY THEM!!!]"

All ships fire- but the energy blasts just get absorbed into the armor of this new ship.

Wait.

WAIT.

It couldn't be...!

"[THAT.][IS MY LORD'S GIMMICK!! YOU GIVE IT RIGHT BACK RIGHT NOW!!]"

But how!? How could they have known about---

Wait.

WAIT.

The---!!!

"[TIME TRAVELERS!!!!]" he roars in sudden understanding of the series of events.

"Well," Dammek remarks, "he's really mad now, isn't he?"

"I'd say so," Okurii nods. "Let's give him our response."

The combined transformed robot's response is just to fire off the shoulder mounted weaponry:

**PVWAAOOOOO!**

The Mofang ships stop firing the moment the blue wave of energy washes over them, and the control systems in Scratch's Helmet report a LOST SIGNAL.

"...What?" he stares. "What!? How is that-!?"

Then, the hands on the new robot's arms launch off like rockets- smashing with a brutal ONE TWO PUNCH into his ship- brutally crushing in its sides and bow, and shutting down so many major systems.

"Oh now that's just RUBBING IT IN!" he laments as, instead of the fists returning to their place, the arms now reveal a SECOND SET OF GATLING GUNS, and the DISRUPTOR WEAPONS shift back into the first set of Gatling Guns.

Rockets shoot out enmass and smash into his ship, and the damned thing explodes right from underneath his feet- the explosion catches up with some of the Supergate fragments, and then THEY
TOO EXPLODE- much brighter than any piece of normal metal has any right exploding into.

And thus a pretty picture could be painted. The combined Astro-Delta Megazord standing, glaring at the massive explosion that everyone could only hope actually took out the Scratch Doctor once and for all.

"You know what?" Okurii says, sounding like a job was left unfinished. "Let's not take any chances. Let's smash the rest of the Replicator ships and then drag the rest of the Supergate chunks into the nearest fucking black hole."

"I like the way you think, Okurii" Dammek says.

Your name is Davis Strider.

You just rode out a fucking space battle inside of a giant fucking transforming robot.

How the hell did that even WORK?

Why even go with GIANT ROBOTS in the first place!? What... what a stupid way to fight ship to ship and yet---

And yet.

...

You're not quite sure how to feel about this other than to say, "I want one."

Your name is Rose Lalonde.

You just rode out a space battle inside of two transforming and combining robots.

Jade Blooded girls? Check.

Giant Robot Battles that appeal to your inner CRAVINGS FOR DESTRUCTION? Double. Check.

The sheer and total amount of WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK WE ARE that these people your Aunt Joey works and lives with? TRIPLE CHECK.

You think you're in love with this galaxy and never want to leave.

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser.

After that massive scare you just had over all possible BAD ENDS during that last battle, and as the Astro and Delta Megaships land for repairs in Cla'dia's shipyards...
All you want is to find Jude Harley and tell him a few things.

You're done playing around.

As everyone filters down to the Stargate, you figure out exactly what you want to say.

As you step through back to Alternia, and see Jude waiting there along with your rightfully concerned mother, it's him you gravitate towards first. You give your mother a look that should tell her you'll talk to her later.

Then, you grab Jude by the hand and drag him away somewhere private.

"Uh, Cassie? What's up?" Jude asks.

"We've nearly died fifteen times during the last few days. And that's fine. But five of them were specifically during that last battle," you tell him as your other hand finds his, "and each and every time I felt like the worst possible end had come upon me and I couldn't do anything about it and it made me so MAD. But you know what, Jude? It also made me realize something."

"What's that?" He asks, voice sounding just a bit hopeful.

"I think we've thought about it for long enough," and then you lean in- hesitating, do you feel the bad vibes from this choice? .... No. You don't. "I love you, and I don't want to keep denying it anymore."

There's a moment of silence, and Jude asks, "What was that one part again?" It doesn't sound confused. It sounds... wanting. You know exactly what it is he wants to hear again.

"I love you, Jude Harley," you tell him.

And then says the cheesiest thing ever, "I know," and then he kisses you, and you kiss him back.

For a few moments, all is right with the world.

Then you feel a bad vibe about if you don't break off the kiss right then and there and you quickly do so, much to Jude's confusion. Well, until an annoyed Cerulean blooded troll storms down the hallway, that is, flexing her left hand and complaining about dropping a shield.

She pauses to rip off a bandage from around her left eye and toss it to the ground. Thus paused, she manages to side eye you and Jude with a bloody, battered eye with a mutated pupil. She has seven irises in her left eye, and quite a few of them look like they were busted from some kind of recent impact. It looks nasty, and she should probably see a doc... wait, Yeah, the medbay is down this hallway isn't it?

"What're you looking at, punks?" She asks, growling.

"There's a rust spot on that wall that looks like a Replicator," you say the only thing that doesn't feel like it ends badly.

The girl pauses, turns around, and stares at the wall. "...Huh. Freaky that." And then she turns, and continues down the hall.
Jude takes a look at the wall after she's gone, and says, "Hey! It really does look like a Replicator! Geeze. That's so weird. It's even got the sort of spindly legs and everything."

You can only sigh in relief as another disaster is adverted.

Your name is Dammek, and you feel just a little bit more light hearted after returning home, despite the question you're about to ask. You, Okurii, and Mallek stand at the bridge, staring out at the stars. "I guess the only question now is, 'Did we kill him?'"

You three stand there for a minute, then Okurii laments, "It's a shame we couldn't find the body."

"Definitely," Mallek nods. "But, hey, maybe we lucked out and it got vaporized so there isn't a body to find?"

"Until we learn otherwise, let's assume that Scratch can't survive a super sized double Naquadah explosion to the face," Okurii says, smiling faintly. "That said, if he did survive that, I look forwards to making sure he stays dead this time. Personally."

"Agreed. Maybe a swift punch to the gut'll finally do him in. That's the least of what the jerk gets for standing on the outside of a ship as it rams into our stomach!" Mallek gripes, rubbing at his own gut.

Silence falls between the lot of you for a bit.

"Major Vantas said he's got one more mission to take care of before he's heading back to Earth," you add to the conversation. "Apparently he needs the Megaship for it, but..."

"Since it's suffered moderate damage, it'll take a while to repair," Okurii nods. "Yes, I suspect he's not too happy about the delay."

"At least half a month, I'd guess," Mallek muses. "Why's he want it anyways?"

"Apparently," you say. "he wants to do a sweeping run on Soria to wipe out all the bugs. And all the Mofang tech on it still functioning too. That way the Empress can't get her hands on any of it."

"Speaking of her," Okurii begins, "do you think our killing Scratch, or at the very least seriously maiming him, is going to make her easier or harder to deal with?"

"No way to know until we have to fight her," you figure. "And I'm not looking forwards to that day just yet."

BVRRRMMMM- SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK.

VWRAAOOOOSSSH!

SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK- VVVRRAAMMM- SNKT.
"Oh, my dear Scratch Doctor," you are now EMPRESS MEENAH - HER IMPERIAL CONDESCENSION- and you kneel with a grin on your face as you observe the mangled body you'd just fished out of a sea of wreckage. "I told you the Supergate plan was a folly. It was one when those idiots did it during the Summoner's revolt. And it was one now. More so, even."

He doesn't reply. Of course he doesn't. He never listens to what you have to say. Never RESPECTS your wisdom, just because he's as old as Alternia's sun.

"But if I'd KNOWN?!" You begin, tone of voice growing cold. "KNOWN that you had some way of controlling those mecha sea flappers that've been cullin' MY SHIPS?? That you were letting it happen just to build this SUPERGATE??"

You grab the man by what remains of the scuff of his neck collar and lift the mangled form up off the floor like the puppet without strings it is.

"If I'd KNOW THAT!?!" You hiss at the helmet- somehow pristine despite the damage the rest of his body and suit took. "Screw the rules- Fuck this LEASH you and English think you have around my neck- I'd run you through with my trident and end you myself."

He doesn't reply. Of course he doesn't.

You unseal the latches on his helmet, and remove it.

His face is blue- bluer than you recall from the last time you saw it- from space exposure. It's almost an icy, frozen blue, locked into a permanent roar of rage.

A shame, he was quite handsome when he wasn't experiencing some form of NEGATIVE EMOTION.

"Alas," a humorous tone returns to your voice. "It seems you're the one who 'choked on your aspirations', this time."

And thus, you let the body fall back to the floor, and you stand up, helmet in your free hand. You lament it for a moment.

Moment's over.

"General Naihite," you smirk at the captain of your ship, "take this piece of junk to the medical ward. Harvest as much intact DNA as you can from his body." You pause, then add, "Then burn the rest."

"Yes, your Imperial Condescension," the troll with the wooden-bio-arm bows in acceptance of your order.

"Director Darane," you toss the helmet at a blind troll. "Take this helmet to Science at once. Strip out the control mechanisms from it. Create an upgrade for my tiara that will let me control the bugs Scratch lost his leash on."

"Yess'm'am," the yellow blooded troll nods. "I'll get right on that."

And thus, they scamper off like the gremlin they've intentionally styled themself to be.

With a sway of your hips and a flick of your long, luxurious hair as a signal for your crowd to
disperse, you saunter over towards the window and stare out at the battlefield that is the Mofang Homeworld- SORIA- far, FAR out in the distance.

It barely resembles a planet at this point... more A HOLE FILLED CHEESE PRODUCT formed into the shape of a BALL, through which you can BARELY see something being birthed within.

You wonder what it is? What kind of terrifying weapon it is? Your heart is EAGER WITH ANTICIPATION.

Will you be able to control it?

You certainly hope so. You can barely handle the suspense!!

Chapter End Notes

And thus you begin to see the beauty of Dammek's idea to make ships transform into robots (And also Combine to form more powerful machines) that doesn't just have to do with him being able to pilot GIANT ROBOTS.

It's the equivalent of bring a gun to a knife fight, after all. As Lord English's Snake-Mech proved, unorthodox ship designs just confound the people who are very suddenly limited in how they can fight back... and Dammek realized you're going to need something just as crazy to fight back against it. (A ship that turns into armor for another ship to steal the very idea of English's ship's energy absorbing armor! Hah!)

Is this also just me unashamedly putting in giant robots where they don't belong? Probably a good fair share of it is, yes.

EDIT6/3/19: Fixed a broken video link.
Chapter Summary

Joey revives Thor, and mission briefings are had.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


Your name is JOEY CLAIRE; you've got a TUB FULL OF ONIONS, a bracelet full of magic, a stasis pod with a dying alien in it, an AUDIENCE ready to heckle, and one hell of a potentially bad idea to execute flawlessly.

"Can't I get out of here yet!?” Karkat Vantas complains. "I feel fine!"

"I could set you on fire," Polypa Goezee says with her usual muffled voice- one you've gotten used to. "Could set us both on fire. That'd keep us in here for longer."

There's a pause as Karkat tries to parse that muffled sentence, then groans. "No! No thank you! No fire setting, please."

"Could you both please be quiet while I work?" You ask of them.

"No!" Karkat says. "I want out already!"

"I'll set you on fire if you don't be quiet and let her work," Polypa warns. Karkat takes another half minute to process that sentence properly.

You look Polypa in her one uncovered eye and silently make the same offer you've made many times before by raising your left wrist. 'Do you want me to heal you?'

She blinks (winks?) twice- 'No.'

You nod in acceptance.

It's come down to that exact formula since you've gotten some PRETTY EXACTING CONTROL over Shaper's abilities. At first you'd offered "when I get control over it" and she just said "Maybe." But when you did, she'd decline, "Not today" or "If the scars turn ugly, sure."

Sometimes you'd have company, and so you'd resort to that sign language sort of thing instead of asking outright. The closest Ploypa's ever come to accepting your offer was just after you'd come back from the past, but even then...

Well.
"Okay, fine, I'll be quiet," Karkat agrees under threat of burning.

And with that, you look over at Dr. Fraiser and Major Strider, both seemingly holding a curious interest in watching you work, but respectfully have been keeping their distance while you prepared.

You can't blame them. It's their friend you're about to save.

You look to the Bracelet, and glance to JADE GREEN, asking it one last time if it will help you out. Stubbornly, it denies your request to use it on the Asgard called Thor. You wonder why it's being disobedient in this one regard.

Admin, Shaper, and Reaper chime in that they're ready to begin, and you guess that's all you'll need for now.

"Alright then," you breathe out as you take off your jacket and put it on the nearest bed, "let's clone us an Asgard."

And then you disengage the stasis field on the pod, and the Patient gasps for breath. Quickly, you reach out and apply your left hand to his heart and activate the three crystals.

Simultaneously, you RECORD Thor's Genetic structure, RIP OUT his soul/mind from his body, and HOLD IT suspended in the ARAI NETWORK for safekeeping for the moment.

[What...?] his voice echoes among the network. [What is this? Where am I?]

[Excuse me,] you tell him, [Sorry, I had to kill you in order to save you. I'll be cloning you a new body in just a moment.]

[Cloning...?] He goes silent as you feel, through Shaper, the old body dying by its injuries. [Very well. I will observe and let you proceed.]

Taking your hand off of the dead body, you then shove both of your hands into the tub full of onions, and let SHAPER DO THE WORK.

You dissolve the BIO-JUNK making up the Onions into a SOUP you can work with, and then transform all of that NEAT, RAW MATERIAL into the first shape that comes to mind- an ARAI BARNACLE EGG. (Nobody needs to see what you're doing in real time. That'd just be gross.)

You make this egg bigger than any you'd taken from Kaptar. No Arai will be hatching from THIS one, that's for sure. Framework in place, you then begin turning and churning genetic stuff to form an ASGARD BODY- one identical to the one that just died save for the key difference of having INTACT LUNGS.

It's quick work. FAR TOO QUICK for your liking, as a matter of fact. The Asgard BASE GENOME is too... too...

Well, if the Troll's Reproductive system was MODIFIED for MASS POPULATION GROWTH, the Asgard's body is basically a FACTORY MADE TEMPLATE with little to no deviance.

[...You're all clones, aren't you?] you ask as an aside, looking over the massive gaps in the structures that were just SMOOTHED OVER, basically.
[It is a problem we have been dealing with,] Thor’s voice echoes sadly. [We can no longer reproduce ourselves by any means but cloning.]

[Yeah... you've pretty much wiped out a lot of D.N.A. here,] you frown. [It's pretty and very fancy, but... it's not sustainable.]

[No, it's not,] Thor agrees. [If the Replicators do not destroy us first, our own cloning procedures will.]

[You'd be better off just starting from... starting over,] you advise. [Change species entirely, maybe.]

[An interesting proposal, miss... ] Thor pauses. [I do not believe I caught your name.]

[Joey Claire,] you introduce yourself. [I'm Jude's big sister.]

[I see. So that would make this Alternia?] Thor asks.

[Yup,] you nod.

[So that was Major Carter's plan,] Thor realizes. [Dialing this far out would sufficiently drain the power core. Unfortunately, that also means my hand-held dialing device does not have the power to return us to Earth or to my own Galaxy.]

[Not so unfortunate, really,] you say. [We've got someone working on the blueprints we got from the SGC a few months back. Improving it, even. Salazl says we should be able to get multiple, full window dial-outs with a single charge instead of just two brief bursts.]

[The Emergency Stargate Power Supply Colonel O’neill made to contact us when the Ancient Repository was downloaded into his head,] Thor says, suddenly realizing the only item it could be. [Clever, adapting it so.] There's a pause, then he says, [This device, the Bracelet you're using. It speaks of a similar design philosophy to their work, and yet... I believe it's of Furling origin. How curious.]

[Furling?] you ask. [Never heard of them.]

[They are a very secretive people in this day and age. Even I am not sure if they still have any strongholds remaining in the Milky Way galaxy,] Thor remarks. [How odd that a piece of their technology would find itself in this far away galaxy.]

[We're thinking the Bracelet is like a key to a large, animal shaped, semi-sentient device we call the Royal Lusus,] you tell him. [Is that far off from what you think it is?]

[I would need more information than that, however, your analogy of a 'key' is quite correct for what I am thinking of,] Thor says. [While 'Animal shaped, semi-sentient device’ does not describe what I am thinking of, it is quite a vivid image, which could also fit where I see the inspiration of the Ancients involved as well.]

[Oh?] you ask. [When we get you up on your feet, we're going to have to have a nice long talk about this.]

[Agreed,] Thor says. [It seems I have much to catch up on.]
You find Teal'c in the ship's kitchen, frying up something that looks suspiciously like GREEN HAM. You'll never tell Colonel O'neill that such a thing exists. He'd be quoting children books for
months if you did. Teal'c looks busy for a while, so you'll tell him when you loop back around.

Cassie and Jude, however, you find sequestered off on their own on the ship's bridge, sitting together, hand in hand, staring out at the night time desert. How Adorable, you think. You let them sit that way for a little bit longer, then start to head over to them.

That's when, of all things, Okurii begins a team meeting with people from the SG-1 and SG-2 equivalent teams, and you find yourself cut off with them in the middle.

You... can wait, you guess.

"Alright, so what's so important about you reviving an Alien that I had to get out of a music groove for this?" Dammek asks, twirling a drum stick idly across his fingers.

"Sorry, Dammek," Joey says, apologetically, "but this is important." She takes a breath, then says, "While I was reviving Thor, I had a discussion with his spirit. He mentioned that this-" she holds up her wrist with the bracelet for a moment- "looked like what he recognized as 'Furling Technology.'"

"Never heard of them," Daraya says.

"I have, vaguely" Mierfa says. "It was an obscure, random name that cropped up on ruins every now and then when Okurii, Salazl, and I were working for Trizza. We thought it was just some historically significant Troll."

"I recognize it too," Okurii nods. "And interestingly, I think I remember seeing the most of it on our hunt for where that Bracelet was hidden- well, back before we knew the Bracelet was even what we were looking for."

"That's what I was afraid of," Joey says. "Thor mentioned something about the Bracelet sharing 'Ancient Influence' in its design- and he seemed to mean 'Ancient' as in a group of people, the same ones whose Repository of Knowledge ended up stuck in Colonel O'neill's head and let him design the Battery Salazl's been re-working."


"Oh!" Callie snaps her fingers. "The Database from the Destiny we stole! The people who built the Stargates and sent the Destiny to follow the seed ship... before the Empire captured them, that is."

"Yeah," Joey nods. "Anyways, I asked him if there were any devices similar to the Royal Lusus and its key here," she shakes her left wrist, shaking the bracelet about.

"And?" Mallek asks, voice a bit thready.

"I got the impression there was an Ancient Device back in My Galaxy that inspired the creation of the Royal Lusus," Joey says. "By the Furlings."

"So... who are they and how did their tech get on Ancient Alternia?" Xefros asks.

"Thor agreed to talk about it when we came back in to talk with him," Joey says, "so I didn't press for too much information. But I needed to let you guys know ASAP about this so we CAN get all the right questions together to ask him."
"Smart thinking," Okurii nods. "Dammek, get Skylla in on this. Tyzias-" She pauses. "Tyzias?"

The girl seems asleep on her feet.

"Oi! Alternia to TZ!" Mallek snaps his fingers, and the teal-blood jolts awake.

"Bwuh!? Sorry. What?" She asks, shaking her head and showing all the obvious signs of sleep deprivation.

"When did you drift off?" Okurii asks.

"Um..." Tyzias blinks. "Joey said she'd just revived Thor?"

"So you were basically asleep for the whole thing," Okurii sighs. "Damn it, Tyzias. Go get some fucking sleep. You're no good to us walking dead."

"I'm good," Tyzias says, hands flexing as if trying to grip around something. "Just let me get some coffee and-" she pauses. "...Where's my coffee mug?"

"You left it on my desk two days ago," Callie tells her. "I've tried bringing it to you but you keep telling me it's not yours even though it is."

"I have?" Tyzias blinks, tiredly. "Huh. Guess I... uh... What were we just talking about?"

"Damn it," Joey sighs. "Daraya, with me. We're going to make sure she gets some sleep."

"Sure," Daraya nods, and together, they guide Tyzias away from the meeting table.

"Alright," Okurii concludes, "Everyone else, come up with questions you think need asking. Meeting dismissed."

And with that, you're finally able to make your way over to Jude and Cassie, who seem to have completely ignored the entire previous conversation that just happened.

"Hey," you greet them. "Thor's up."

"Oh! Cool," Cassie smiles. "We'll come drop by the med-bay in a little bit."

You stay there for a minute, then, when it seems neither Jude or Cassie are going to get up any time soon, head back towards the kitchen to talk with Teal'c.

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**EARTH DATE: JULY 11TH, 1997.**

"To seed life in their Galaxy," your name is Callie Ohphee, and you begin the presentation with a rough sketch of a MOUNTAIN with a RADAR DISH on top of it, "the Ancients devised a device to work through the Stargates. It would emit a targeted wave of energy that would basically bring quantum life particles together and kickstart evolution. It was that way that the Ancients created human life and seeded it across the Galaxy."
You pause, watching all eyes around you taking in this information. People you've worked with for months and years, people who time traveled, and people who came through the Gate from Milkway. Thor, curiously enough, among them; he seems WILDLY ENTERTAINED by the idea of receiving a mission briefing.

"Now, the Asgard, Ancients, Nox, and Furlings all were allies around this time. And according to Thor, the Furlings, well, they saw the Ancient's little toy, and decided they could do one better." you continue, clicking to a slide, showing an artist's rendition of the ROYAL LUSUS. "So as best as we can figure, they came to a Galaxy without Stargates, and built a device that could cover the range of the ENTIRE galaxy at once with no outside aid. Then they went to another, and another, and another, basically leapfrogging around and creating life in a bunch of empty galaxies. Our galaxy became one of them. Probably."

"Probably?" Major Vantas asks.

"Well, see, here's where things get complicated," you say. "We think at one point they ran into a galaxy with sentient life already in it. One where Lord English existed, and, well..." you click to the next slide- showing a HISTORICAL PAINTING of a GIANT SNAKE and a CUEBALL HEADED MAN bestowing the ROYAL LUSUS to the EMPRESS OF ALTERNIA, along with the BRACELET TO CONTROL IT. "They took the Royal Lusus for their own and began using it as a bargaining tool to rule over this Galaxy."

"Which would explain why nobody remembers the Furlings," Okurii remarks.

"Now," you continue. "This is where we get into trouble in the present day. Trizza Tethis, the former Heiress, if she got control of the full bracelet without proper training, was prophesied to unleash what Alternian society called the "Vast Glub"- in which the Royal Lusus would scream and end all life in the Galaxy."

You pause to let that sink in. You see the dawning clicks of recognition as the gears begin to turn in people's heads.

"What the device can make," Joey begins, "it can also UNMAKE."

"Yes. We stopped that, of course," you say, "when Joey got her hands on the Bracelet, and disarmed Trizza. However, the fact remains that a device like the Royal Lusus exists in the Milky Way galaxy, and as far as Thor is aware, it doesn't have a mind-controlled interface restricting its usage to ONE person."

"I do believe that such a device could cause great harm to many people should it fall into the wrong hands," Teal'c observes.

"It can also become a boon, if we use it right," you say. "The training Joey has with the Bracelet shows that we can selectively create, change, or destroy specific things. In-fact, I dare say it works on the exact same principals of the Replicator Disruptor Gun, which simply emits a wave of energy specifically fine-tuned to the exact energy field that Replicator Blocks connect to each other with, to cancel it out."

"We don't need the Megaship to wipe out the Replicators on Soria," Major Vantas says, eyes widening. "We already have the biggest large scale Disruptor in existence on the planet! So that's how they- we- future us does it."
"Exactly," you nod. "If we can calibrate control over the Lusus right, we can destroy all of the Replicators in this Galaxy in one shot." You pause. "And then as soon as we've done that, we destroy it. Because the chances are, as soon as we use it, the Empress is going to notice, and we need to deprive her of the weapon as soon as possible."

"And as soon as the Empress notices, there's one of two outcomes. Least likely is she's going to come after us," Dammek observes. "In which case we have to fight her."

"And when we fight her," Joey adds, "we have to figure out how the hell to exile her back to Earth in Ancient Egyptian times really quickly."

"Yeah," you nod. "There's that too. The timing on this has to be spot on or else... well..."

"We get a doomed timeline," Major Strider says, sounding a bit grim.

"Or, what I think is much more likely," Dammek continues, "She could run scared and Not come after us the moment she realizes we used the Lusus, whether we destroyed it afterwards or not. And THAT buys us a lot more time to deal with her."

"Would Khepri not have more of a reason to come after us if we destroyed the Royal Lusus than if not?" Teal'c inquires.

"You'd think," Dammek says, "but the thing is, we scare her enough as it is."

"What makes you say that?" Jude asks.

"Think about it," Dammek says, "In the past, the last person who had that Bracelet was Reenah Kraken, who cut off the Empress' legs and, rather than finish her off, instead abdicated by cutting off her own hand and ran. And she did that RIGHT AFTER we blew up Scratch's house on the Green Moon. That's an impressive show of force, speaks to out-planning all parties involved, and that we know we can all just safely disappear afterwards without a trace. She rewrote history to pretend she won, but we KNOW she lost that battle. And more importantly, SHE knows she lost."

"At which point she shattered the Bracelet and scattered it across the Galaxy," Mierfa says. "And then she took away Alternia's Stargate rights to keep any future Heiress from getting the pieces. But we reunited it anyways, and... Oh. Oh Wait. The Pulse!"

"What Pulse?" Fraiser asks.

"There was this, energy pulse from the Royal Lusus when Joey returned with the full Bracelet," Okurii explains. "Everyone on Alternia felt it. And Joey says it felt like the Lusus was accepting her as the new Heiress. The Empress has to know we have it reunited."

"What Pulse?" Fraiser asks.

"Think about what that must feel like to her," Dammek says. "The Heiress vanishes, Abdicated, along with all of the people who helped her do it to another world. Years pass, you think she's gone, but then, suddenly, the Bracelet is reunited, and she KNOWS her days are numbered because it's entirely possible Alternia's lack of Stargate didn't stop the Heiress from re-assembling the thing." He pauses, then says, "And the last time she went charging into a confrontation, she LOST. She's not going to go rushing in like last time. She's going to have to make her own plan. Sure, we use the Royal Lusus to suddenly destroy all the Replicators, but that's an enemy of her own destroyed. Technically helping her, really. So what does she care beyond the fact that we've proved we have all the cards?"
"You're right," Xefros says. "We have a weapon that can kill her at range, and her specifically. But we're not using it on her. She has to realize she's at a disadvantage and she can't come at us directly or else we'll use that weapon against her."

"And think about what it means if we suddenly destroy the Lusus after using it," Dammek continues. "It tells her we don't NEED it to take care of her. And destroy it or not..." He smirks, "The fact that we're saying we DON'T need it to take care of her is going to scare her more than anything else."

"A bluff," Thor surmises. "One that is a convincing threat against her reign of terror."

"Exactly," Dammek concludes. "The moment we use the Royal Lusus against the Replicators, we've already struck the killing blow against the Alternian Empire as it's stood for centuries. Destroying it or not? That's just the icing on the cake."

"Now then, as for what we need to do to destroy it," you hand the clicker device over to Skylla Koriga. "I'll leave this part to Skylla."

"Right," Skylla begins. "So, this Lusus," she clicks to another rendition of it, "It's basically a giant squidtopus thing that looks like an eldritch thing from the furthest ring. But in designin' it like an animal, they've also included some weakness of tha animals in question. Now, there are a lotta FAKE weaknesses design'd ta make us THINK it's weak there when it's really not." She clicks to a new image, and Daraya sits up with interest. "Tha thing is, this monster eats. An' it eats a LOT. That's how it keeps itself powered. We can't starve it, or else it starts Vast Glubbin'. But that's where we've got this thing by its metaphorical horns." She grins, "We give it indigesti'n."

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**EARTH DATE: JULY 14TH, 1997.**

"I'm nervous, Xef," Joey says as she closes the door behind her.

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and you look up as your Moirail sits down next to you. "What about?"

"This whole plan," Joey begins. "I know we're not even going to try it for another few days, but... I'm scared I'm going to lose control at the worst moment. Or that Scratch is going to show up and cause trouble, or the Empress is going to come and attack us- that- that everything will go horribly wrong somehow."

"It's worked out so far," you point out. "Sure, we've had some ups and downs, but with two Seers working to hammer out the plan for this- how can it go wrong?"

"Now you've jinxed us," Joey sighs over dramatically. "Now something's DEFINITELY going to go wrong."

"Nah," you say. "We're just too lucky for that."

"Nooo! Quit it!" Joey laments.

"Nope! It's all going to go right!" you say. "We've got Cassie chance-dancing us across the battlefield Terezi's painting for us. We'll make it."
"But... when does it ever go right for us?" Joey asks. "When we know exactly what we're doing?"

"Um, I can think of a few times," you say. "Namely, ones involving Time Travel. Which, oh, hey, would you look at that," you grin. "We've had like, six time travelers handed to us from the future to make sure this all goes according to plan!"

"...Fair enough," Joey smiles. "It just feels so weird being on the receiving end of this."

"Tell me about it," you say. "Some days it feels like we've barely had any room to breathe as it is. But you know what? I think I'll be glad once we've finished things with the Replicators."

"Why's that?" she asks.

"Cause," you answer, "it means we get to put all of this behind us and we get to take a well deserved break before we go diving into the next big problem."

"...A break sounds nice," Joey says, smiling as she closes her eyes and dreams. "Not worrying about the next big Time Loop, or what planet to keep from exploding or..." She sighs. "The sad thing is I can't remember the last time I really took a vacation. A real vacation, not, like, a few hours of rest time between bouncing between this thing or that thing. It was a really long time ago, I think. Before I even came to Alternia."

"That's a long time," you say.

"It is..." Joey nods. "Do you think I've been selfish, Xef?"

"About?" You ask.

"Trying to keep Jude out of all of this?" She asks. "I haven't even really spent all that much time with him since we saved Diaspora from the Replicators. I was out with the Megaship searching for the Supergate, then... then reviving Thor. Doing all this planning stuff. I- it's so crowded here on the ship anymore."

"Yknow," you say, "maybe we should all just move off world."

"What?" Joey asks, surprised.

"Diaspora," you say. "Like, we treat the ship as our work place, and we have some place else that we can call home. I think I saw some new buildings they've been making last time we were there. And it'd keep you closer to the Arai Colony, too. We could build a big place there for all of us."

"I guess..." Joey muses. "That would be nice."

"Plus," you add, "you know what'd be great about moving out there?"

"No, what?" Joey asks.

"Fresh Air. A Sun that doesn't want to kill us," you list off. "Fresh Air. Lots of friendly people who don't want to kill us. Did I mention the Fresh Air?"

Joey laughs. "Yeah, you did."
"It's something I miss," you say, "from my old hive. Not having sand getting everywhere and having to use air filters to keep it out and- urgh. I'm always mad when we have to come back here and someone's forgotten to change the filters and everything just smells like death warmed over."

"Yeah, there's that," Joey muses. "Y'know what? I'm gonna go talk with Mierfa. See what she thinks of this idea." And then she gets up and heads for the door, pausing briefly, "Thanks, Xef. I think this could be a really great idea."

"Glad to be of help!" you smile as she leaves your room. And then, you look around your room and realize...

Yeah, you're probably going to need to pack up all this stuff at some point. What have you gotten yourself into?

Chapter End Notes

Some BIG REVEALS this chapter that I've been itching to reveal. Namely, yup, the ROYAL LUSUS is a Furling version of the Ancient Device on Dakara. Basically, the alien version of "Hold my Beer and watch this!" happened. There's not a whole lot to work with RE: Furlings. They're sort of a blank slate. That just means I get to have fun working things together in unique ways. :D

...At the rate I'm doing these chapters, Alternia might get a full season ahead despite not moving further ahead than SG-1 in terms of time line. _._;
ALT:04X08: Creeps from the Deep

Chapter Summary

Shadows fall, hear my call, and I always will be...

Chapter Notes

Here's to 2018. Happy New Year, everyone.


Your name is MIERFA DURGAS, and you can feel the tension rising in the air as your small fleet of DRAGONFLYS descends upon a certain part of the Alternian ocean.

"You ready for this, Claire?" You ask to your ship's passenger.

"No," she replies. "But I'm going to do it anyways. We were going to have to do this eventually as it is, so... might as well kill two monsters with one visit."

"Alright, ladies and gents," Daraya's voice echoes over the radio in your helmet before you can say anything. "Our mystery meat payload is ready to go and we're departing from shore. We'll be there by the time you launch off the Repli-Glub."

You glance at a rear-facing mirror you attached to the side of your Dragonfly's neck. You can see the DELTA MEGASHIP lifting off in the distance from shore. It took less damage during the last engagement so it was ready to go sooner, you were told. Truth be told, you don't really care. Its black and crimson hull shimmers under the green and pink moonlight, looking like the spectre of death looming large and wide.

It's appearance ended the Scratch Doctor once already. Now, it heralds the end of the Replicators and the Royal Lusus. Hanging beneath it through GRAVITATIONAL MEANS is a massive WHITE LUMP of UNKNOWN CONTENTS stitched together. You think you spy a whale Lusus somewhere in there. There's definitely a bit of GIANT SPIDER ABDOMEN, apparently donated generously by that Ashler girl.

You're just a bit squicked out by this whole idea, and you make no attempt to hide it.

"Check spacesuit seals, everyone. Then check in." Dammek's voice echoes again. And you take a breath to do just that.

Pressure seals, oxygen reserves...

It strikes you as a little funny that you're going to use space suits for under-water diving, but
apparently, according to Major Davis, the Earth-born space program "NASA" has done similar for training their astronauts. You guess that water pressure mimics the same kind of forces on a spacesuit that a hard vacuum of space does? But that doesn't really check out to your mind. Maybe it's for movement practice? Who knows. It's also supposedly "safer" in that you only risk drowning if something fails rather than being exposed to the raw void of the black of space.

But to you that's a bit of a moot point. You might die either way if something goes wrong.

"Seals secure," Joey chimes in.

"Seals secure," you confirm.

There's a few chimes a few seconds later of "Seals secured," and then with that, you get the go-ahead from Okurii, "Away team, dive in."

And with that, you hit a switch and the Dragonfly's side thrusters switch from ATMOSPHERIC MODE to AQUATIC MODE, and down you go once more into the deep blue sea.

Water splashes across the force shields, and then breaks apart, looking like a bubble of pure air situated around you and Joey.

Breathe, Mierfa. Breathe. You focus on doing your job and DESCENDING TO THE FURTHEST DEPTHS of the ocean.

To your right, you glance over and see Dammek and Cassandra in their Dragonfly. To your left, you spot two more Dragonflies- Xefros and Jude in one, Mallek and Terezi in the other. You're not sure why everyone is coming down like this for, but with two Seers, well...

Better odds of success, you guess?

The light levels, dim as they are from the moons, lower significantly more, and so you and your team flick on the headlamps- the ones hidden away in the head of the Dragonfly's front mount that look like eyes. Yeah. Lights on, now you can see as you go further and further down. Down, into the depths.

"Creeps from the Deep, freaking with your mind," You hear Xefros whisper-rap as you go further down. "Creeps from the deep, crawling up your spine..."

The only thing moving along your spine right now is a shudder, which you try to repress.

"We need to do a song about that," Joey remarks. "Like, seriously. That's too good of a line to not use, Xef."

"Do you guys always use real life for inspiration in your songs?" Jude asks.

"When we do weird shit like this at least once a month, sometimes more?" Joey answers, "Yeah."

"It used to be more vaguely political ranting at the Heiress," Dammek chimes in. "Stuff that's just barely vague enough to say 'no, we did not just call out the Heiress on her tacky rug collection' instead of 'we totally just lambasted the Heiress for killing a whole village with a carpet bomb run just for a selfie opportunity.'"
“Did that actually happen, though?” Jude asks.

“More than you’d like to think,” Xefros answers. The conversation grows cold with that remark, as does the ambient temperature of the air inside your force field- all the heat is being sapped out into the ocean around you.

Soon, something MASSIVE swirls across your vision- something large and thick and round and LUSUS WHITE.

“I think we’re getting close,” Cassandra says, stating the obvious.

“Close? You mean we’re not even AT the thing yet??” You don’t like the feeling of that.

Your team descends further and further down, down, down... And then the writhing tentacles of the ROYAL LUSUS grow in number. More, and more, and more, until finally a MASSIVE EYE COMES INTO VIEW HOLY FUCKING SHIT. It glows a TERRIFYING RED.

[INQUIRY.] A rumbling voice presses against your mind. [AUTHORIZATION?]

“Well, uh,” you hear Joey fiddling with the bracelet under her spacesuit, and that’s when you see a brief pulse of ORANGE BRONZE LIGHT out of the corner of your eyes. “Oh... I see. So that’s what you’re for, isn’t it?”

You hear a button press, and then suddenly, the force shield in back disappears, and Joey begins swimming out from the Dragonfly’s passenger seat.

Oh hell, oh fuck, oh shit, please don’t get eaten, Joey.

She swims up to the thing’s massive eye, and holds up her left wrist- through which you can see one of the crystals pulsing bright orange even through the opaque fabric of the suit.

[“COMMUNION” DEVICE RECOGNIZED. AUTHORIZATION CONFIRMED.| The voice booms again. [DEFENSE PROTOCOLS LOWERING.]]

And then the crimson glow in the eyes fades to a BRONZE-ORANGE.

“Okay.... okay I think I got it. ‘Communion’ must be the orange crystal,” Joey says over the radio. “We’re good to begin, I think.”

With that, the other passengers disengage their force shields and begin swimming out. Cassandra and Jude have waterproofed containers in hand- one holding the replicator-facsimile parts, and the other the future-tech disruptor.

Terezi starts scooting around on her own, and you can only hope she doesn’t do something that gets you all killed.

[Hi!] You hear Joey greet the Lusus, and you’re not sure if it’s Administration or “Communion” doing the helping with this. [We need your help with making a huge energy wave. We have a device that makes a small version for you to reference.]

[PROCESSING REQUEST. PROGRAM: ENERGY WAVE, ACCEPTING NEW
WAVELENGTH SETTINGS. The Lusus booms.

[We’re going to use the device on a demonstration target so you can match it exactly.] Joey explains.

[RECORDING NEW WAVELENGTHS... PENDING...]

Joey nods over to Cassandra and she takes aim with the disruptor at the box Jude’s holding.

You watch, and away through the water goes a blue wave of energy as if the water wasn’t even there. You can even hear the PVWAOO through the water as if it and your helmet and the forceshield weren’t even there.

It still strikes its target and destroys it utterly, just as easily.

[PROCESSING...] The Lusus Booms, then orders [PLEASE DIRECT WAVELENGTH GENERATOR AGAINST SENSOR ARRAY FOR DATA RECORD CONFIRMATION.] And then it provides a limb, a spot of it flashes with bio-luminescent light.

Cassandra takes aim at the indicated spot, and PVWAOO.

The energy wave strikes the arm and seems to get absorbed.

[PROCESSING...]

A few moments pass.

[PROCESSING...]

And you feel like holding your breath.

[NEW WAVELENGTH RECORDED. PLEASE STATE PARAMETERS FOR WAVELENGTH DISTRIBUTION.] The Lusus’s voice booms, and you sigh in half-relief.

[Maximum range.] Joey declares.

[PROCESSING...] a pause, followed by the booming voice. [ERROR: INSUFFICIENT ENERGY STORAGE LEVELS FOR MAXIMUM RANGE WITHOUT TRIGGERING LONG TERM STARVATION PROTOCOLS.]

[We’ll bring you food when you’re done. A huge thing, as big as a space ship!] Joey offers. [Would that help?]

[PROCESSING...] another pause, then another BOOMING VOICE: [ITEM: 'FOOD CONSUMPTION’ MEETS ENERGY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS. COMPILING... WAVE GENERATION AT MAXIMUM RANGE CAN BEGIN AT USER PROMPTING AT ANY TIME.]

“Alright, guys, we’re set up,” Joey says. “Okurii what’s your ETA?”
“We’ll be at target in about three minutes,” Okurii answers.

“Alright,” Joey says- pausing as she and you both spot Terezi swimming back towards her Dragonfly- a small TREASURE CHEST in hand. So that’s what she was after. “Everyone get back to your ships. It’s time to blow this thing and go home.”

You start to feel less anxious as Joey swims up to your Dragonfly and gets into the back seat.

[FIRE,] Joey orders.

[BEGINNING WAVE GENERATION SEQUENCE. PLEASE RETREAT TO A SAFE DISTANCE FOR WAVE GENERATION SEQUENCE.]

A sphere of BLUE LIGHT begins to build up around the Royal Lusus, and you take that as your sign to get the hell out of there.

You are now HER IMPERIAL CONDESCENSION, and, standing on the bridge of your ship, you look at your NEW HEADS UP DISPLAY, projected from your TIARA.

A small swirling circle icon indicates that your NEW CONTROL PROGRAM is trying to get its hooks into the Replicator Network.

Soon, soon, you will CONTROL THEM ALL!

That’s when you feel a faint tickle at the back of your head- on a connection you barely focus on ever.

The HEIRESS has contacted the Royal Lusus. Why? What possible reason would she have for-?

Signal ACQUIRED! Your Tiara tells you suddenly. YES! YES! You’ve done it! YOU OWN---

-- PVWaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa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That’s when a massive PSYCHIC SCREAM tears across the galaxy, and your Tiara complains of A LOST SIGNAL.

You can only watch in horror as a REPLICATOR DIRECTED VAST GLUB shatters the massive collection of BUGS that you just got a connection to and all their ships suddenly stop moving. Worse, the planet’s surface, once gleaming bright red in the places where the Replicators were the most active, goes DARK. Even through the gaps, you could see light, now, those too have gone dark. Worse, the planet’s surface begins to crumble, and collapse inwards, pulled towards some here-unknown gravity well point.

“BACK IT UP!” You hear General Naihte yell. “SOMEONE GET US OUT OF THE BLAST RADIUS NOW OR SO HELP ME--”

Too late, the planet’s remains collapse into a singularity, crumpling and crumbling into nothing but a
brilliant pinpoint of EMERALD LIGHT, before EXPLODING OUTWARDS as a wave of BRIGHT CRIMSON FLAMES.

The ships closest to the blast are all incinerated by the sudden, inexplicable FUSION WAVE, and it comes crashing towards your ship faster and faster and faster--

“SHIELDS UP!!!” you hear a helmsman cry out- and the ALTERNIAN FORCE SHIELDS flare up around HER IMPERIAL CRUISER moments before the shock wave hits.

Thankfully, it seems the old DESTINY’S SHIELDS are of a somewhat stronger tier than the ALTERNIAN ONES, because they kick in the moment the normal shields collapse from the impact. It’s only the sudden WALL OF YELLOW LIGHT that filters out most of the rest of the explosion, but it’s only that. MOST. Because even those old shields collapse, and then the rest of the energy wave crashes into your ship- causing explosions and sparks to flare up all around the bridge.

Everything shakes, but that’s about it.

The shock wave passes, your ship is DAMAGED- even from here you can see pieces of the OLD HULL peering back at you like the ugly muscles beneath hardened armor that had been ripped away- but it’s INTACT. You’re ALIVE.

“Status report?” General Naihte calls out.

“...Damage to FTL drive and sub-light engines. Massive hull breaches in the Outer Addition hull,” Someone reports. “Also lost a fuck ton of the battle armaments. Outer armament spikes 3 through 19 have been torn loose... shit, we also lost long range communications. We’re mute and deaf.”

You’re scarred, yes. But you’re ALIVE.

...And they have the LUSUS. They figured out how to tune the LUSUS to become a perfect weapon against the Replicators. You’re not even sure who ‘they’ even are, but it’s CONCERNING. You should, by all rights, turn tail back to Alternia and squash “THEIR” asses into paste. But...

“How long until repairs can be made?” You ask.

“...Without knowing the full extent of the damage, and assuming it’s all out of our repair skills at the moment... then Limping along established safe routes until we can find a ship we can contact with short range?” General Naihte begins. “Worst Case: Two weeks before we can begin repairs.”

“FUCK! THEM!!!!” you yell, stomping your foot on the metal floor. “FUCK TH’ MOFANG FOR SETTING SORIA UP SO FAR AWAY FROM THE REST OF OUR TERRITORY! FUCK THEM!!!!”

...You’re gonna give those kiddos on Alternia HELL for this when you finally get back there... if you decide to go back there.

It feels like rushing back to Alternia right now could be a bad idea. The moment you get LONG RANGE back up, you're going to have to do some RESEARCH into what the hell has been going on in your Galaxy.
You’re Mierfa Durgas once again, and your crew have SURFACED. The DELTA MEGASHIP hovers overhead with its payload of MYSTERY MEAT. It looks wholly even more unappetizing up close.

“We’re up, drop it, and let her eat,” Dammek calls out as your team’s Dragonflys switch from aquatic to aerial, and take flight towards the Delta Megaship’s docking bays, small as they are.

As you fly up, that massive bulk of meat is cut loose from the energy field holding it in place, and it falls down.

**SPLOOOSH!**

And then it sinks, and sinks, and sinks, and sinks...

“...Now we wait,” Joey breathes out as it goes out of sight.

You all dock on the Megaship, and make your way through its UNFINISHED HALLWAYS up to the bridge. By the time you get there, Joey and Skylla can both confirm through their different means that the Lusus has gotten its final meal and is happily consuming the Mystery Meat Package.

Well, as ‘happily’ as a mechanical creature capable of mass destruction CAN be, at any rate.

“Do it,” Okurii orders, and with that, Daraya taps a few keys and...

“Done,” Daraya answers.

...Suddenly, a section of the ocean itself just stops. A sort of circular shape just... stops moving. Everything else around it keeps moving, seemingly moving around it, even.

There’s a certain irony, you muse, in the fact that you used the Royal Lusus to destroy the Replicators- a creation of the Mofang- and now you’re using an Asgard designed TIME DILATION DEVICE to destroy the Royal Lusus- because you couldn’t otherwise reverse engineer the Mofang version of the devices fast enough, and Thor’s knowledge of similar devices cut the construction and innovation time in half- and didn’t involve HUGE GRAVITY FIELDS, for that matter.

“Slowed time bubble established,” Daraya says.

“Lockin’ ont’tha time field with tract’r beam,” Skylla continues. Then, a spherical green shield appears around the bubble of slowed time. “An’ secured.”

“Good,” Okurii says as she taps a few console buttons of her own. “Now let’s get out of here.”

And then, the Delta Megaship lifts up into the air, and you can see, via external cameras, that you are indeed towing along with it a huge spherical section of the ocean locked in a state of frozen time. Contained within it is the massive, bulking girth of the ROYAL LUSUS, frozen in a moment of time where it remains unaware of the fate about to befall it.

“And there she is,” Dammek says, staring at the beast. “One Royal Lusus all tied up and ready to be chucked into a black hole.”

Okurii guides the Megaship up out of the Alternian Atmosphere, and then engages the hyperdrive. It’s a somewhat slower path given the massive CARGO you’re carrying along, but it’ll do, especially
as your destination is yet another Irony.

The place where the first Supergate had been built. Where the Sorian Empire had first turned on Alternia and caused so much trouble.

That black hole still exists in the present day, and now you’re going to feed it one of the most dangerous weapons in all the galaxy.

---

**EARTH DATE: JULY 21ST, 1997.**

Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and you feel a little... uncertain about the fate you’re about to bestow upon this creature. Massive and Dangerous as it is, it’s just technology. You could obviously reprogram it, and it’s clearly somewhat sentient... it just feels wrong to do this on some level. Morally.

But Cassandra, Terezi, and, hell, even ROSE all agree that this is the safest way to dispose of the damned thing as quickly as possible.

No chance for it to GLUB. No chance for anyone else to abuse it. No chance for you all to use it to possibly save the universe from Replicators again... After all, there are still Replicators in Thor’s Galaxy.

“Joey?” You find your Sister standing on the bridge, watching the Hyperspace window wash over the Megaship.

“Yeah?” She asks, looking at you.

“Are you sure this is the right thing to do?” You ask, if only in part because being sucked into a black hole is something that gives you NIGHTMARES still.

Joey frowns, “If we hadn’t had to just spend months fighting against Replicators, Jude, I think I’d be a lot more upset about what we’re doing to it.” She picks out a small block from her pocket- one of the inert ones left over from the bug that escaped Thor’s ship through the Gate with you. “These things... they’re smart. They’re arguably alive. But they don’t give a shit beyond what orders they’ve been given. And if they don’t have an order? They just eat and reproduce.” She tosses you the block, and you catch it “We should be glad Vast Glubby downstairs doesn’t do that second part when it ears.”

The block Joey tossed you is one of the smaller designed pieces, which Thor said was the staple shape of the bugs from his galaxy before their sudden evolution. Even the larger pieces whose function clearly had come from this Galaxy’s version of the bugs had taken on this signature shape when made over there.

You look to Joey, and she seems to want you to think about it for a moment.

“Are you saying that the thing we’re towing to its death is no better than the Replicators?” you ask as you toss it back to her, and Joey gives a grim nod as she catches it.

“It was all too willing to blow up the Replicators,” she says, “but it only did that because I had the
key to its command prompt and was promising it food. If Trizza got it? If the Empress wanted to use it? We’d be dead because of it.” She frowns, looking over the block before pocketing it. “If that thing below us had ever run out of food? It’d have killed everyone in the Galaxy as it starved to death. No other reason about it.”

“So we destroy it like we do the Replicators,” you surmise.

“So we destroy it like we do the Replicators,” Joey nods.

The Delta Megaship drops out of Hyperspace about an hour later, and the bubble of frozen time containing the Royal Lusus is flung into the Blackhole with little fanfare.

You all only stay as long as it takes to watch the thing be completely consumed by the event horizon of the Black Hole, and you’ve lost signal telemetry from the time dilation device.

From its perspective, the Royal Lusus never knew what hit it until it was suddenly crushed into a tiny singularity by all the force of a Black Hole coming down onto it in a single second spread out over several minutes. You can only hope that was enough.

You’re the FUCKIN’ EMPRESS, HER IMPERIAL CONDESCENSION, and you suddenly feel that tingly connection at the back of your head SNAP. After the last few hours of a strangely SLOWED SIGNAL, to have it suddenly disappear is... is...

You know exactly what this means. Your LUSUS is DEAD. SCRATCH is DEAD. ENGLISH is EXILED.

You don’t have any more hands to HOLD YOUR LEASH.

You. Are. FREE.

And yet that is not the relief you thought it would finally be. Because now that you’re without your leash, you’re without PROTECTORS to play as SACRIFICES. For the first in in a VERY LONG TIME... You’re VULNERABLE. The Heiress and whoever she’s working with managed to do something you never thought possible. The Lusus is DEAD. The Lusus is DEAD and you don’t know HOW they did it.

You realize with a heart wrenching fear gripping at your everything that the Heiress doesn’t WANT to be an Heiress. It’s the same girl. That same damned girl who ABDICATED all those years ago by cutting off her own damned wrist. She must have beaten... what was her name again? Pizzaa Teeths? Whatever. It doesn’t matter.

This has been that Reenah Kraken’s plan all along, hasn’t it?? Lull you into a false sense of security and then- then wait for your most vulnerable moment to destroy the Lusus and end the LINE OF SUCCESSION once and for all.

You are Meenah Peixes, and you are THE LAST EMPRESS OF ALTERNIA, not exactly as you intended, but...

...If this were a chess game...
...You’re in fucking CHECK.

Chapter End Notes

And that’s the Replicators and Globby taken care of. Frozen in time and chucked into a black hole.

...Meanwhile, the Replicators seemed to have been doing something VERY dangerous within Soria’s core. Well, whatever it was, it's gone now! Couldn't keep itself together without Replicator blocks and their weird energy-field bonding techniques. Good think HIC didn't get her grubby little claws on it.

EDIT: Not sure what the hell happened with the quote marks mid-way through. :/
The Timeline truly takes a hard left hand turn from where it'd been going.

Still, you'll ask Carter what she thinks about these letters before you go.

"Carter?" You peek into Carter's office, and find her snoozing at her desk.

Yeah, you're not going to bother her. It takes a lot of energy to dig your way out of a cave with a limited oxygen supply.

You'll ask her about the Alternia stuff tomorrow, you guess.

It's right there, on the tip of your-

WAAAAAGH! WAAAAAAGH! The gate sirens suddenly yell.

"Who-WHAT!" Carter suddenly jerks awake.

"UNSCHEDULED OFF WORLD ACTIVATION!"" Walter's familiar voice echoes through the base. "I REPEAT, UNSCHEDULED OFF WORLD ACTIVATION!"

"Please let it be them," Carter prays to herself as she gets up at a run from her desk, brushes past you, and heads for the elevator.

Well, you might as well follow.

A brief elevator ride down to Level 28 later, and you're surprised that you've arrived in the Gateroom before the 7th Chevron locked.

Which it does the moment Hammond takes one look at the frenzied Carter taking a seat next to Walter, and asks, "I thought she left for home?"

"Found her in her office, Sir," eyeing the Gate as it continues to spin around with no sign of
activating after the 7th chevron. "...Is it supposed to be doing that?"

The 8th Chevron locks, followed a moment later by more spinning.

"It's the first time it's taken this long," Hammond says, "but yes, it's the same result we get every time Alternia-"

"CHEVRON NINE LOCKED!" Walter calls out.

WAAA WAAAA!

And then the KAWOOOOOSH splashes up against the Iris with a loud, resounding rumble of thunder. More than you've heard in a long while.

"...Dials in to transmit a report," Hammond finishes, frowning as the Gate remains active.

"Sir!" Carter calls out, voice in her glee, "It's Teal'c's Personal IDC!"

"Open the Iris," Hammond orders, and Carter does just that with the palm scanner.

The Gate stands open for several moments, and you can feel the tension in the room building. Even Roxy Lalonde makes her way into the Gateroom in that moment, and she's whispering, "C'mon, Jude! C'mon...!"

SCHLORP. And then Teal'c steps through the Stargate. Woah, what. Is that just the lighting or does he have the slightest hint of a beard growing on his chin?

SCHLORP SCHLORP, Fraiser and Cassie at his side. SCHLORP SCHLORP, next comes Strider and... the hell?

You could swear that's a teenaged, grown up version of NEPETA STRIDER standing right next to her Dad.

SCHLORP SCHLORP SCHLORP! And then following right behind them is-

"JOJO!!" Roxy takes off for the Gateroom.

-Jude and Joey Harley, along with a grey skinned alien girl with some kind of lime eye symbol printed on her shirt.

Following through the Gate in short order are a few more Aliens with grey skin and HORNS. Alternians. Then you see three kids who look like GROWN UP versions of JOHN, JADE, and ROSE. All of them are carrying with them LARGE BOXES full of who knows what- and then stepping through the Gate, rounding out the bunch is one ADULT ALTERNIAN GUY in A BOG-STANDARD US AIR FORCE UNIFORM and a plucky little Asgard you recognize as THOR.

With them through, the Gate gives off a keen and shuts down.

"Oh, Lucy!" Strider calls out as he catches sight of you in the control room. "We're home! And you'll never BELIEVE the Day I've had!"

"JOEY!!! JUDE!!!" And then Roxy barrels into the Gate Room and shoves past people to wrap her
arms around both Harley Siblings. "Oh thank god you're alright! Oh thank GOD...!

Carter, sitting in her seat, sighs out in relief as well as she slumps back into her seat, "They made it. They made it."

You can feel the tension in the room bleed off sharply like a popped balloon.

---

The conference room has never quite been so crowded before despite not been THAT crowded. All of the standard seats are taken, and Roxy has opted to sit on the floor nearby, her arms wrapped firmly around the future versions of John and Rose, who are hugging her just as tightly in return.

"Sorry for the delay, everyone," Joey Harley- no, Claire, you remind yourself. That's how she introduced herself in the videos and in person this time in the Gate Room- begins with a small bow and a smile. "Salazl and Thor were insistent they get the new power generators working properly before they let us dial out. But, with the new and improved Gate Dialing Batteries made, Earth and Alternia should have no problem staying in contact with each other anymore."

You'll admit one thing, kid's got PRESENCE. She's gone through some shit that's got her all the dangerous presence you've only felt from team commanders like yourself- or her father, for that matter.

"While Thor and Callie work on installing the Earth Side version of the device," Joey continues, "I'm going to turn you over to Mikari, current host to Jolinar of a Doomed Future, for her report."

Wait, what? If there was something that got Carter to go from '70% awake' to '100% awake' it was that declaration.

And then she steps aside and mystery lime-eye sign girl take center stage.

"Hello again, everyone," the girl begins to speak without the familiar voice echo, but you recognize that tone of voice anyways. It's Jolinar speaking. "It's been a while since I've seen a few of you alive, even longer for even more of you." She takes a moment to breathe, then says, "There are several things that need to be taken into account right now, and the first of those is the fact that there is a Planet we need to lock out of the dialing computer immediately. The people who live there are called the Aschen, and while at first they seem friendly, they want nothing more than the utter death and subjugation of every person on every planet they find themselves 'allied' with."

And thus future Jolinar weaves a tale you can find all too believable. The future versions of Nepeta, John, Rose, and Jade all chime in with their own knowledge of future events.

It's debatable at first how accurate it is, because Quantum Mirror, up until Jude whips out an old, crinkled letter and places it on the table, and Cassandra pointedly asks you for your version of it. The version of it that you only literally just got today.

The hell?

You take out both letters, and decide, why the hell not, and open them both.

Inside Jude and Cassandra's letter is exactly the same message, except one is unarguably older. The
other one is your personal one, but it reads the same as what Rose remembers the future you's letter reading.

At that point, Hammond concedes the point and calls for Walter to go block out the Aschen Homeworld.

That's the cue that one MAJOR VANTAS takes as he stands, looking like a guy who knew that was going to happen. Apparently he's from THE REAL FUTURE and not some DOOMED OFFSHOOT created in a Quantum Mirror branching incident.

That makes him dangerous, even despite the fact that he claims he doesn't know much about the future of this galaxy because the him that lived up until he time traveled lived in the other Galaxy. You're not sure you believe that. There's no way anyone at the SGC would ever approve not briefing a future time traveler on important events.

Of course, that's assuming that his future even ends up being the one you'll be aiming for.

You smell bullshit, plain and simple. He knows more than he's letting on.

After the "Major" finishes his recap of events on his side- the kids arriving in the future from the other reality, and then their traveling back in time- you finally get into the meat of the matter. Strider, the Fraisers, and Teal'c all begin their report on what happened from the minute they wound up on Thor's Ship, to the moment they finally wound up on Alternia. After that, it basically becomes a free-for-all as people fill in whatever Details they want to fill in.

Then they tell you they defeated the Replicators by way of having an alien machine scream at them, and you want to call bullshit.

Except then they tell you they then took the alien machine, froze it in a time bubble, and threw it into a black hole.

Which they just so happen to have a picture of.

You blank out for exactly six point twelve seconds trying to process that insane tangle of tentacles.

That's when Skaara finally joins the meeting, trailing behind by an irate looking staffer from the Pentagon who's definitely on a mission to deliver some bad news and won't let anyone stall him from interrupting the meeting in progress.

"We have a situation," the staffer says, not even blinking at the multiple actual aliens in the room.

"Annnnd! There!" Your name is Callie Ohphee and you've just finished typing in the new POWER CONVERSION PROTOCOLS to the Earth Dialing Computer. "We should be good to try dialing out to your home planet, Thor."

"As far as tests of the new power generator goes, this will be an excellent one," Thor says. "And if it does not work, I still have my hand dialer to use that will allow us to connect regardless. It would be simple to retrieve the materials necessary to fix any improper connections on this side from there."
"Yeah," you nod, then look to the bemused SGT. SYLER, "dial it up, if you'd please, good sir."

"Alright," he nods, and then types in the eight symbols needed to dial Thor's Galaxy.

The Gate revs up to spin, and you watch as chevron one locks. It's so weird, looking at a Gate that's so similar and yet so different from what you're used to seeing.

It's mostly just the colors throwing you off. Your galaxy's gates are a slightly purplish grey with purple chevrons, this galaxy's gates are a more... shiny dark-silverish grey with orange chevrons.

Chevron Two locks, and the Gate keeps on spinning. You observe the power level draws, and, yes, properly as it should be the program has recognized the Eight Symbol address properly on the first try and is drawing power for the dial out specifically from the new battery generator.

Chevron Three, no abnormalities. As you're working on the observations, you hear someone stomping down the stairs to join you at the station.

"Hey, Thor," Major Strider begins as he comes up from behind you. "Before you go, we've got a situation we'd like so advice on."

Chevron Four locks.

"Oh?" Thor begins. "What situation?"

"So apparently a Replicator survived the crash of your ship, and, uh... hijacked a Russian Submarine," Strider says.

Chevron Five locks.

"How long ago?" You ask.

"Two days ago," Strider answers.

"How unfortunate," Thor muses. "Given the the matter generation abilities they've shown after their contact with the Mofang Technology, they've likely reproduced to a very high level by now and are as advanced as they were when consuming materials off of my ship."

Chevron Six locks.

"That's the weird thing, though," Strider says, providing Thor a picture. "None of the bugs in the picture look like either strain of Replicators we've seen before, and there weren't that many of them on the ship."

"How curious," Thor remarks of the picture. You look as well. The picture shows a steel-grey bug on a computer that, shape wise, is a standard Replicator, but it's made entirely out of tiny blocks with not a sign of any large pieces recovered from Thor's Ship's Replicator or the ones from the baseline Mofang technology. Thor confirms it as he continues to talk, "It's an outdated model of Replicator. From before their evolution with Mofang technology. I wonder why."

"Maybe it got damaged in the crash?" you ask. "The Mofang tech bits couldn't replicate?"

Chevron Seven locks.
"Perhaps," Thor muses. "It may be a good thing we brought spare disruptors back from Alternia for taking back to Ida."

"Exactly what I was thinking," Strider says. "We take a disruptor, blast the bugs off the sub, and be back home in time for dinner."

Chevron Eight Locks and there's the WAAA WAAA KAWOOOSH that you've come to expect from a successful connection. Thor goes to work sending a signal through his hand held device to the other side. In the mean time.

"Here," you pry open a case and remove two of the REPLICA DISRUPTORS to hand to him. "Take this and go smash some bugs for me personally, would you?"

"I'll do my very best, Little Muse Calliope," Strider replies, and then scurries on upstairs.

"So, we good to go?" You ask, turning to Thor.

"Yes and No," Thor replies. "I sent my identification code and received an automated return stating that the shields had been lowered, but I've received no further communication from any other Asgard on the other side."

"So... problem?" you ask.

"Very much so, yes," Thor nods. "I will not risk you not being able to return to your home, so I will go alone." He motions towards the opened disruptor case. "Give me the one scaled to my size."

"Alright," you nod, picking up the smaller device and handing it to him. "Good luck out there, Thor."

"If all goes well, I shall return via ship within the day, if not, I will call for assistance before the wormhole disengages," Thor says. "Good luck with your endeavors back on Alternia."

"Thanks," you say, and watch as Thor heads off for the Gate.

You don't stop staring until he's gone through the Gate. You wait for the amount of time it takes for the wormhole to make it to his galaxy, and then...

Then the Stargate shuts down and you didn't hear a word back either way.

You hope that's a good sign.

Your name is ROXY EGBERT and you have no idea how exactly to deal with the fact that your two babies have suddenly doubled into four, and are so much older now other than to hug them tightly and keep them so snugly safe and secure and and and-

"Moooommy!!" Tiny Rose calls out. "She's looking at me funny!!"

"I'm just surprised how cute I was at this age!" Bigger Rose remarks.
Tiny John seems to have no problem, though, enthusiastically clapping and saying "Again, again!" to every card trick his Bigger self is showing him.

You take a photograph or three because it's so adorable.

Your name is Jade... Jackson, you guess. You really weren't so sure of John and Argo's idea to go full rename until just this moment. PAST YOU- or rather, A PAST YOU- stares up with wide eyes and oh god this is so awkward.

"Ar yu my Momma?" She asks.

"Err..." You pale, and look at the boy sitting in the office desk chair for help. "Jude, please, help me out here?"

Jude Harley, your one time big brother, just snickers at the adorableness. He's of no help at all!

"No, sweetie, she's your-" And then Joey swoops in and picks your past self up. "Cousin! From out of town. Really, really," she glances across the room at Mierfa, who's leaning against the old wall safe, "really out of town."

"Oh," Jade Harley, in her arms, just blinks. "Okay."

"You know, there is quite the strong family resemblance on the maternal side," Mierfa remarks, clearly trolling with that smile on her face. "I could see people thinking you're sisters."

"Ar yu an ahktor?" younger you asks of Mierfa.

"An Actor?" Mierfa asks, blinking, "Why would you ask that?"

"Yur grey and hav' candy corns," younger you says. "Wike on TeeBee."

"Candy Corns?" Mierfa asks, raising an eyebrow at you in particular.

"Your horns are orange and yellow and look like a candy," you elaborate.

"Ohhh," She nods in understanding. "I see." Then she looks to your younger self, and says, "Nope. I'm one hundred percent pure Alternian Troll."

"Alpurrian?" Younger you asks, completely butchering the word.

"Alien," Mierfa corrects to a simpler term, not even bothering with correcting the proper name. "I'm a space alien from another galaxy."

"Oh," Younger Jade blinks as she processes that. "Okay."

Younger you is a very simple child, you think. Inquisitive, but accepting of the answers she gets. You wish you could go back to the days of being that innocent.
Your name is GEORGE HAMMOND, Commanding General of STARGATE COMMAND, and you have a headache of a mountain of paperwork to file and a headache of a mountain of phone calls to make.

Time Travel makes everything harder, really.

It's going to be hard to negotiate your way through this safely. You were already in enough hot water as it was because of the Asgard ship crashing into the ocean, now it's come back around and instead of getting your missing people back, you got them plus some.

At least the Brass are happy that official communication between Alternia and Earth has been established. You could only wriggle so much spare time cycles on it before, but now... well...

There's a knock at your door.

"Enter," you say, and in comes one of the Alternian Trolls- no, wait, two of them, actually. Dammek and Xefros, you believe their names are. "What can I do for you two boys?" You ask.

"We're here to talk about Joey, sir," the one with the red sign- Xefros- says.

"What about her?" You ask.

"You're not going to let her return to Alternia, are you?" the one with the orange sign- Dammek- accuses more than asks.

"Legally, she shouldn't be there and I can't allow her to return, as much as I know I shouldn't force her to stay here," you say. "And then there's my commanding officers who want a thorough examination of her bracelet done, preferably with it not on her wrist."

"Yeah, fat chance of that working out," Xefros says. "We've tried taking it off since the Lusus died and, uh, if anything it's gotten even more clingy than it was before."

Your confused emotions must have shone through, because Dammek clarifies, "It's actively generated some kind of tether between the bracelet and her skin now, and it's shrunken a little bit more too."

"But that's not why we're here, Sir," Xefros says, getting back on track. "You say legally, as in 'Joey Harley' right? She can't go back to Alternia as a human, right? But we," he motions at him and Dammek, "and the rest of us Alternians are clear to go back just fine?"

"Just as clear as any visitors to the base have been before," you say, thinking you might understand where this is going. "You're not prisoners."

"That's all we needed to know, then," Dammek says, and with that, he and Xefros turn to leave the office.

"If you're thinking of making fake horns and painting her skin grey," you advise them, "make sure it's a damned good fake. Plausible denyability and such."

That gets a laugh out of the both of them, and Xefros says, "Thanks for your time, General..."
Hammond.

As they leave, however, you notice that Joey Harley is waiting to come in.

"Oh, hey guys, what's up?" she asks.

"Just making sure there weren't any legal problems with us dialing out later," Xefros says. "We'll talk to you later about it, alright?"

"Sure," Joey nods, and then peers into your office as the two boys walk away. "Um, may I come in?"

"Of course," you nod. It's not like that paperwork can't wait, after all. "What can I do for you, Miss Harley?"

"Claire," she says. "First of all, it's Claire. Not Harley. Claire was my mother's maiden name. I haven't gone by Harley since I left for Alternia, and I was considering changing it even before then."

"Ah," you're starting to see why the boys questioned "Joey Harley" specifically. "Alright, Miss Claire. What can I do for you?"

"Well, um," she takes a breath. "First of all, well, um, I guess Second of all, really..." She shakes her head. "I wanted to thank you for giving me that Gate Address to Alternia, Sir. Jude and I realized it was probably a time loop just before I went through, but, even if you were just following causality, it's..." She smiles, and you're reminded of your granddaughters. "The last Two and a half years have been some of the best years in my life. I've made so many friends and done so many things I never even thought possible because of it. I finally feel like I've found my place in everything. So thank you."

"You're welcome, Miss Claire," you say, not sure how else to respond. "Is there anything else?"

"Yes, actually," Joey says. "I'll be turning eighteen next year, officially an adult by most modern Earth standards and... And not subject to parental guidance laws." She takes a breath. "Jolinar and I talked before we came back to Earth. Offically, I, Joey Claire, would like to apply for position of Earth Ambassador to Alternia. Her host, Mikari, will be coming by in a few minutes to formally announce her position of Alternia's Ambassador to Earth as well."

"You're proposing a trade like what we've done with the Tok'ra," you realize. "One person from each side staying to represent the interests of the others."

"Basically, yes," Joey nods. "I've already spent the most time on Alternia out of any other human on Earth right now. I have the connections, I have the relations, I have the respect. I've already basically been doing this job without the title for years."

You take a steeling breath. "Legally speaking," you begin, "Joey Harley has no reason to go back through the Stargate. My superiors have even said that you shouldn't even be allowed near it. 'Let her live a normal life,' one person told me, actually." You look her in the eyes, and you see a faint smirk on her face. She knows what you're going to say next. "But you're Joey Claire, not Joey Harley. Legally speaking, I have no reason to hold you back from going through the Stargate to return to Alternia for any reason." You pause, then say, "Just make sure you don't look like Joey Harley when you do it."
"That's easy enough to do, Sir," Joey answers, smiling.

"One more thing," You say before she leaves. "As ambassador to Alternia from Earth, I do believe you're owed payment. I'll see to it that an account is set up for you to access for whenever you decide to visit Earth again. Two and half years of Back Pay is owed, is it not?"

"Something like that, I think," Joey nods, and thus, with that done, she makes her excuses to leave.

Once again, as she steps out the door, another person is waiting to enter.

You have a feeling you know where THIS conversation is going to go.

Your name is ARGO LALONDE, and you find your past self napping on Cassandra's lap, while she sits on a bed in the Infirmary while Dr. Fraiser sits at a desk writing up some PAPERWORK.

"Oh, hey, Argo," Cassandra greets with a whisper. "Came to check in?"

"Mmh," you nod, moving to sit down next to her. You carefully fold your wings so as to not disturb anything. "...I was so tiny."

"You definitely were," Dr. Fraiser says from her desk, not looking up from her paperwork. "You were even more tiny when I first saw you after Davis brought you in. Your wings were barely any bigger than your shoulders."

"Hard to imagine, that," you say, glancing over your shoulders at your own wings- down close to your knees when laying flat on your back and so much larger than even your younger self's wings are right now, which barely reach the bottom of her ribcage in terms of length. It's funny, really. You barely remember your wings being that small, but you remember being around this age.

"Fortunately, you won't have to deal with the 'same name' problem going forwards," Dr. Fraiser says as she finishes up with the paperwork, stands up, and hands you what looks like-

"A Birth Certificate?" You can't help but stare at the text reading 'Argo Nepeta Lalonde, born October 3rd, 1985' among other various information that you're pretty sure would be identical to your original one save for certain time and location specific details. For example, you were now apparently born in SPOKANE, WASHINGTON. No parents listed, though. Odd.

"Back dated two months and ten years, as you requested," Dr. Fraiser says. "I just finished with the others' certificates. I want to make sure I got everything right with you before I file them in the system." And then she hands you another, "Here's Rose's first."

Rose Lalonde, it reads, October 4th, 1985, of the same hospital and doctor. Curiously, you check the TIME STAMP, and you two are now not only ACTUALLY SISTERS, but TWINS at that, at least, according to the paper. You're now the older one by FIVE MINUTES, separated across a clock striking midnight. Same lack of parents.

"Heh, these work," you say. The only problem is Rose doesn't have cat ears or bird wings. But, you've been wearing a hat since you were a baby anyways, nothing new there.
"Here's Jade's," Dr. Fraiser hands you another one. It reads: JADE JACKSON, born OCTOBER 1ST, 1985, in SANTA BARBRA, CALIFORNIA. No parents.

"Looks right to me," you nod, then place it with the others.

"And here's John's," and then the last one. It reads: JOHN SHEPPARD, Born FEBRUARY 13TH, 1986, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA. No parents either.

"A college town?" You ask, raising an eyebrow.

"I figured it wouldn't be too far off the mark for the cover stories," Dr. Fraiser shrugs.

"Speaking of cover stories," You frown, "I'm noticing a severe lack of parental names on these certificates."

"Mothers came in with fake names, gave their kids to Foster Care," Dr. Fraiser says. "I've arranged a fake trail through the system so that you four ended up meeting up within a few months of John being born, and had you stick together up to the point you turned Nine, at which point you, Argo, were split off from the others, who managed to stay together until just recently, where you'll be set to stay with whoever you want to stay with here on base."


"I figured it'd be easier to match your real history," Dr. Fraiser says. "We did something similar with Cassandra and the other Hanka survivors."

"I was apparently born in Toronto," Cassandra chimes in.

"Thanks," You smile. "I'll go take these to the others. Let them know we're set."

"In the mean time," Dr. Fraiser says, standing up. "We'll keep an eye on your past self until Davis and Teal'c get back from dealing with the Russian Submarine."

"Sounds like a plan," you say, smiling. A thought hits you then, and it bugs you enough that you have to check. "Hey, um..." you begin, "what ever happened to Dirk Strider?"

"Ah," Dr. Fraiser gets a confused look on her face. "That I'm not quite sure about. I'll have to check."

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Your name is DIRK STRIDER.

One month ago your brother was KIDNAPPED BY ALIENS. You were then given NON DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS to sign that prevent you from telling anyone about it.

You were also given a JOB to help buy your silence.

You're now working at CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN as, of all rediculous things, a "LUNCHLADY" (Well, the term is foodserver, but come on, you're wearing a hairnet and everything!) in the cafeteria,
because really that's the only skill you've got any semblance of skill at that could help this place in any way.

One month ago, your brother went missing. Couldn't be helped. Had to save the world or some bull crap jazz like that. You knew he'd be fine, although you were starting to get your doubts. But he came through in the end. And your first sign that he was back was a bunch of long winded alarms going off. Only Dave could make such a racket just by arriving.

And then the second sign was Dave himself blowing through the Cafeteria lunch line, stocking up on as many CHOCOLATE PUDDING CUPS as he could, smiling at you and saying he'll catch up with you at home later, and then blowing out of the joint like a whirlwind hurricane ready to finish a job left unfinished like some kind of... of... of.... okay that metaphor got away from you.

And then in comes the teenaged version of the girl who got you involved in all this crazy nonsense to begin with. Sure, her hair's dyed black, for the most part, but you see the danged ears and the wings. And the Eyes. It's the eyes that get you the most. (So much like your own, damn it.)

She saunters up to the counter, orders cheap bottle of milk, and then says... "You've got a second chance now, Dirk. Don't blow it."

And while you're pondering what the hell that means, she places a $5 bill onto the counter to pay for the bottle of milk and leaves.

It's only as you look the money over that you realize it's either FAKE, or NOT FROM YOUR TIME, because why the hell else would a FIVE DOLLAR BILL have the face of SENATOR ROBERT KINSEY on it? Seems kind of pointless as a prank...

Also, the bottle of milk was only like, one dollar and fifty cents. She way over paid too.

You have no idea what to make of this and will ask Dave when he gets back home.

...Shit, you're going to need to clean up the kitchen before he gets back home. And buy a new microwave too.

Why did the danged thing have to break last night for anyways? And WHY did it have to break SO EXPLOSIVELY for too??

Argh, just one of life's many mysteries, you guess.

Your name is SKAARA, and you can't help but stare at the picture of the VERY LARGE MECH-BUG Teal'c had taken moments before UTTERLY DESTROYING IT with some NEW TECHNOLOGY.

"Yeah, that's one of the bugs from Thor's ship alright," Major Davis Strider nods at the highlighted section of one. "But damn if it didn't take a beating."

The picture shows a battered, three-quarters version of a Replicator that's fused itself into a larger bug. It's missing one of its original legs, and a chunk of the back half on its right side that would have connected to it. All of that has been replaced by the differently colored small Replicator blocks. That,
combined with the Parts that are BLACK and have dull red lines on them which you're told should be glowing, tells a pretty compelling story.

"It seems Miss Ohphee was correct in her assumption that the Replicator took heavy damage to its Mofang based upgrades," Teal'c muses.

"It also explains why it took so long for the Replicator to find a ship to inhabit," you agree. "It probably couldn't swim all that well with just three legs."

"Well," Major Strider remarks, "it doesn't matter now. We've swept over that ship three times with the disruptors and there aren't any bugs left on it."

It was over. A small victory if ever there was one, but it was over. And besides the crew of the sub, nobody had died. So that was a plus.

...But you still feel like despite all the huge sweeping changes that happened today, it doesn't feel like it's enough and you're not entirely sure why.

Maybe you're just over thinking things to avoid thinking about how much like Sha're the future version of JADE looks. But that'd just be silly, wouldn't it? It's not like you tried to avoid the sudden meeting to avoid meeting JOEY CLAIRE'S THREAT of turning your hair rainbow colors.

Meanwhile, a certain Jayni pretending to be Nirrti remains blissfully unaware of the changes to the timeline and begins plotting her next move based on information that might rapidly become out of date.

The EURONDANS would soon contact Earth, and prime them for an alliance with the Aschen.

Unfortunately for Jayni's planning, SG-1 would end up taking it as their first mission together again, and Teal'c's presence would thrown an unexpected wrench into the works... among other ripples in the timeline she would remain ignorant of.

Your name is DAVIS STRIDER, and you sigh in relief as you step back over the threshold of your house, daughter in tow twice over.

"I forgot it smelled like this," Argo, as she insists she be called to minimize confusion, remarks, scrunching her nose in a perfect mirror of disgust shared between her younger self- carried in her future self's arms- and yourself.

"It shouldn't," you remark, then call out your brother: "Diiiirk!"

"Sorry! Sorry!" He comes rushing from the kitchen- a panicked look on his face. "The Microwave exploded and it sent chili everywhere and I didn't get a chance to clean it up before now and-"

You raise a finger to silence your brother, and then pull him into a hug.

"Damn it, Dirk," you say. "I was going to order take out anyways."
"Er... yeah. Dinner. Hah..." Dirk awkwardly hugs you back. "Where the hell did you go?"

"It's a really long story," you tell him as you break the hug and look your brother in the eyes. Damn it. You can see the twinges of resentment in his eyes. You can only wonder what the hell's been going through his mind this entire time, and it's been a month... Well, no better way to turn things around than to ask, "Now... what do you all say we talk about our last month over some takeout Pizza?"

"Can we eat on the porch instead of in the house?" Argo asks. "It's smelly in here."

"Smelly!" Nepeta chimes in agreement with her older self.

"That's a completely reasonable suggestion," Dirk agrees to both ideas.

So you place a food order and do some cleaning up in the mean time before food gets here. But seriously, what the hell happened to your Microwave? You mean, sure, it's an old one, but the way it exploded chili everywhere is just...

"BLUH BLUH," you growl, "HUGE MESS."

At least that gets a laugh out of the girls, though Dirk keeps eyeing Argo weirdly, until finally he asks about the FIVE DOLLAR BILL from lunch.

"What about it?" She asks. "It's just a five dollar bill."

"No, I mean, why's Senator Kinsey on it?" he asks.

"Ohh," she replies. "That. I'd almost forgotten. Yeah. Uh... Kinsey was President in the old future timeline. He absolutely demanded he get put on the five dollar bill. He also got himself put on the Penny too."

"Somebody has an ego," you remark, scowling at the memory of one of your own unpleasant encounters with the man.

"That he does," Argo agrees.

"Let's agree to never tell the man about it if we ever see him, right?" you say.

"Cross my heart, hope to lose my head," Dirk replies.

Pizza arrives, you all eat on the porch, and yeah.

It's good to be home.

A moment later, Argo cries out with- "AH! That Five dollar bill isn't valid in the past! I stole that bottle of milk!"

"Don't worry about it," Dirk chimes in. "I put it on the Senator's Tab."

"Does he even have a Tab at the SGC?" you ask.

"He does now," Dirk answers with a smirk.
The Senate Appropriation's Committee, meanwhile, wondered why Robert Kinsey suddenly had a sneezing fit lasting a solid minute and thirty four seconds during their latest meeting.

"You sure you can't stay?" Your name is Jude Harley and you hug your sister tightly in the Gate Room as the Stargate begins to spin up to dial out.

"We need to test the connection back to Alternia, and we still have dear ol' Grandma to move to Egypt, so..." Joey hugs you tightly back, nodding. Her 'fake horns' nearly bump into your forehead. You wonder how the hell she managed it so quickly. Just, entering a room with no supplies, locking the door, and coming out a few minutes later all Alternia-ified. "Yeah. We gotta go."

You break the hug, and look your sister in her subtly changed eyes. "Promise me you'll come back to visit soon, alright?"

"I will!" Joey nods. "I've got a lot of birthdays that I've missed out on and I'm not going to miss out on any more!"

"Now, Joey!" Roxy kneels down and looks your sister in the eyes as well. "You make sure to call atleast once a week, even if you can't make it over! Okay? You let us know the MINUTE you miss some ol' magic spice cooking, or need us for anything and we'll come right over!"

"Right," Joey nods. "And you make sure you come visit sometimes too! A lot of my friends back on Base have heard a LOT about Roxy Lalonde, wonder babysitter, from me and Jude! So! Yeah! You've gotta meet them too."

"Of course!" Roxy nods, then looks towards Xefros and Mierfa. "Keep her safe, would you?"

"As if you have to ask," Xefros answers, smiling.

"Oi, Harley," Dammek says, drawing your attention over. "Got a second?"

You walk over to talk with him. "Sure, what is it?"

"You call us the moment those government types try to do something weird," Dammek says, voice lowering to a hushed tone. "Anything that has Mikari, Jolinar, Cassandra, or you feeling weird-ed out, you call. You call and you say you need a delivery of... he pauses. "Say you need some of Xicali's unique style of Hotdogs."

"You mean the things that laid Vantas out?" You ask, and Dammek nods. Well, you suppose as far as SECRET CODE WORDS go, there could be worse. "Alright," you nod. "If something goes wrong, I'll place an order."

"Good." Dammek says, and right on that note, the Stargate does its WAA WAA KAWOOSH behind the Iris, which opens up a moment after the wormhole is established. "I guess that's our signal to go, right, Callie?" He looks up as his mo... mwai... MOIRAIL skips down from the control room.

"Yup!" Callie says, "I've sent the IDC code, and we've got a return signal from Alternia Base. We're
She pauses, turning to look you in the eyes. "Give us a call if Thor doesn't contact you guys in a week. We'll come running to go help, if we can."

"Sure," you nod. "I can do that."

"Alright, team!" Joey calls out. "Let's head back home!" And with that leading cry, she and her four friends head up the ramp to the Stargate. Back to Alternia. She hesitates at the eventhorizon along with Xefros even as Dammek and Callie head through. Joey turns as Mierfa heads through, and smiles, "See ya soon, Jude!"

"See ya!" you wave.

And with that, Joey steps through the Gate backwards, and Xefros laughs, then follows her through it a moment later. The Gate stays active for a little bit longer, until you guess the technicians received confirmation that they'd made it through, and then shuts it down.

"Yknow," Roxy says, clearly fighting back the tears in her eyes, "I thought I wouldn't have to go through this 'til she went to College."

"She kinda already did," you say. "The college of life."

"Heh, I guess that's true," Roxy nods. "...I never did get around to teaching her how to drive, though."

"You can teach me," you say. "And it'll be good practice for when you get to teach Rose and John... and then Rose and John."

"Hah, yeah, there is that," Roxy nods. Then, she looks at you, smiles, and says, "C'mon, Jude, let's go find everyone else and head home and make the biggest welcome home feast we can manage on short notice!"

"That sounds nice," you nod. Yeah, you could really go for dinner right about now.

Meanwhile, snoring away in her bed in her own apartment off base, one Major Samantha Carter finally gets a head start on catching up on almost a hundred days of missed sleep.

Chapter End Notes

...Yeah. For those who aren't intricately familiar with the SG-1 timeline... "Small Victories" was supposed to take place only a week after "Nemesis," meaning that now that some of those events got pushed back by a whole month on one side of things... they didn't equally get pushed back on the other.

Butterflies ahoy! XD
ARTWORK: "Glimpsing the Future"

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter End Notes

For Full View: https://axrosspaceandtime.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/sgalt302beta.png

TINY DETAILS:
John, Jade, and Rose have Stargates as Zipper pulls and a necklace. John's is ATLANTIS STYLE, Jade's is EARTH STYLE, and Rose's is ALTERNIA STYLE.

Rose's Book Is titled "The Butterfly Effect." Similarly, John and Jade have BLUE HOURGLASSES on their shoes and belt respectively. Davepeta's bootlaces are done up in butterfly shapes.

Each of the kids has one color of the others featured in their wardrobe somewhere.

...I forgot to put orange highlights on John's shoes. >_<;

The Green Star exploding in the night sky is the light from KARFIN OUTPOST'S SUN after it went Nova. The STAR CONSTELLATIONS are in the shape of a few glyphs from the Alternian Stargate. There are six of them in total.

THE CRASHED SHIP in the background is the ALL YOUR BASE. The F-302 the kids are resting on was drawn based off of a Lego MOC I redesigned from a LEGO STAR WARS: SANDSPEEDER set.

The Kids' TROLL SIGNS match their proper MOON/ASPECT, but not all are the same ones people choose normally for the kids based on their birthdates.

FUNKY LIGHTING IS FUNKY! I bit off a bit more than I could chew putting in THREE CONFLICTING LIGHT SOURCES >_<; (Pink Moons, Green Moon, and Davepeta's Bio-Luminescence.) Apologies for anywhere it looks weird.

Your name is JOHN EG-SHEPPARD. SHEPPARD. JOHN SHEPPARD. You're still getting used to that. Just like you're still getting used to waking up from a nightmare in the middle of the night to the horrible sensation of not having a warm body clinging to you on either side.

You're up and using your wind powers to muffle your steps as you quickly move to the door a moment later. A quick check of wind currents through the house reveals that your Parents- the ones who are alive, Roxy and Alec- are sleeping in their room and that your past self is still in his room along with his sister and his version of Jade. They're lucky that they get to stay together right now.

You, not so much.

You're slipping out across the hall and making your way into Jade's room (Your Jade) and are slipping into bed next to her right as the first signs of a nightmare start to surface on her face and in her breathing. Her eyes are starting to dart beneath her eyelids in a way that's not good for anyone.

Once you're beneath the sheets and have your arms around her, you can feel the tension relaxing from Jade's body, and you settle in for another night of keeping the peace.

When you have nightmares, the worst that happens is that it gets a bit WINDY OUTSIDE. When Jade has nightmares, that's when floors start creaking and pipes start bursting and walls start cracking.

Fortunately, your own nightmares since you moved back to the old house have been able to wake you up before Jade's nightmares start becoming a problem and you can go calm her down just by being there.

But it'd just be better for everyone if you didn't have to tiptoe around the idea of you two sharing a bed. Like it was on Alternia, and back in the now gone future.

Your nightmares usually fall under one of two categories: for the longest time, it's a horrible, twisted vision of the car wreck that killed your family (twisted because you weren't there to witness it first hand, but you saw the wreckage afterwards and your imagination's filled in the blanks again and again and made it worse and worse) or, starting since you time traveled back in time, the horrible deaths of Sam and Jack as they destroy the mirror to keep the Aschen from you four.

The first is nowhere near frequent, but the latter has been fairly consistent.
Jade's have nothing to do about anything mundane and everything to do with the extended senses her powers give her. Jade told you in her nightmares, she can see everything she can grab in her powers, and then her mind is dragged towards smaller scales, like sinking in quicksand to every item's individual components, and then further down to the molecules making up those individual components, and then even further down to the particles making up those molecules and then-

Well, that's as far as Jade's ever gone into one of her nightmares before someone woke her up or started grounding her to the world at large. And grounding is what you do best, ironically, despite your abilities being wind based.

Sam guessed and theorized all sorts of reasons why someone sleeping next to Jade would 'ground' her from delving too deep into her powers in her sleep, and the best Sam could come up with was the idea that, on her own, Jade's mind felt isolated, and so began trying to drag in everything it could into orbit around her. Sam guessed that adding another person or two made Jade feel like she already had an 'orbit' established, and thus the powers didn't try to drag in other things.

Rose has her own problems with sleeping, but at least her powers don't lead to potential property damage when triggered by bad dreams. Because Rose doesn't have bad dreams. She doesn't have good dreams, either. She doesn't have any dreams at all, as a matter of fact because Rose's Powers make it so that she can never sleep at all- not intentionally, at least.

Rose often jokes that she's like a sun- forever burning, unable to shut her mind off, and never suffering the consequences of a lack of sleep. When Jack and Sam first realized this was a potential problem, they tried giving Rose sleeping pills to help her sleep.

That didn't end well. Well, no, that's an understatement. It pretty much ended with Rose alternating between harsh whispering and horrid screeching for an entire night in an eldritch tongue with nobody able to wake her up by force.

Come morning and her waking up on her own, Rose looked and said she felt like she'd been hit with all of that sleep deprivation at once, and refused to talk about what she'd seen in her sleep for months. (Even described in the minimalist of ways, that was enough to give you nightmares completely unrelated to the usual kind.)

Needless to say, nobody wanted to try forcing Rose into an unconscious state from then on. And you have no way of knowing what happens when she DOES eventually crash out, because she just simply hasn't done anything to BURN that amount of energy in a single burst before.

So Rose doesn't sleep. Sure, she can close her eyes and lay in bed and do a decent impression of sleeping, but she gets restless if she does it for too long. "And a restless Rose not doing anything is a waste of everyone's time," Rose would says in as polite of a way as possible.

It's what makes it impossible for Rose to be here for Jade to keep her from having nightmares. You've tried it. Oh how you've tried so many sleeping arrangements over the years since these stupid powers started causing you trouble. But of the two of you, Rose is the worst at keeping Jade's nightmares in check, and you're the best at it.

You're going to have to figure out a way to bring this up to your parents eventually... but for now, you'll just keep doing this: Slipping across the hall when your nightmarish dreams wake you up, and keeping Jade from turning the house into a proto-black hole's singularity.

In the mean time, you can only hope Rose is working on her own solution to this conundrum.
...Maybe it'd be better if you moved off world. Abydos or Alternia, maybe.

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you're being so STUPID.

Just because John's lucked out and woken up before Jade's nightmares become a problem doesn't mean he'll keep doing it going forwards. You should just stay in the house and keep an eye on her even if it makes you feel constrained and restricted and STUCK.

And yet, here you are, having sneaked out of the house and walked all the way to the SGC on foot without feeling a single bit tired out at all. You stand there in front of the elevator, waiting for someone to get on or off, and glare at the ID CARD SWIPER TGING.

Stupid thing. Restricting your access.

You glance at the GUARD standing, unawares, just a few feet away from you. Could you pickpocket the key card off of his waist? Sure. Would he notice it suddenly floating through the air and activating the elevator all on its own? Definitely.

Sometimes your powers are awesome. Most of the rest of the time, they're a curse.

But, luck smiles upon you and some tired airman exits the elevator.

You slip inside before the door closes, and you eye around for cameras. Seeing none, you press the lowest floor button you can go down with this elevator, and descend downwards and downwards.

By the time you reach the bottom floor and the elevator doors ding open, it seems someone came to investigate the possibility of an invisible person sneaking into the base, because the armed guard has some kind of gun pointed at the elevator that makes you turn visible.

Or... at least, it would if your powers worked on that same invisibility principle.

See, you're not technically INVISIBLE, per say, just... a bit OUT OF PHASE with everything else.

The guard frowns as his fancy gun does nothing to reveal your position, and so you slip past him with ease as he enters the elevator to search it thoroughly.

It's times like these you could really do with John or Jade keeping you from doing impulsive things like this, but yeah.

...That's not going to happen right now.

...Usually you'd stop John from whirling up a tornado by now. Where is your self restraint?

Left behind on Alternia, likely. You've been antsy since you came back to Earth. Nobody minded that you were up at odd hours- there was always someone up and about. Nobody minded that you, Jade, and John all shared a room except for the people, ironically, who came through the Stargate from Earth just a few hours before you did. Joey didn't bat an eye.
Truth be told you wish you could have stayed behind, but you needed to come because you wanted to see your Mother alive again.

Okay. You've seen her alive again.

Now you want to go back.

You wander for a while and eventually find your way to some lab where a Tok'ra woman is discussing something with the Troll girl Mikari from Alternia, or possibly Jolinar. You still can't tell who's who by their vocal patterns yet.

"The Ataniks' armbands are fairly dangerous, Anise," the girl says. "We can't risk testing them, not even against the new Battleship Apophis is building."

"But they can give humans an incredible strength boost, Jolinar, surely this time we can refine the experiment and-" 'Anise' protests.

"No! The boost is Temporary, and at the cost of an increased metabolism and a horrendous increase of rash actions," Jolinar counters. "And besides, the last time around, us sending a team in to destroy the ship nearly ended with the team DYING because Nirrti swooped in, utterly wrecked Apophis' forces, and took the ship and its design for herself!"

"Then that's all the more reason for us to test the armbands on a mission to destroy it now!"

Anise counters.

"Freya," Jolinar counters, "surely you're not agreeing with this logic."

There's a pause, then the woman speaks again, without the modulated voice, "It's too much of a risk, Jolinar. Apophis or Nirrti- either one of them getting this ship would prove disastrous for the Galaxy at large." She takes a breath, then says, "Anise is too excited for the experiment, yes, but I believe that we do need to try this."

"...Fine," Jolinar says. "Go ahead and try to talk to Hammond about this in the morning," she puts a hand on a large box. "But this box stays LOCKED in this lab until either you leave with it, or Hammond agrees to this foolish experiment."

"That's fine," Freya says. "Anise isn't happy, but she'll accept it for now."

"Good," Jolinar nods. "Now, let's go talk and catch up over a bowl of soup. Teal'c brought back some recipes from Alternia that Mikari loves, and I find surprisingly good."

"It is so strange having two of you here, Jolinar," Freya says as the two of them walk past you without noticing. "It's very confusing."

"Tell me about it," Jolinar says, and then she locks the door to the lab... with you inside.

Armbands that can boost a human to super powered levels, hm?

You bring yourself back into the normal flow of reality, becoming visible once again to the world, and head over to the crate. You open it, and inside find THREE LARGE BRACERS.
You really shouldn't do anything with them. You should leave them be...

But damn it, there goes your impulse control again.

You scoop the bands up, slot one onto your arm and- WOOOAAAH. The armbands must be part magnesium. Someone get you a voltmeter, you feel like your powers got an extra TEN THOUSAND VOLTS running through them.

Holding the other two bands close to your chest, you SHIFT BACK to your other state and WOW everything is just so BRIGHT AND COLORFUL and could you always see into the ULTRA-VIOLET SPECTRUM?

You walk up to the door that you shouldn't be able to walk through even in this state and... slip! You walk through it just like it wasn't even there.

You feel like you could run a mile and ZIP, you're suddenly back at the elevator.

You wonder, can you fly? You can walk through walls so why not give it a try.

You step through the closed elevator doors and into the shaft and you're FLOATING HOLY SHIT YOU'RE FLOATING.

YOU ARE KEEPING THIS.

Your name is JADE JACKSON and you wake up to the sudden sensation of something SNAPPING TIGHT ON YOUR RIGHT ARM.

"Wha-!?" you jerk upwards and yell, trying to shake whatever it is off your arm while John yells out:

"ROSE! What the Fuck!?"

Rose?

You look at the edge of your bed and- wait. You're not wearing your Glasses. How the hell are you able to SEE WITHOUT THEM??- Rose is kneeling on the floor, grinning like that Cheshire cat from Alice in Wonderland, looking like she's just given you the best gift ever.

You look at your arm, and see some weird kind of alien bracer thing on your arm. "Rose? What is this?"

"I stole it from the Tok'ra," Rose says. "They say it came from some alien warriors who used it to make themselves really strong and I CAN FLY!" she squeals.

"...What?" You ask.

"Rose, you stole it!?" John shakes his right arm around. "Get it off! I don't want this!"

"Can't take it off! Doesn't come off until it wears off but until then I have a plan," Rose says, grinning like a loon. "And I need your help with it too!"
"...Do I even want to know, Rose?" John asks.

"We're gonna wreck the Aschen's shit with these things," Rose says, grinning, "and then some."

...You look to John and he looks to you and...

You nod.

"What's the plan?" John asks, frowning serious.

Your name is ARGO LALONDE, and you frown as you open the front door at TOO FREAKING EARLY in the morning.

"Are your John and Rose and Jade here?" Roxy Egbert asks.

"No, why would they be here?" You ask.

"I went to wake them up this morning but none of them were in their rooms and they left their cellphones behind," Roxy explains. "I know Rose sneaks out at night but she's always been back by morning but now all of them are gone and I'm really worried."

You sigh. "Damn it." You shake your head, clearing the sleep away. "I've got the worst feeling they've gone and done something fucking stupid. Let me get dressed and we'll head to the SGC. That's probably where they'd go."

You get dressed as quickly as you can and leave a note for Davis and Dirk saying you were heading in early, and then you ride out with Roxy to the SGC.

"Why do you think they'd go to the SGC?" Roxy asks on your way there.

"When we were on Alternia last month," you begin, "Rose mentioned that she was thinking about doing some stupid revenge scheme against the Aschen. John and I talked her out of it, but I could just tell Rose wasn't going to let it go, and even John seemed like he was considering it. Jade actually wanted to go along with Rose's plan from the start."

"Shit," Roxy fishes out her cellphone and tosses it to you. "Call ahead to the base. We need to let them know."

"If Rose is doing her thing, security won't be able to do much good," you say, searching through the phone's really primitive contact list menu. "And with John's windy powers, avoiding security would be easy enough too."

Damn it. Damn it all. This is what you get for spending years out of close contact with them. You should've been included in this but you've been so out of touch and sync with them you were kept out of the loop.

Damn it damn it damn it.

"General Hammond?" You begin to talk into the phone the moment it picks up, "This is Argo Lalonde. We've got a problem."
"What do you mean the meeting's canceled?" Anise asks.

Your name is George Hammond, and you shake your head as you have to push past her, "We've got a situation involving some super powered kids who likely are going to try using the Stargate on a revenge mission against a whole other planet. Super powered arm bracers will have to wait."

"The Aschen that Jolinar mentioned?" Anise guesses. "We Tok'ra have had the occasional run in with them in the past. They seemed like nice people, but there was always something off about them that disinclined us from forming an alliance."

"That's them, yes," you say. "We'll put the meeting off for another time, until we've sorted this out."

"Very well," Anise nods. "I have permission to wait here as long as it takes."

"Hopefully we can end this simply enough to-" You stop as the Gate alarms sound.

"General Hammond and Major Carter to the Gate Room, please?" Walter's voice nervously echoes out, and you sigh.

"That's probably them," Anise muses.

"Yes, it almost certainly is," you nod, and head to the Gate Room. Anise follows out of sheer curiosity, you suspect.

You get to the control room and find that the computers are idling, but the Gate is spinning as it dials—a bit slower than usual, though.

It's almost stop and go at moments, but it's moving definitely as if it's being manually dialed.

Except there's nobody there who's dialing it.

"That's not right," Major Carter says as she joins you in the control room.

"Chevron Three... encoded?" Walter comments as the third chevron locks into place. He writes down the glyph onto a pad of paper. The inner ring pauses for several moments, and then begins spinning in the opposite direction. Slowly, surely, manually.

"Shut the power down," you order. "However they're dialing out, they can't do it without power."

"I already did that, Sir," Walter says. "But the Gate wasn't drawing power from the system when it started dialing anyways. We were running a diagnostic."

"It wasn't connected?" Carter asks.

"Nope," Walter shakes his head. "It's getting its energy from an external power source as far as the system can tell."

"What address are they dialing?" You ask as Chevron Four locks into place.
"Unknown, Sir," Walter says, scribbling down another glyph, "I've been writing them down as it goes, but I don't recognize the address."

"If the next glyph is what I think it is," Anise says after a few moments of studying Walter's scribbled symbols, "I think I know where they're going."

The wheel starts spinning again.

"Where?" You ask her.

"A planet we had Intel Apophis was building a new type of space ship on," Anise says. "I talked it over with Jolinar, the future one, and she said that we tried sabotaging it the last time around and it didn't work out. Apparently Nirrti wound up taking it from him in the alternate future time line."

"The lesser of two evils," you muse, as the gate keeps spinning, slowly, surely, manually, to the next glyph.

Chevron Five locks down just as Argo Lalonde come strolling into the gate room, and Roxy Egbert joins you in the Control room.

"ROSE LALONDE YOU MAKE YOUR BUTT VISIBLE RIGHT THIS MINUTE!" Argo yells out, stomping her foot on the floor. The Gate's ring doesn't start moving again.

"Invisible?" Carter asks, frowning as she double checks a monitor. "But the thermal cameras aren't showing anyone else in the room."

"Rose wouldn't show on thermal," says the Troll girl Mikari- or rather, the Tok'ra inside her, future Jolinar. "She can sort of get out of phase with the rest of reality if she wants to. Usually she can only do it to herself, but we always suspected she might be able to do it with other people some day."

"ROSE! JOHN!" Argo calls out again. "JADE!?" A long pause... "Come on, guys, just talk with me?"

Then, the Gate begins to spin again towards the next glyph.

"Symbol five is the same glyph," Anise says. "They're going to the construction yard. How the hell did they find out about that, though? I only mentioned it to Jolinar after--"

"Oh no," both Tok'ra chime in.

"Oh no what?" Roxy asks.

"Rose might have gotten into the lab we were storing the Bracers in," Future Jolinar says. "I kept the door locked, but if she got in before we locked the door and then put on a bracer after the fact-"

"You said she could get out of phase with reality," Anise says, "could she walk through walls?"

"Not really, no," Future Jolinar shakes her head, "But it's entirely possible that the boost from the Atinak Bracer-"
Chevron Six locks, and then the Gate begins spinning again almost immediately, for its seventh and final chevron.

"Close the Iris," you order, and Carter uses the palm scanner.

The Iris begins to close, only to suddenly shudder and stop in place, before reversing with a flash of green energy.

"JAAAAAAAADEEE!" Argo calls out. "NO! BAD JADE! BAD!!!"

"-Made it so that Rose could bring people into phase with her AND let her walk through walls too!" your Jolinar of the present finishes. "That's both incredibly frightening AND amazing at the same time!"

"DON'T YOU DARE DIAL THAT LAST CHEVRON!" Argo yells out. "GUYS! COME ON!!!"

Chevron seven locks on the Point of Origin anyways.

**WAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!**

"OIII!!" Argo yells out. "IF YOU STEP THROUGH THAT GATE WITHOUT ME I'M GONNA-"

And then Argo suddenly vanishes mid sentence. Literally blinks out of existence in the same instance that there's a large ripple in the Stargate eventhorizon as something travels through it at what you can only guess was an incredibly high speed.

Then, the gate shuts down of its own accord a few moments later, clearly having been disconnected from its power supply.

"...Shit," Roxy whispers.

"Why didn't you try talking them down?" You ask, looking towards her.

"Argo thought she'd have the best luck if I wasn't there," she says.

"Of course she would," Future Jolinar says. "The Aschen arranged for your death in the future, after all."

On that somber note, you look to Major Carter, "Get the rest of SG-1 together the moment Colonel O'neill and Skaara get back on base. You're going after them."

"Right," Carter nods, and then leaves.

"We need to check on the Atinak Armbands," Future Jolinar says. "If Rose stole them, then we might have a bigger problem than three fourteen year olds with incredible power going on a revenge mission."

"And what's that?" you ask.
"Three fourteen year olds with an incredible boost to their already incredible powers going on a revenge mission while thinking they're invulnerable and are on a timer they don't know about," Future Jolinar answers.

Your name is ARGO LALONDE and in the blink of an eye, you suddenly went from standing in the middle of the Gate Room to standing in a wide open grass field surrounded by unconscious JAFFA.

"-BE REALLY... really... Uh...." you blink, looking around the field. The Stargate is a lot further behind you than you'd thought it should be.

A moment later, John, Rose, and Jade blink into existence next to you.

"Jade! John! Do your thing!" Rose says as she grabs your hands and smiles brightly. "Sorry! We only had three bands and your powers aren't exactly the most destructive and I KNEW you'd never agree to this so I just figured we'd let you sleep this one out and-"

"ROSE LALONDE!" you yowl at her. "Shut the fuck up for a second and let me process this!!"

You don't get much time to process anything because suddenly the WIND PICKS UP, and makes you look at the large imposing shadow of a ship in the distance.

Part of it is glowing green- Jade's doing. What could she possibly-

**CRACK.**

The whole thing suddenly splits apart into a bunch of pieces and Jade's apparently increased powers let her drag a HUGE POWER CORE out from the center of it.

Then, she lets go of the rest of the ship, and John's windy powers utterly FLING THE PARTS into the upper atmosphere, where things begin exploding and exploding and--

Uh.

...

Your COUSINS ARE SERIOUSLY OVER POWERED right now.

Like, really.

Jade brings down the power core thing above you and then you see the damned thing SHRINK. Down to a size from which it could fit comfortably through a Stargate.

"I can shrink it! Ohmygodohmygod!" Jade SQUEALS, sounding both terrified and excited at the same time. "I CAN SHRINK THINGS!!!!"

"Awesome!!" Rose skips over to- no, wait, she's FLOATING. How the fuck is she floating? That's kind of YOUR WING GIVEN ABILITY here.
Freaking cheating Armbands.

ARMBANDS!!!

Now you remember. Jolinar told you about those damned things once.

Rose reaches out to touch the shrunken power core and her eyes and hands light up BRIGHT YELLOW GOLD and... and...

"John..." You look at the boy, "Please tell me Rose didn't do that to the Stargate?"

"How else were we going to power it without them intervening?" John shrugs. "I manually dialed, Jade told me which glyphs to put in, and Rose powered it."

Fucking shit damn it all with some energy blasting thingy.

"Doneee!" Rose grins, and as the device starts to whine dangerously, FWOOOSH- suddenly Rose is over at the DHD punching in the glyphs to what Jolinar knew as P4C-970, and everyone else from your time practically memorized as THE ASCHEN HOME WORLD.

WAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!

The Gate Activates, John quickly pulls you out of the line of fire and Jade fucking PUNTS the Power Core through the Stargate.

A moment later- the wormhole connection suddenly flickers as if destabilized, and then utterly vanishes with a gut wrenching sound.

"...What did you guys do?" you ask, feeling very wary.

"I turned the Naquaradria Power Core into a Triniminum entasted... fashion..." Rose starts stumbling over her words. "Nuuukaaa cola...."

And then she collapses to the ground as the armband finally pops off of her arm.

You look at John and Jade and they look pretty concerned... and also suddenly very exhausted. How much energy were they burning with this little stunt of theirs?

"...Is she not talking eldritch tongues?" Jade asks after a moment of consideration.

"Nope," John answers. "I guess we finally found out what happens when Rose pushes herself to exhaustion."

"What now?" You ask. "I hope someone brought along a GDO or memorized an IDC, 'cause otherwise we're stuck."

"We were gonna head to Abydos, actually," Jade says. "After."

"Abydos..." You sigh. "You know what, that's probably a better idea than sticking around here."

With a bunch of unconscious Jaffa who are going to be severelly mad when they wake up.

First, though...
You fish out a pad of sticky notes from your coat pocket, and write a brief note in a short hand that Jolinar learned from Carter, and leave it on the DHD for SG-1 to find, because they're almost certainly only a few minutes behind you.

You wrote: "J. No GDO. Went to Aby. -A"

And so, Jade dials Abydos, and you and John carry Rose through the Gate behind her.

Once you're in Abydos' Gate room within the Pyramid, you all settle down in the DHD's corner, and wait for SG-1 to check in.

Jade collapses soon after you arrive, John follows her a few seconds after, and then the armbands pop off a few minutes later.

You can only just sit there, and sigh, and think about Rose's mumbled words.

You guess Rose took a Trinium and Naquadah Encased Power Core and turned it into a fucking nuclear bomb. One probably strong enough to either destroy a Stargate, or force the connection to jump to another planet.

It probably destroyed the Stargate, though, if Naquadah was involved, and that would have created an even BIGGER explosion that... well...

Needless to say you're pretty certain that the Aschen Confederation just collectively got punched in the groin and then had their entire reproductive system brutally incinerated out of them.

Soon, the Gate activates, and SG-1 comes marching through the Gate.

"So," Colonel O'neill begins. "We noticed a distinct lack of space ship on that planet."

"Jade and John tore the ship apart for the power core," you say, "then Rose turned it into a nuke and they punted it through the Gate to the Aschen homeworld. Pretty sure their Gate blew up with it."

Skaara, Carter, and O'neill all look at eachother with horror on their eyes, and understanding. Surely they're thinking about what happened here on Abydos some... uh... carry the three... Five-ish years ago?

"So..." O'neill begins. "You screwed over Apophis and Jayni by depriving them of a ship..."

"And you nuked the Aschen with the same ship's power core?" Skaara asks.

"So even if the Aschen survive and find any remnants OF the power core," Carter concludes, "they'll think Apophis sent it to them instead of us."

"Rose's plan," you say. "Swift, brutal, and fucking everyone over at the exact same time."

Teal'c just nods in acceptance, and says, "I do believe that is what would be considered a karmic twist of fate."

"Probably," you shake your head and pick up an armband. "These things timed out, by the way. Faster than Jolinar remembered, but I guess super powers come with super immune systems that burn
"I don't think Anise will be happy with that," Jolinar remarks through Carter. Not your Jolinar. Not ever. "But I think that's a win for us."

"Jayni's the one who's not going to be happy," O'neill says. "It sounded like she wanted that ship something fierce."

"Well," you say, "that's the problem with future knowledge, I guess. After a while, it just gets out of date and if you don't adapt, you're stuck with a fucking nuke come barreling through your Stargate."

"Indeed," Teal'c agrees.

Your name is Janet Fraiser, and you frown as Rose finally groans back to consciousness.

"Whu..?" She blinks. "What happened?"

"You crashed after your immune system fought off the armband," you say. "You're also incredibly malnourished right now. We've had John, and Jade on an IV for a while, which you're still on to get you nutrients, but they were nowhere near as bad off as you are. You really need to eat something, Rose."

"Guess that'll happen," Rose mutters as you grab a tray of food and bring it over to her bed. "I powered a fucking Stargate on my own. I'm not even sure how the hell I did half the things I did today."

"John and Jade are in similar boats," you say, placing the tray on the slot locks designed to hold it. "Jade's mostly terrified of the fact that she shrunk something down with her powers. Apparently she never knew she could do that before and doesn't remember how to do it now, either."

Rose grumbles something incoherent as she grabs a fruit cup and rips its foil lid off, and then throws back the entire cup's contents into her mouth like a shotglass.

Honestly, you're kind of grossed out just watching it.

You've never seen someone throw back a fruit cup like that, and you really don't want to see it ever again. Which is exactly when Rose just grabs a small single serving sized box of cereal from the cafeteria, tears it open, and just dumps the entire box of fruit loops into her mouth.

What? When did she eat the entire cup of fruit? You didn't see any in her mouth and... That's a LOT of crunching.

"I'm just going to go order you something substantial to eat now that you're up," you tell her, and make your excuse to leave.

You barely see her give you a thumbs up before she pops off the lid to a bottle of Gatorade and begins chugging it to wash down the cereal and fruit.

...
You're going to try to forget that you ever saw that.

Your name is ROXY EGBERT, and you sigh in relief as you get home with an armload of groceries.

"Hey! Welcome back!" Jude greets you at the door, and quickly helps you unload things into the kitchen. "How'd it go?"

"Store was crowded this time of day," you report. "And the damned meat department was full of meat that expires today so nobody was buying any."

"Bluh," Jude grimaces. "How the hell does that even happen?"

"No idea, Jude, no idea," you shake your head. "How were the little ones while I was out?"

"I've got them watching some marathon of Power Rangers," Jude answers. "It seems a little weird knowing that giant robots like that actually exist in this universe somewhere. though."

"Hah," you grin, "it is so weird, isn't it?"

"As for John and Jade..." Jude frowns. "Well, they both went into John's room and I haven't heard a peep out of them, but given John's windy powers, I guess he could be suppressing things. Jade looked pretty upset by something though, but she wouldn't tell me what."

"I'll tell you later, okay?" you say to him. "After I go check in on them when we're done with groceries."

"Alright," Jude nods.

You finish with groceries soon enough, and then head upstairs to the guest room you'd once intended for family when they visit, but never quite like this.

You carefully peek open the door and peer inside...

You see John and Jade lying in bed together, Jade out of it entirely, and snoozing with a tired look on her face. John's awake though, and eyes you with something akin to surprise and fear on his face that he didn't sense you coming.

Oh, there are so many thoughts whirling through your head at the scene before you. Some of them bordering on "What the hell?" and most on, "Oh, you poor things."

You just give a smile and a thumbs up, and leave them be.

Oh, you'll have to talk with them later, but you're pretty sure that if anything hinky were going on that you'd be in some fairly different timeline entirely with a whole bunch of different people who came back from that dark future. ...Well, maybe. There was that whole 'forced sterilization' thing you heard about the Aschen doing, after all. (...Eh, the Galaxy won't miss those bastards. Not one bit at all.) But still!
...Still...

What does it matter anyways? John was adopted and Jade's Daniel's kid. And they've all changed families so many times over their own lives in that other timeline that the only consistent people IN their lives are each other. So what even if they were doing something hinky? It doesn't matter! After the shit life they've lived through, those kids are welcome to have whatever coping mechanisms they need to get through this!

You're not one to judge. You're really not. You've had some awful coping mechanisms when you were a teen, and as long as those kids aren't following in your specific bad choices, you don't have any right to judge them.

Argh. This is all entirely FAR TOO EARLY for you to be having these thoughts for your kids. You thought you'd have atleast a whole another ten years before having to deal with this stuff.

Well. You suppose it'll make for good practice, at any rate.

Now, time to go tell Jude about what happened today.

"I'm going to throw these armbands into the nearest opening stargate," Anise says as she shoves the things into the box.

Your name is MIKARI AIIKHO, and your partner laughs through your mouth. "I told you they were bad karma. I warned you they were bad news. We were just fortunate it wound up pointed at the Aschen, this time."

"Yes, yes," Anise shakes her head. "Still. Damn it. I had no idea those kids could do that."

"I didn't know they had it in them either," Jolinar says, and you can feel her unease.

To do something so blatant...

It was certainly the Alternian way of doing things, you'll say that much.

...Actually.

"It was the Alternian way of doing things," you say, seamlessly blending into the conversation. "It wouldn't be so out of place back there. Throwing a bomb through the Stargate like that."

"Perhaps," Anise says. "But it was a bit... excessively preemptive. I guess, that's the word I'm looking for."

"They're a bit too violent for our civilized Galaxy, is that what you're saying?" Jolinar asks.

"That's not-" Anise cuts herself off. "I'm worried about what they'll do when they get to that kind of power level without the Atinak armbands."

"If the worst comes to it," you interject, doing your best to mimick Jolinar's speech pattern, "we'll send them back to Alternia. That kind of power level wouldn't be out of place there. Just look at Joey
Claire," you say. "In terms of sheer power level, with just that Bracelet alone, she's arguably even more destructive than those kids are. But she has restraint." You pause, then say, "Infact, I dare say we should send them to her to train their restraint."

"...That is a smart idea," Anise muses. "Bring it up with your General Hammond when I'm gone. No offense to your host, but I'm a little bit afraid of anything going into or coming out of that Galaxy right now and I'd rather not be here when you send them lest I get sucked up into the chaos."

"None taken," you say. "Honestly, I've been a little startled by the chaos going on there myself, at times."

You really don't want to think about how the hell they dealt with the Royal Lusus.

You really, really don't.

Chapter End Notes

Ironically, the episode "The Other Side" would have gone more differently from Canon SG-1 in the doomed timeline than it did in this timeline. For once the butterflies of time travel caused things to stay ON the rails, and for that reason, I didn't see a need to adapt it here. It's really funny, in its own way.

Conversely, it's then very appropriate that those same butterflies brought a brutal and abrupt end to the Aschen, and started to derail Jayni's plans in a rather explosive manner.

No Black Hole self destruct for the Aschen here. No siree. Losing their Stargate is going to set back any survivors for a VERY long time... and that's if the secondary Gate explosion didn't set off any third or fourth explosions that then set off even MORE explosions...

And, well, yeah. To TL;DR it: Eugenics programs get nobody anywhere good, and it always comes around to bite them in the ass eventually.

Get it? 'Cause they're the Ass-chen? XP

An Arai Beetle watches as a young teal blood ran down the streets of Diaspora's main settlement. Her hair, tied up into far too many ponytails to be anything but ridiculous, bounced in a way that was reminiscent of a crab's legs skittering across the sand.

The girl's name? Tirona Kasund.

"Miss Skalbi! Miss Skalbi!" she cries out, coming up to a sliding halt next to a Jade Blooded supervisor who was discussing something with an Olive blooded man in a chefs outfit.

"Yes, Tirona?" The Jade blood- one Lynera Skalbi- asks as she peers down at the girl through her violet rimmed glasses.

"They're here!" Tirona grins.

"Ah," Lynera smiles, then turns to the Chef. "To answer your question, I would say we should have the food ready in an hour's time."

"Understood," the Olive Blooded chef nods, and then stalks off.

"Now, Tirona," Lynera turns to the teal blooded girl. "Would you be so kind as to run over to the Arai Colony and fetch Miss Claire and the others?"

Tirona nods, enthusiastically, and then takes off at a run towards the Arai colony.

"Such an enthusiastic girl, that one," Lynera muses, before turning to go do whatever else she needed to get done before the celebration began.

Another Arai watched Tirona Kasund as she ran along the path out of the Diaspora settlement towards the nearby cliffs that housed the Arai Settlement. A wide, happy grin on her face.
Today was going to be a party! A party to celebrate defeating the Replicators, finally destroying the Royal Lusus, and ALMOST POSSIBLY CERTAINLY killing the bastard known as the SCRATCH DOCTOR.

There was going to be FOOD! And MUSIC! And DANCING! And rumor was that the Mother Grub was finally resettled into her new cave properly and would be accepting donations again! Meaning- new grubs could be hatched soon! Meaning that Diaspora would finally be once and for all their new home!

And although there was so much left to do in terms of freeing the Galaxy from the Empress' tyrannical rule, it was alright every now and then to celebrate the massive milestones!

And celebrate they would tonight!

Finally rounding the corner to the cliff face, Tirona paused at the sight of the massive wall of stone covered in barnacles and flying beetles. The largest massive one in the center of it all turned its head towards her, and for a moment Tirona felt a brief pulse of attention wash over her.

Then, it looked away, and some of the Arai beetles came buzzing over, as if to guide her along her way.

"Hahah!" She giggled as one of the creatures nuzzled up against her face. "You're so cool!"

Following the bugs down a hidden pathway, Tirona soon came across a wood cabin that looked to be further along in construction than one would think just by looking at it. Of course, that partly had something to do with the fact that, as she stood there, pieces of the thing came floating out from behind the thing and started maneuvering themselves into place with psionic abilities.

Some Arai buzzed here and there, looking over the place.

Staring up in awe, Triona carefully took a few steps forwards as she watched some of the bugs zoom in and begin using more precision bursts of telekenetic abilities to fasten the parts in place. Once done, there was a pause as the bugs all seemed to scatter away to where ever they felt most comfortable, and then out from behind the house came Joey Claire and Mierfa Durgas. Walking, rather than floating or flying. Which is a silly assumption to make but it was one regardless that Triona's mind briefly skipped towards.

"Hello!" Joey waves. "You came to tell us something?"

"Oh!" Triona nodded fiercely. "Your team's here from Alternia!"

"Ah, just in time for the Party!" Mierfa grinned.

"Thanks for the reminder!" Joey says, "I nearly forgot."

"Let's get going then," Mierfa says, and off they go, gathering what they need and heading back into town.

Your name is SKYLLA KORRIGA and if there was one thing that caught you off guard by when it
came to the future, it was the fact that Alternia had, for the vast majority of the time since you'd traveled forwards, been cleansed of Adults. There was one small cavern that escaped notice, somehow, but even they, eventually, had left the planet.

They had left for Diaspora, and somehow, their desert isolation had given them a culture that was vastly different from the rest of Alternia as a whole. They were Day-walkers, and they tended to use Stargate Glyphs more often than not as their signs- repeating the signs but changing the colors where they felt needed- and only occasionally seemed to use symbols from the wider Alternian standard symbol sets whenever their Seers decided on it.

Far from the standard means of a Sign being assigned at a Troll's graduation from the Trials (Because Trials were no longer a thing in a place meant to be hidden away), a Troll got their sign during a ceremony held once their first molt from Grub to bipedal form had been completed. You've been told that some times a Troll or a group of Trolls would go through the ceremony again after undergoing some tumultuous hunt that ended in victory, as a replacement for the Trials of sorts.

And so as the sun sets and the settlement's people all finish whatever meals they'd had left to eat, you find yourself sitting next to Dammek around the LARGE BONFIRE in the central square, where Seer Altair and Matron Porrim are seemingly preparing themselves for some large announcement.

You suspect this ceremony thing is about to be-

"EVERYONE!" Matron Porrim calls out. "IF I COULD HAVE YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE?"

-Nevermind.

All eyes turn towards her and conversation comes to a halt. The Matron smiles. "Alright! I know I'm probably repeating myself, but I'm sure I've missed saying it to some people so again: Welcome to tonight's celebration! We've all had some wonderful fun tonight, and lots of delicious food. Diaspora has been more of a bounteous world than we'd ever dared dream it could be. The last few months have been great both for us here on Diaspora, and for Alternia's battle against our Galaxy's cruel emenies." She looks around, before smiling at your group of people specifically- Dammek and Joey and Xefros, Mierfa, Callie, Daraya, Mallek, and even Tyzias. You feel weird being included among the group, like you barely did anything. "The Replicators which plagued our Galaxy have been slain, and the Scratch Doctor, that mythological Man on the Moon, has finally died. Then, ontop of that, the Royal Lusus whose Vast Glub has been an ugly blight on the galaxy as a whole has been slain by being fed into a Black Hole. The Vision our Seers predicted ages ago of the former Heiress Trizza Tethis gaining control of it and eradicating all life in our Galaxy has finally been prevented. And so tonight, we celebrate. Seer Altair?"

Seer Altair takes up center stage next, speaking with their loud, commanding voice. "To help celebrate the victories we've had, we understand and recognize that the arrival of certain people to our time frame made this possible. And while some of them may not have done anything quite just yet of great importance in our Galaxy, they have survived a great trial already by making their way here." The Seer motions towards the four kids from the future. "We of Diaspora's Blind Seers believe this to just be the first of many Trials, and see in their future great feats and adventures to come, both here in our Galaxy and out there among the stars in other Galaxies. To that end, they will recieve Signs tonight- the first of many Signs to be given tonight- and will always find a place here among us on Diaspora should they so ever require one."

"John Sheppard," Matron Porrim calls out, "Rise up and approach the fire!"
The boy in blue does so, much to his embarrassment at being the center of attention.

"Heir of Breath!" Seer Altair steps forward to meet him, and says, "You who shall be in the eye of the storm, and raise a wall of to defend against a Hurricane's winds! We Seers grant you ARUS, the SIGN OF THE WANDERER." Seer Altair then hands John a piece of paper with a red sign painted on it. "Wear it with honor."

"Thank you," John says, taking the paper, and moving to sit back down.

"Argo Lalonde!" Matron Porrim calls out. "Step forwards!"

The girl with the cat ears and the crow wings steps up towards Seer Altair with a sort of noble air about her steps.

"Rogue of Time!" Seer Altair says, "You have faced the fear of the hunted, and come out on top to witness the downfall of the hunters. We Seers grant you LERIES, the SIGN OF THE TENACIOUS. Wear it in memory of those lost, yet found again."

"I will," Argo says as she takes a paper with an olive painted sign on it, and then returns to her seat.

"Jade Jackson!" Matron Porrim calls out. "Join us!"

The girl with the rounded glasses steps forwards a nervous smile on her face.

"Witch of Space!" Seer Altair goes on, "You have much hardships ahead of you, but most perplexing of all is what we Seers foresee as nothing short of a miracle. When the heavens turn red, and all you have is your powers, bring forth your might and reflect!" Seer Altair hands her a paper with a teal sign on it. "We grant you LIGO! SIGN OF THE CIRCUMSCRIBED."

"I'll wear it," Jade bows her head, "Thank you." And then she sits back down.

"Rose Lalonde!" Matron Porrim says. "Arise!"

Finally, the blonde haired girl approaches, expectant and yet curious.

"Seer of Light, blinding out sight!" Seer Altair pauses, "Or perhaps, you are a Witch of Void, Hm, to obscure us so? You are a perplexing case for us Seers. For you we cannot see your fate, but we can see the effects of your actions spreading far and wide like Karfin's star, exploding in the sky. And for that, we deem you with a Sign we do not give lightly. SCORPIA- Sign of the EMPEROR." Seer Altair hands Rose a sheet of paper with a Cerulean sign. "May your rule be benevolent."

"I'll certainly try my best," Rose says, taking the sign, and returning to her seat.

"Now!" Matron Porrim calls out. "We will continue to call out those who have distinguished themselves in other ways throughout the night and grant them new Signs, but we have other priorities to talk about first."

"We of the Seers," Altair begins, "see troubling times ahead. Though the Replicators of our Galaxy are gone, their bretheren are elsewhere in the Universe. Though the Empress is weekend, she is no less dangerous, and perhaps is more so than ever before. And while we celebrate tonight, we request of all of you that you exercise caution going forwards. The Universe is a Dangerous Place, and Death is common."
"But Death is but one side of the coin," Matron Porrim continues. "The other is Birth, and on the edges is Life itself. Our Mother Grub has fully settled into her new nesting Cavern, and has accepted the first test run of genetic materials properly. She is ready to accept the donations of our people once again, and so our next generation will be born here on Diaspora. For those of you with Matesprits and Kismesises, should you find yourselves celebrating privately, feel welcome to donate afterwards. For those who wish to donate but have no consistent partner of either side, know there is no shame tonight. Tonight is a celebration of LIFE. Of our continued survival. Of our combined wills beating back death's door for longer than any have dared believe possible."

"And so we of Diaspora mark tonight as one of the last days of the old year," Seer Altair concludes. "All planets spin to a beat of their own hearts, that is no different for Diaspora. And so we have made a new calendar for our new home, with Respect to Alternia's, but suitably unique to us here and now. The official reveal of the new calendar will be posted tomorrow in town square."

The Matron then goes on about some other important things after that, but you tune it out, turning to Dammek and asking in a whisper, "How long exactly is this gonna go on for?"

"I'd give it another few minutes before they get back to the re-signing," Dammek says in return.

You nod in understanding, and tune back in. "-next weekend we're setting up for harvesting the trees for their fruit," the Matron is saying. "Don't forget to bring your apple baskets!"

You turn back to Dammek, "Think there's anything that applies to us specifically?"

"Why do you keep asking me?" Dammek asks in return.

"Cause," you motion with your eyes in the other direction, and Dammek does indeed look to see that the person immediately next to you on the other side is Tyzias, and she's actually fallen asleep despite the commotion going on around you.

"Ah," Dammek nods. "...We should probably get her somewhere she can sleep at."

"Yeah, that's probably a good idea," you agree. And so you and he quickly and quietly move to get Tyzias spread out between you and carry her off somewhere she won't be disturbed.

---

**EARTH DATE: JULY 27TH, 1997.**

"-ay, I'm waking her up now."

Your name is TYZIAS ENTYKK and you groan as you suddenly register light shining into your eyes, which you're stubbornly squeezing shut.

As you slowly open your eyes, you realize you're not on Diaspora, but rather, on the All Your Base, in its medbay...

"Oh thank goodness," And then Daraya is leaning into your field of view. "We were so worried when you didn't wake up yesterday morning. We thought maybe you were just tired, but then we got worried that something like what happened with Dammek might have happened."
"Wha...?" You blink the sleep out of your eyes. The last thing you remember you were at the party and... and... "What happened?

"As far as Shaper can tell? Years of sleep deprivation finally catching up with you without any stimulants keeping you functioning," Joey says, walking into your field of view, frowning. "I thought you were taking it seriously to get constant sleep after the last time you crashed on us."

"I, um..." You blink. "I crashed before?"

Joey glances at Daraya, who frowns in clear concern.

"You don't remember?" Daraya asks. "It was during the meeting? After Mikari came to the ship?"

After---

Oh.

"After Amisia tried to kill her," you swallow some spit that'd built up in your mouth. "Right. Yeah. I remember now."

"What happened?" Joey asks you.

Fucking hell, you don't know. You can barely remember anything after that night. After... after...

After the friend you brought back to life tried to kill someone.

What the hell have you been thinking?

"I don't know," you finally say- and it's the truth. You don't know what the hell you've been thinking or doing because you really just can't remember anything right now. "It's all a blur."

Joey sighs. "Alright. That's fine. Listen, Tyzias. We're gonna have the Nurse keep an eye on you for the next few days and make sure you're getting sleep and eating properly. Okay? I've got a mission to go on for today, and when I get back we'll talk about this more. I don't want to hear you've left this hospital room for any other reason than to go to the restroom, okay?"

"Yes, ma'am, Doctor Joey," you try to joke, but it feels a little flat to you.

Joey smiles regardless, but turns to Daraya, and says, "Make sure she eats something before she falls asleep again."

Daraya nods, and then Joey goes to leave, pausing only when some mumbled shout catches her attention. You're so out of it you're not even hearing people's voices properly.

"Yeah, Polypa?" Joey asks, heading off somewhere to your far right before exiting out of view. You don't even bother looking after her, as Daraya fetches some food-filled cups from a nearby table and starts opening the lids on some for you to eat from.

"My manph mou moh meal meh," the mumbled voice says. "Mhen mou meph mahk."

"...You sure this time?" Joey asks, and you think you can hear the frown in her voice. "You said that
"the last time I went on a long off world mission and when I came back you put it off again."

"Myhm mure," says the muffled voice, and then something more, but Daraya talks over them, shoving a cup with some kind of pureed concoction into your face.

"Here," she says. "Drink this first."

"What is it?" You ask, eyeing the unidentifiable smoothie.

"Apples, oranges, and strawberries," Daraya says. "They're growing them on Diaspora now."

You sigh. Fine. It can't be that bad, right?

You take a swig of the pink colored blend and **OH!**

**SUPER BITTER!**

"Needs sugar," you bite back after swallowing.

"Drink it anyways," Daraya insists, and you sigh in reluctance.

"Fine," Joey concludes as she walks back into sight, looking slightly annoyed in an amused away. "But if you backtrack on it again this time, Ploypa, I'm gonna heal you anyways! 'Cause you promised me right here and now! 'No Take Backs!'"

"MINE!" muffled voice barks back, sounding similarly annoyed and amused despite the muffled-sounding voice.

Joey rolls her eyes, then turns to smile at you, "Okay, take care, Tyzias. Get some sleep. I'll see you tomorrow, alright?"

You nod, and then force yourself to down another gulp of the bitter, bitter smoothie.

You manage to rasp out that it is, indeed, "**Smooth. VERY SMOOTH.**"

"So," Your name is Xefros Tritoh, and you eye your Moirail as she joins you outside the medbay. "Polypa's saying 'no takebacks' this time, huh?"

"Hah," Joey laughs as you two make your way to the Gate room. "Yeah. Maybe she's finally over her hang up. How hard is it to make up your mind on getting healed or not?"

"Honestly," you say, "having finally heard you two talking, at this point I'm pretty sure we have it right and it's not about her getting healed and more about seeing if she can rile you up over it."

"Well, she's succeeded in that part," Joey answers. "It's really annoying!"

"It's also Textbook testing-the-waters pitched flirting," you note. Joey laughs at that, but otherwise gets a slightly... mischievous look on her face. "Also, the same could be said for that 'I'll heal you anyways' jab you put in. That intentional?"
Joey just nods, and says, "Yup!"

You've only even really talked about this a few times here and there, and it seems your alien-world born Moirail is really figuring out how to navigate all this Alternian Romance shit on her own. And with it especially being one of the more nebulous concepts like the ASHEN ROMANCE, you feel a sort of MOIRAILGIC PRIDE.

Moirailgic? Is that even a word? Well, if it wasn't, IT IS NOW.

You soon wind up in the Gate Room, and see that the Stargate has already started dialing up. Joey heads over to talk with her brother and Mikari/Jolinar, and you make your way over to Mierfa.

"Hey, Xefros," she greets.

"Hey," you return the favor. "You excited for Earth?"

"Not really. It'll just be another building with a Stargate in it, really," Mierfa says. "I'm more excited for Joey getting to go back for a bit and seeing people she hasn't seen in a while. But, um," she lowers her voice to a whisper, "I got the feeling last night that she was more nervous than excited."

"Mmh," you nod. "Been getting the same vibes here." You're not going to talk about it with all these other humans around, but during the last serious Feelings Jam you had, Joey mentioned that she'd been feeling like a mirror had been thrown in her face and her reflection was coming back Alternian rather than Human.

Ironically, it would only be several hours later that her reflection would literally be coming back as Alternian rather than Human so you could bypass some stupid POLITICIAN'S desires to keep Joey from returning to where she's needed.

...What concerned you was that she didn't change back on arrival, or even just a few hours later, and was still looking fully Alternian by the time she and you rolled around to the medbay to spring Polypa from her bandage-made prison the next morning.

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**EARTH DATE: JULY 28TH, 1997.**

Your name is POYLPA GOEZEE and you feel as nervous as a sputtering candle flame as Joey and Xefros walk you to Joey's old room on the ship, presently still branded in her name, but soon to be vacated for someone else to use.

Xefros soon makes his excuses to leave, although he settles a burning gaze on Joey for a moment that says "We will be talking about this later, Dear Moirail." Joey just nods in agreement, and then soon, the two of you are alone. (Your heart feels like a pocket lighter's flintlock wheel spinning and sparking without release.)

"So! How do you want to go about this?" Joey offers, voice sweet in that way that just kind of makes your mind turn to ash at the thought of all that kindness being turned at you. Who the hell has that much kindness in their hearts?? "I was thinking we could start with your left arm first since it's not as badly damaged, and then we go for the rest of it at once?"
"Alright," you mumble, and it really isn't due to the bandages you think. "Sounds good to me."

And then she starts unwrapping the bandages around your left arm.

Damn it, you're so much more of a mess right now. You'd heard that that Bracelet let Joey turn herself into a Troll but fuck it if you never imagined she'd look hotter as one. She'd set the room on fire if she were any hotter. (And you're fine with that. That'd be completely fine if the room burned with you two in it.)

"Sorry, what?" Joey asks as she pauses. "I didn't quite catch that."

Uh- Wait. Did you say any of that out loud? UMM... THINK, POLYPA, THINK! "Said, 'could you let me set myself on fire?'" Annnnd you've done it now.

"...Like, let you set your skin on fire on demand without burning yourself?" Joey muses on that for a moment, and then there's a spark of an ember in her eyes (OH NO). "While that'd be pretty cool-" (OH. PLEASE NO.) "I'm not sure that's such a good idea. You're kinda sweating something fierce right now and if that were oil, it'd just get everywhere and then you might burn a lot of stuff down you don't want to burn!"

Your heart's spark wheel cracks in half--

"But," Joey continues, "maybe I could give you some cool flame tattoos. What would you think about that?"

--and then it explodes with all the burning fire of a sun.

"Yes," you mumble excitedly, "Definitely! ABSOLUTELY!!"

And so Joey grins, and finishes unwrapping your burnt up left arm- spared a lot of the damage the rest of your body suffered. Your skin looks like nothing it should. Joey touches it, and you can't feel her hand touching your burnt up skin. You've got no pain receptors at all, it seems.

Except then the bracelet glows and your arm BURNS and "Owowowowowowow-" Like TROLL ICARUS getting to close to the SUN, you feel the BURN. But somehow it hurts in A GOOD WAY, because you can watch as your skin seems to ripple and then UNBURN ITSELF and and holy shit you can feel her hand touching your arm and oh- OH WOW.

Where you once had BURNS, now FLAMES run along your arm in OLIVE GREEN, standing out in sharp contrast against your grey skin like your sign against your shirt or- uh. Actually, AGAINST YOUR SKIN. There, on the back of your hand, is your SIGN, LEUS, from which all the flames spawn.

"Oh wow," You breathe out, at a lost for words and feeling like a flame smothered by lack of oxygen.

"So, I was thinking of a style like this for the tattoos," Joey says. "I'd mirror it on your right arm, extending it to where the burns are, and then do something similar on the rest of your body, too. Is that okay?"

Your heart beats like a lighter cap being snapped open and closed.
"Y-YES." Oh hell did your voice really just hitch, damn it damn it. Say something, You! SAY SOMETHING!!! "Stuh- strip?"

AAAAND you're CRASHING. BURNING. IT'S A TAILSPIN ENGINES EXPLODING AND FUEL SPIRALING OUT INTO THE HEAVENS AS IT IGNITES AND LEAVES A DRILL SHAPED FIRE IN THE HEAVENS!!

"Oh, yeah," Joey nods after a moment. "We're going to need to get the bandages off so I don't accidentally merge them with your skin." Her cheeks flush with a bit of green hue. (Oh FUCK YOU, she made her disguised form have some shade of green blood. Why?? Is it Lime? Olive??? Jade??? You can't tell and it's setting your brain on fire.)

Truth be told, your mind sort of blanks out over the next few minutes as your bandages come off and Joey runs her magic powers across your skin and burned muscles and you're somewhere in a state between pure agony and pure bliss and by the time its finished you can open both of your eyes and look in the mirror and--

And she even went so far as to regrow your hair out, too.

You have sprawling tattoos running up from your feet, flames licking up every inch of your legs past your hips where it ignites up along your stomach and then diverges suddenly up along your right side, where the flames there merge with the ones coming from your hand and your arm and then shoot along your neck and go up along the side of your face.

You turn around and look over your shoulder to check out the back and it's all there, all perfect except---

Except she fucking put her own sign on the back of your waist. That stupid pyramid with a circle on top. That MOONLESS MOCKERY of Alternia's Point of Origin Symbol is there on your back, and instead of flames surrounding it there's some stupid Spirograph of some kind and and and-

"The hell is this?" You ask her as you look her in the eyes.

"The hell is what?" she asks back, a smug smile on her face. It reminds you just a little bit of a Fox Lusus's coy smirk.

"Your SIGN. On my butt," you say, voice growing a bit gravely.

"It's not on your butt," she counters, smug smile growing. "It's on your waist."

"You BRANDED me!" You yelp, indignant.

"Did I?" She asks, not once breaking her gaze from your eyes and oh does a burning fire start to churn in the back of your chest.

For a few moments, the two of you stand there, eye to eye. She has no shame about this! She---! She...

She doesn't even need to wander her eyes up or down or anywhere she fucking SCULPTED you. She knows every curve and- and- and- OOOOOOOOOHHH. She's planned this. Her little revenge and payback for you wallowing back and forth about whether or not you wanted her to heal you just
so you could prolong it and-- And--

...And figure out whether the burning fire in your chest every time you saw her offering to heal you was because you didn't want her pity or because you had a HATE CRUSH on her. AND... that's what you did. YOU'VE GOT A FUCKING HATE CRUSH on the girl across from you who's downright out and out branded you in such a blatant PITCH MOVE that...

That.

You're RECIPROCATED. Your hate is actually being returned in equal.

"What?" Joey asks, smirking wider, "Cat got your tongue?"

Your name is Xefros Tritoh, and as you meander around your old room, packing your shit up into boxes, you suddenly hear Polypa YELLING LOUDLY from Joey's room. The words "I'M GONNA FUCKING BRAND YOU, JOEY CLAIRE!!!!!" are loud, coherent, and perfectly understandable despite several walls of THICK STEEL blocking the way. The following sentence, "RIGHT ON YOUR TO--MRPH!?" is less coherent, but still understandable until it's presumably cut off in the middle by Joey Claire, Extraordinaire, kissing the girl.

Go her, you smirk, as you then hear a few muttered groans from down the hall, as well as a few exacerbated cheers from up elsewhere in the ship.

...You think that if anyone were holding bets on whether or not Joey would ever have a Kismesis, the people who just lost, lost big. And those who just won, well...

They just got a little bit richer, you guess.

Your name is Mierfa Durgas, and you're a little bit of two minds about this morning's events- that is to say, your Matesprit just got her Kismesis.

On the one hand, you've now got someone new to work into your inter-personal relations. Getting to know the Kismesis of your Matesprit is a challenging enough thing when you don't really know them. It's a whole OTHER deck of cards when you were there watching the girl get dragged away from a Stargate after being covered in molten rock.

On the other hand... Over the course of a single shout, you've just became one of the richest Trolls on base by way of hedging all your bets through a MIDDLE-MAN, and you just earned SERIOUS CASH RESERVES. Enough to buy some fancy furniture for your NEW HIVE on Diaspora.

As you stroll into Salazl Captor's office, you grin at your MIDDLE-MAN and say, "Pay up, Captor."

The Yellowblood just eyes you from the side, then says, "Come back in an hour, I'm waiting on Zebede and Diemen to pay up after their shifts end."

"Fair 'nough," You say, and come back later.
You're once again Xefros Tritoh, and about an hour later, your Moirail stumbles into your room barefoot, shoes and socks nowhere in sight. You think you can see a few bite marks along her neck, for once not covered up by the collar of her jacket, and her hair is really ruffled up wildly. Her shirt seems to be on backwards, as a tag is sticking up from the front of her collar, and her sign isn't displayed on the front, but the back instead.

And somehow, despite the disheveled look, a goofy grin resides on her still Alternian face.

"So," you begin navigating some probably still choppy waters, "how did that go?"

"There was a lot of biting," Joey giggles as she sits down next to you. "And also some wrestling. And punnery. Lots of punnery. That's... good?"

"Sounds about right for a Kismesisitude," you muse. "Now, while you're blissed out from hate sex and likely not to get mad at me, can I ask you why you haven't turned back to human yet?" Because you're pretty sure this is a problem and not just convenience.

Joey closes her eyes, takes a deep breath, and sighs out. "Fiiiine." You wait for her to figure out what to say, taking in her appearance here. Not in her clothing or such, but how her body posture changes. Tempered by her good mood before, you can see there's a bit of unease in her posture now. A small squint of sadness creeps in around the edges of her eyes. "I don't want to be human right now, Xef."

...Annnd yep, there it is. "Oh?" You prompt when she doesn't say anything more.

"I never was really human to begin with, not entirely," Joey opens her eyes and looks at you. "Pa's cloned from Scratch, and I'm his daughter, and that means I'm technically Scratch's granddaughter and that scares me, Xef. It scares me to think what weird shit is hiding in my D.N.A. and I... I can't deal with that right now. I showed Jude and he was SCARED." She tucks her knees up to her chest, and reaches a hand down to fiddle with one of the claws-nails on her toes. "He tried to hide it, but he was scared. He didn't even know what Scratch WAS and... hell, even we don't really know what Scratch was... but he was still scared. I scared my little brother by telling him who we're descended from and I- I don't want to be that person anymore, Xef. I don't want to be Joey Harley."

You're not quite sure what to say, but before you can even get a chance to figure it out, Joey takes a breath and continues.

"And all of that's not counting the weird shit the Bracelet's done to me," she continues. "I've got a hive-network of Arai Beetles in my head, I can FLY with wings that don't make fucking sense on a human and even Roxy said she had no idea how they really worked beyond 'magic', and I got turned into a fucking werewolf for a few minutes!" You can see tears brimming in her eyes, as she pauses, and then says, "Plus this stupid thing striped out my human reproductive system without even asking me first, and started replacing it with a Troll one and isn't it stupid that I don't HATE it for that?" She asks. "I actually like not having to deal with cramps every month and being put out of commission and being compatible with Mierfa-" she pauses. "And Polypa now, too. I guess. It's..." She sighs. "I feel whole, like this, Xef. And I'm not sure if that's the Bracelet messing with my head or if that's me just not wanting to be ME?? You know??"

You're not entirely sure you do know, but... "I understand the feelings behind that," you tell her,
putting you arm around her. That's all she lets you get out, despite wanting to say more, though.

"And that's not the worst of it!" Joey continues. "I couldn't even come back to Alternia as Joey Harley. HARLEY. Specifically, Harley. The Human girl. Jude's sister. I had to be Alternian so the stupid people in the government couldn't say I- that I couldn't-" her words hitch in her throat for a moment, and she leans into you. "I don't want to go back, Xef. I don't want to be Joey Harley. I don't. I'm Claire. Joey Claire. Not Harley."

"You are," you tell her, squeezing tight. "You're Joey Claire, and you're not anybody else. You're our Friend and you're so much more too."

"Why did they have to come here?" she asks, burying her head into your shoulder. "Why couldn't they have just stayed over there on Earth. Why did they have to time travel back?? Why- I just-" She sobs. "I just wish I wasn't related to anybody and never knew who my parents were or anything like that! Everyone here on Alternia has it so lucky! They don't have to know who their parents are or their brothers or their cousins and-! And they don't have to worry about that stuff because that means they don't have to worry about being anyone but themselves- AND YES, I know I'm idealizing part of it, Xef, and there's so much wrong with the system as it is, but it's-" She chokes on her words for a moment and you put a hand on her head and stroke from the top down to the side, trying to comfort her. "I just need to not be ME!? Is that so wrong!? Can I just- NOT BE ME!"

With your other, non-stroking hand, you pat Joey on the cheek- gently and softly.

"Sssh," You whisper. "Just let it out."

And so you sit there for the next few minutes- Joey crying and ranting her heart out, and you sooshing and papping just as any good Moirail should.

Soon enough, she's cried out every emotion that she's needed to vent, and you just sit there together in relative silence for a few minutes.

"Xef..." she whispers, "am I a monster?"

"Not unless you go 'werewolf' again," you say, and that prompts a small laugh from her.

"Not what I meant," she complains, but it doesn't have any anger behind it.

"You're not a monster, Joey," You tell her. "And if you need to go full Alternian for a while to get your head together around that fact, then you take all the time you need for it. And in the mean time..." In the mean time... "I'll glare daggers at anyone who comments on it, okay?"

You've got an intergalactic phone call to make.

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**EARTH DATE: AUGUST 3RD, 1997.**

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and you step through Alternia's Stargate, traveling across the galaxy in a bright red wormhole that transitions across the middle to bright green, before emerging in the Gateroom of Stargate Command.
You 'volunteered' yourself to Okurii to go along with the Messenger for today's exchange of information, and while said Messenger- Callie- goes and does her thing, you find your way to an office marked STRIDER, and inside... Yup, there's Karkat Vantas, playing chess against Davis Strider.

"Excuse me, Sirs," you knock on the door as you enter, closing it behind you. "May I have a word?"

"Um... is this something I should be here for?" Strider glances at Vantas, who shakes his head 'no.' "Alright, I'll, just, uh, go get a bottle of water." He gets up from his chair, and glares at Vantas, "Don't touch my Knights, Major."

"As if I would, Major," Vantas counters.

And thus, Strider leaves his own freaking office, leaving you alone with Major Karkat Vantas.

"So," Vantas starts, "did Joey and Polypa hook up yet?"

"They did," you confirm.

"So you're here about Joey going full fledged Alternian to run away from her problems, I take it?" he asks.

"I am," you confirm.

"What do you want out of this exactly, Tritoh?" Vantas asks. "I can't give you tips about how you did it, because I never asked."

"I just want assurances," you demand. "That you'll do what you can on this side of things to make it so Joey doesn't have to worry about the Government of this planet trying to take her away from the people she cares about."

"I can try to do that," Vantas nods.

"I don't want 'try','" you tell him. "I want 'done.'"

"An instant 'Done' is something you expect from a Miracle Worker, kid," Vantas says, frowning. "As I'm sure you're well aware, politics plays a major role in everything we do on this side of things. Shit happens. People get replaced. I'll do what I can here, but I'm NOT a Miracle Worker." He pauses, then says, "That said, I'll do what I can with the wriggle room I've got right now. It might take me years to get what you want done, well, done."

"I don't care how long it takes," you say, "I want my Moirail to not have to be afraid to come visit her own family. I want my Moirail to not have to be afraid of wearing her own FACE. I want Joey stable, as any good Moirail wants for their partner."

"Never had a Moirail," Vantas answers, "can't speak for that side of things. But I can respect 'stable.'"

"Will you do it then?" You ask.

"Never said I wouldn't," Vantas grunts out, and offers you a hand. "You've got yourself a negotiator, Tritoh."
You shake his hand, and pray that you’re doing the right thing.

Chapter End Notes

I was hoping they’d have released Polypa earlier into the troll call, TBH. Would have been nicer to have written her and Joey interacting more in the past, but I guess I can go do that w/ flashbacks now...

Annnnnnyways. Yeah. Heavy emotional content indeed. Joey is in the unenviable position of hating her body as it was, and all the expectations tied to it, and having a magic escape card in the form of a bracelet that can shapeshift her body around as a means to run away from her problems. The Arc continues.
SG1:04x05: Crossroads

Chapter Summary

In which not much happens, but a butterfly flaps its wings regardless.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**August 9th, 1997.**

Your name is George Hammond, and you’ve been expecting some backlash for quite a little while now.

You just didn't expect Senator Robert Kinsey to come barging into your office in person, voice roaring mad as he yells:

"YOU LET A TEENAGED GIRL RETURN THROUGH THE STARGATE!?"

"I'm sorry?" You ask him, schooling your face neutral.

"I've been very patient with you, Hammond," Kinsey growls, "but you should consider yourself very lucky that I found out about your slip up before anyone else did!"

"I'm not sure what you're talking about, Senator," you tell him.

"JOEY HARLEY. Don't play dumb, Hammond. You let that girl and the WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION strapped to her wrist through the Gate back to Alternia!" The Senator growls.

"I can assure you, Senator Kinsey, I did no such thing," you say honestly. After all, Joey Claire was the one who returned to Alternia, not Joey Harley. "You're free to review the camera footage from the Gate room if you'd like."

"I-" The Senator pauses. "What?"

"You'll see that no human girl matching Joey Harley's description stepped back through the Gate to Alternia," you tell him. "Only Alternian Trolls returned back to Alternia, and unless you and your pals in the NID wanted to detain sovereign citizens of another galaxy and cause an inter-galactic incident with a race of known psychics...?" You trail off, leaving the ending open ended for the Senator.

Kinsey scowls at you. "You're playing a dangerous game, General Hammond. I'd advise you get out before something terrible swallows you whole and you burn in hell."

"Senator," you look the man in the eyes, and see as much evil within them as you once did in the Goa'uld Hathor's eyes. "I would similarly advise you not to be the fool who ignores a rattle snake's warning. You might get bitten."
Kinsey just leaves your office, angry, boiling, seething with rage.

You've delayed the inevitable for now. It'll be Kinsey's move... or maybe the NID's.

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**August 17th, 1997.**

Your name is JOLINAR of the FUTURE NOW PAST, and with SG-1 on VORASH to meet with the TOK'RA about a SYMBIOTE who has supposedly turned traitor and wishes to join their cause, you're left to wonder why this is happening in THIS TIMELINE and not in the old one?

Perhaps it has to do with Teal'c returning, and messaging Bra'tac of his return?

Well, it doesn't matter. You and your host are left to your own devices for the most part, and you decide to spin your wheels on observing the kids from your future.

Sitting around the floor in Jude's office, you can observe a few key things about your kids, even as they keep watch over their younger selves.

John and Jade seem more openly closer than they were before after their recent encounter with the Atnak armbands, sitting pretty much right next to each other, shoulder to shoulder. While they don't seem to be interested in talking much themselves, their younger selves are talking to each other about some TV show they watched recently while sitting in their respective future selves laps.

You get the feeling that they're content with the way things are for the moment.

Rose is trying to teach herself how to knit, and letting her Younger self watch and observe all the while. It's an interesting distraction from her own issues, you suspect, but it's a distraction nevertheless. Rose lost control over her impulses and stole alien technology and forced it onto John and Jade while they were sleeping.

Rose is angry at herself for it, while also conflicting-ly happy over delivering a massive gut punch to the Aschen home world... whose Stargate almost certainly is destroyed and the people along with it. (Carter suggested an attempt at dialing out to the planet to check if the Gate locked, and... no connection could be made.)

Finally... Argo.

They're just sitting there in Jude's chair, reading a book together about... about a Cat jumping back and forth between two pink moons? You don't recognize it, but Mikari does- apparently it's some ALTERNIAN version of a CHILDREN'S BOOK- or a "Wriggler's Book" or whatever.

Anyways, it's an odd thing. Argo and Nepeta. The same girl, separated by some 10 years, a name shuffle, and a bottle of hair dye. Looking at the two of them, you could almost think... not quite mother and daughter, but more Big sister and Little sister.

*[It's still weird knowing they're exactly the same person,]* Mikari's voice echoes in your head.

*[Indeed it is,]* you agree.
Still, you're glad to see that, Rose's aberration of sneak-thievery aside, the kids have settled in.

All you can do is hope nobody from the government tries to give them trouble for existing here in the past.

Your name was NIRRTI, but now-a-days you go by KA'TURNAL.

It feels like you haven't done anything important in a while, but you've suddenly been asked by Colonel O'neill of all people to consult with the Tok'ra over this TRANSFERAL of a fully grown Goa'uld for a larval one for some Chulakian priestess.

He calls himself TANITH, now. Needless to say, you're SUSPICIOUS AS HELL at a fully grown Symbiote NOT taking over a host entirely on its first try, even supposedly willingly. The Tok'ra are suspicious as well, but they seem blinded by hope.

But, because you're a full fledged Goa'uld System Lord, if YOU of all people smell a rat, then, well... They're willing to trust your judgement to SOME extent.

As everyone settles down for a while to let the respective parties recover from the Symbiote transfers, you take the opportunity to reflect on your own Host's life for the first time in... well... You're not entirely sure.

Could you ever do what the Tok'ra do? Share the body? Not likely. You're too much of a scientist, and you wouldn't need the host's thoughts interrupting your thoughts during an experiment...

But when's the last time you've DONE an experiment on anyone, really?

Unlike some Goa'uld who keep their hosts aware, but suppressed, you prefer having your hosts generally be in a state of perpetual dreaming. The inspiration you get sometimes from your current host is incredible, if at times wildly inappropriate for proper science work. Plus, it keeps the potential of your host learning something you'd rather she not if you have to leave the body on short notice.

You're not a sadist in that regard. Your host really doesn't even know you're here, or what her body has been up to. They're really some pleasant dreams, honestly. You'd hate to wake her up from that.

Because, really, reality is oh so unpleasant.

And this is where your CONSULTATION COMES INTO PLAY.

O'neill suggests you use that drug on Tanith that you did so long ago on Jolinar and Carter, they bring that idea up with the Tok'ra, who, while wary, do wish for some confirmation that Tanith is telling the truth.

And so, under the pretense of 'running a test to ensure the blending worked properly,' you give Tanith the drug, and soon, the host, Hebron, surfaces, panic in his eyes.

"A TRICK!" He warns, "Tanith tricks us all! He wants to destroy the Tok'ra and serve the Goa'uld!"

And with that as the deciding vote, the Tok'ra use their technology to remove the damned snake from
the poor boy's head and they shove it into a large containment tank where they can hopefully drag out some useful information from his genetic memories, memories that, you're surprised to learn, the Tok'ra are willing to share with Earth should something valuable surface.

When she wakes up after receiving a new infant Symbiote, The Priestess is heartbroken to learn of this turn of events, and decides to stay with the Tok'ra for the time being, to see if her initial experiment would work better with a Symbiote who is very young, rather than with a Symbiote that was near maturation.

If that is to be the case, well, you doubt you'll see the fruits of her labor for many more years to come.

By the time you return to Earth, you do wonder, though...

And as you settle down in your own spartan room in the SGC, you decide to try something... risky.

For the first time since you took this host, you delve deep into her memories, using the perpetual dream you had set up as a means of viewing them. All of it, just to answer the question.... Who is your Host? Admittedly, it's a question you no doubt should have asked a long time ago, but... You never felt the need.

The answer to your question is completely horrifying, mind boggling, and enlightening all at the same time.

You learn that you body jacked the ORIGINAL VERSION of the woman named LINEA, shortly into her reign of terror across the Galaxy and long before she became known as the DESTROYER OF WORLDS. In fact, as far as you can tell the woman who DID become known by that title was a CLONE with a VERY CHANGED FACE.

It was no wonder you never recognized her during the last two encounters SG-1 had with her. Well, that certainly explains a bit about where some of the more ESOTERIC DREAMS you drew inspiration from came from... but now that you're looking...?

Well, needless to say, you might have been doing the Galaxy a favor by not having two of them running around the place.

You're just going to never mention this as a thing that you ever considered and you do your best to suppress your host's personality even further from constant slumber to basically not even that. A perpetual coma. You're... you're really kind of horrified at the fact that your GOA'ULD DOMINANCE is actually doing some GOOD for a change, and has been a net positive overall despite all the other horrible stuff you've done.

If you do ever change hosts, you're going to have to make sure this one doesn't go anywhere after the fact.

Your name is JAYNI and your PLANS seem to have hit a bit of a speed bump.

Namely? The NEW MOTHERSHIP Apophis was building and your notes state you should have stolen... well, it's basically disappeared entirely, and in addition to that, you've discovered that the
EURONDANS seem to have lost their war and have been DESTROYED. You assume that because you can't connect to their planet via Stargate for a FRIENDLY VISIT to encourage their new relations between Earth and the Aschen...

Also, you've completely lost contact with your SPIES within the Aschen Confederation. They've suddenly, worryingly, gone silent, and even worse your attempts to REACH OUT via Stargate have gone about as well as your attempts to dial the Eurondans.

That is to say, that damned seventh chevron just won't lock.

Something had gone wrong in your planning, and you have no idea what happened to cause it...

Harumph. No matter, it's not like you can't steal the NEXT one of Apophis' motherships as a replacement. And really, the loss of the Aschen and Eurondans is... well... okay it'll hurt your plans in the long term, but you just have to hold out with the script you have until future you sends back a new modified report to run off of.

That was always the backup plan in case something went wrong. Stick with what you have until you get new info.

You can do this.

You can do this!

You and your Jake can do this! Or your name isn't the SYSTEM LORD, NIRRTI!

Chapter End Notes

It really isn't your name, you sneak thief.

Meanwhile, Tanith tries to fool everyone and gets caught up in a CALLBACK USAGE! Don't mind him, just hanging out in the background like a severed hand floating in a tank just waiting to regenerate into a whole new body.
Chapter Summary

Divided, but not conquered, what we have here is a Window of Opportunity.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and you're the perfect answer to the ZATARC PROBLEM that's showed itself as a response to Earth and the Tok'ra formalizing their alliance with a treaty.

You stroll through the SGC, hand-in-hand with Jude, seemingly just on a causal friend-date, but in reality, you're just checking every person on a short list of SG-Teams who recently got captured by a Goa'uld or encountered a Goa'uld during their missions during the last two weeks.

Casually tapping your ring finger against Jude's hand once for every person you come across that you get a BAD FEELING about ignoring and leaving alone for longer than it'll take you to report it to General Hammond, Jude makes a mental note of the nametags on the people in question. It's a very short list, only the members of SG-14 ping for BAD VIBES, and as you and Jude make your way back to the CONFERENCE ROOM to inform Anise, Lantash, General Hammond, and SG-1, you can't help but enjoy a little bit of the fact that you and Jude have had an excuse, finally, to act like a cute loving couple.

Something that's been lacking since your return from Alternia has been some personal time together. Oh, sure you've had free time separately, but getting time together has been rather hard given all the hoopla around getting the kids from the future settled in.

And then dealing with getting them set up to go to school with you starting September. And you consulting to make sure nothing goes wrong. And, yeah... Even if that's what you're doing right now you're still glad that you and Jude have had SOME decent time together right now. And will soon have even more free time on Abydos later this week too. That'll be nice.

And thus as you return to the conference room you pause as a wave of terror rumbles over you the moment you spot Martouf/Lantash. It's the first time you've actually seen him all day.

You tap your finger against Jude's hand, and he glances at you, concerned.

"Who?" he asks, a whisper.

"Martash," you whisper back that hybridized name and hope that nobody over heard you.

"Well shit," Jude mutters.

"Jude, Cassandra," Carter smiles as she spots that you two had walked in. "How did it go?"
"Well, we swept the base," Jude begins stalling for time as you glance at Colonel O'Neill. "Cleared every floor we could..."

O'Neill's eyes meet your own, and you glance at Martouf/Lantash, who seems TOO interested in Jude's report.

He follows your gaze, then looks back and mouths "Really?"

You nod as subtly as you can.

O'Neill picks up the Zat gun off the table, and begins toying around with it as if he were just bored, but you can see the wariness in his eyes as he sizes up Martouf/Lantash.

"Basically, SG-14's compromised entirely," Jude finally concludes, "but we did pick up one other person that surprised us."

"Really?" Martouf asks, "who?"

"Well, that is to say..." Jude trails off.

You step in, "Someone in this room."

The wave of shock runs through the entire room, and the only person who doesn't react to it is Colonel O'Neill.

"Who?" Martouf pushes, sounding desperate to know. "We have to know!"

"If you want to know that badly," you say, feeling the best outcome from this next sentence, "just turn around and look in the window."

Everyone's confused at that statement, except for Martouf, whose eyes widen in realization that he's been caught, and Colonel O'Neill, who activates the Zat gun and fires it off in one smooth motion at Martouf, stunning him and sending him to the floor.

And whoo boy does that make everyone panic for a few moments before you can yell out "WE'RE GOOD!"

Crisis averted.

...You're really looking forwards to a vacation right about now.

Knowing who the confirmed Za'tarcs are, Anise and Freya use some fancy new device to test the people, Martouf included, for the 'NEW TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED BRAINWASHING' stuff.

Despite Cassie putting you up to taking Martouf down, your name is COLONEL JACK O'NEILL, and you've been asked to run through the test along with SG-1 to keep the members of SG-14 feeling not so singled out.
You're asked a bunch of questions, and boy are they hard questions to answer, because they're involving a MISSION THAT YOU NEVER TOOK. You're basically trying to trick the machine into giving a false positive and seeing if it catches you.

Like seriously, what the hell is this nonsense about you and Carter getting stuck on opposite sides of a forcefield and you not leaving her behind? Why would you do that? Because A: She's your teammate and you NEVER LEAVE A MAN BEHIND, and B: ...Okay, admittedly you're pretty sure that if you were ever caught in this situation you'd definitely be feeling some other emotions mixed in there that aren't strictly purely COMMANDER-SUBORDINATE related.

And apparently that kind of confusion is enough to throw the machine off and give an INCONCLUSIVE result, which Anise finds utterly fascinating when Carter somehow replicates the exact same result.

Still, it doesn't matter in the long run because Anise's test confirm's Cassie's BAD VIBES and SG-14 all launch into attempts of acts of self destruction.

Fortunately, a good Zat gun to the face puts them out of it for a while, but now comes the hard part, figuring out how to undo it.

Martouf gets put under with a reversal of that drug Ka'turnal used on Jolinar and Martouf, knocking the host out, and letting you all talk to Lantash, who, it seems, has been the victim of a body jacking that usually never happens to a Symbiote.

He then delivers the utterly unsurprising news of who did this to Martouf: one nasty Goa'uld named ATUM.

Fortunately, seemingly unaffected by the Za'tarc stuff, Lantash is able to be removed in hopes of transferring him to another host while the Tok'ra try to figure out how to undo the brainwashing on SG-14 and poor Martouf.

"Because of COURSE Daniel was being too silent for his own good," you remark to Carter as you both head up to the conference room.

"It was only a matter of time, I guess," Carter replies. "Poor SG-14, though."

"At least they didn't go self-destructive like that first guy," you gripe. The guy being Major Thomas Graham, who who tried to kill the Tok'ra High Councilor Per'sus and then killed himself afterwards. What a day.

"Sir," Carter pauses your long march back to the conference room in a relatively abandoned hallway. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure, Carter," you say. "What is it?"

"Teal'c and Skaara managed to trick the Za'tarc detector on the fake story," Carter begins, "I'm wondering where we went different on it?"

"I don't know, Carter," you say. "Maybe it's because they didn't have a life or death scenario on their hands? Or hell, maybe it's because Freya managed to write a decent fake scenario for them that they
didn't have any problems with."

"You had a problem with your part of the story, Sir?" Carter asks.

"Well, it's blatantly about us wearing those stupid armbands Rose stole," you say. "I've got a little bit of a problem stealing credit from kids first of all."

"Fair enough," Carter agrees, "and second?"

"Second is the scenario is stupidly timed," you continue. "Why do the arm-bands fall off RIGHT THEN and in that order? According to the fake story I put mine on first, but it came off last. Really should've been me stuck behind the force shield and not you."

"I had a problem with that part too," Carter says. "Rose's armband was put on first and it came off first, with the same basic amount of time between hers going on and John and Jade's going on as they did coming off. AND!" She raises a finger, "There's the whole problem with the explosion in the power generator knocking out the shield generators across the ship when the way the blueprints the Tok'ra stole clearly show that those are all independently generated at a local source! You bashing at the crystals should have shut that one field down entirely."

"Definitely," you agree. "What kind of bad writing was that exactly? I swear, it was almost like Freya was slipping in some romantic tension- intentionally trying to trip us up on it, even!"

...Ah. Wait. Did you actually just say that out loud?

Wait. Did you just say THAT out loud too? You can't tell or not sometimes with your internal monologue.

Carter stares at you for a moment after you've said that, then, seemingly hesitantly, or perhaps testingly (testing the waters, the cliche goes), says, "Yeah, you said that out loud."

"...Ah," you nod for a moment, then... well, no other way around it, "D'oh."

Carter clears her throat. "Anyways," and thus she begins walking forwards on towards the conference room, you follow. "So later this week we've got a mission to-" she pauses for a split second, then spits out a planet address so fast you barely catch it. P4X... something. You think you remember your WEEKLY MEMO of missions for this week and that means it'd probably be P4X-639.

"Six-Three-Nine? The one with the coronation mass evacuation?" You ask for clarification, intentionally garbling the scientific term just incase you're actually wrong about the planet Carter was talking about.


"On their first mission?" you ask. "Go them."

"Yeah." Carter nods, "They've set up an observatory to monitor the geomagnetic storm that's going to happen there. I put in a request for us to go there and take a look when it's happening."

"Sounds fun," you muse.
"I think Skaara should have fun getting to know the Archaeologist there," Carter says. "Plus: the buildings and equipment there have Ancient writing on them."

"Jude'd be happy to look into that, I'd think," you say.

"He would, yes, but we can always bring him back later after he's back from Abydos," Carter adds.

Abydos? You rack your brain and- Oh. RIGHT. Jude and Cassandra were taking John, Jade, and Rose to Abydos for a pre-return to school start visit this week at around the same time.

"Weird timing on that," you say, finally reaching the conference room.

"Cassandra insisted it be this week," Carter says, "something about there being a mild annoyance of a disaster if they don't go this week? Nothing major, at any rate."

"Well, at least there's that," you say.

The Tok'ra-Earth Alliance Formalization Treaty (Or whatever it was formally being called) would later go off without a problem or interruption.

...Which in of itself should have been a sign of the problems to come.


If P4X-639 could be summarized in a single word, it would be "ORANGE." Orange stone, orange sky, orange chevrons on the Stargate. Orange Cubed. Even the lenses on the sunglasses this Malakai guy has are ORANGE, and for some reason, a certain CAT GIRL has volunteered to come along for the relatively mundnae STORM OBSERVATION.

It's all routine.

Carter is off doing her MEASURING, Skaara is EXAMINING THE ANCIENT WRITING on a strange device that's been positioned in a straight line with the Stargate. Argo is poking and prodding at the strange PILLARS lining the way from the Stargate to the device, and that just leaves you and Teal'c standing guard.

"Ah!" Carter exclaims suddenly. "The Geomagnetic storm is building up. We shouldn't stay too much longer."

"Alright," you nod in agreement. "Just lemme know when."

You decide to meander over towards Argo in the mean time, and ask, "So! What do you make of your first time on an official mission?"

"It's pretty cool," Argo says, and you watch her wings flex a little. "Though it's a little boring. I guess not every mission is something big and crazy, though, right?"

"Nope," You shake your head. "You gotta take the calm with the exciting, otherwise you go nuts."
"Hah, yeah, that makes sense," Argo nods.

"Sir!" Carter calls out, and you nod.

"Alright, time to go tell Skaara to pack it up," you tell Argo.

"Sure," she nods, and heads over to the platform, calling out to Skaara. "Skaara! Time to go!"

You're about to head back to talk to Carter when suddenly there's a yell.

You, Carter, and Teal'c run in a heartbeat.

What you find is Skaara out cold on the ground, Argo fighting with Malakai over the controls of the ancient table device, which is VERY ACTIVE, and moving parts around like some kind of physical waveform readout.

"Teal'c!" you don't have to say anything else- you and he rush the Archaeologist and Carter goes to check on Skaara.

"NO!" Malakai yells out as you and Teal'c grab onto the man and help Argo restrain him, "Let go of me! You'll ruin every--!"

The device suddenly stops moving and the nearest set of pillars suddenly shoot forth a beam of light straight through all the other pillars until it hits the Stargate and WAAA WAAA KAWOOOOVRRRRRSHTK!

The Gate barely activates before it's shut down and sparking wildly with energy that-

FWASH.

"-but that's just how I feel about it!" Skaara is suddenly speaking to you and Carter at your table in the cafeteria.

A spoon full of fruit loops is raised to your lips.

"I dunno," Carter frowns, then looks to you, "it makes sense to me, but what do you think, Sir?"

"..." You blink. "Sorry, what?"

"I asked, what do you think about Skaara's point?" Carter asks.

"No, I mean," you shake your head. "What just happened?"

"What do you mean what just happened?" Skaara asks.

"I feel like I missed something," you say. "We were just somewhere else."

"...No we weren't," Skaara says.

"Yes, we were," you say. "We were on P4X-639."
"We haven't been to P4X-639," Carter says, checking her watch. "OH! But speaking of we have to get going the briefing or we'll be late."

"If you just stopped paying attention you didn't have to make something up," Skaara eyes you oddly.

"But I..." You frown.

Okay.

Something weird is going on.

FWASH!

"-sure you're up for this?"

Your name is ARGO LALONDE, and where but a moment ago you were restraining a ROGUE ARCHAEOLOGIST who shot Skaara you're now-

Uh.

You're waiting in the elevator, heading down to Level 28.

"Argo?" Dad peers down at you. "You having second thoughts?"

"No, I-" you frown. "I just got a really weird feeling of déjà vu all of a sudden. That's all."

You don't THINK this is related to your POWERS, but hell, maybe it is.

Well, the Seers on Diaspora called you a ROGUE OF TIME, maybe something kick-started from that?

You'll just have to wait and see how the briefing goes.

FWASH!

THWUNK!

Your name is TEAL'C- and someone just shoved a door into your face.

"Oh, sorry, Sir! I didn't see you there."

You're very confused, you could swear you just... were... somewhere else??

"It is fine," you tell the man who opened the door in your face. "Accidents happen."

You head to the BRIEFING for the mission to P4X-639.
You swear you've done this TOO.

"We've done this," Colonel O'neill says half-way through the briefing Carter's giving.

And suddenly, you're not the only one.

"No, we haven't," Skaara interjects, sounding a bit annoyed.

"Colonel O'neill is correct," you say. "We have indeed done this briefing before."

"Same here!" Argo Lalonde raises her hand. "Thirding this dejavu-town."

Hammond looks at all three of you, then says, "Okay, Prove it."

You look at O'Neill, then Argo, then ask, "SG-12?"

"Oh!" Argo nods. "Right! SG-12 is going to come through the Gate any minute now!"

"SG-12 isn't scheduled to return for another day," Carter says.

"One of 'em's injured," O'neill remarks.

Everyone looks at the Stargate, remaining idle.

"Any minute now," Argo chimes in...

...

Moments pass, and then...

**WAAAGH! WAAAGH!** The Gate alarms flare up and the Stargate receives an incoming wormhole.

Everyone goes to look down at the window, and sure enough, after the **WAA WAA KAWOOSH**, SG-12 comes through the gate, with one of them having a broken leg. Hammond turns to look at all of you, then says...

"Medbay, now, have Dr. Fraiser look you over."

"D'oh," O'neill grimaces.

You're Argo Lalonde again, and a waste of time of SEVERAL HOURS LATER, O'neill, and Teal'c are in Hammond's office as Fraiser gives her report stating... "They're in perfect health."

"Then how do you explain this?" Hammond asks.

"I don't know, Sir," Fraiser says, "but it's nothing wrong with their bodies. Maybe it could be one of Argo's latent powers kicking in? Some sort of shared vision of the future?"
"Like Cassandra's ability to sense incoming doom, or that Terezi girl's visions of events happening here on Earth?" Hammond asks.

"Either way," O'neill says, "I request that SG-1 suit up and head through the Gate right now so we can stop that squirmy little scientist from turning on that device on P4X-639."

"You don't even know what it does," Hammond remarks.

"It did something to the Stargate," you say, "for all we know it caused all of this."

"...If it's the cause of it, maybe it's because you three, according to your report, prevented this Malakai person from finishing what he was doing," Hammond offers. "If we let it go through without you interfering, perhaps-"

"He shot Skaara, Sir!" You protest. "Either stunned or killed, we didn't get to find out before we wound up back here! It's not good if we let him go through with it!"

"I still think we should-" Hammond's suggestion is cut off as the GATE ALARMS SOUND.

"I do believe it is too late," Teal'c observes.

"Ya think?" O'neill asks, and you all head to the Control room.

WAAA WAAA KAWOOOOWRRRRSHKT!

And there the Gate goes, dialing in and shutting down, and SPARKING all over.

"What the hell is that?" Hammond asks.

"That'd be what Malakai shot the Gate with, Sir," O'neill says before-

FWASH!

"-sure you're up for this?"

Your name is ARGO LALONDE, and where but a moment ago you were in the Control room, you're now in the elevator, heading down to Level 28.

"Argo?" Dad peers down at you. "You having second thoughts?"

"Either I'm having the weirdest dream, my powers are acting up," you frown. "Or. Somebody is fucking with time."

Chapter End Notes

And Here. We. Go.

Another string of Alternia Chapters will go on for a bit, with the occasional interspersed bit of Window of Opportunity thrown in for good measure :33
ALT:04X10: Time to Kill

Chapter Summary

A series of Meanwhiles.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 1/8/0001

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and you can't believe what you're hearing from Jude over the Gate-radio.

"They turned a power generator into a BOMB?" You ask, on the one hand scarcely believing it and on the other hand not doubting it one bit at all.

"Pretty much," Jude replies, sighing. You can only imagine the face he's making. Probably massaging at the bridge of his nose like Pa used to sometimes, and Roxy did fairly frequently whenever one of you did something that made her confused (Usually Jude was the one behind it, but you had your own fair share of nose-massaging incidents). "Worst of all Rose STOLE the arm bands. I swear, some-days she seems like a perfectly normal girl, and then others she's like this cat that just wants to knock stuff over just to see what happens."

"I know the feeling," you say, thinking about your recently confirmed KISMESIS, and her tendency to say inane things about setting things on fire just to get a rise out of you. Working her onto a Team Rotation Roster would have been a bit tricky, but with Tyzias pretty much out of it, you could slot her back onto her 'old' team without much problem.

But there in lies another problem you've had to deal with. One you're not going to blather over the radio to your brother, lest you unearth some other problems you're trying to not let your brother in on.

"Anyways!" Jude says, "Too long don't reading it, basically, the Aschen are gone, and are having a hefty dose of radiation poisoning to their bananas."

"Their bananas?" you ask, confused.

"Like, um... oh would you look at the time!" Jude tries deflecting.

"Jude Harley! You tell me what you mean right this instant!"

"Sorry! Gotta go, Cassie's calling! BYE!" And then you hear the radio go silent.

"...Is anyone there who can tell me if Jude seriously just up and left?" You ask.
A moment later, someone you think was named GARY... or was it WALTER?... answers with an uncertain, "He definitely got up and left."

Oh, so basically Jude just ducked under the table. Cute. You roll your ORANGE AND GREEN EYES, and huff, annoyed. "Well, fine. Maybe you can explain what he meant by that?"

A long pause and then you get a sort of awkward explanation that Jude probably meant everything the ASCHEN'S FOOD SUPPLIES to their REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS. All you have to say in response to that is a flat "okay."

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**EARTH DATE: AUGUST 17TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/14/0001**

Your name is DARAYA JONJET and you've got a bit of a dilemma you're working on. You're not going to dare bring it up with anyone you work with at the moment, so you go to someone who you trust, but not someone you see every day of your life.

You go to LYNERA SKALBI, one of your friends who decided to STAY with the Mother Grub and the other Matrons, and continues to train to this very day to become one, some day. You find her in her own hive somewhere near Diaspora's new Grub cavern.

"Hello, Daraya," she greets you. "It's been a while. What brings you around?"

"Hey, Lynera," you begin, a little hesitantly. "Can I ask you for some advice?"

"Sure," she nods, smiling. "What is it?"

"I'm worried about Tyzias," you say. "Like... as more than a friend."

"...Like Pale?" Lynera asks, frowning slightly.

"...I think so?" You say. "It's... hard to tell for sure, though. And I'm not sure that if, even if I do feel that way, that she feels the same about me. And it might not be appropriate if I talk to her about it right now anyways."

"Why not?" Lynera asks.

"...'Cause Tyzias is basically not sleeping at all unless we force her to and she's not entirely... all there when she's not getting any sleep?" You say. "And it'd feel weird trying to edge in on that while everyone else is fussing over her? And... I'm not even sure if I'm going to even KEEP feeling this way once she's recovered so... I don't want to wreck things."

"Ah, I see," Lynera nods. "Yes, that would be a confusing thing to work through."

You stand there for a few moments, waiting for any other form of reply or comment, and...
"And?" You ask.

"And I've got nothing," she shrugs, a sheepish smile on her face. "I don't know this Tyzias person personally, so... sorry. I'm of no help."

"Gee, thanks," you lament quietly.

---

**EARTH DATE: AUGUST 24TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/21/0001**

"So apparently on Earth they're doing a treaty thing with the Tok'ra," Dammek's voice approaches from behind.


"Ah don't get the idea of treaties, mahself, but that sounds, good, hopefully?" Skylla's drawling accent.

Your name is Mierfa Durgas and you look up as Dammek, Callie, and Skylla sit down at the table next to you, Xefros, and Joey. There's one seat left open, and you see Polypa up at the counter eyeing it inbetween waiting for her food and tapping her hand on a counter eagerly.

"Treaties help formalize alliances," Dammek explains. "We've got one with Cla'dia that basically puts our verbal deal in writing. I'd imagine the Tok'ra and Tau'ri have the same thing going on."

"Taoow....ree?" Skylla asks, not recognizing the word.

"Humans," Callie elaborates, "from Earth. Tau'ri is just the galactic name for them. Like we're mostly called Alternians by everyone but as a species we're known as Trolls?"


"Hey, guys," you wave to greet them once there's an apropriate lull in conversation. "What's up?"

"Th' moons?" Skylla offers. Heh.

"We just got a report back from Earth," Callie says, frowning. "Still no word back from Thor, and they still can't dial out to connect to them from Earth for some reason. The last chevron just won't lock."

"That's concerning," Joey frowns. "I wonder what happened?"

"Watch," Xefros says, "and it'll turn out to be something incredibly stupid inspired by something stupid Thor learned about while he was here."

"Like what?" Callie asks.
"I don't know," Xefros frowns, "Maybe they dialed a black hole with their Gate, threw it into a sun, and made their whole solar system go Nova to destroy a fuck ton of replicators?"

"You mean, replicating what the Mofang did with their Nova bombs?" Dammek asks.

"Pretty much," Xefros nods.

"You know, that would be an interesting way to get rid of Replicators," Callie muses. "I mean, assuming Thor didn't get a chance to blow them all away with a wave motion gun."

Meanwhile, in the Ida Galaxy.

Thor and two of his fellow Asgard catch their breath as they recover from the tiring tension of having just having lured a fleet of Replicator ships directly into the path of a supernova-ing star before outrunning the shock wave themselves.

"Where exactly," One of his fellow Asgard begin to ask, "DID you learn of this technique?"

"Haha," Thor laughs. "You would not believe me even if I told you."

"It doesn't matter," another one of the Asgard shakes her head. "We have to manufacture another pair of Stargates and launch them into the next targets. ...I can't believe I just said that with a straight face."

"Feel fortunate the Replicators have already done the evacuating for us," Thor chuckles grimly. "Now, we deliver them their eviction notice."

The other two Asgard look at each other, and wonder just what the hell got into Thor after his return from the other Galaxy.

"I'll place a bet," you begin. "A solid hundred says he's doing all sorts of insane stunts while delivering cold, hard one liners all at the same time like a movie star... And NONE of the other Asgard get it."

"Oh, you're on!" Polypa suddenly chimes in as she sits down at the last seat. "I'll take that bet!"

As bets race across the table, you notice that Joey hasn't said a word since the Earth discussion started and is picking at her breakfast slowly, methodically, and nowhere near as fast as she was before the Earth talk started.

You glance at Xefros and he shrugs in that way that says he's working on it.

...That's the best you can hope for right now, you guess.
"Annnnd that's a fail to lock," Zebede frowns. "Again."

Your name is Okurii Leijon, and you frown as well. This sudden miss of a weekly check-in from Earth is... concerning. The inability to dial out five times in a row, with a solid spread of variable time gaps between each attempt, is more concerning.

"I wonder just what the hell they're doing out there that's keeping the gate in use," you wonder aloud, while theorizing just a few key scenarios in your head, none of which are likely to be true, but hey, it kills time.

FWASH!

"And I'm telling you, It's NOT ME!" Argo complains. "We've been over this like, five times already, Doc!"

"Your powers include slowing down people's perception of events to give them more time to process a situation," Doctor Fraiser says. "What if you also have the ability to rewind it?"

"And I'm telling you, we've CHECKED," Argo counters. "I was hooked up to an EKG machine during the last THREE resets and it didn't show ANY spikes in brain activity leading up to the reset like it did when we were testing my time stop power."

"I'm still thinking that maybe-"

WAAAGH. WAAGH.

"URgh," Argo hangs her head. "Saved by the reset."

FWASH!

But speaking of killing time, you wonder how far along Joey's and Mierfa's hive building on Diaspora is going? You might go check it out.

"Zebede," you say, "Dial up Diaspora. I'm going to take a visit for a while."

"Alright," he nods, and begins dialing it up.

Soon, there's a WAA WAA KAWOOSH, and you're skipping through the Gate to Diaspora.

You head along the path to the ARAI COLONY, and pause as you spot Dammek, Callie, and Skylla along the path, walking along the same way just as you are, talking about building their own hives here on the planet somewhere.
"Captain Lorenz is Injured," Teal'c remarks mere moments before SG-12's team stumbles through the Gate. "He tripped, fell, and Doctor Fraiser will find he has broken his ankle."

"How he does that on a staircase," Argo remarks, "I'll never figure out."

"Okay," Hammond begins, "let's say that you're right and we are stuck in a time loop caused by the machine. How do we stop it?"

"We figure out the instructions," O'neill says, and then mutters beneath his breath, "which is where Skaara now says-"

"The inscriptions on the control console!"

You wave at them and join their conversation. Thinking about it, you're actually interested in getting a Hive built here as well. It's a very nice planet full of lots of bright colorful stuff.

Soon, you all make your way to the Arai Colony. Skylla is hesitant about going anywhere near the giant one- BEC- any time soon.

You wave in greeting at the Polyarch, and it seems to smile and wave back with one of its large limbs.

"Um..." Skaara pauses as he spots Argo sitting sideways on an office chair in his office. Sideways as in her legs are sticking out from beneath one arm, the rest of her upper torso sticking out from the other direction, and her waist apparently balanced on the seat, bending with no apparent discomfort. "Argo?" he asks, hesitantly.

"What?" She asks in return, eyeing him, "This is how you chairs, correct?"

Skaara had no reply to that.

Soon enough, you make your way to Joey and Mierfa's new hive, and find that it's almost complete-the two girls plus Xefros are working presently on coating its wooden surface with a weather resistant stain.

"Hey!" You greet them. "Need any help?"

"Oh! Guys!" Joey smiles. "What brings you around?"
'Talking about making our own Hives here on Diaspora,' Dammek says. 'How hard was it?'

'With psychic powers?' Joey holds up her left wrist. 'Not so hard. I'd imagine it'd be harder without a strong lifting force to do it, though.'

And so soon starts a discussion on housing stuff that lasts a few good hours.

---

**EARTH DATE: AUGUST 30TH, 1997??**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/27/0001**

Meanwhile on Abydos, one Jude Harley frowns as he can't connect the Stargate back to Earth...

Again.

For the seventh time today.

'Okay, at this point,' he turns to Cassandra, 'I'm beginning to suspect getting us stuck on Abydos is the lesser of two annoyances?'

Cassandra nods. 'Pretty much.'

'Any idea how long we'll be stuck here for?' Jude asks.

'Nope,' Cassandra shakes her head.

'...Guess we'll be stuck dialing out once a day until we finally connect, then,' Jude muses.

'Let's go tell the others?' Cassandra says.

'Sure,' Jude nods, and with that, the duo make their way out of the Abydos pyramid and along the flag marked 'road' back to the village.

---

**FWASH!**

A loop later, completely unaware, Skaara would find Colonel O'neill doing the exact same thing that Argo had been doing.

'Um...' Skaara pauses. '...O'neill?'

'What?' He asks in return. 'Can't you see I'm fishing?'

'...Fishing for what?' Skaara asks.

'Reactions.' O'neill answers.
Skaara had no reply to that.

Meanwhile, in a parallel universe, a Joey Claire frowned as the QUANTUM MIRROR gave an error message of "TIME LOOP INDUCED LOCKOUT" written over a field of static.

Only one problem.

The error message was written in ANCIENT, and not in ENGLISH.

FWASH!

A loop later...

"Um..." Skaara pauses, spotting Teal'c doing much the same now. "Teal'c?"

"I am attempting a new form of meditation," Teal'c answers simply.

"...Okay," Skaara nods in understanding. "...Are you going to help with the translation from there?"

Teal'c's response was to push off with one of his feet and start spinning the Office Chair around.

Skaara had no reply to that.

**EARTH DATE: AUGUST 31ST, 1997??**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/28/0001**

Somewhere in a Galaxy whose name is presently under fierce debate, a certain Troll woman bound to certain orders completes the last of her orders, and waits.

...And she waits.

And she waits a bit more...

And then she realizes that her next set of orders aren't coming because the person last known to be holding her leash is dead, and the other one, well.. he might as well not be present at all.

A grin begins to crack on a mouth that has not had reason to smile for a very. VERY. Long time.

FWASH!
"Can I just ask," Carter begins one loop as she visits them in Skaara's lab while they work on translating the text on the CONTROL DEVICE, "have any of you taken to doing anything... random during the loops so far?"

"Not really," O'neill says, "Why do you ask?"

"Because I just found a pie on my desk," Carter answers.

"I have not engaged in baking or purchasing of baked goods since the Loops began," Teal'c says.

"What kind of pie?" O'neill asks, a sort of twinkle in his eyes.

"Cherry," Carter answers.

"Oh," Argo suddenly piques up, "Sorry, Syler must've sent it to the wrong office. I meant for that to go to Dad's office."

"Oh, I'll make sure it gets to him," Carter nods, and then moves as if to leave. Then, something occurs to her, and she looks back at them. "Seriously? None of you have thought to do anything random during the loops? I'd go crazy if I didn't take a break every now and then. I mean, if I were caught in a time loop I'd take the opportunity to do some experiments I'd never do because they might otherwise be too risky."

And then a second later she realizes she's made a mistake, because O'neill and Teal'c share a look, and then Argo just smirks in a cat like way as she gets up from her chair and says, "'Scuse me."

Teal'c leaves without a word a moment later, and then O'neill just shrugs haplessly and heads out.

"What did you do?" Skaara asks, after a moment of horror washes over the two of them.

"I have no idea," Carter answers. "But I think I feel a little left out."


Chapter End Notes

Things are about to get rough.
Your name is Joey Claire and you wake up to the sun on your face and the sound of birds chirping through a window. You feel arms wrapped around your waist, and a face nuzzling against the back of your neck. You feel the edges of the sheet lying against your skin in a way you're still getting used to- but it's a good difference. It's not as rough as it would have been against your human skin.

You glance around for a clock, and see that it's early in the morning, local Diasporan time going by the floating green numbers. There's a second clock behind it showing Alternian time in Red- sometime in the middle of the night there, and then a third with what's supposed to be Earth time in blue.

That one you haven't gotten set up properly, so it's just blinking 12, and you're content to leave it that way until you can maybe re-establish contact with earth. Content. You're content. You're so very content... You don't want this dream to end.

Mierfa mumbles next to you, and you sigh, contentedly, closing your eyes and settling back into bed.

Your bed. In your new Hive. On Diaspora.

You don't want this moment to end.

FWASH!

"Teal'c..." Dirk Strider pauses as he sees the large mess Teal'c has made of the base cafeteria, "...What exactly is this?"

"A traditional Alternian Dish..." Teal'c pauses. "One that I have yet to master completely. Please forgive the burnt skin. That is not traditional to this dish."

"Does that mean there are dishes where it IS traditional to be burnt?" Dirk asks.

"...Indeed," Teal'c nods.
A space ship hurtles towards Diaspora, without care or heed of safe flying procedures.

An engine red lines, structural integrity fluctuates wildly.

And within, a HANDMAID grins as she approaches her destination.

FWASH!

RING RING!

"HI DAD! BYE DAD!"

Davis Strider jumps sideways as his daughter drives by him on a pink painted, BARBIE BRAND, cheer leader pompom tasseled bicycle.

"Uh... hey...?" Davis stares after the girl, wondering what the hell just happened... and more to the point, how the hell Argo got a bicycle like that into the base.

A burning burst of fire shoots across the morning sky, trailing behind it a SONIC BOOM that wakes everyone up whether they wanted to get up or not.

Groaning, Joey Claire and Mierfa Durgas quickly get up and dressed for seeing just what the hell made such a loud, awful noise.

FWASH!

"Section Fifteen starts with another reference to Perennial Adventus-" Skaara says, working on the translation of the control console parts.

"The Approaching Disaster," O'neill interjects. "It shows up a lot. Check Section Twenty-three, and four, and five."

"Ah, right..." Skaara nods. "Some kind of plague, maybe?"

"More like boredom," O'neill groans, leaning against the desk and planting his head in his arms. "How the hell did they not get tired of this when they made the damned thing?"

"I don't know," Skaara frowns. "Why aren't you goofing like Teal'c and Argo have been?"

"We're alternating," O'neill answers, head still hidden in his arms. "One of us works on the translation a few loops at a time and the others get to goof off."

"It's driving you nuts, isn't it?" Skaara asks.

"Oh you have NO idea," O'neill pops his head up, glaring at the chalkboard with the half-translated
Terezi Pyrope ran through the halls of the ALL YOUR BASE- yelling that A GLUTTONOUS HANDMAID was raining down as a BURNING FIRE upon a Dispersed Forest.

Needless to say, Okurii Leijon figured it out very quickly and ordered a team to go to Diaspora immediately.

FWASH!

Teal'c worked on kneading a loaf of bread into a shape that was not an appetizing one on Earth, and certainly was confusing to his sensibilities, but apparently was a very FESTIVE shape during certain seasons on Alternia, and thus, Teal’c made it.

That he would present it to a tired Colonel O'Neill before the loop ended to utterly confuse the man was Teal’c's end goal for today.

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and for the second time in, uh.... You're not entirely sure how long, you're STALKING THROUGH A FOREST looking for a crashed ship. At least there aren't Replicators around this time.

"Do you think Mofang, or Alternian?" Mierfa asks.

"Probably Alternian," Joey answers. "Knowing our luck it's Trizza back from the grave."

"I hope not," Mierfa grimaces.

"No, I'll bet you it's some new completely unpredictable threat that nobody saw coming," you chime in.

In that moment, several things happened at once.

The first was a sudden burst of psychic energy that grabbed all three of you and slammed you each into nearby, but equidistant trees.

The second was a tall, ancient looking woman flickering into visibility. Her skin was charred black in some ancient explosion of energy, her bun-tied hair was streaked with still burning embers and wild flickering flames that were never in the same place for more than a second, her eyes a flickering parade of rainbow energy, and only identifiable as Alternian thanks to the RAMS HORNS atop her head, growing and spiraling and decaying and regrowing all within seconds- flickering between states just as rapidly as her eyes were. That part made identifying her clothes- a BRIGHT, FELT GREEN DRESS that shifted between whole, burning, and ash, and back again in various places- all the more terrifying.

The third was the sense of TIME ITSELF feeling like it'd slowed to a halt in her very presence, even as she opened her mouth and spoke in a raspy, almost sort of TEMPORALLY NONEXISTENT
VOICE that vibrated between languages just as rapidly as her body seemed to.

[THE RUST BLOOD WON THE BET,] she hisses at you. [HIS PRIZE IS GETTING TO BE THE LAST ONE TO DIE PAINFULLY.]

"H-Handmaid!" you gasp out, finding it hard to talk with the psychic grip holding you against a tree. "It's th-the HANDMAID!"

The Handmaid- one of Alternia's BOOGEYMEN of MYTH, much like LORD ENGLISH or THE SCRATCH DOCTOR- said to be the HARBINGER OF DEATH. If she makes herself known to you, you are soon to die. PAINFULLY.

She's Alternia's version of what Earth calls the GRIM REAPER, you explained to Joey at one point. Silent, never seen, unless you did something to make her MAD.

"Wha-" Joey gasps out as well. "What do y-you want?"

[TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR FREEING ME FROM MY LEASH.] The Handmaid's voice hisses out in a few different languages at the same time. One of them you think you recognize as ARCHAEIC EAST ALTERNIAN, but that's just not an important detail over all. [BY STEALING THE THING FROM YOU THAT MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE.]

And with a raise of one hand, Joey's left arm suddenly gets dragged forwards, and pulled taught, causing your Moirail to squak at the strain.

"C-Claire!!" Mierfa calls out.

"Joey!" you grit your teeth. "Le-Let her go y-you--!"

[SILENCE!!]

You flinch at the overbearing psychic cry on top of the multitude of languages barraging down on you.

[NOW. THEN.] The Handmaid took a strange, half floating step towards Joey, and she began to float out a single distance just the same. [LET'S GET THAT FANCY RING OFF YOUR ARM ONTO MINE.]

"N-No!" Joey cries out- panic in her eyes and you're not sure what to do.

Then, you watch as The Handmaid grins, and the Bracelet around Joey's left wrist starts to suddenly strain, and creak loudly as an alternating crimson and white aura around it flickers.

Rust blood psionics? You realize with a start, The Handmaid is a Rust Blood??.

Certain Crystals began to pry themselves loose- Reaper, Communion, Regent- while others seem to be trying their best to stay with Joey and fighting. Reaper, as a matter of course, comes off the easiest.

You reach out with your own limited psionics and think of those traitorous Crystals as spoons waiting to be twisted.
The Handmaid notices Reaper and Regent stopping their procession forwards, but thinks nothing of your own interference.

You squeeze down on that crystal with your mind- panting from the strain but then again so is Mierfa from being held in place and fighting against it.

"NO! STOP!" Joey yells out, and you think you see Hyperbeam start to flicker to life, and a glow around those already removed crystals starts to drag them back towards her. "S-STOP IT!!! DON'T TAKE THEM!"

[SURRENDER IT TO ME! YOU INSOLENT-]

You clamp down like a vice on Reaper, the most dangerous one of the group, and the crystal cracks down the middle.

[NO! STOP RESISTING!] The Handmaid yells at Joey. [YOU'LL DESTROY THEM!!]

That's exactly what you plan to do with the most broken abilities of the bunch. Regent follows. Crack- CRACK.

You squeeze tighter, and light begins pouring out from the crack in Reaper's and Regents surface- more cracks form and more light spills out. Actually- here and there- you think you spy a burst of electrical discharge in that light as well.

You spot Communion pulling forwards and you clamp down on the orange crystal harder- beginning to strain it just the same while you keep crushing Reaper and Regent.

"NO!" you hear the Handmaid yell in what sounds like proper Alternian. For a moment, it looks like she's completely normal, and further more, not even adult. No burnt skin, no burnt clothes, no flickering eyes. All you see is a girl. Confused, terrified, and scared.

How old was she when she became the Handmaid?

Reaper cracks a bit more, you're almost through. There's just a tiny sliver left holding the thing together.

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

And then Karkat Vantas comes leaping out from the forest, swinging a Crowbar with deadly accuracy straight at the Handmaid's head.

That's when you feel Reaper shatter within your grip, and you feel the trajectory of one of the chunks flying straight into the Handmaid's head. The other one comes tumbling straight at y-

FWASH!

Major Karkat Vantas frowns peculiarly at the bread loaf Teal'c had made.

"Is it not to the proper standards?" Teal'c inquires.
"What? No. I mean, yes. It is," Vantas shakes his head. "I just... got the strangest feeling something happened outside this time loop and I'm not going to remember feeling this going forwards so I can't investigate and find out if it is what I think it is."

"And what do you think it is, Major Vantas?" Teal'c asks.

"...I think past me just made excellent use of the Crowbar I gave him," Major Vantas answers. "Think you could check on that when the loop ends?"

"I will do so," Teal'c nods.

[TARGET DESTINATION?] The voice of the Royal Lusus echoes around you. There's a moment of tapping on some kind of console, then the voice speaks again, [CONFIRMATION. TRAJECTORY?] more tapping. [CONFIRMATION.]

Then, you're being picked up off of a table and held up to the light.

"You know, Scratch," says the oddly childish voice of the green-skinned skull faced teenager holding you. "I'm still finding it hard to believe. That this little thing. Is the key to holding an entire galaxy hostage."

He turns you around in his hand, and you get a look at the room.

You're in the inside of a ship. No. The inside of a MACHINE. A LIVING MACHINE. The Royal Lusus.

"Sir, please put the Bracelet back on the table," sighs a tired voice, and a familiar one, from the helmeted visage of the SCRATCH DOCTOR. "I need it to complete the re-calibration."

"Fine," the brat puts you back down on the table. "Now. How long before we reach. Our new Empire?"

More tapping resounds from a console you can't see anymore. "With the EMERALD SERPENT carrying this beast through the voids of space? Not too much longer."

"But I'm BORED." The brat growls. "We've been traveling. FOR MONTHS. How much longer. IS NOT TOO MUCH LONGER?!"

"...Another year."

And then the brat picks you up off the table and throws you at the Scratch Doctor.

You bounce off of the helmet, and shatter into pieces.

You see REGENT and COMMUNION, SHAPER and HYPERBEAM, THE BASE RING and ADMINISTRATION.

But where is your twin?
Ah, there it is. The JADE STONE- REVIVAL- twirling away and away from you- growing distant and more distant and then you hit the floor and gasp awake as the strange vision fades from your eyes, nothing more but a distant memory that was not your own.

Your.... Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and you reach up and feel your forehead where you're SURE you felt a chunk of the Reaper Crystal smash into your skull.

But there's nothing there.

"No! No-no-no-NO No!" Joey's voice brings you back to the here and now, and you push the insanity of the previous moment aside to look as Joey picks up what seems to be HEAVILY BURNT fragments of the Bracelet off of the ground.

You're up on your feet and staggering over towards her even as Dammek and Polypa help pick Mierfa up off of the ground- she's bleeding from her left shoulder. Karkat stands nearby, towering over the corpse of the HANDMAID- who has two massive holes stuck in her head. One of them dead center on the forehead, the other one on the side.

She's dead, and she's not getting back up.

Good riddance.

You don't see Daraya or Mallek or even Callie, but you hear them yelling in the distance about having found the crashed ship.

You fall to your knees next to Joey as she picks up the remains of the Bracelet, and you do a spot check. Oh. Oh NO. It's just the ring. The Crystals are gone. The Crystals are GONE and the ring itself is broken into pieces and there are sparking wires hanging out from inside parts of its once solid stone frame.

How the hell did it...?

Wait.

You look Joey over and you realize that she's still Alternian. Didn't the Bracelet undo all of the changes it did to Reenah Kraken when SHE lost ownership of it in the past? ....But the bracelet was still intact in the past. It wasn't... it wasn't like this.

It wasn't BROKEN.

"I can't find it! I have Admin but I can't find Shaper!" Joey cries out, searching over the remains again. "Shaper's missing! Where's Shaper!??"

Wait, what? She has Admin? You do a spot check of Joey herself. There's a burnt hole in her shirt over her heart, and through it you think you spot a glimmer of lime green gemstone.

Wait.

Wait!?

You process Joey's panicked sentences in that moment. She's still Alternian. Shaper was what would
let her turn herself back to human at any time she wished. She'd told you that was how she was content to stay Alternian. That with the full Bracelet- but Shaper Specifically- she could turn back whenever she was ready to.

She doesn't have SHAPER anymore. She doesn't have any CHOICE but to stay Alternian now. The contentment behind the choice knowing she could turn back if she so chose- it's all MANGLED now beyond recovery because THERE IS NO LONGER ANY CHOICE.

"I- I'm..." Joey drops the remains of the Bracelet to the ground. "I'm stuck." Lime tears build up in her eyes, and you pull her into a hug as she cries out, terrified: "I'M STUCK!!"

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and hours later, you're staring at your own reflection in the mirror. You're the same as you were before when you woke up this morning save for one difference.

The Bracelet isn't on your wrist, and Administration is back over your heart. But not like it was before. Oh no. Instead of being one solid chunk of a diamond shaped crystal, it's broken, and splattered across your skin over your heart in a starburst pattern.

It still works- you still have the Arai swarm and thank goodness for that ability to shunt a good portion of your unsteady emotions to an Arai Beetle safely out of sight of everyone else where it can just rattle and shake terrified without anyone noticing- but it's clearly never going back on the Bracelet ever again.

It's almost a mockery. That sign your mother painted on your bedroom ceiling all those years ago- that you'd begged Roxy to get a shirt custom printed for you with that symbol on it. The Starburst that you'd left behind on Earth when you came to Alternia all those years ago. The one that you'd seen on Bec's head. The one that haunts the night sky where Karfin Outpost's sun used to be.

Now it's on your skin. Over your heart.

Like a freaking crystal-made tattoo.

A part of you is happy to see it back; the rest of you is horrified about what it means.

The Bracelet is Broken. Shaper- and all the others besides Administration- is gone. You're stuck in an Alternian form.

You wanted to run away from being Joey Harley and well... you've certainly gone and done it now. Unless you can find where Shaper went, chances are you're never getting back to looking human again.

You're stuck.

There's no going back.

You just wanted an escape and now... now fate's decided to put you on a permanent holiday.

Damn it all. Damn it. Why the hell did that Handmaid have to come after the Bracelet for??
You shrug on a shirt that doesn't have a hole cut through it from Admin attaching itself to you, and head out of your old room on the All Your Base. Beyond you having Administration, Xefros claimed he'd gotten hit by Reaper, or a fragment of it, and while a chunk of it was retrieved from the Handmaid's head, nothing could be found on Xefros himself.

So if something similar had happened, Reaper had merged itself more completely with him than Administration had done to you.

You head back to the medbay and go check on Mierfa.

While she was fine for the most part, when the nurses gave her and you and Xefros a checkup, they DID find a chunk of one of the crystals embedded deep into Mierfa's shoulder- dangerously close to an artery.

Nobody's sure which one it is, and Mierfa hasn't reported showing signs of any of the usual powers, but you have a suspicion it might be part of Communion.

You don't blame Xefros for trying to break certain crystals- or for succeeding with Reaper. You'd rather they all be destroyed than in the Handmaid's hands... But damn it all if it hasn't made picking up the pieces harder.

You have no idea how you're going to break this to Jude when you finally get contact re-established with Earth.

You find Polypa waiting outside the med-bay, a rare, concerned look on her face.

"I should've been there sooner," she says after confirming that it was you that walked up. "Nobody burns my Kismesis but me."

You laugh a hollow laugh. "Thanks, Polypa. It's the thought that counts." You pause, then say, "Sorry I never got around to figuring out how to safely let you set yourself on fire."

"Not your fault," she shakes her head, then looks you in the eyes. "Now go in there and be with your Matesprit, alright? I'll stay guard out here just in case anyone gets any funny ideas."

"Thanks," you nod, then head inside.

You find Mierfa getting tiny sliver after tiny sliver of BLUE CRYSTAL pulled out of her arm, grimacing, and swearing like Roxy on a bad night as the pieces come out. Regent? You guess that makes sense, since it was out in the open. You don't sense any kind of energy from the pieces through Admin, though. Regent, like Reaper, seems to be dead.

You hope, at least. You're not quite sure if the parts of Admin you're feeling energy from are actually coming from the crystal, or if the power has somehow migrated to your body and is using the Crystal chunks as a sort of relay.

It's entirely possible the Crystals themselves were just containers for the real powers within... but that's a terrifying thought you don't want to think about.

Just like you don't want to think about that vision you had about the BIRTH OF A GALAXY'S POPULATION from the Administration Crystal's perspective.
"Hey," you say as you sit down on the bed next to Mierfa.

"Hey," she smiles at you- then yelps and says something unfit for print as another chunk of Regent is pulled out of her. She glances at the tray of crystal chunks, then at you, and asks, "Please tell me that there's not much left?"

You look, try to figure out how the pieces would look fit together...

"Yeah, looks like only one or two slivers left, I'd say," but you have no idea how big or small those pieces would be. "Almost all of it's out, looks like."

"Good," Mierfa scowls. "As much as I loved how pretty this thing looked on your wrist, I gotta say having it jabbed into my shoulder is not how I expected us finally getting it off."

"Me either," you say, grabbing at your left wrist and feeling the parts of its skin that feels different from the rest- the place where the Bracelet should have been but wasn't.

"Hey," Mierfa smiles. "We survived, though?"

You smile back, "Yeah. We did."

You guess... that's all that matters right now.

Mierfa then yelps as one final chunk of Regent is pulled out of her shoulder.

FWASH!

"Teal'c..." Colonel O'neill stares at the baked loaf of bread being shoved in his face right as the Gate Alarm sounds off. "What the hell is this?"

Teal'c considers his timing, glances at the wall, and then speaks. "It's a Traditional Alternian Dish called Fried-"

FWASH!

THWACK!

"Oh! I'm sorry, Sir! I didn't-"

Teal'c, despite the pain of a door slammed in his face, cracks up laughing.

The look on O'neill's face made the pain of this particular repeating injustice bearable for this loop.

Chapter End Notes

No, I didn't just introduce the Handmaid just to unceremoniously kill her off. (Hint: She
was "ALR---EADY D---EAD.")
Yes, I did just pretty much give out a Worm-styled Trigger Event to Xefros and Joey and a few other people.
Yes, I've seen today's Troll Call, and yes, I suspect Elwurd is probably going to be about as Important as Dammek is, given their shared lack of ALTERNATE NAMES. I'm also suspecting Dammek is also Dammek's last name and not his first.
No, I don't know how to work Elwurd in just yet if she IS that important.
Yes, I suspect Mierfa might be a tad redundant in the <3 quadrant if things happen in Hiveswap Act 2.
No, I'm not going to kill her off if it turns out Elwurd is THAT important.
ALT:04X12: Simultaneous Insight.

Chapter Summary

In which a problem is worked on from multiple angles.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

FWASH!

"Nooo! Doc!" Argo protests over dramatically. "Not the EKG Machine!" A pause, then she adds, "AGAIN!!!"

FWASH!

Colonel O'neill started juggling a series of paper balls while Skaara went on about reviewing the Translation work O'neill had carried over from the last loop.

FWASH!

THWACK!

"Oh, Sorry, Sir, I didn-AHAHH!"

Teal'c slammed the door closed on the hapless door-opener's face.

FWASH!

Argo started juggling a series of blue, violet, and green balls along side Colonel O'neill, who was sticking with the regular paper ones for the moment.

Carter just stared on incredulously.

FWASH!

"Seriously, Janet!?" O'neill protests. "Why am *I* getting the EKG machine too?!!"

"Because if Argo's right and we've done it twenty times already, then there's nothing her powers are doing to cause this, and that means it Might actually be one of you manifesting powers!" Janet theorizes.

"But I'm not genetically modified!" O'neill complains.

"That you're aware of! It could be that you got put in that Sarcophagus on Abydos like Daniel was and never was aware of it!" Janet continued on. "We have to rule out every variable!"
O'neill just gives Argo a sympathetic look as she giggles from her own EKG machine setup.

FWASH!

Teal'c, O'neill, and Argo juggle a bunch of rubber knives in perfect synchronicity, much to Skaara's confusion.

FWASH!

"What would you say to us just taking the next loop baseline?" Argo asks. "Let's just run it to P4X-639 and shut Malakai down without anyone knowing we're looping!"

"It is worth trying," Teal'c agrees.

"Oh, yeah, definitely going to give that guy a good sucker punch to the face," O'neill nods as they watch the Stargate electrify itself and then-

FWASH!

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**EARTH DATE: SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1997??**

**DIASPORA DATE: 2/7/0001**

Your name is TEREZI PYROPE, and you awaken from a VIVID DREAM.

You make your wait to the BRIDGE of the All Your Base, and wait there for the first meeting of the day.

Soon, Mallek, Daraya, Polypa, and Dammek arrive along with Okurii, and you wave at them.

"Oh no," Dammek frowns, "what now?"

"I think I know what's going on with Earth," you say, then elaborate, "I had a dream."

"Alright," Okurii nods. "What is it?"

"A wild elf, feral and dumb has set up camp on an hourglass," you begin explaining your dream to them. "He kicks and paws at it, knocking it over and over, hoping to bring back that which was once lost, but he just can't get more sand to appear in the glass than what's already there." You pause, then say, "A Chef, a Lost Father, and a Cat-bird walk into a Storm, what's the punch line? The wild elf's snout."

"...Okay," Daraya frowns, "that... makes a little sense? Are you saying they're stuck in a time loop?"

---

FWASH!
"The Geomagnetic storm is building up," Carter says once SG-1 arrives through the gate. "We shouldn't stay too long."

"Don't need to," Colonel O'neill begins, marching up towards the altar with the Archaeologist at it. "YOU!" He barks, voice angry.

The man looks up, and stalls as he sees Colonel O'neill, Teal'c, and Argo storming up at him. Carter and Skaara wonder for a moment why he gets such a frightened look in his eyes.

"Oh no," he whines, audibly.

"MALAKAI!" O'neill yells. "SHUT. THIS. TIME MACHINE. DOWN. NOW!!!"

"Now, come on, Colonel O'neill," Malakai begins, raising his hands and trying to appease them. "time loops? That's insane. And Teal'c, please, don't look so angry!"

"What's insane is the fact that A!" O'neill raises a finger. "You said TIME LOOPS. Not TIME MACHINE."

"Wait, did he just say time loops?" Skaara asks, turning to Carter.

"SECOND OF ALL!" Argo chimes in, "You knew his name! We haven't introduced ourselves yet!"

"And thirdly," Teal'c begins, wedging himself into frame and dominating Malakai's line of sight prominently. "We have every right to be angry considering the countless unpleasant incidents you've put us through."

"What the hell is going on?" Carter asks, running up to join them.

"Major Carter, please, talk some sense into these three!" Malakai begins. "They're talking insanity!"

"No. We're NOT." Argo growls. "You shot Skaara! Started this stupid time machine and then we ALL GOT CAUGHT IN A LOOP!"

"Also, how did you know my name?" Carter asks, frowning. "We didn't-"

"Oh screw it all," And then Malakai grabs a something from his bag and-

**TWHACK!**

O'neill decks the man in the nose, sending him stumbling backwards.

"SIR!" Carter cries out in shock.

"SHUT THIS MACHINE DOWN, MALAKAI!" O'neill orders.

Malakai glares at him, then just smirks and says, "Never."

And then the GOA’ULD STUN GRENADE rolls out of his hand- beeping wildly.

"HIT THE DECK!" O'neill barely has time to yell before the grenade detonates and-
"-but that's just how I feel about it!" Skaara concludes dramatically to Colonel O'neill who blinks the stars out of his eyes.

"I dunno," Carter frowns, then looks to O'neill, "it makes sense to me, but what do you think, Sir? ...Uh, Sir?"

O'neill drops his spoon of Fruit Loops back into the bowl, and puts his head in his hands, groaning. "Damn it. Of course he was looping too."

"O'neill?" Skaara asks, out of concern.

O'neill just slams his hand on the table out of anger and then gets up from the table.

"...Ah," you blink. "Yeah. Something like that."

"That would explain why we can't connect to Earth," Daraya muses.

"Yeah, but how do we stop it?" Mallek asks. "Clearly dialing in doesn't work, or dialing out for that matter."

"As much as I hate to say it," Dammek says, "we'll just have to wait for them to sort it out. You said Argo's in the loop?"

"Pretty sure she is," you nod.

"The Seers called her a Rogue of Time," Dammek smirks, "if there's anyone who can snatch an ending out of an endless time loop, it'll be her."

"So, I guess we can chalk up some good news from that loop around," Argo laments as Janet shines a penlight in her eyes.

"Indeed," Teal'c growls faintly as Carolyn shines a light in his eyes. "It seems Malakai is in the loops along with us. We have more opportunities to punch him in the nose to establish our superior logic for ending the time loop."

"I was going more for the idea that we can wake up at the start of the loop if one of us gets knocked out," Argo says, blinking the spots out of her eyes as Janet goes to shine her penlight in O'neill's eyes. "Whatever starting conditions got us looping are what's keeping us looping."

"Oww." O'neill grimaces as Janet turns the light off. "Is this really necessary?"

"At this point," Janet remarks, "if you're serious about this being a perpetual time loop, probably not.
But I'll get my kicks out of it any way I can, since I'm not looping."

"We should be glad John isn't here," Argo laments. "I don't think the SGC could stand the pranks he could pull if he were caught up in this."

Meanwhile, on Abydos, a certain glasses wearing boy sneezed, much to the amusement of a few of the locals standing nearby, and to the confusion of Jade walking alongside with him.

FWASH!

WAAAAGH! WAAAAGH! Went the Gate Alarms.

KLICK! SCHLORP! Went the Golfball.

"Oh, YEAH! That'll play!" O'neill grinned as he and Teal'c switched places. "How far away is Alaris anyways?"

"Several Trillion Light years," Teal'c supplies as he sets down a golf ball.

"That's got to be a record," O'neill remarks as he lines up for his next swing.

FWASH!

"-Section Twenty Three ends with a reference to Perennial Adventus-" Skaara recites.

"Been Over This," Argo interjects. "It means 'The Approaching Disaster.'"

"...Oh, right, yeah..." Skaara nods, and makes his correction.

FWASH!

O'neill sets up for a back swing on the golf ball...

"COLONEL O'NEILL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?" Hammond's voice suddenly yells over the intercom, startling the Colonel out of his line up.

Annoyed, very rightfully so, O'neill turns to the control room window and yells, "IN THE MIDDLE OF MY BACK SWING!?"

FWASH!

"-of the machine itself. 'With recurring use', the machine 'surrenders to the rigors of time.'"

"That's wrong, Skaara," Argo interjects, and the boy turns around, surprised.

"The word 'abicierum' means to give up, not surrender," Argo corrects him. "So the correct
translation is that after using the device over and over again, they 'give up to the rigors of time,' not surrender to it.

"That sounds like a matter of semantics," Skaara notes, frowning. "But good point. There might be a reason for that specific word usage."

FWASH!
observed with the Stargates in a way that affects more than one Gate at a time," Your name is Callie Ohphee and you lay out a STAR MAP of Alternia's Galaxy, which you're using as a proxy for the Milky Way. "Which, thanks to the events at Karfin Outpost, we know CAN happen."

"Right," Joey nods. "How the gates we sequestered off from the main network weren't connected to when Karfin's spacegate got supercharged by the Nova bomb."

"Exactly!" You nod to her. "Our sub-network basically formed a bubble of closed off space that didn't get stuck in a time dilation field like the rest of the Galaxy did, because the energy field couldn't lens out from the Gate."

"Speaking of lensing," Dammek says, "we know that Black Holes affect Stargates too from the SGC's report where they connected to that one planet."

"Right," you nod. "The way I figure it," you uncap a marker, and encircle a section of space, connecting the dots of various Stargates, basically. "We're dealing with some form of device that's probably taking advantage of the Solar Flare Time Warp phenomenon, probably a very small flare if this is some kind of test run of the device, one that wouldn't go back more than say... hmm, twelve hours?"

"I think the Geomagnetic storm on P4X-639 is fueling some kind of energy wave that's being broadcast through all Fourteen stargates around it simultaneously, and being lensed out from the Gates as a focus point, like the time dilation wave was progressing through our Stargate when we accidentally dialed that planet," Carter continues, "causing our ten hour time loop to happen."

"But why are Colonel O'neill, Teal'c, Argo, and this Malakai person aware of it and not you or Skaara?" Hammond asks. "According to their report, you two were there too."

"It's possible that whatever parameters the device has for generating the loop has a small exclusion field around the Altar so that the time loop doesn't progress endlessly without anyone there to stop it," Carter theorizes, "and those four were inside it, while Skaara and I were just outside of it."

"So, how can we break this Time Bubble, or whatever it is?" You ask.

"I'm not sure we can," Rose muses. "If there's a singular device inside the field we can't access, and we can't dial INTO the field, how could we figure out where to go? I'm pretty sure that if there's anyone aware on the inside of what's going on, they're going to have to be the ones to end it."

"Can't we just destroy the device on P4X-639 and end the loop that way?" Hammond asks.

"That's not a good idea, Sir," Carter says. "The temporal bubble surrounding us might pop if we were to destroy the console, sure, but if we destroy it and the time loop resets anyways, the device could carry over broken and then nobody could stop the loop as it continues marching forwards into eternity. Or worse, everyone involved could lose awareness of the loop and we'd be stuck in Groundhog day for the rest of our lives." She pauses, letting that sink in, then says, "I think Colonel O'neill has the right idea. We have to translate the runes on the device and figure out what the hell
happened when it was turned on the first time. If there's an instruction manual in there that tells us how to shut it off... we just need to find the off button, basically."

"...How many times have we had this conversation," Hammond finally asks.

"I have no idea, Sir," Carter says, "but I'd be willing to bet this is our fourth time through."

"I've got that new intern Okurii hired, Galekh, running the simulations on it to put him through his paces," you continue. "If we're lucky, we should be able to figure out what kind of energy field is being broadcast through the Gates causing this problem."

"And then what?" Xefros asks. "We can't get a lock on Earth's gate, so what good would it do us anyways?"

"Well," you say, "for starters it'd be nice to have a countermeasure against something like this if it gets used against us."

"Always pays off to be prepared," Dammek agrees.

"But also," you add, "if we can figure out how to stop it, we can also figure out how to *use* it, possibly in a more refined, targeted, and less time loopy manner."

"You're suggesting we build a Time Machine," Okurii realizes.

"To exile the Empress back in time to Ancient Egyptian times on Earth," you smile, "exactly that."

"We still don't know how this loop field is being generated, exactly," Joey voices her concern. "We're assuming it's a Solar Flare type device, but what if it's something else?"

"Well," you shrug, "if SG-1 back on Earth can end the loop, if they're even aware of it, and we can get access to the machine that started all this, I could probably reverse engineer it easily enough."

"Alright," Okurii nods. "Callie, you and Galekh keep working on this from the solar flare angle. We'll keep attempting a dial out to Earth during our spare cycles to check for the loop's end, and if they end it, we'll let them know not to do anything drastic to damage the device."

"Even if they did something stupid like destroy the control crystals," you say, "it won't matter too much to me. The way I see it, there's likely some kind of emitter array targeting the Stargate to generate this time loop wave to begin with. As long as they leave that alone, I can work on reverse-engineering it."

FWASH!

**EARTH DATE: SEPTEMBER 24TH, 1997??**

**DIASPORA DATE: 2/21/0001**
Teal'c finds O'neill sitting in the Cafeteria, eyeing a blank plate, "O'neill, is it not your turn this loop to assist Skaara with the translation?"

"Yeah, but I handed it off to Argo early," O'neill says as he picks up a squeeze bottle of ketchup, and squirting a dollop of the red stuff on the plate. "I'm taking this loop off." he squirts another one just a bit next to it. "I'm telling you, Teal'c, if we don't find a way out of this soon, I'm gonna lose it."

Teal'c raises an eyebrow, not at the remark, but at the fact that O'neill doesn't even look up and instead grabs a squeeze bottle of mustard with his other hand and begins drawing on the plate while rambling.

"Lose it. Text book definition: 'Go Crazy, Nuts, Insane, Bonzo,'" as he progresses drawing, his voice raises in volume, drawing the eye of everyone in the cafeteria. "No Longer in Possession of one's faculties, THREE FRIES SHORT OF A HAPPY MEAL...'" He finishes drawing on the plate and holds it up for the whole world to see as he yells out, "WACKO!!!!"

A drawing of a very sad clown made out of ketchup and mustard stares back at Teal'c, and he nods in acceptance.

"Very well, I will leave you to your break," Teal'c says.

"Thank you, Teal'c," O'neill says, carefully putting the plate back down on the table.

With that acceptance received, Teal'c heads off to do more baking, it seems.

O'neill wonders for a moment if he should help out.

...Nah, cooking really wasn't his thing. Now... pottery on the other hand... maybe that could be fun.

Jacob Carter steps through the Abydos Stargate, and sighs in relief as he spots you and Cassandra at the DHD.

"Oh thank God, someone I recognize," he says, stepping over towards you both.

"Hey Mr. Carter!" She smiles at him. "What's up?"

"We've been trying to get through to Earth for over a week now," Jacob says. "I take it you're in the same boat if you're here on Abydos?"

"It's been almost a month," you say. "We were only supposed to be here for a few days, but it's been a lot longer."

"Really?" He frowns. "What happened?"

"We think they're caught in a time loop," Cassandra says. "Not sure what we can do from the outside."

"Well, I'm sure Sam can figure out how to stop it," Jacob frowns. "Damn, though. We had some decent intel we pried out of Tanith's brain that might be time sensitive."
"What's up?" You ask.

"We uncovered a communication frequency Apophis uses that we were unaware of before, and we were able to intercept a transmission implying that he and Heru'ur are talking about a possible alliance," Jacob says. "Now, we know Heru'ur was hunting Apophis for the Harcesis thing, so..."

"It's incredibly unlikely they're actually going to talk things out an ally together," Cassandra nods.

"No matter what way we're looking at it, someone is about to become the owner of the largest dominant fleet in the Galaxy," Jacob nods.

"When's it happening?" You ask.

"No set date yet," Jacob shakes his head. "They're just in the 'early' stages of talking, as far as we can tell. A lot of posturing is going on."

"Hopefully nothing'll come of it til the time loop's broken," Cassandra says. "But come and find us here if things look bad and they're still stuck looping."

"Will do," Jacob nods. "...Mind if I stick around and keep you guys company for a while?"

"Sure," you nod. "The more the merrier!"

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FWASH!

EARTH DATE: SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1997??

DIASPORA DATE: 2/25/0001

Inconspicuously, as the Stargate alarms sounded heralding the end of another loop, Jack O'neill strolled into the Control room dressed in as gaudy of an outfit as could be considered 'civilian' as possible to be gathered on short notice.

"Colonel O'neill? What are you doing out of uniform?" Hammond asks, wary of a possible prank given what information he had available given the time loop situation.

"Handing you my resignation," O'neill says, handing Hammond a letter, before checking his watch.

"Resigning, Sir, WHY?" Carter asks, getting to her feet.

"So I can do..." he pauses, and then, "This!" Grabs Carter and pulls her into a kiss which, to nobody's surprise but Hammond's, she eagerly returns even as the Gate finishes dialing in, electrifies itself and--

FWASH!

"That's just how I feel about it!" Skaara concludes yet another ramble.
Carter goes to make the usual remark, only to stop off as O'neill sighs dramatically and puts his spoon down in his bowl of cereal. "...Sir?"

"Sorry, Skaara," O'neill says, sparing a glance at Carter, "I got day dreaming. What was it you were talking about again?"

"Oh, well," Skaara goes on to elaborate on the subject he was so passionate about a moment ago, but Carter tunes it out, locking eyes with the Colonel and seeing that subtle look he was sending her that implied they needed to talk about something.

She wondered what about.

During the briefing about P4X-639, the sudden revelation of a TIME LOOP existing made it fairly clear that, oh, yeah, they definitely needed to talk about something.

With Teal'c and Argo apparently out of the loop about whatever it was, and they were working on their respective tasks (Cooking and Translating, respectively), O'neill asked Carter if she'd be up for a coffee run.

That was definitely out of the ordinary, she felt. So they really, definitely needed to talk. So they went to get coffee.

And then they had a talk, consequence free, of what exactly they could possibly expect from any kind of breaking of the rules outside of the time loop once it'd been resolved.

All 'hypothetically speaking', naturally, but it was something that Carter had been thinking about on occasion.

It was nice to get the thoughts out and spoken, even if only one of them would remember it afterwards.

Stupid time loops.

---

Your name is TRIZZA TETHIS, and for longer than you'd cared to count, you've been an ARMLESS RENEGADE. Well, more like HANDLESS, but Puns aside...
You've lurked, traveling planet to planet, disguising yourself as a mere VIOLET BLOOD just to escape scrutiny from anyone else. You claimed to have come from some SETTLEMENT that the Mofang had destroyed, if anyone asked.

Only a few people did, and you made sure they didn't go asking for more.

As you make your way through some MARKETPLACE on some alien world friendly to Alternia's Empire, but not officially allied with them, you wonder when you'll find more scrap parts to build up your REPLACEMENT ARM- well, hand, but semantics.

The Galaxy has changed since you lost that Bracelet to the human girl. The Mofang left, their pet weapons swarming across the galaxy like a plague before being eradicated by a VAST GLUB targeted at them directly.
Everyone had seen the shockwave, wondered what it meant for Alternia's current state of being, and then... just a bit later, the news had broke that those fucking Rebels had KILLED YOUR LUSUS by chucking her into a black hole.

While everyone else celebrated, you MOURNED.

Just another way to make you alone, it seemed, not that they intended it that way. You're pretty sure the Rebellion doesn't even think you're still alive. And if they do, they certainly haven't come after you at all. And you're not going to give them a reason to until you're at a full ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.

Beyond that, word was that Alternia was now in OPEN REBELLION and had been pushing the front lines of what, for a time, you'd considered a NEW EMPIRE, but have lately begun rethinking it.

They'd killed the Lusus. This wasn't going to BE an Empire. Alternia's Rebellion wasn't fighting to build an empire, and they weren't conquering planets to take them over. They were liberating them from the Empire's grip and returning control to the rightful rulers of the planets in question.

It was becoming something more like a COALITION, or an ALLIANCE, more so than an EMPIRE.

There were also rumors that the SCRATCH DOCTOR was dead too, but who believed that kind of shit? He was a Myth anyways. And recent word that the HANDMAIDEN was dead too? Well, of course she was. She was a fucking GHOST. You can't kill a ghost.

As you walk into a back alley to search the more... ILL-GOTTEN of TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED GOODS, you wonder just what the hell you're going to be doing in the future. You certainly don't have the power or the skill to fight the Rebellion head on. You don't have any RIGHT to that, either. You lost the Bracelet to the girl- the new HEIRESS, you guess.

And it's not like even if you DID ever get your hands (hand) back on it again that you'd even be able to use it to-

You stop as you see something in a jewelry vendor's display. Something shimmering and JADE GREEN rests within a necklace. You peer closer at it- and yes, it's diamond shaped. Yes, it's cracked up more than you remember it being, and yes, it certainly doesn't PULSE like it did when you found it the first time but...

It's here.

The REJUVENATION CRYSTAL from the Bracelet.

How could that even be possible?

"'Scuse me," you say to the lady manning the stall. "What's this?"

"Oh? That?" The vendor laughed- a pair of cat like ears flexing in amusement atop her skull. "Just a trinket I've been trying to pawn off for years. People tell me it's cursed and return it to me after buying it for a day."

"Cursed?" You ask, "How?"
"Oh, they claim it's haunted," the woman leans forwards, conspiratorially, and says, "apparently, it's a gemstone off of a ferris wheel that tore loose during a carnival on Alternia. Crushed a kid to death during the chaos! They claim it's haunted with their spirit."

You frown. Surely it's not possible... but... then again, what isn't these days?

"How much?"

"No charge. Take it if you really want it," the woman says, smiling. "I won't be taking money off of a thing that they say is cursed. I've never seen any ghosts, personally, but... well, you never know with things like this. Maybe I'm just immune to hauntings?"

"Maybe," you take the necklace off the display and throw it around your neck. "But I'm no stranger to being haunted at this point. My own mistakes, usually. What's some kid who died under a giant rolling ride added to the pile?"

"A fair question," The woman smiles, and soon, you leave. As you walk along, fingering the gemstone within the necklace as you go, you wonder if the story is true.

Could it really be possible?

"Oi oi!" And then a tall, muscular jock of a cat-boy stands in your way, with some prissy little follower-ons hanging beside him on either side. "Would you lookit that, boys? Looks like we've got ourselves and Alternian Rebel."

"Me? A rebel?" You laugh. "Would I be on an Empire friendly world without a hand if I were a rebel?" You show them your stump. "A rebel did THIS to me, you jerks."

"Aaah?" The ring leader eyes your missing hand. "Maybe you're not a rebel and maybe you are, but we're not gonna take chances, are we Skull?"

"Yeah!" One of the hanger-ons chimes in. "We ain't gonna do that, are we, Bulky?"

"Hell naw," Ring Leader grins.

The other hanger-on draws out a large metal pipe, and you groan.

Of course it was never going to be this eas- OH FUCK!

In the brief moment you were distracted, the pipe was smashing down on your head before you even know what hit-

---

The Handmaid yells, the crowbar hits her head, and time ceases to have all meaning for a long, drawn out moment.

And then your connection to the HEIRESS is gone, and you're drifting- No. Spinning.

You SPIN.
You spin and you spin.

You tumble endlessly across time and space before somehow landing on a meteor that crashes down into a planet's surface.

There you wait for A MILLENNIA before you are suddenly unearthed, and afixed onto a giant metal wheel that spins.

And so you spin.

And you spin.

And you spin and you spin and you spin.

And then a Dragon roars, and you feel, for a moment, an echo of your past self twice over.

Then it's gone and you're tumbling, world spinning and spinning out of control as your giant metal wheel tumbles out of its casings and it rolls and it rolls and it rolls, flattening all within its path.

There is a Clown and her Twin, and you see the one shove the other out of the way mere moments before you impact her body.

[BARZUM! I'M COMING TO GET YOU, BARZUM!!!]

And then you SNAP your eyes open as you stumble backwards from the blow that caved your skull in.

You feel your head crunch and shift back into position as the pipe-wielding cat takes a step backwards in shock. His two companions stare on, eyes wide with horror even as you feel a burning sensation at your stump and then--

You hold your hand up to you face, and watch as the damned thing grows back before your eyes.

"W-W-W-WHAT ARE YOU!?!" The ring-leader yells out, terrified.

"Me?" You crack a grin, "You can call me either 'A thorough Reexamination of your sad Life Choices', or..." you lock your fingers together, and stretch your arms out forwards- relishing in the popping and stretching feeling in your reborn wrist. "'Skull Cracker.'"

Needless to say they called you many other things that were quite nasty while you beat them to within an inch of their lives, but atleast it was all better than being associated with a type of f-

...Food.

You realize it a minute too late as those three scramble away for their lives. You meant "Skull Cracker" as in someone who cracks skulls, but you stupidly went with a word that could also be used to refer to the FOOD ITEM known as a CRACKER.

...Damn it all.

You really walked into that one.
*whistles innocently while quietly re-adding Trizza to the character list*
ALT:04X13: Walked into that one.

Chapter Summary

In which a wall is raised and people walked into it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

FWASH!

EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 1ST, 1997??

DIASPORA DATE: 2/28/0001

"Where are they?" Hammond frowns, "They're late."

"Maybe they- Oh!" Skaara smiles as the trio of missing people walk into the room. "There they are!"

"I guess we're ready to start talking about-" Carter begins, only to be interrupted.

"P4X-639," Argo launches into the monologue, "according to the translations we've finished across MANY. MANY time loops, was a home to the Ancients when a plague started spreading across their worlds, Earth included. Their top scientits all branched out and designed their own means of solving this crisis. One of their kind designed a device that was supposed to buy the people on P4X-639 time, out of desperation, to find a cure. Unfortunately, they couldn't get it to work."

"The time machine is pretty much stuck creating a ten hour loop no matter what," O'neill takes off from there. "From everything we translated- and yes we translated EVERYTHING we could get our hands on- it didn't matter how they tweaked the emitters, or changed the programming, every time they activated it, ten hours go by and POP. Back where they started. Thre Ancients eventually just gave up on the idea and let it go." He pauses, letting that sink in, then says, "And basically Teal'c, Argo, me, and the guy Malakai behind all this are stuck in a perpetual time loop."

"Unfortunately, only the person who activated it personally can disable the loops permanently due to two reasons," Teal'c concludes. "The first is that the shut down combination is dependent on the same symbols pressed to activate the machine in the first place, and the second is that the device is keyed to the initiator's D.N.A."

"...Wait," Carter stares, "are you saying-"

"Yes, we're really stuck in a time loop," O'neill, Argo and Teal'c say at the same time, and Carter blinks, goes to say something more, to which the trio chimes in once more, "Fifteen Planets, counting Earth." Carter considers that, and then-

"Fueled by the Coronal Mass Emission," Teal'c continues.

"Causing the Geomagnetic storm to build up some kind of static charge that's turning on the device and shooting the Stargate with this electrical beam thing!" O'neill concludes, and then, pauses to add, "And on that note, SG-12 is about to come through the Gate." And right on that note, the Gate Alarms start up as another Stargate dials Earth.

"One of 'em tripped down some stairs and has a broken ankle, and we've already sent Janet down to the Gate room to deal with that," Argo says as the WAA WAA KAWOOSH goes off, "so no, you don't need to call her up here and have her waste a few hours hooking us up to an EKG machine-"

"Or shining a pen light in our eyes," O'neill adds.

"Or running unnecessary blood tests," Teal'c also adds.

"We're clean," Argo confirms, "and NO. It's not my powers doing this. We've checked. MANY times."

"We need to gear up, head to P4X-639, and convince Malakai to shut the device down," O'neill concludes. "Otherwise? We're gonna Groundhog Day it in another nine hours."

Hammond goes to open his mouth, and Teal'c pre-empts him, "Ask Major Strider if he has been feeling a peculiar sense of repeating today's events as well."

"Dad told me last loop he's been getting a deja vu headache that's been getting worse every loop," Argo shrugs, "no idea why he's noticing and nobody else it, but it's happening."

"And on that note!" O'neill says, "Let's discuss Malakai! Our other time looper."

"He shot Skaara on the first loop," Argo says, "I fought him off as he tried to activate the machine, and Teal'c and O'neill joined me in trying to keep him away."

"We have also tried running this baseline and tried confronting him once already," Teal'c summarizes. "He pulled a Goa'uld stun grenade on us and the loop reset afterwards, and likely has other Goa'uld technology at his disposal."

"I also punched his smug ass face in the nose for trying to pretend he wasn't looping." O'neill pauses, then adds, "It didn't help."

There's a pause, then Skaara opens his mouth-

"Yeah, sorry," Argo says, "we pretty much rehearsed this last loop for this one, which should be our final one if we do things right. We need all the time on these back end loops we can get to figure out how to end this."

Hammond, Skaara, and Carter sit at the conference table for a few moments.

And then Hammond nods, and says, seemingly with nothing else to say, "SG-1, you have a go."
The lights flickered, heralding the sound of a muffled explosion before it rocked across the All Your Base, and soon immediately followed by Callie's enraged yelling, which could be heard through the suddenly offline heating and cooling ventilation system.

"STUPID! FUCKING!!! DUMB! DUMB! STUPID DUMB!!!"

"I should go check on my Moirail," Dammek said as he got up from the table in the cafeteria, and quickly absconded.

Your name is Joey Claire, and you sigh.

"Something wrong?" Xefros asks.

"I just, wonder where everything went wrong," you ask. "What choice did I make somewhere that caused all of this?" You raise a finger before Xefros can answer, and say, "Rhetorical. Question."

"Ah," He nods.

A moment of silence passes between you two, then you finally bite the bullet and ask, "How long before the time loop's broken, do you think?"

"No idea," Xefros shrugs. "Why do you ask?"

"Well, I got to thinking," you say. "There is a whole other me on another version of earth through the Quantum Mirror, and she doesn't have a bracelet, so maybe... there's another version of the Bracelet out there in that universe's version of Alternia that's unclaimed?"

"Trizza likely has it," Xefros frowns, "and she'd probably kill anyone who tried to take it from her."

"Oof," you grimace, "fair point. Do NOT want to go facing her again with a full bracelet. But maybe..." You muse. "Maybe we could find that other version of me who DID have a Bracelet and Jude saw her through the mirror with a bunch of Jade Bloods on her team?"

"And what, ask her to give it to us?" Xefros asks.

"No," you shake your head. "Maybe... just ask her to turn me back to human?"

"...That could work," Xefros muses. "Are you gonna ask about it when we finally get contact re-established?"

"...Nah," you shake your head. "Not right away. Only if we can't find out what happened to our Shaper first."

"Yeah," Xefros nods. "That might be a better idea. No sense bringing other universes into our problems without seeing if we can't find our version first."

---

WAAA WAAA! KAWOOOOSH!

Malakai looked up from his work on the control console as the Stargate activated for the third time
today. For a given definition of "Today," that is.

It usually didn't activate. Those other Time Travelers from SG-1 just wouldn't come through most loops.

And through the gate five of them step- the same five. Always the same five.

"Geomagnetic storm is building up," O'neill remarks as Carter checks her instruments. "We shouldn't be here long." He eyes her when she gives him a look, and says, "Lucky Guess."

Everyone clearly knows it wasn't a lucky guess.

And thus as a whole, SG-1 begin walking towards the control console altar.

Malakai frowns, and activates a small button on his tablet. A beep in confirmation confirms that what's done is done.

"Malakai!" O'neill calls out- oh, there's the anger to his voice, sure, but it's nowhere near as frightening as the last time he yelled out. "We need to talk!"

Malakai frowns, and steps out into the line of sight of them, causing SG-1 to stop just at the base of the stairs. "Not after the last time, Colonel O'neill. Your form of 'negotiation' just doesn't agree with me. Or my nose, it seems."

"That was before we had all the information," O'neill says. "We thought you were doing this to us intentionally. The same ten hours over and over? But that's not what you want at all, is it?"

"You can't get it to work, can you?" Argo says, ears flexing beneath her hat in a peculiar way. "This loop isn't what you want at all. Is it?"

"Of course it isn't," Malakai scowls. "Who the hell would consign themselves willingly to the same ten hours over and over and over again? It's maddening. But I can't let it go. If I let you end the loop, I'll never get another chance like this again. This storm is rare enough, you see. Even if I'm stuck in a time loop," he gives a brief smile of hope, "well, so is this storm."

"We regret to inform you that wherever you wish to go," Teal'c says, "you cannot go there."

"Of course I can," Malakai says. "I just have to figure out how to get the temporal coordinates to work right and then I'll be where I need to be, and you all will be left behind."

"That's not what we mean, Malakai," O'neill says. "We translated the warning they left behind here."

"You?" Malakai scoffs. "Skaara, maybe, but you, Colonel O'neill?" He shakes his head. "Teal'c and Argo, even less so. But you? I doubt it's possible. I've been working at this for longer than you have and I still haven't finished."

"Well, there were three of us," Argo says. "We took turns so we didn't burn ourselves out."

"...Frugal," Malakai muses. "Alright, if you've 'finished it', what does it say?"

"The Ancients couldn't get this machine to work," O'neill says. "They tried shutting it down, restarting, reprogramming, doing everything they could to make it work to save themselves..."
"No matter what they did, it's stuck on a ten hour loop," Argo says. "That's literally all it does. Ten Hours. The Ancients built the Stargates and even THEY couldn't get this damned thing to work!"

"So you're trying to tell me that no matter what I do with this machine, it will NEVER work?" Malakai asks.

"Indeed," Teal'c nods.

"Listen," Skaara takes a step forwards, and begins climbing the stairs, "if you need to go back in time to prevent something, there are other ways than this. If a wormhole intersects a solar flare just right it-"

Just as he's about to pass over the threshold and enter the control room, a GOA'ULD FORCE SHIELD spawns to life and sends the poor boy flying back down the stairs.

"Skaara!" Carter quickly moves over to check on him while O'neill and Teal'c draw their fire-arms and aim at Malakai.

"...Well," Malakai frowns, "I guess you could say he walked right into that one."

"The HELL did you do, Malakai!?" O'neill asks, growling.

"Goa'uld Forceshield I traded for some valuable artifacts some time ago," Malakai answers. "I've set it up every loop since you punched me in the FACE." He glares at O'neill. "...But I'll lower it if you're serious about being able to travel back in time through other means."

"Why do you even want to go back in time for, anyways?" Argo asks.

"...My wife died, twelve years ago," Malakai answers. "I wish to see her again."

"And save her?" O'neill asks.

"No, that's impossible," the man shakes his head. "A genetic defect... even if I could find a donor willing to go for a transplant, the doctors wouldn't go for it. My wife's chances of survival due to that defect were... not fantastic."

"So you just... want to go back in time and see your wife alive again?" O'neill asks. "That's it?!"

"Just one more time to see her alive again," Malakai nods, sadly. "That's all I want."

"So you put us all inside of a time loop..." O'neill begins, "just to see your wife DIE again?"

"...When you put it that way..." Malakai frowns. "It does sound a bit..." he shakes his head. "But what do you know!? You haven't lost anyone like I have!"

"Yes, I have," O'neill frowns.

"Who?!" Malakai asks. "Clearly nobody important to you if-"

"I LOST MY SON!" O'neill interjects as he stomps his foot on the ground.
Malakai stares for a moment, taking that in, then he asks, "And if you're so aware of Time Travel options, then why haven't you brought him back?! WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE IT!?!"

"BECAUSE I COULD NEVER GO THROUGH THAT DAY AGAIN!" O'neill yells. "EVEN IF I HAD A CHANCE TO-" he takes a breath. "It was My Fault. But if I changed that day, I'd never have gone on to do half the things I did. I'd never have pushed myself to save the people I did BECAUSE I lost him." He takes another steeling breath. "And if for a moment you think I haven't considered doing it- going back and saving him- *I HAVE.* I'd thought, 'maybe I'll write myself a letter' or 'maybe I'll stay behind and try to change things.' But I couldn't- I COULDN'T bare the thought that if I FAILED? That I'd just be putting myself through that pain again. And I can't go through it. Not Again."

There's a moment of silence for a few moments, and then an alarm sounds off and the control console behind Malakai starts activating, pieces shifting and raising and lowering into place before a large HUM begins to build up in the air.

"...There's the early alert," Malakai says. "Give me one good reason why I shouldn't let it go on for another loop?"

"Would your wife ever want you to go through with it?" O'neill asks. "To see you go through that pain AGAIN? I know my ex wife wouldn't. I know my son wouldn't. And even if I found some way to save him... what kind of future would I be making in the process?"

Malakai considers it, then walks over to the console and presses a few stones. The whole thing seems to shut down, and the humming charge building up in the air goes away.

"If you're right that there's other ways," Malakai finally says as he walks back over to the entryway, "then this machine doesn't need to be run."

Naturally, he walks head first into his Goa'uld force shield, and gets slammed back up against the wall behind him.

"...Malakai?" O'neill asks, even as Skaara groans back to consciousness.

"I guess you could she he walked right into that one?" Argo asks.

"Indeed," Teal'c nods in agreement.

---

On an alien world in an old abandoned alleyway resides you. TRIZZA TETHIS. And you're feeling suddenly overwhelmed by the SPIRIT OF THE NECKLACE- whose centerpiece gemstone that you bought it for is suddenly just GONE.

[BarzumBarzumBarzumTakeMeToBarzumBarzumBarzum] The spirit rages in your mind- clearer that it has any right being. A clown girl who was crushed by a ferris wheel at a Dark Carnival and is DESPERATELY missing her... twin?

The concept is so weird to you, but it's the least weird thing about this situation.

First of all, The Jade Crystal VANISHING as it did, combined with you gaining its powers, is a
wonderfully insane concept to behold on its own. Then there's the CLOWN SPIRIT.

In the moments since you... TRIGGERED, you suppose, with this power to self-regenerate, you've alternated between being fully in control, and fighting back against the ENRAGED CLOWN SPIRIT now residing within your SKULL.

Now, each of those is a solid TEN on their own weirdness scales, but COMBINING THEM??

Combining them makes you so weird you don't even HAVE a scale.

You have to find some way to... to... ESTABLISH A MUTUALLY ASSURED AGREEMENT of some kind. You're sharing this body so you'll have to work TOGETHER.

Now if only you could get a word in edge wise opposite all the [BARZUMBARZUMBARZUMBARZUM]s in your head.

You get the feeling this is going to be a LONG AND ONGOING PROCESS.

You are now GENERAL GEORGE HAMMOND, of STARGATE COMMAND, and you look on in hope as SG-1 returns through the Stargate- with one extra unknown guy leaning against Teal'c's shoulder.

"I hope that since we're all here past this ten hour deadline that means that you were successful?" You ask of Colonel O'neill as SG-1 meets you at the Gate's ramp.

"Yup," O'neill says. "You know what they say, if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try... try..." He pauses, then adds, "Try TRY again!"

"And Malakai?" You ask, eyeing the unknown guy.

"Passed out from running into his own force shield," Teal'c responds with a very observable amount of glee to his voice.

You're not even going to ask.

"Chevron Eight,Encoded..." Your name is OKURII LEIJON and you're not holding your breath as the Gate spins around for the Ninth Chevron. "Chevron Nine..."
KA-TWHUNK.

"Locked!?" Zebede gasps out in surprise.

WAAA WAAA! KAWOOOOOOSH!

"Finally!" You breathe out and grab at the Radio. "Stargate Command this is Alternia. Please Respond."

A pause follows, and then you hear the a familiar voice of either Mikari or Jolinar- whichever is in
control, it's the familiar voice of HIVEKEEP speaking- come back through. "Alternia, glad to hear from you. I suppose this means we've been out of contact for some time? May I ask what the Earth Date is?"

Hoooboy. "According to our records, today should be OCTOBER 1ST, 1997," You answer.

There's a pause.

"Over a month," comes the reply. "It's still August 26th on our end, Alternia."

"Duly noted, Stargate Command," You answer. "Time Loop?"

"Time loop," comes the reply.

"We figured as much," you say. "Callie's requested you NOT destroy the device in question. We'd like a chance to reverse engineer it for security reasons."

"Like preventing someone from setting off something similar?" Mikari asks.

"Like preventing something similar, yes," you say, leaving out the other reasons. "We'll be sending Callie over to start work on that tomorrow."

"I'll pass that along to General Hammond," comes the reply. "Anything else of interest to report before we close the connection?"

You consider your next few words carefully... "There was an incident on Diaspora. A crashed shuttle piloted by the Handmaid. I'm sure Major Vantas can fill you in on the relevant details, as his past self was present during the ensuing scuffle and HAS definitely been paying attention to everything that's gone on."

"Will do."

"We'll re-establish contact tomorrow at..." you pause, "What's the current Earth time?"

"16:18, Ma'am," comes the reply.

"We'll re-establish contact in twelve hours," you say.

"Understood, Alternia. Over and Out?"

"Over and out," And with that as a signal, Zebede shuts down the connection to Earth, and you exhale in relief. Then, you look to Zebede, and say, "Let everyone who wanted to be notified know we've re-established contact with Earth."

"Will do," Zebede nods.

And with that, you decide it's time to go let Callie know she should gather up her team.

WAAA WAAA KAWOOOSH!
"Finally!" Your name is Jude Harley and you eagerly punch in the code for your IDC. You receive a green light a moment later, and you turn to smile at Cassie. "We're good to go!"

"I had a feeling it'd work this time," she says, which was exactly why you brought John, Jade, and Rose to the Pyramid with you this time. "Let's head home."

You five head back through the Stargate and emerge safe and whole on the SGC's ramp. Janet is standing waiting for you all.

"Welcome back, kids. You've got good timing," she says, "we just got off the line with Alternia, actually."

"What happened?" Cassie asks of her mother.

"Time loop, apparently," Janet says. "O'neill, Teal'c, and Argo were caught up in it."

"Ouch," Jade grimaces. "That doesn't sound pleasant."

"By the way, the Tok'ra were trying to get in contact with you," Rose chimes in. "You should dial them up and let them know the time loop's broken."

Janet turns to look at the control room, and you see Walter nod in confirmation of that. "Hammond'll make the arrangements," she says as she turns back to look at you. "So! Stuck on Abydos for a month! I hope you kids didn't get up to anything we should be aware about."

"What? Us?" Cassandra asks, sarcastically. "With nothing but desert farming and all sorts of other fun things to keep us distracted?"

"We most certainly didn't do anything like get accidentally married or anything," John answers, glancing at Jade, who nods furiously.

"Nothing happened at all!" She says.

Rose just laughs, and you sigh and shake your head.

Janet looks at all of you for a moment, then smirks, and speaks in a sarcastic tone of voice. "Of course you didn't. Abydosian traditions are clearly labeled after all."

The real answer is that nothing of import happened of the sort like was being implied.

Sometimes, you wonder if spending a month in a desert did any positive things for your sanity.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter took entirely too long for as little as got written.
Chapter Summary

What feels like a prelude to some Political Scandal.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.


DIASPORA DATE: 3/02/0001

"...Okay, now I know how it feels to be on the other end of this." Your name is MAJOR SAMANTHA CARTER, and for some reason, the Stargate just WILL NOT LOCK today.

[Is it possible something is going wrong with the Stargate after the Time Loop?] Jolinar asks.

"Not likely," you reply. "It's possible, but... Hrm. No, I think it's something else."

[Something else?]

You check the power logs and some seismic readouts just in case and you find...

"There's a minor seismic event that matches the time we dialed out just now exactly..." you pause to reflect on that.

[Oh.] Jolinar gives the impression of blinking, mentally.

Oh indeed.

It seems someone in Siberia has been using a Stargate.

...The Russians have a Stargate, and they're leaving it on.

General Hammond is not going to like this.

An hour later, a check of the BETA GATE revealed that yes, it is still there at Area 51, and it is not a fake. That means that the only Gate that the Russians could possibly have gotten their hands on is the Alternia Gate Khepri had made, and you'd sent to Davis' team to use to escape Thor's Replicator infested ship. Somehow it survived the explosive re-entry. You're not sure HOW, considering that Gate was nowhere nearly as well built as the ones standard in Alternia's Galaxy and your own Galaxy.

...Because it's either that, or some Replicators have been building a Gate of their own in Siberia.

You're not sure which is more frightening, because on the one hand, it's your fault this has happened;
while on the other, you have Replicators to fight.

Another attempt to dial out confirms that this other Stargate is STILL ACTIVE, even after a whole hour. It doesn't make sense... unless they dialed a Black Hole? In which case you feel REALLY AFRAID of what this could imply for the Earth.

Jolinar scolds you for thinking up worst case scenarios, and so you just bring your information to Hammond, and he does his networking thing and soon enough A Doctor SVETLANA MARKOVA seems to have requested your team's presence specifically, and so you and the rest of SG-1 are sent to Siberia to deal with what seems to be a RUN-AWAY GATE PROGRAM that's gone disconcertingly silent.

You can only hope what you find is less scary than your mind is whirling up conjured nightmares of.

{Meanwhile, on P4X-639...}

Your name is DAMMEK, and you watch your Moirail and a FEW OTHER SCIENCY TYPES- some from Alternia, some from Earth- work on examining everything about this TIME LOOP MACHINE that they can learn before tearing the thing apart.

There's also the fact that you're all being SUPERVISED by SG-2. Why? You don't know. Maybe incase someone like this Jayni lady comes along and screws with things, you guess?

"Don't you walk away from me!" And then there's that new INTERN, GALEKH? GALECK? How's his name spelled again? You've never even been properly introduced to the guy, so you'll just roll with GALEKH for now. He's arguing the Earth Scientists... Mack... Mckay? Yeah, that guy. "I am not finished talking here!"

"I'm not walking away, I'm deliberatly walking to the other side of the console to look at what you're talking about so I can see if you're making any sense at all!!" Mckay argues back. "And even if I was it's not like I'd have anywhere else to walk away TO that you couldn't follow me to!"

You massage at the bridge of your nose, and glance at your FELLOW SUNGLASSES WEARING COMPANION, Major Davis Strider, who sighs in mutual agreement.

You're both thinking, 'Why did we have to bring him along for, again?'

In your case? Because Tyzias is still on leave to get her sleep schedule under control. As for this Mckay guy, who the hell knows. You guess maybe he got bored of looking at a mirror all day long for months on end?

You glance at Callie, who looks just as annoyed at Galekh as you are- with ample reason, as her hair is cut a lot shorter than it usually is thanks in part to Galekh messing up with some delicate experiment the other day and, well... Causing her to get some burnt hair in the process.

Ironically, you ended up keeping her from strangling the guy. Maybe you should've let her; but, eh, how else is the kid going to learn how to science properly if you don't let him make mistakes?
{Several hours later. In Siberia.}

You're still MAJOR SAMANTHA CARTER, and a few things have become readily apparent by the time your team arrived in SIBERIA.

First is that the Alternian Outgoing Gate DIDN'T survive intact, and what's being used seems to have been reverse engineered from the remains. That's good.

Second is that they somehow have the GIZA GATE'S DHD. You're not sure you buy MARKOVA's history lesson if the Nazi's getting it, and then the Russians confiscating it from them, but hell, whatever. So they have a working DHD and got it to work with a REVERSE ENGINEERED STARGATE. Cool. Okay. Whatever.

Next is that Russians' first attempt at dialing out ended up being to a planet submerged under water, and they sent a NUCLEAR POWERED PROBE through the Gate to begin with, and its that PRESENTLY ENDLESS SUPPLY OF POWER that's somehow creating a RADIO SIGNAL that's keeping the wormhole open. Also good, you know how to stop it. Shut down the probe and the wormhole should terminate.

What's BAD about it is a multi fold issue. Putting aside the fact that this shouldn't be happening for a moment- (The THIRTY EIGHT MINUTE WINDOW shouldn't be overwhelmed by a measly radio signal, even nuclear powered. Well, that'd be the case if both Stargates were FUNCTIONING MILKYWAY GATES, and one wasn't a reverse engineered mish-mash of parts, but there's an ACTUAL WORKING DHD here that should be doing its job properly and controlling the wormhole timing.)-There's a problem in that there is no SUBMARINE available nor any DIVING GEAR that could let you go through the Gate to disable the drone.

What's WORSE is that the outgoing Stargate is gradually building up an electrical charge within its NON STANDARD PARTS that could cause the damned thing to explode if it's not shut down soon- and worse, could make traveling THROUGH the eventhorizon to the other planet a RISKY ENDEAVOR.

Because yes, it's not a regular Stargate.

And somehow, worse than THAT?

Well, first of all worse than that, there's the fact that the Base's enitre WORKING STAFF is missing. Nobody in sight at all that SHOULD be here...

Because there seems to SOMEHOW be an alien incursion of strange, WATER-VAPOR BASED LIFE-FORMS on the base. One of them having been found in COLONEL HARRY MAYBOURNE of all people, who was locked in a WALK-IN FREEZER. Which, as you remind yourself, is in SIBERIA. Why would they put a WALK-IN FREEZER in?? That's just asking for trouble.

Once Maybourne is apparently freed of the WATERY ALIEN BEING and confirmed to be of his sane faculties, he tells you all that he'd been fired from his job at the NID when he found out that THEY'D given the Gate remains to Russia for 'repair' and tried to get it returned to the SGC.

So naturally, instead of doing the sane thing and coming to the SGC for help, he went to Sibera personally to try and steal the damned thing back, and that's when everything went to hell and he got jumped by that water alien and apparently got locked inside a freezer somehow. He doesn't
remember the specifics and you're pretty sure it's an embarrassing story he'd never want to tell even if he did remember it.

None of this is making any sense to you with regards to the problem you're facing with this constantly active outgoing wormhole.

Of course, the missing Water Alien body-jacks Teal'c, and takes him to the Stargate before you can figure out what's going on.

And then out it goes through the Stargate's event horizon, and... then the Gate's event horizon does this weird fluctuation thing where it seems to disconnect and activate again in the same instant, and THE SURVIVING MISSING RUSSIAN BASE PERSONNEL are shoved back through the wormhole from the other side before the Gate finally disconnects and...

And...

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED.

O'neill suggests it was a HOSTAGE EXCHANGE, and all you can say in response to that is...

"Huh."

Because apparently whatever these WATER ALIENS really were? They know how to hold open a Stargate wormhole for an improbable amount of time, and not only that, REVERSE a wormhole's direction without disconnecting and re-dialing.

You feel like all you can do at this point is make note of the planet in question and request to Hammond that its address be blacklisted from the dialing computer. Because, it seems like the only thing that solved this kind of standoff peaceably was O'neill dragging Maybourne out of a freezer.

_____________________

**EARTH DATE: SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 3/06/0001**

You're once again DAMMEK, and your SQUAD of REVERSE-ENGINEER-ERS- you guess that's a passing title- emerge through the Gate back in Stargate command, lugging behind you crates full of DISASSEMBLED TIME LOOP MACHINERY.

"Miss Ohphee?" General Hammond is there waiting for you all, however. "Tetrarch Dammek?"

"Yeah?" Callie asks.

"You have experience with Building Stargates, yes?" he asks, rhetorically. "How would your deconstruction team like the chance to take apart a Russian made reverse-engineered Stargate?"

"Hey, how come I'm not invited?" Mckay asks, annoyed at being left out.

"You were," Galekh complains. "We ALL were."
"Oh, right," Mckay says, annoyance fading. "Sorry, little slow right now. I haven't had a good night's sleep in days."

You look to Callie, and she shrugs, showing no problem with the idea of an extra project. You turn to General Hammond and say, "Let us get cleaned up and have a few hours to rest up, then point us towards it and we'll tear the thing apart."

"I'll send Carter to fetch you all in the morning," Hammond nods. "Dismissed."

You get the feeling there's a story behind this sudden job request, but you're not going to ask it. You've got other things to deal with first.

Your name is GENERAL GEORGE HAMMOND, and the whole thing just doesn't sit right with you.

Maybourne got arrested for 'corporate espionage'- it seems the NID didn't take too kindly to his attempts at shutting down the Russian Gate program- and is being sent to some high security prison on US soil, which, you'd think he'd be arrested and sent to a Russian prison or something, but Dr. Markova managed to pull a few strings, it seems.

Speaking of her, the Russian Gate Program got shut down anyways, at her and Sam's joint request. Apparently their "Reverse Engineered" Stargate is too dangerous to leave intact given the energy surges being detected in the damned thing during the extended dial out. Not only that, but Maybourne got his wish and it was returned to the SGC for "SAFE" deconstruction.

It feels like the Russians caved way too easily on that demand.

You smell POLITICAL SHENANIGANS. No doubt the whole thing was set up by the NID for some reason or another. Senator Kinsey's likely positioning the metaphorical chessboard for some grand strategy, giving the SGC a "win" while also denying Maybourne any further influence in future events.

You're beginning to suspect that, for all his previous antagonism to the SGC earlier on, Colonel Maybourne was one of the few sane men in the NID.

You're almost tempted to recruit the man to the SGC if not for the fact that you think that's exactly what Kinsey wants you to do, and that feels almost too much like a trap.

You bring Colonel O'neill up to your office, and you let him know how you feel about this situation. He agrees, and offers to come up with a contingency plan or three in case things go sideways.

You tell him to do such, but not to tell you what those plans are, just in case PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY is required.

You've got a bad feeling that you're going to need it sooner or later.
Chapter End Notes

The plot just kind of resolves itself once Maybourne's out of the freezer, tbh.
Chapter Summary

Breaking open a cold one.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

DIASPORA DATE: 3/20/0001

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you should have had your BIRTHDAY PARTY already.

You're not miffed (Okay, you are just a little) but it's just a LITTLE BIT FRUSTRATING that your adjusted birthday has to be RE-ADJUSTED thanks to a month long time loop.

You're, thankfully, not the only person fed up with time stuff.

Colonel O'neill has been eating nothing but oatmeal for breakfast since the loop broke, relishing in it, it seems. You figure he'd probably be sticking with Fruit Loops if not for the word "LOOP" in the brand name.

Sure, you'd all done something unofficial on Abydos for yours and Jade's birthdays just a bit before the time loop broke, but it's still... the whole point of the matter was getting some semblance of normality back.

That you'd have your birthday with your actual family on the day you were born and... it just ended up being skipped over because the dates just didn't line up right anymore. If you'd known the time loop was coming up, you'd have requested everyone's birth dates be set back three months instead of two.

Pah. It doesn't matter any, you guess.

You feel BORED OUT OF YOUR MIND at school. It's... it's just. It's so MUNDANE, and worse, YEARS OUT OF DATE with regards to things like HISTORY and MATH and even some bits of BIOLOGY AND SCIENCE. John's similarly bored, although not as much, because Jade seems excited for the 'real 90's experience' and he's excited for her.

As for Argo?

Argo's being 'home schooled' on account of her wings and ears. Lucky. That just means she gets to hang out at the SGC all day during school hours and possibly get involved in SHENANIGANS.

Jude and Cassandra seem used to it all, though, and are happy to be showing you three 'new kids' the 'ropes.'
Urgh. It's all just so... NINETEEN-NINTYS.

You're really, REALLY rather be on Alternia right now. But nooooo. You couldn't just hitch a ride back with Dammek and Callie to Alternia. Nooo. Gotta go to school. Gotta deal with all of this shit that feels so...

So...

Soooo....

NNNNGGAAAAAAAHHHH!

You feel like a kitten trying to get at a bag of catnip that's being kept up on a shelf way out of your climbing range and won't even be IN climbing range until you grow just a bit bigger and get some REACH in those spindly kitten limbs of yours.

Somehow it's even WORSE than your incessant insomnia (Which, at least gives you a ton of free time to knock out what's SURE to be a metric fuck ton of homework).

You wonder what SG-1 is doing right now?

{MEANWHILE, on P3R-118...}

"Slave labor!?!" Colonel O'neill yells out, indignantly.

Administrator Calder frowns. "It's not Slave Labor."

"Yes it is!" O'neill protests. "And if you're not going to change what you're doing, all I can do is refuse to recommend a Trade Agreement to our people back on Earth."

"...I see," Administrator Calder gets a glint in his eyes. "Maybe there's something I can do to... Change Your Minds."

Eh. It's probably more fun than being at school here learning about the AMERICAN CIVIL WAR for the FOURTH TIME OVER.

It IS interesting, you guess, to see how history's lenses are shaped without the Aschen's influence or Historical Revisionism, but... it's still the same general story you've heard four times over already.

But you're expected to NOT KNOW IT here and so you're all just going over it for the 'first' time and, blah blah blah blah yak yak yak yada yada yada yada...

Your feet twitch in their shoes, and your knees tense in preparation to bolt into a run the moment the bell rings.

B! O! R! E! D! WHAT'S THAT SPELL? BORED, BORED!

...You swear, if you had a cat tail, it'd be swishing anxiously in wait.

Your name is CASSANDRA FRAISER, and you can just see Rose struggling in her seat to maintain her composure.

You're not getting any bad vibes right now, so she's not going to do anything outlandish in class. But... still. It's a concern.

You're going to have to talk with her sooner or later. Hopefully before she spazzes out and does something stupid.

You wonder what you can do to help, and consult the VIBES.

It's kind of weird knowing that you've actually got some kind of PREDICTIVE ABILITY deep within you. And just when you'd gotten used to the whole BLOOD ON FIRE thing whenever a Symbiote possessed person was around, too.

On the one hand, you're able to make sure things go fairly well on a day to day basis. On the other, though, it's just one more thing that kind of isolates you from the rest of the world. You're very much NOT NORMAL, even if you ignore the whole BORN ON AN ALIEN WORLD thing. It sucks having to pretend.

At least Jude understands what it's like.


DIASPORA DATE: 3/23/0001

Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and your thoughts are caught in a whirlwind chaos of everything going on.

SG-1 missing off world; Rose clearly building up to a boiling point where her self-restraint won't be much of a restraint any more; and the fact that Joey's been avoiding video calls for the last... uh... well, last month since before the whole TIME LOOP THING.

You know she left disguised as an Alternian... you wonder if it got stuck somehow and she's pretending that it didn't? If so, you really wish she'd just own up to the goof and let you know. Maybe you could get the other Joey through the Mirror to come and provide a stable image reference?

But, Joey's a whole Galaxy away, and that's not something you can deal with right now.
You can't do anything about SG-1, and are leaving that to HAMMOND to sort out.

So... that just leaves you with ROSE to deal with.

All of you have at least ONE class together with her, and in each one it's READILY EVIDENT to all of you that School is *clearly* not agreeing with her.

But what to do? Cassandra's not getting any MAJOR DISASTER vibes yet, but this clearly isn't going to miraculously get better. John and Jade have tried talking to Rose about it, but she insists she's fine.

Yeah. Nobody's buying it, least of all Rose herself.

You frown as the bell rings and you get up from your desk in one class to head to another.

"Hey! Harley!"

You stop, and brace yourself for the inevitable.

The minute people found out that yes, you really were the son of JAKE HARLEY, they basically started treating you like a local celebrity. You feel a bit like that kid in that new WIZARD BOOK Roxy bought over the internet back in early August before all this time loop stuff. The one with the sudden fame shoved on his shoulders after a rotten growing up. Harry something-or-other. You can't remember the full name, as you're not really into wizards or magic, but Roxy insisted on "EARLY ADOPTING" what was sure to be a WORLD WIDE TREND after Rose let the series name slip out at one point.

You also don't have time to rationalize it because someone slaps you on the shoulder and leans into your line of sight.

"Uh, hey there..." Crap Crap Crap What's his Name- Pete?

"So me and the guys were thinking," Pete, you think, begins. "there's going to be this totally rad party down at James' place-" You have no idea who James is. "-this Friday and you're cool and hip, so we're lending you out an invitation!"

...Uh.

"Sorry," you say, "already got plans Friday."

"Whaaat? Really? Nothing you can't reschedule? I'm sure your Mom won't mind-" Pete goes on, trying to clearly convince you that you should DEFINITELY GO.

You suppress the flinch at his mention of your mother, or miss-assumption that Roxy's your mother, and interject, "I have a dinner date scheduled for that night."

"A da- wha?!" Pete seems completely flabbergasted. "Since when do you have a girlfriend!? Is it that Jade chick who transferred in? Cause MAN is she hot!"

"First of all," you don't bother to repress the scowl, "ew. She's like my sister." Pete doesn't seem deterred by that concept one bit, and actually seems ready to press it further. "Also, I'm pretty sure she's got her eyes on someone else." And you're leaving it at that because you're not going to go off
on this poor guy trying to explain the nuances of ALTERNIAN ROMANCE. Nobody deserves that sprung on them suddenly without fair warning.

The warning tone to your voice seems to get through to this jock-head for a moment, and you take an opportunity to press on.

"And second of all," you say, "it's none of your business who I am or am not dating," You think you see a potential end to the conversation, and you take it. "Besides, I'd really rather not have to pay for the exorbitant cancellation fees." If you could call the cancellation fees the local OLIVE GARDEN charges 'exorbitant.' "Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to get to class."

And thus you push on away to get away from the jock-head Pete leaving him flabbergasted in the middle of the hallway.

You swear, you never got this kind of attention back in Hauntswitch. Everyone there knew your PA was a weirdo and didn't think he was all that like everyone here does. It's like they think he's a modern day INDIANA JONES or HAN SOLO or something. And it's only been getting worse since Pa died.

Some days the MILITARY BRATS try to press and pry thinking you're gonna be ONE OF THEM just because your PA was seen going into the SGC a few dozen times. Others the JOCKS try to get you involved in their stunts thinking you're gonna be a big huge adventurer like your PA. The amount of girls who've tried flirting with you...

...Surprisingly low, now that you think about it. Still a lot higher than it was back in Hauntswitch but still. Comparatively speaking... You guess that has something to do with you and Cassandra hanging out all the time, cause the only times girls have come up to you has been when she's not around.

...Now you're wondering how the hell Pete back there didn't realize you and Cassandra are dating now?

It doesn't matter. You liked playing the SOCIAL GAME back in Hauntswitch, where everyone was a nobody and nobody was a super special person and people could just hang out and be friends without having any 'political' reasons for it.

If you could consider SCHOOL to be POLITICAL, that is.

But regardless, here? Don't get you wrong, you like Colorado for everything new that's come into your life, but this SOCIAL LADDER CLIMBING EXPECTATION is just...

Urgh.

Give you a good conspiracy group to join, PLEASE.

Your name is GEORGE HAMMOND and you look at Major Karkat Vantas with suspicion. "Are you sure about this?"

"It's one of the few things I'm painfully aware of, Sir," Major Vantas says. "It's time we called in backup- and not to search a Glacier we both know SG-1 didn't go climbing on."
"Alright then," you nod, and with that, the two of you exit your office and head down to the control room.

"Walter!" Vantas begins, "Dial Alternia."

"Sir?" Sgt. Harriman looks up at you, and you nod.

"Do it."

"Yes, Sir," and with that, the nine chevron dialing sequence revs up.

You prepare your words in your mind carefully, weighing options and then coming up with an exact thing to say as the Gate finally locks, and you can radio Alternia.

"Alternia, this is General Hammond of Stargate Command, over," you begin.

"This is Okurii Leijon, receiving you General Hammond," comes the voice of your other-worldly counterpart. "What can we do for you?"

"Major Vantas has requested you send over a team consisting of his past self, Miss Durgas, Miss Claire, and..." You pause, trying to remember the name.

"Polypa Goezee," the time traveler supplies for the other side with a smooth interjection.

"...Are you sure about that, Stargate Command?" Okurii asks, sounding a bit concerned.

"Yes, we are," you say. "Tell them to dress warmly."

"Alright then," Okurii answers. "We'll dial back once we've got them ready to go."

"Another Time Loop?" Karkat Vantas complains as you stand on the steps to the bridge, waiting for the Gate to dial Earth. "Fucking wonderful. I get to be yelled at by my future self for a few hours!"

Your name is MIERFA DURGAS and you're not sure why you and Joey are being asked to come over, specifically, but Joey didn't protest. If anything, she admitted it gives her an opportunity to come clean about what happened to her brother.

...That hasn't stopped her from wearing a faked replica of the Bracelet. It's just painted foam and some translucent rubber-gel crystals that Dammek created for some reason after he returned from Earth from the last visit. You guess he picked up on something.

Up close it looks pretty obviously faked by someone working with a good memory but without a reference photo for exact details; but at a distance it should fool a casual observer.

**WAAA WAAA KAWOOOOSH!**

"SGC this is Alternia," Okurii calls out over the radio, "sending away team."
"Alright," Joey breathes out. "Let's do this."

"Good luck," Okurii wishes you. "Stay safe, and cause exactly as much trouble as is needed."

"You know us too well, boss-lady!" Polypa laughs. "We'll set the place on fire before too long!"

"Please don't set anything on fire," Karkat gripes. "Atleast not with me inside anything."

And with that, you all step through the event horizon.

For a moment, the four of you stand in a red void, before being stretched across space and time, hurtling across the spinning red vortex that flashes, and becomes green, and then you're stepping out the other end of the Gate on EARTH'S GATE RAMP. The Gate shuts down the moment Alternia receives confirmation that all four of you arrived safely.

"Welcome back to Earth," Major Vantas says, standing there at the base of the ramp, arms behind his back and looking like he's about to punch someone in the nose. "Don't get too comfy, you'll be heading out just as soon as you're briefed and re-equipped."

"Oh, joy," Karkat gripes sarcastically, "what lovely local do you have planned for us today, oh master of Time Loops? An active volcano? A boiling desert? Don't leave us in suspense!"

"Don't play dumb, you already know you're going to an Ice planet," Major Vantas answers, smirking at his past self. On that note, some guy with a coat rack steps through one of the Gate Room doors. There are lots of large and fluffy looking coats- similar to the ones you're already wearing, but different in one key detail:

They have patches associated with THE SGC and are labeled with the SG-1 team badge.

"The planet is called P3R-118," Major Vantas says, stripping a coat off of the rack and presenting it to Joey. "SG-1 was sent there a few days ago to negotiate a trade deal... and they didn't come back."

"And you're sending us because you remember going?" Joey asks, frowning as she shrugs off her original jacket and trading it for the one offered.

"That, yes," Major Vantas says, grabbing another jacket and handing it to you, "but also because we can't risk sending another SGC team through the gate to that planet. The local Administrator might just make THEM disappear too. But that's what we're counting on for you four."

"What are we walking into?" You ask, taking the jacket and checking the pockets discretely. You feel a Z-SHAPED kind of device in one pocket, a ZAT GUN, if you had to guess, and a few other things elsewhere.

"Mind Control Scheme added to forced Slave Labor," Major Vantas answers.

"Oh, Lovely," Karkat glares at his older self. "What's the point of sending me? I'm not immune to that shit."

"Spoilers," his older self counters, giving Polypa her jacket- one that sounds distinctly RATTLE-Y from one pocket.

"Fuck that. Why am I going?"
"Spoilers."

"NO. SERIOUSLY!"

"Just take the damned Jacket and deal with the fact that I have my reasons," Major Vantas glares, shoving a jacket into his past self's hands. And with that, he turns on his heel, looks up to the control room, and yells, "DIAL IT UP!"

And with that, Major Vantas exits the gate room. Meanwhile, you and your team quickly clear past the yellow boundary marked on the floor for safe standing clearance, and look at each other warily while the gate spins up seven symbols.

"What's the point of this?" Karkat gripes as he shrugs on his jacket. "Like, seriously, what's the fucking point? We're bait. That's what we are. We're fucking time bait."

"I dunno," Polypa shrugs. "I've always wanted to set fire to an ice planet."

"He knows I'm not at full strength here, right?" Joey asks, voice a whisper as she looks at you.

"Probably," you nod and whisper back. "Which means a few terrifying implications."

'Mind Control Scheme added to forced Slave Labor,' he'd said. That means SG-1 is not themselves... but Joey isn't her human self either.

...Does it not work on Alternia physiology, you wonder?

Maybe that's the trick.

**WAA WAAAA! KAWOOOSH!**

"And once more into the breach," Joey exhales a held breath. "Hoods up."

You all put up your hoods, awkwardly given that the hoods don't have horn holes in them. But that seems to be intentional here.

"Let's go," Joey says, and you open your one jacket pocket and shove a hand inside.

And so you step through the Stargate once more, exiting a warm Gate room and emerging into a frigid cold room covered in snow. There's a missing wall in one place.

The two Guards take one good look at you- see the SG-1 badges, and one promptly grabs their radio to yell- "SG-1 AT THE GATE ROOM!!!"

The other one raises their gun, you've already pulled the ZAT out before they can fire and hit them with a solid *PCH-ZYU!*

Before the Radio-guard can go for their gun, you've re-aimed and *PCH-ZYU'D* them too.

"...where the hell did you get that?" Karkat asks, staring enviously at the Zat gun.

"Check your pockets," you say.
They do so. In addition to each of them having ZATS as well, there's...

"OOOH!" Polypa grins as she reveals what look to be GRENADES. "Spicy!"

"I got a Map," Karkat gripes as he pulls out a hand drawn map of where you're supposed to go.  
"And some kind of hook-gun?"

"GRAPPLING HOOK!" Polypa squeals out.

"I got a..." Joey frowns at a pocket sized SHOUTING-AID. "...A megaphone? Well, okay. Whatever."

"Maybe future me screwed up our jackets," Karkat says. "Trade the map for the shout-aid?"

"Nah, you keep it," Joey says. "You probably drew it anyways off of remembering it."

"...Damn it," Karkat growled. "Stupid time loops."

You check your other pocket, and find that there's some kind of block of clay, labeled "C-4." "The hell is this?"

"Oooh!" Polypa grabs a small metal circuit board with wires sticking out of it from her other pocket-a detonator. "Probably goes with this!"

"Smart to split it between us," you say. Polypa would probably sooner blow something up without restraint if it was kept as one solid piece.

"Alright, that's enough stalling," Joey says, putting the pocket-shout-aid into the pocket it came from.  
"Karkat, show us the way!"

"Right," Karkat nods, and then checks the map. "...This way." And with that, you head off for a door that seems to lead OUTSIDE of what little shelter there was around the Gate.

You wonder what kind of shorthand the map's written in if Karkat can figure it out on his own. It looks pretty SHODDY as far as drawing skills go... well, from what little you can get a look at it before you're mostly blinded by a savage snow flurry.

You stumble through the snow before you hear sudden shouting from over a guards' raido, and then a door suddenly bursts open from out of nowhere, piercing through the cloud of snow.

Joey snaps out with her Zat-gun and manages to hit the door with it. The guard that had been on the other side shouts in surprise and then collapses to the snow covered ground in front of you.

Karkat checks his map, then says, "Ah, we turn right here."

Through the tunnels you go, slowly switching from freezing snow to somewhat WARMER TEMPERATURES the further in you go.

Naturally, more GUARDS come out of the wood-work, but they simply don't stand a chance when you can hear the bastards yelling as they scramble about at "SG-1'S ESCAPE!"
You're starting to see the genius in giving you SGC issue Winter Jackets with the SG-1 Patches on them. By detaining the guards at the Gate before they could report that you'd come THROUGH the Gate, the word got out that "SG-1" was out and about, even if they were actually captured.

In that first guard's panic, the rest of them now think the real SG-1 has made it to the Gate undetected and they're now scrambling to recapture them.

It's brilliant, really, if it were in any way intentional. But you're pretty sure Future Karkat got the idea from Past Karkat seeing all of this chaos going on around him... maybe.

Or maybe he's got no idea what exactly is going on beyond the fact that he's navigating off of a map he himself hasn't drawn yet? Who can say. You sure can't.

Soon, you come to a turning point, but instead of going down the turn, Karkat frowns, and says, "We should be going straight through."

"C-4?" Polypa asks, looking to Joey.

"C-4," Joey nods, to which the Olive blood squeals in delight.

With a shrug of indifference, you hand her the block of clay. It sticks to the wall, and then in goes the detonation relay, and Polypa sets it for a decent 15 seconds.

Wait. FIFTEEN?

You all back way the fuck up down the hall and duck for cover.

Administrator Calder was in a panic.

HOW the hell had SG-1 managed to ESCAPE the Power Generator Rooms???

Someone had to be helping them on the inside, but WHO!?

It made no sense. It made no sense at all- how the hell did they-!?

And then the door to his office was slammed open, and in came an irate looking SUPERVISOR BRENNA storms into his office.

"The Jaffa is dying, we can't figure out what's wrong with him," she begins. "We need to-"

And then Administrator Calder opens a drawer, grabs his gun, and shoots her in the arm.

"YOU!" He growls. "You let them go!"

"W-What!?" Brenna asks, shocked by being shot.

"SG-1! They escaped!" He yells at her. "You helped them!"

"What are y-you talking about!?" Brenna yells back at him, "They're all still in the power room!"

"THEN WHO THE HELL IS THE SG-1--"
That's when the entire building shakes with the sound of a **KA-BOOOM!**

"...Doing. That?" Calder asks, faintly.

Explosives?? They had EXPLOSIVES??

"...Not the SG-1 you had brain-washed," Brenna glares at him, "that's for sure."

A hole punched in a wall, an UNCONSCIOUS TEAL'C rescued from a soon-torched-by-grenade MEDBAY, and a spiraling staircase into a massive cavern later, your team stands on a ledge overlooking a crowd of confused workers.

Karkat takes up a guard position, You and Polypa are doing most of the carrying of Teal'c for the moment, and Joey takes the opportunity to take out the pocket-shout-aid thing and clicks it on.

"GREETINGS, ILLEGALLY ENSLAVED CITIZENS! WE'RE HERE FOR SG-1," Joey declares. "WOULD THE REAL O'NEILL, CARTER, AND SKAARA PLEASE STAND UP!!"

Somehow, you feel more than see where a set of eyes are looking on you, and there you spot SKAARA, looking like for all the world like his vacation has ended and confused as to why he's feeling that.

You feel more eyes, and you spot O'NEILL and CARTER- holding hands, aww, how cute!- looking like they just had their wildest dreams confirmed and served up on a silver platter.

And then some guards barge in from opposite the other side of the room, and there's an angry looking man standing there, glaring, and a woman who looks like she'd been SHOT IN THE ARM. Wow, you can practically FEEL her anger and resentment radiating off of her like a sun.

You glance at Polypa, and she glances back at you, then you both look at the angry man.

And before he can issue a single order, Polypa aims her Zat and - **PCH-ZYU!** - Down the angry man goes.

Arm-shot woman takes the opportunity to jump onto something tall and yells out, "ADMINISTRATOR CALDER HAS BEEN LYING TO US ALL! THE SURFACE MAY BE COVERED IN SNOW, BUT IT'S NOT AN ICE AGE! WE JUST HAPPEN TO LIVE INCREDIBLY FAR NORTH BECAUSE NOBODY ELSE ON THE PLANET WANTED TO DEAL WITH CALDER'S FANATACISM AND BRAINWASHING PROGRAMS!"

And with a nod at Karkat from Joey, he draws out his grappling hook, aims it at the nearest rafter- **PCHFWOOMP!** **TWLINK!** **SHCK!** -and there it stays.

With a kick off from where he's standing Karkat swings down into the crowd, and as he gets closer, somehow, through him, you're able to get a sense of what's been done to these people.

O'neill and Carter approach, and you get an even better look at what's been done- somehow. Brainwashing that just needs the slightest TUG before it all unravels entirely and-
Somehow, you do just that. And then like a ripple of a stone tossed into a pond, it spreads out across the workers. And they REMEMBER.

Knowing what to look for, you check Teal'c, but find that it's already been undone by something else... the Symbiote?

Wait. What the hell just happened here??

...You're not entirely sure what you just did, but your name is MIERFA DURGAS and you sure as hell just did it. Your free hand grabs Joeys and you squeeze it tight.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and your triumphant return to Earth with a bunch of refugees is soured only slightly by the appearance of an IRATE POLITICIAN who seems to have been waiting in the Control Room.

Hammond nods at you, then heads upstairs with the Politician. With a daring, ditzy smile to Mierfa, you head to the Conference room.

For all the anger you've had at the Bracelet getting broken, you think you're going to RELISH THIS next moment. Just a little bit.

"Miss. Harley." The guy you think is a politician grits out, glaring at you like... like...

Like nothing at all like Scratch, or the Empress, or even Trizza.

"Sorry, what?" You ask, putting on a drawl similar to Skylla's. "Name's Claire. Bonnie Claire."

He glares, "Don't give me that crap. I know it's you. Joey Harley. Daughter of Jake Harley. Illegally hiding on an alien planet. I don't buy that cheap ass disguise for a minute."

You look to Hammond, and ask, "Who's this douche-bag?"

Hammond doesn't answer, as the guy introduces himself, "I am SENATOR KINSEY. And you are in a lot of trouble little lady."

Kinsey, huh?

You can roll with that.

"Ohhh!" you say. "Now I recognize you!"

"Hah!" the man laughs something that sounds like a gotcha.

"Yeah, you're the human version of that bastard Senator from Dragonia," you say, "Senator Lemonsnout."
Whatever the hell Kinsey was expecting, it wasn't that, because he flounders for a moment.

"So, Senator Lemonsnout," you say, "what do you want from lil' ol' Bonnie Claire?"

"Whatever," the Senator shakes his head. "We of the United States Senate Appropriations Committee, and the heads of the NID's Board of Trustees, request you come with us so that we can study the powers of your... unique bracelet and replicate its powers."

"...What powers?" You ask, removing the fake bracelet, and tossing it onto the table. "Mine's just a copy."

Kinsey stares for a moment, and even Hammond seems taken back at this sudden turn of events. Did he know this was coming? Did Major Vantas even tip him off?

Doesn't matter.

"Wh-What do you mean a Copy!?" Kinsey asks, stumbling over to pick up the faked bracelet.

"I thought miss Joey Claire's bracelet was really cool," you lie, "and since we're basically twins except for species differences, I commissioned a copy. It's just foam and translucent gels, but it's pretty neat, right?"

"So the real Bracelet and the actual Joey Claire is still on Alternia, correct?" Hammond asks, finally getting his wits about him, and starting to smile just a bit.

"Eyuuup," You drawl out the lie as convincingly as you can. "Can I get my bracelet back now, or do I have to get another one made?"

Your answer comes in the form of Kinsey snapping the damned fake into two chunks, revealing its foamy interior.

"...Well okay then," you say. "Can I go now?"

Kinsey says nothing, instead stumbling into a chair and looking dazed.

Hammond just nods at you, "You're dismissed. Sorry for the hassle, Bonnie."

You crack a grin, and then head back down to rejoin your team.

Today was a good day.

Chapter End Notes

Lights flickering, snow falling. Summary short. Have a chapter.
EDIT: Typo pass done. Egregious errors fixed. Hope the weather is nicer where you're at, dear reader, on whatever day you're reading this.
ALT:04X14: The Moth called Icarus

Chapter Summary

Be glad I decided Tirona was too young to live up to the title of TATTLEERROR in full.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 3/23/0001

"It BROKE!"

Your name is Joey Claire, and you wince at the nearly shrill high pitched note your Brother managed to hit by way of trying to whisper a startled shout.

"Yes, Jude," you say, keeping your voice down low as you glance out into the hallway through an Arai beetle's eyes. Nobody seems to have heard it. "The Bracelet broke."

"That's horrible," Cassandra chimes in, frowning. "So you're stuck?"

"Until I can find Shaper again, if it's even still around," you sigh.

Right now the lot of you are in Jude's/Pa's office- a group consisting of you, Mierfa, Jude, Cassandra, and the four time traveling kids from the future.

"Well, that's not good," John remarks. "How did it break?"

"Some lady called the Handmaid came to steal it," you explain. "Karkat hit her in the head with a crowbar, and we're *fairly* certain that whatever weird time-mumbo-jumbo was done on her got transfered onto the Bracelet fragments when she died."

"Time Mumbo Jumbo?" Argo asks, "What do you mean by that?"

"Lady looked like she'd been run through an explosion, was still living through it, and wasn't even put through it all at the same time," Mierfa summarizes.

"Considering what was left of the Bracelet looked like it was exploded to pieces?" You sigh. "Yeah. We're pretty sure that whatever the Crowbar did to her, it caused all that weird temporal energy to jump ship to the nearest object."

"Second Hand Exposure to an explosion of time based energy?" Rose muses. "We're lucky it didn't jump onto one of you instead of the Bracelet."
"Lucky, yeah," Mierfa scoffs. "If that's what you'd call getting shards of crystal jabbed into tender flesh, then sure. What a Lucky Break!"

Jude looks at you, eyes widening in concern, and you sigh. Jacket shrugged off shoulder, shirt collar and sleeve pulled down enough to show Administrator's form embedded over your heart- everyone stares for a moment- Mierfa the only one out of sympathy.

"Mierfa got Regent in the shoulder, Admin merged with me, and Xefros..." You trail off. "Well, a part of Reaper apparently hit his skull, but we haven't found any traces of it."

"We won't tell anyone," Cassandra promises, and the others nod in agreement.

"Thanks," you say as you re-align your shirt and jacket. "Figured that'd be the case, but it's always nice to get confirmation."

"So," Jude begins, "do you have any ideas where Shaper might have landed?"

"No idea," you shake your head. "For all I know it could be anywhere in time and space and we'd never find it until it's already gone and grafted itself to someone."

---

{Meanwhile back in the Alternian Galaxy...}

Your name is BOLDIR LAMATI, an OLIVE BLOOD on a mission to expose some DEEP-STATE SECRETS and bring them back to the REBELLION.

As of right now, you reside MILES ABOVE THE SURFACE, staring down through a pair of BINOCULARS at an ALTERNIAN COMMANDER'S SPACESHIP. How? By way of a DRAGONFLY piloted by an exceedingly cheerful Bronze Blood named VIKARE RATITE.

You two have worked MANY MISSIONS together, and while he's certainly an over-eager sort of fellow, you wouldn't trust anyone else to keep you out of SONAR RANGE so you can do your SNOOPING.

He's a damned good pilot, you'll say that much.

Your TARGET of the day is a CORRUPT LOUT of a woman named THE MOTHCAPE, and if you can get this information back to the Rebellion... then the next team that comes through this planet's Stargate will deliver a SWIFT KICK IN THE REAR to the MOTHCAPE'S... erhm... posterior.

"Not to be buggy, Boldir," Vikare's voice echoes in your ear. "But how much longer? We need to land and refuel soon."

"Can we last another minute?" You ask, not taking your eyes off of the window you're peering in through.

The MOTHCAPE is busy taking a luxurious bath at the moment, at the total expense of the local planet- which is going through a drought season right now.
You can see all the multitude of scars along her back. What interests YOU, however, is the shiny PINK GEMSTONE EARRING attached to her left ear. It looks familiar somehow.

"Yeah, I think we can-" and then Vikare's voice suddenly goes silent with a wet squish and you feel the entire Dragonfly JOLT BENEATH YOU. To the point you drop your binoculars down and down and down and down.

"Vikare!" You turn around in your seat and see that something has SHOT THROUGH your pilot's head and into the control console.

He's dead. Oh GLUB he's DEAD. He's DEAD!?

You don't have long to worry about that because power cuts out to the engines a second later and gravity takes hold and you're suddenly TUMBLING DOWNWARDS AND DOWNWARDS.

You grab at the controls past Vikare's body and try to restart the damned thing but it's not working. Whatever went through Vikare's head is- is- It's jammed into the tender inner workings of the ship and it's broken something.

You take a glance at the ground rushing up to meet you and figure you have but a few moments to try and fix this mess.

You reach into the shiny new hole in the control console and grope around for whatever it was that impacted it. (Oh GLUB there's BLOOD and BRAIN MATTER in here-- DON'T THINK ABOUT IT DON'T THINK ABOUT IT.)

Your fingers brush against what feels like some kind of... crystal fragment? Did a piece of space rock fall from the sky or something??

NO! FOCUS BOLDIR! FOCUS!!!

You grip at the crystal and yank it--

---

**Time stops for a moment** as you feel crushed in a psychic grip. The Handmaiden yells- and the Heiress yells back. There's a back and forth to it.

And then you're suddenly KNOCKED SIDEWAYS through time by fragments of your own future self slamming into you and making the damage to your shell even worse.

You can feel in that brief moment that your future self is LESSER somehow. Like MOST of you isn't there anymore- and what tiny bit is left is desperately seeking out a host in order to survive.

And then you're TUMBLING through the air and smashing through something hard, then soft, then hard again, and you feel like you're leaking out energy everywhere.

A hand touches you, and you feel a portion of yourself being siphoned into its owner as whatever time jump just happened completes itself and your shell is yanked--
The world flickers for a moment.

You're staring up at a ceiling as you toss a ball up and down in your hands. Playing catch with yourself is boring, but the Doctors say it helps with the hand eye coordination.

You catch the ball as it falls down into your hands, and prepare to toss it upwards--

The world flickers again.

Suddenly, you're looking over a crowd of aliens, out of the eyes of someone else entirely. You see a boy who looks like his vacation's been ruined, and then two others holding hands, how cute.

Someone is talking through a shout-aid but you can't pick out exact words. It's... muffled. Like you're underwater. Also, alien in origin, a bit. You look, and see... Joey Claire? What the hell?

A man bursts out from a door- and is stunned into submission- a woman jumps onto a high place and starts yelling in an alien language.

What the hell is going on here?? And then you feel like you're being pulled backwards and--

OUT and there's nothing in your hand! What the hell? You could have sworn- No. Never mind It's fine. IT'S FINE. You've got it loose and you've got SECONDS LEFT to rewire this control console before you go SPLAT on the ground.

So you do.

Somehow it makes more sense than anything else in the world in that moment.

This is the remnant of the red wire, twist and connect it to the piece of black here, then take green and connect to blue and-

For a brief moment, you get a shock along your arm, but that just signals that your job was a success. Well, that, and the PCHOOOOOOO of the rocket thrusters engaging and slowing your descent just enough so that your brutal impact with the ground isn't brutal enough to turn you into jelly.

Instead, you're just sent flying out of the Dragonfly and into some bushes.

You're barely conscious enough to watch on with remorse as the remains of the Dragonfly EXPLODE, taking Vikare's body with it.

Then, you pass out.


DIASPORA DATE: 3/24/0001
You come back to with the sensation of water being splashed in your face.

"Well, Well, Well," a sharp voice rolls as you shake your head out and look around. "Looks like a little moth got too close to the flames."

You're captive. Hands bound to manacles on the wall above your head, and the MOTHCAPE is standing above you, dressed in all REGAL PURPLES and fish-fin-themed clothes that would seem IMPRACTICALLY RANDOMLY DESIGNED if you hadn't seen all of her scars earlier.

A FAMILIAR LARGE WINDOW and an emptied BATHTUB lie across the room from you, framing the EMPIRE GENERAL in a SUNRISE LIKE AURA.

-Intentional,- a voice whispers in the back of your mind. -Thinks of herself like a goddess above even the Empress. Wants you to think that.-

You take stock of your state of dress and see that your CLOAK AND HAT have been laid out on a nearby desk- and your pockets emptied of stuff.

-Searching for information on who you are.-

Ah, geeze, there's your GDO there too. Damn it.

-Doesn't know what it means.-

Oh, well, there's that at least.

...Wait, how are you realizing this?

"Oi! Stop staring off into space!" The MOTHCAPE growls at you.

-ANGRY. Wants all attention on her.- Well, DUH, that was obvious.

"Uh... sorry?" You offer. "Kinda hard to focus when I just got shoved outa crashing ship."

"Don't care what makes you ditzy," the MOTHCAPE glares, "I wanna know what you're doing on my PLANET, SPY."

-Suspects you were sent by the Empress to spy on her. Will kill you if you don't confirm that suspicion. Thinks her lack of progress on taking over the planet is raising concerned alarms.-

Well that's useful.

"The Empress sent me," you say. "She's not happy with your work ethic lately."

"DAMN IT!" She roars, turns on her heels, and stomps off towards her bath tub to stare out the window.

-Suspicions Confirmed. Angry. Feels like she let her guard down. Actually letting her guard down while she thinks on what to do next. Great. You glance up at the cuffs holding you in place. -Simple Locks. Key in HIDDEN POCKET, front center, waist level of dress.-

Oh, like hell you're reaching in there.
-Locks could be picked, or forced open.- Oh? How? -Brute Force.- ...And if you don't have the muscle strength for that? -Manacle size scaled for adults. Wrist size small enough that a broken thumb could allow you to slip out.-

The HELL is with the sudden self destructive thoughts?

The MOTHCAPE turns to return her attention towards you before you get an answer to that.

-About to propose a deal.-

"I wanna propose a deal for you, little Spy," the Mothcape says.

"What kind of deal?" You ask, and the voice inside your head somehow supplies the words you need to keep going. "Do you want me to lie to the Empress or something? Say you're doing just fine as it is, and you let me go?"

"Yes!" The woman says, grinning. "Exactly that!"

-Will offer you false information to feed the Empress, to her benefit.-

Then the Mothcape goes on to offer exactly that. Wait, is this what you think it is? Have you SOMEHOW gained a PSYCHIC ABILITY of some kind??

-Will happily let you go if you agree to wild terms of Empire benefit that you cannot provide.-

You agree to the Mothcape's wild terms of service, knowing full well you're never going to be feeding the Empress this information at all.

And then... she lets you go. You gather up your things, and you prepare to make your way back to the Stargate on foot.

A thought hits you as you glance at the Mothcape's earring. Because if you ARE suddenly reading this woman's mind... You'd heard something strange had happened to the BRACELET KEY Joey owned, so... You eye the earring on her ear. Could that be it? Was it that crystal from the dashboard?

-Earring Costume Jewlery. Made of glass and food coloring. Designed to fool causal observers into thinking she owns a piece of the Royal Bracelet. God Complex at its finest.-

Ah, so hers is a fake. Lovely. You don't have to worry about that, then. Still, what about the thing that caused all of this to happen?

You get no response as you leave the ship via Ring Transport. You don't get one as you walk back to the Stargate. And you still have none as you dial a random ass planet, and gate through, before redialing a few more times to other worlds to cover your trail before you finally dial out to Alternia and head home.

---

Your name is MIERFA DURGAS and you're definitely dealing with a suddenly forming Psychic power that's kicked in for seemingly no reason. After returning to Alternia, you've quite suddenly
become aware of various minds that you can feel... being there. And you couldn't it before, even after having that damned crystal jabbed in your shoulder.

You'd wonder what the change is when you suddenly feel a pull from the Gate room. Like half of a link has suddenly been restored. You tell Joey, and then you and her make your way to the All Your Base's gate room, just in time to witness the return of one of the RECONISANCE SPIES, BOLDIR LAMATI.

She locks eyes with you, you lock eyes with her, and despite the PULLING TUG you're feeling towards her, you can't sense her mind at all.

"Something happened," you realize.

"What do you mean?" Joey asks.

"Lamati!" Okurii heads down the stairs towards the girl. "Where's Ratite? And more importantly, why did you come back from a different planet entirely?"

"Mission went sideways," Lamati says, breaking eye contact with you for a moment, and turning to look at Okurii. "Some kind of rock thing fell out of the sky and crashed into the ship's console. Went through Vikare's head to get there."

"A kind of rock?" Joey asks, interjecting herself into the conversation. "Did you see what it was?"

"Grabbed it out of the console, but then it vanished," Lamati answers. "I blacked out for a moment too. Saw something weird. I... I think whatever the hell it was, it was one of those Crystals from your bracelet."

"Which one?" You ask, fearing you know the answer for your sudden activation of powers.

"Considering I'm suddenly gaining all kinds of insight from people's minds just by standing here?" she frowns. "Uh... I'm pretty sure it was the blue one."

"Regent?" Joey frowns. "But it wound up in Mierfa's shoulder."

"Lamati, When did this happen?" You ask, a growing suspicion as to something happening around the same time.

"Sometime yesterday," the girl answers.

"What did you see?" You ask.

"I saw..." She pauses. "Wait a second. I saw a room full of aliens and Joey was yelling through a shout-aid device at them. Then some guy burst out through a door and got stunned, and a woman got on a table and-" she stops suddenly. "What the fuck?"

"That's from our mission on P3R-118 yesterday," Joey says, eyes going wide.

"Holy shit," you stare for a moment. "Lamati and I both must have gotten Regents powers somehow! That explains why it came out of nowhere for me. It was waiting for Lamati to get her powers!"
"How is that even possible?" Okurii asks.

"I don't know," Joey shakes her head. "But what HAS made sense about this whole thing after the Handmaid died?"

"...Good point," Okurii frowns. "So it's possible that even if we do find one instance of every crystal..."

"There might be who knows how many others out there in the galaxy right now," Joey answers.

"There's something else," Lamati says. "I don't think 'Regent' went straight to Mierfa after it left me."

"So someone else out there might have gotten to touch Regent in between those few moments and might ALSO have gotten powers?" Okurii frowns. "I'm not sure I like the sound of that."

"Me either," Joey chimes in. "Cause if Mierfa's gotten Regent's mind control dismissal abilities, and Lamati's gotten...?"

"Insight on people's memories and thoughts, I think," the girl answers.

"Then someone else has the ability to actually control people's minds," Joey concludes. "And that's the worst part of all to be out on its own somewhere."

"Especially if it wound up in the wrong hands," you agree. "The Mofang Emperor used it to mind control his own people. Who knows what whoever else has the rest of Regent will do with that kind of power."

Meanwhile, in the cafeteria within the Astro Megaship's hull, a certain Cerulean blooded girl sneezes.

Chapter End Notes

I'll be honest. I wasn't sure where today's chapter was going to go until the Troll Call hit.

Boldir Lamati is going to be fun to work with :33
"Does anyone know what this meeting's about?" Carter asks as she sits down in a chair with a cup of coffee.

"No, but I hope it's important," Skaara laments, seeming just a little bit withdrawn. "I was right in the middle of translating that tablet we found on P30-255."

"Yeah, I have to finish re-calibrating the MALP's 3K sensors for the long-term recon on P5X-3D7."

"I was unable to complete my kelno'reem," Teal'c says, slightly annoyed.

You? Your name is Colonel Jack O'neill and all you want to do right now is go FISHING.

Is that so hard to ask for after being BRAINWASHED into thinking you're someone else? It's been almost... two weeks? And sure you had about a whole half of that to get your head back on straight after somehow being snapped out of it. But still, right after that you're sent right back to work and... URGH.

"I was just about to do something important," you chime in just to add to the conversation.

And then Hammond comes into the Conference room, with a tired looking Roxy Egbert and Jude Harley at his side.

You go to stand up, but Hammond dismisses it with an "As you were," while he and the others sit down.

A few moments later, Hammond begins, "Early this morning, at aproximately Oh-Four-hundred hours, the Egbert household recieved the following call."

"Telemarketers?" You guess.

"You'd hope so, but nope," Jude says, drawing out a cassette tape recorder/player and placing it down on the table.

You notice that the player casing has a piece of paper taped onto it reading "Anti-Harassment
Jude presses the PLAY BUTTON. There's a click, and then Roxy's voice comes out of the player, "is this about the Harley Estate? Because otherwise there had better be a damned good reason to call this early in the morning," Roxy answered, and you see the woman sitting, annoyed, at her chair as she relives the conversation. "And yes, we record out calls in case a sensitive issue regarding the estate comes up. I just started recording, as a matter of fact."

"Okay, good," comes the voice of the caller, someone who sounds like he's a normally mousy kind of person, but can scrounge up some determination every now and then. He clears his throat, and then says, "I have a message for whoever currently is in possession of the large, ring shaped device found in Giza in 1928. I believe Jake Harley was the last one to own it but it may have transferred ownership to the US Air-force following his death, and is currently in active use at the base of a certain Missile Silo under a certain secret program code named 'Stargate Command'?"

You blink, and sit upright a bit more, as does the rest of SG-1.

"I can neither confirm or deny such a program exists," Roxy's voice answers, tensely, suddenly very alert as well. "But I might know who owns that giant ring now- why do you ask?"

"Tell whoever is willing to meet me that I'd like to meet, in person, alone with a representative. No bugs, no wires. I'm not an amateur. I know all about Roswell and the Kennedy cover-ups, and the-"

Jude starts fast forwarding, and Roxy supplies a "He goes on like that for a while."

Jude resumes playing to check- "and the prototype virtual reality headgear with the microwave problems, and the-" And then continues fast forwarding.

"Quite a while," Jude mutters.

"I was mostly in shock about him knowing about the Stargate at this point," Roxy says.

Jude stops fast forwarding again, "the lizard people, AND the snake-based body jackers."

Oh hello.

"But that's not important," the man on the line says. "As I said before, I'd like to set up a meeting. Butte, Montana, a little place called Average Joe's, at, uh, eleven or twelve-ish? I'm flexible on hours if you're flying someone out here."

Jude stops the recording there at Hammond's nod, and the General begins to speak, "He then went on to list the names of certain SGC personelle as possible representatives before settling on you," he looks at you, pointedly.

"Me?" You ask.

"By name," Hammond says, "and specifically with 'two L's.'"

"...Huh," you blink. "That's... uh..."

"SG-1," Hammond orders, "you leave in 30 minutes. I want you to find out how the hell he got his information, and who this man is."
"...Aye, Sir," you nod.

And with that, you gear up to leave.

You get the feeling it's going to be one hell of a day.

Your name is JOHN SHEPPARD, formerly EGBERT, and you frown as the lot of you wait around at the STRIDER HOUSE later that afternoon. "I think I vaguely remember this happening the last time?"

"Really? You remember us getting a phone call at ass-o'clock in the morning," Rose remarks, looking up from her and her past self's knitting work (One is decidedly better looking than the other, for two nearly identical piles of tangled yarn), "but you don't remember half of the other fine details of our old time line?"

"What can I say," you shrug, "I don't have as good of a memory for stuff like that as you do, Rose. But I make up for it in sheer imagination!"

Jade giggles from her spot on the floor over near where her younger self is coloring in a coloring book. "That is true!"

"What do you guys remember?" Jude asks, half focused on keeping your own past self from eating a crayon, and the rest of his attention on the conversation.

"I think..." You frown. "Is the name Martin Lloyd sounding right to anyone?"

"The guy who directed the TV series based on Stargate Command after it got de-classified?" Argo asks, pausing briefly in her preening work on her younger-self's feathery wings. Nepeta whines after a moment, and Argo resumes work picking pieces of crayon wrapper and torn up paper out of her younger-self's wings.

"Yeah, him," you nod. "The first time I remember hearing his name it was around this time of year the first time around."

"Now that you mention it," Rose says, "I think they did have the same voice."

"Mmh," Jade nods. "That sounds right to me too. I think he dropped by once for an interview?"

"Something like that," you agree.

Cassandra enters the room from the kitchen a moment later, sipping at a glass of water. Unceremoniously, she sits down next to Jude, and asks, "We still talking about this guy who called this morning?"

"Yup," Jude nods.

"I don't get any long term bad vibes coming up around the guy right now," Cassandra answers, "so... I guess we're good, with him existing as a person. I guess. If that makes any sense?" She frowns, and mumbles as she tries to make sense of the things she just said.
"Good to know," Jude says.

"Yeah," you nod.

"He was probably one of the least bad things about our old time line," Rose says. "Glad to see that he's going to be a part of this one too."

"I wonder if we'll get an SGC documentary series this time around, or something completely different?" Argo muses.

"Who knows," you say. "Honestly, I'd love it if they did something more comedy focused than history focused."

"I dunno," Cassandra muses. "A Comedy leaning sci-fi show? You'd have to seriously balance it out right with good serious episodes otherwise it might get canceled before it even starts."

"Eh," Argo shrugs, "it can't turn out worse than Firefly."

"Hey!" You complain, "Don't jinx it!"

Meanwhile, deep in orbit over some unknown planet, a small CARGO SHIP's receives a transmission from a certain source of information.

"Interesting," the pilot muses, reading over the data. "Of course they would be on Earth."

On the one hand, Jayni's job offer isn't really an offer. He'd have to do it regardless. On the other hand... given his HOST'S REPUTATION on Earth, infiltration was going to be as easy as it could possibly be. The only risk involved were the SGC becoming aware of his presence, but...

If her information was right and the SGC would be distracted by a ROGUE DEATH GLIDER? Well...

Hunting down Osiris before they became a problem would be something he could manage. And if... if it just so happened that an opportunity to turn Osiris against Jayni's monopoly on the Galaxy at large presented itself... well...

Atum was not one to complain.

He sent back a reply to the woman pretending to be the Goa'uld Nirrti, saying he'd take the job, and began plotting a hyperspace route back to Earth.

It was time for Dr. Daniel Jackson to re-enter the world of Egyptian Archeology.

Chapter End Notes

Point of No Return is a fun episode, but there's not a lot of butterflies to be had about it.
Still gonna take the opportunity to officially plant the seeds of Marty's presence for later down the line, and do some set up for the next big episode that DOES get butterflied by quite a bit.
Chapter Summary

Title would be more accurate if it were called "The Attack of the Butterfly Effect" but I'm trying to be accurate to the actual episode in question. XP

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 4/17/0001.

Your name is DANIEL JACKSON- and for once in a blue moon, your POSSESSOR is letting you run almost everything on the surface level. Oh, sure, you can only think about turning and running to the SGC for but a second before Atum will shut you down, but hey, it's the thought that counts, right?

You'd only just gotten into a CLOAKED ORBIT over Earth when your Cargo Ship's scanners detect a ROGUE DEATH GLIDER shooting out of Earth's atmosphere. When it blows past you, it certainly looks like it was once a Death Glider, but it's been reworked to some degree- with the markings "X-301" painted on one wing.

You think you see two pilots inside, but you can't tell who it is as they blow past. If it was anyone you knew, that'd explain why the SGC would be distracted by this.

You land the Cargoship in CHICAGO, and begin making your way around town, looking for signs of your OLD CIRCLE making local news, because that's the clearest sign of trouble if Jayni is sending ATUM to do stuff here, armed with FUTURE KNOWLEDGE.

What you find is a newspaper article citing a RECENT EXPLOSION and that your old ARCHAEOLOGY PROFESSOR, one DR. DAVID JORDAN, has died in it.

The funeral is today, of all coincidences. (There are none when it comes to Jayni's meddling with the time line.)

You quickly acquire a SUIT, do a quick INTERNET SEARCH via the Cargo Ship's computers, and find the FUNERAL, which you go to attend as quickly as possible.

Your old friend DR. STEVEN RAYNER is giving the... the... for a moment, your mind blanks out on the word you want. The obituary? No. The... the...

You can't believe you've forgotten the word for this very important thing. The- the- Damn it. Being shoved into the back of your own head for so long seems to be having some ILL EFFECTS on your cognitive reasoning.
THE EULOGY! That's it.

In the amount of time it took you to rationalize out that one word, it seems the eulogy has ended, and down into the grave goes the casket with Dr. Jordan. And so everyone begins breaking up to either leave, or hang around for a few more minutes to grieve.

You hang around, hoping to make contact with someone else... but your attention, first and foremost, is drawn to the small refreshments table that was set up.

Oh thank you, whoever set this up! You've been absolutely parched. Not much going for the way of FRESH WATER on a Cargo ship.

Casually, but greedily, you drink up a cup of water. Oh, that just feels so good. To be able to drink something out of your own volition.

Atum writhes in your neck in dissatisfaction, urging you to get on with it.

"And so the Prodigal Son returns," and then there's Steven Rayner, come to interject himself into your life.

"Daniel?" And there's Sarah Gardner, too, sounding much more relieved to see you.

This is going to be a fun conversation.

Meanwhile, in the X-301.

"You just HAD to try and take the new prototype for a Joy Ride, didn't you, Rose!?!" Cassandra complains, loudly, while flipping switches and pressing buttons to no avail.

"You're the one who jumped in the back seat and didn't try to stop me!" Rose complains back as she punches at controls that refuse to respond.

"We get the best outcome this way!" Cassandra remarks. "Not so much if you went alone!"

"And this is BEST!?!" Rose yells, near shrieking in panic. "HOW IS THIS THE BEST OUTCOME!?"

"I don't know! Maybe the fact that you might have blown yourself up the moment you lost control if you were on your own?!" Cassandra draws up the first worst case scenario her predictive powers can draw up.

Rose has no immediate response to that kind of statement.

[Curses do not exist,] Atum protests within the back of your mind as you look over the picture of the MISSING GOLDEN AMULET, showing it to the ADMINISTRATOR of the Storage Warehouse. [Key-based technology, on the other hand, does. This is a key.]
"Hrm, no, haven't seen that," the Administrator lady says, "But you know what, I *DID* Just find a canopic jar that was mislabled and supposed to be with the Steward Expedition relics."

"A canopic Jar?" you ask, surprised, and Atum's attention is suddenly heightened.

[Interesting.]

"Yes, hold on, let's go see if we can find it," the lady says, and leads you through the shelves...

Then, you come face to face with a CANOPIC JAR depicting ISIS, and marked with EGYPTIAN and GOA'ULD text, the latter of which reads "Banished to Oblivion."

[This is a stasis container,] Atum realizes. [A shame the seal is cracked, if what's inside this is what I think it is.]

Needless to say, Atum takes over, and you take the damned jar back to the Cargo Ship instead of returning it to the collection soon destination-bound for Cairo.

And then he just breaks the lid open, dumps the contents out into a large bowl and OH GOD that's a dead Goa'uld Symbiote.

"Very much a shame," Atum mutters. "Behold, Daniel Jackson, Isis- a Queen Symbiote... dead."

And thus, control is returned, ever so reluctantly, to you.

"The administrator mentioned there was a second jar," you say out loud, putting the pieces together. "Isis and Osiris Jars. This one was cracked, but the other one was intact according to the pictures, so if this is Isis... then... Then Osiris' jar is still out there somewhere with a live Symbiote in it."

[Or it might have been opened,] Atum points out. [Which would fit with the task Jayni has given us.]

"Either way, we need to find that jar," you say.

Back on the Prototype, Experimental Fighter, 301...

"Negative, SGC! I repeat, Negative!" Cassandra says into the radio. "Firing off the rockets without disengaging is a BAD IDEA and could damage the X-301 and probably get us killed. Over."

There's a long pause, and the two girls wait for the radio signal to go out, and a reply to be sent back.

"Sling shotting around Jupiter," Rose scoffs. "Even if we did manage to pull that off, what's to stop the Glider's blackbox from kicking back in and turning us right back around?"

"No clue," Cassandra sighs.

After a few more moments of silence, the radio chirps.

"Roger that, X-301," Carters voice comes over the line. "Considering intercept options. Over."
"Intercept options, intercept options..." Cassandra frowns. "Man, it'd be really great if Thor dropped in all of a sudden."

"Yeah," Rose agrees. "That'd just be-

PVVVVOOOOOOMMM-SHING!

"-GreaaaaaTOOF!"

And then the two girls land flat on their backs on the floor of an Asgard ship.

Rose and Cassandra glance over at the command chair and the Asgard piloting it.

"Now that's timing!" Cassandra grins.

"Indeed," Thor agrees, eyeing the two girls who definitely should not have been inside the X-301.

A minute of travel time later, there's another PVVVVOOOOM-SHING and then Major Carter and Colonel O'neill are standing there in the Asgard ship, mid conversation.

"-could contact the Tok'ra to- Woah!" Carter jumps after she realizes there's been a change of scenery.

"Thor?" O'neill turns to see the Asgard, and the two rescued girls. "Cassie! Rose! What the hell happened?"

"I intercepted your radio transmissions while entering the solar system, and redirected my ship to intercept the rogue vessel," Thor answers. "I appologize that it's taken me this long to return, but it seems it was a well timed arrival."

"I'll say," Carter shakes her head.

"What happened with the Replicators?" O'neill asks.

"Upon arrival, I found my home world over run by Replicators, terminally so," Thor answers. "With the disruptor weapon, I and a few survivors who had not evacuated cleared a path to a single surviving space ship, uploaded the Stargate onto it, and jettisoned it into our sun, causing it to go super nova and destroying the foothold the Replicators had gotten on our home world."

"...You replicated the Mofang nova weapon with a Stargate," Sam realizes. "You dialed a Black Hole Stargate, didn't you?"

"We did," Thor nods. "I remembered Major Strider remarking about the peculiar events that transpired when you did the same thing by accident, and proposed doing similar intentionally." He pauses, then adds, "We then did the same feat to systems controlled entirely by the Replicators."

"Pretty hard for them to survive an exploding sun, I guess," O'neill muses.

"Indeed," Thor nods. "Using this technique, we were able to push back the Replicator's territory to a more containable level, and the Asgard have begun resettling on a new homeworld. Once I had a free moment, I took a ship to come return here."
"We're glad you did," Cassandra says, smiling.

"Yeah," Rose nods. "I... I did a stupid thing again."

"This is starting to become a concerning habit, you know," O'neill says, fixing a gaze on Rose that she'd seen many times before in another life time.

"I know," Rose hangs her head in shame. "I... I'm just getting so bored here on Earth anymore. Alternia was so much more... fun!"

"Well, I'm sure we can work something out to keep you occupied," Carter says. "...Something that doesn't involve you stealing technology from the researchers working on it."

It's to your surprise that you find Sarah in the archive room, mumbling to herself in the dark as she searches for something.

"Sarah?" You shine your flashlight on her, and for a moment, you swear her eyes reflect back the light oddly.

"Gah! Daniel! What are you doing here?" she asks.

"I could ask you the same," you say.

"Looking for the fuse box," she answers.

"I'm looking for the Osiris jar," you answer in turn.

"...But wasn't that destroyed in the fire?" Sarah asks.

"Maybe, but I have my suspicions it was stolen like the golden amulet," you tell her.

And then the LIGHTS CLICK ON, and you see Steven walk away from around a shelf wall.

"Stolen?" He asks. "Why would anyone want to steal a Canopic jar?"

"I think there was something in it besides vital organs," you answer, warily, as you hear an elevator start moving. "...What are you doing here, Steven?"

"I was searching for the Amulet too, just in case it'd wound up lost in here, when the power went out suddenly," Steven answers.

The three of you stand at odds, and your mind turns its suspicions over and over again like the rusty sounding gears of an elevator descending, descending, descending-

And then it stops.

"...You don't think that whoever cut the power...?" Sarah begins.
Without a word, the three of you go to the elevator and find the Administrator for this warehouse lying dead on its floor, a brick lodged firmly in the back of her skull.

You—that is to say, ATUM didn't do this. Osiris did.

"Oh my god," Steven breathes out.

"Osiris' curse," Sarah corrects him.

"Curses don't exist," you say, ironically repeating Atum's words. "But Thieves who got caught and do a stupid thing afterwards do exist."

"You think-?" Steven whirls on you, glaring. "Jackson! I knew it was too good to be true that you'd show up again out of the blue like this! After Five Years!"

"Are you seriously blaming Daniel, Steven?" Sarah asks, glaring.

"Of course I am! Who else would have the motive!?" he glares at you. "He probably faked an explosion to kill Dr. Jordan!"

"No I didn't," you glare right back at him, "I only just got into town the day of the funeral."

"Then were were you before then!?" Steven demands. "Where have you BEEN since you vanished after telling an empty conference room the Pyramids were built by aliens!?"

"Traveling," you answer as honestly as you can. "Not really of my own will. I got recruited at that conference. My... boss sends me places and I go whether I want to or not."

"Yeah, a mysterious boss you probably won't name even if the cops threaten jail time," Steven scoffs. "I bet they'll just love that!"

"Yeah..." you say, getting a bit of a hunch. "I doubt they'd have me in custody for too long."

"Oh? Are you that much of a big shot?" Steven asks, glaring.

"Oh, no, I'm just thinking about the people who'd want to get at me to get at my boss," you answer, and Atum writhes in amusement.

"...Daniel," Sarah begins, "who are you working for exactly?"

"That's... complicated," you answer.

"Yeah, I'll bet it is," Steven glares, fingers on his right hand twitching as if he's going to reach for something.

"No, see, it's kind of an inherited position and they get this title to use instead of an actual name," you say, deciding to test the waters and see if your rapidly building hunch is correct. "You probably'll think I'm crazy, but she goes by the name Nirrti these days."

"...You're right, you ARE crazy!" Stevens growls.

"Nirrti?" Sarah mutters to herself, "That crazy old crone is your boss?"
...Well that's not suspicious in the least. You think you've just found Osiris, and Atum prepares to regain control.

"Yeah, sorry, Stevens," you barely manage to say as all control is pulled straight back to Atum.

He flashes the eyes, and the voice modulates, "But he's startlingly sane."

"What the-!?" And then as Stevens stares on in confusion and horror, Atum swings out and punches Stevens cold across the face, sending him stumbling to the floor, and its there he collapses.

For a moment, there's silence, and then you hear the flashing of Goa'uld eyes, and Atum turns around to look at Sarah- no, Osiris.

"So... should I kill you and leave you to rot?" she asks, voice echoing. "Or should I torture you for information, and then leave you to rot?"

"No need for torture or murder," Atum says. "Things have changed, drastically, since you were last awake."

"One can only imagine," Osiris says, frowning. "What's the Political scene like?"

"In summary? Ra's dead, his murderer and usurper is dead, Apophis is trying to take over the galaxy, Nirrti has been replaced by a girl named Jayni, who thinks she has all the cards," Atum pauses. "Oh, and Anubis is lurking around in the background trying to find Apophis' illegal Harcesis child, and only Jayni knows where they are. I could give you more accurate information, but I doubt here is the best place for such a discussion."

"Agreed," Osiris glances at the dead body in the elevator. "My handiwork wasn't meant to be discovered with me here."

"I have a Cargo ship," Atum says. "Cloaked. We can leave here and pin the blame on 'Stevens.'"

"Good," Osiris says, her voice going back to 'normal.' "Come, Daniel. Let's find a phone to call the police with."

"Right," Atum says, leaving your voice to speak, despite it being his mouth speaking.

"So... your 'boss'...?" 'Sarah' asks as you hurry out of the warehouse and lock the door behind you.

"I was ordered to kill you," Atum says. "I've decided to go another way."

"Why?" she asks.

"My host is... peculiar," he says. "Faced with the choice of harming someone he cares about- your host, for example- he'd sooner take control over the body and deal damage some other way. As I learned after an ill-advised alliance with Hathor where he wrenched control away from me."

"Daniel is quite strong willed," she says. "I can see that just by reviewing memories." She pauses.
"Oh, there's a bit more to it than that as well."

"Our... once dating, you mean?" Atum chuckles. "Yes, that's quite an interesting conundrum, isn't it?"

"Speaking of Dates and Mates," Osiris pauses, "What happened to my Queen? I couldn't find Isis' jar."

"I have some unfortunate news regarding her," Atum says. "Did you see any pictures of it?"

"No," Osiris shakes her head.

"The seal was broken at some point after it was discovered, lost at sea, and rediscovered," Atum says. "I'm sorry to say Isis did not make it."

"...Do you have her body?" Osiris asks, voice sounding muted.

"On my Ship," Atum says. "We thought you might like a chance to say goodbye."

"'We'?" Osiris asks, humming in a pale shadow of curiosity.

Atum grunts. "Yes, loathe as Jackson is to admit it, he's lost a wife of his own. Same day I took control, as a matter of fact. He's always lamenting the fact that he never got to say goodbye."

"How sad," Osiris remarks.

You'd rather not dwell on it, but Atum just laughs. "Yes, I suppose it is."

Thankfully, the conversation falls silent as you head out towards your cloaked cargo ship.

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Down at the SGC, in the Conference room.

"Oh thank God you're okay!" And thus Janet pulled her daughter into a hug. Then, after a moment, she backs off and looks Cassandra in the eyes and says, "Don't you ever do that again!"

"Unless it's to save someone's life?" Cassandra asks.

"...We'll talk more later," she shakes her head, then looks over at Thor. "Thank you."

"It was my pleasure," Thor nods his head.

"Well!" O'neill claps his hands together. "That was a day! Rose and Cassie go joy riding on a Glider that takes them on the Joy Ride instead and now we've got everyone home safe except for some black-boxed Death Gliders trying to get home the long way."

"It's a shame we're going to have to scrap the X-301 conversions for the remaining Gliders," Carter muses. "I guess we'll just have to make the X-302 wholesale from scratch."

O'neill goes to look like he wants to say something when Hammond comes bursting out of his office.
like a fire was lit under his feet.

"Day's not done yet, Colonel," Hammond declares. "Security Camera footage at the Chicago Archaeological institute just captured footage of Dr. Daniel Jackson leaving the premises with an unknown woman. Thermal Cameras confirmed both had Symbiotes in their necks."

"...Chicago?" O'neill asks, tiredly. "How the hell are we supposed to get there before they leave?"

"Ahem." Thor clears his throat.

"So we're going against this girl who KNEW I'd be awakening?" Osiris asks as you near the Cargo Ship. "Might I inquire as to why?"

"Because her future knowledge has started to slip up," Atum says. "My last mission failed despite my choosing the people she told me to choose. Other things have not gone according to her 'grand plan' either. It's clear she's lost her touch."

"And of this mission?" she asks.

"Another reason I suggested we go to the Cargo ship is because I have little reason to trust the time window of two days that she gave me to operate," Atum says. "It's been barely one day and I feel nervous, as if we'll be detected sooner rather than later. I'd rather we continue our conversation in space, heading far away from this planet rather than staying here."

"I see," Osiris muses. "And what will this Jayni think when you've clearly betrayed her orders?"

"I dunno, what will she think?"

And then Atum and Osiris stop at the voice that speaks up just then- just barely a few yards away from the cloaked Cargo ship's doors.

You recognize that voice all too well.

Atum turns to look at the guy leaning against a tree- and you can't help but cheer a little internally.

"Colonel Jack O'neill," Atum says, growling as the echo returns to his voice with a flash of his eyes.

"Atum," O'neill says, smirking. "Been a while."

"Who is this pest?" Osiris asks.

"Me?" O'neill asks. "A pest? Well, I guess I'm the pest who helped kill Ra. And Sokar. Does it really count for Hathor since I wasn't the one who stabbed her in the back? And Carter got Seth, so..."

"Ah," the echo returns to Osiris' voice. "So he's someone important."

"How did you find us so quickly?" Atum asks, curiosity slipping through his anger. "I had assurances that you would be distracted with a run-away Death Glider."
"Oh, you know how it goes," O'neill says. "Two kids go on a joy ride, get caught by the local Asgard patrol, and are brought home with a strict warning."

"The Asgard...?" Atum asks, surprised, though you can feel him masking it well. "They're still around?"

"Yup," O'neill says with a nod.

"I see..." Atum frowns.

"Can I speak with Daniel?" O'neill asks.

"No," Atum denies.

"Not even for just a minute?" O'neill asks.

"No," Atum denies.

"What about if we blew up your Cargo ship?" O'neill asks.

"You wouldn't- not in a city like this," Atum laughs.

"No, but we could transport the whole thing up into orbit and then chuck it into the sun," O'neill says, smirking.

"...Fine," Atum relinquishes control for the moment, and you're thrust back into the lime light.

"Daniel?" O'neill asks.

"Jack?" You ask in return. "What's going on?"

"Oh, you know," O'neill says. "The usual. You never call, you never write. You try to brainwash a bunch of people in the SGC to get them to kill people..." He frowns. "What's going on here?"

"Sarah got body jacked by Osiris," you answer.

"Osiris, you say?" O'neill muses, glancing at the woman next to you.

"Yeah, we're..." you pause. "I guess we're going to work out some way to screw Jayni over. Will you be willing to let us go?"

"Ah. So you've met the back-stabbing cat-girl," O'neill says. "And you're going to screw her over by... what exactly?"

"Telling her Atum killed Osiris when we really let her live," you say.

"And by unleashing yet one more power hungry Goa'uld into the already teetering scale of chaos that is the System Lord Council," O'neill says, "you're going to accomplish what, exactly?"

"Stop Apophis and Heru'ur from forming an Alliance probably?" You shrug.
"Do I get any say in this?" Osiris asks.

"Of course you do," you say. "But kinda gotta make sure we don't get ourselves killed first here. Sarah doesn't deserve any of this."

"Old flame?" O'neill asks.

"Something like that," you answer, frowning. "Jack, are you just stalling for time?"

"Maybe," O'neill answers. "Maybe not. Maybe I'm fishing."

"Fishing for what?" You ask.

"Back up plans," O'neill says, and you're confused for a moment.

Oh.

OH.

He's talking about getting you and Sarah both freed from Goa'uld possession.

Atum chuckles at your own inward realizations. [Does he really expect me to not pick up on that possibility?]

"What kind of game are we even playing here, Jack?" You ask. "There's no way you can seriously consider letting me and Sarah go. The government wouldn't allow it."

"I'm not the one who has to decide anything," O'neill says.

"And Who is?" you ask.

"A little lady called Ka'turnal," O'neill answers, "and whether or not she pulls a trigger."

A trigger? For what?

PCH-ZYU!

Your sudden awakening, restrained to a gurney on the command deck of an ASGARD SHIP, answers that question.

"A Zat," you muse. "You hit me with a Zat."

Atum doesn't answer.

In fact, he suspiciously doesn't answer.

You can't even sense his presence within your head at all.

"D...Daniel?" a voice draws your attention sideways, and you look over your shoulder to see Sarah, restrained to a bed similarly to how you are. "What... what happened? Where are we?"
"An Asgard ship," you answer. "And if I'd had to guess, I'd say we got stunned and had the snakes in our heads taken out."

"You'd guess correct," and thus, entering the room, a woman in a Doctor's outfit. "I'm Ka'turnal. But you might know me better under a different name, Doctor Jackson, as the former System Lord Nirrti."

"You..." you tense up. "You're working with the SGC?"

"Oh? Didn't my little upstart of a First Prime tell you?" she laughs. "Oh, no, I suppose she wouldn't. Yes. I'm working with the SGC. And don't worry too much about the Restraints. Fraiser's request. We weren't sure how either of you would react upon awakening, if you did while we were removing your... unwanted passengers."

"Can't blame you on that one," you mutter.

"You don't have to worry," Ka'turnal says. "Atum and Osiris have both been removed. Permanently. They've been handed over to the Tok'ra for study."

"How did you get them out?" Sarah asks. "I don't feel like you cut into me anywhere."

"Oh, yes, that's quite a fascinating idea, actually," Ka'turnal laughs. "We attempted and succeeded at using the Asgard beaming technology to remove them from your heads. Very experimental. Even Thor wasn't sure it would work, but... here we are!"

"And the, uh, other thing?" You ask. "That Jayni put in my head?"

"Oh, That little memory box? Yes, I removed that too," Ka'turnal says, smiling a genuinely terrifying smile. "I do so love the idea of undoing Jayni's work after it's caused me so much trouble the last few years. Ah, well, I'll go tell the others you're awake, then. Restraints stay on for observation reasons, though! Fraiser's orders, not mine!"

"I don't know who this Frasier person is," Sarah mutters as Ka'turnal leaves you be. "But she sounds frightening."

"From what little I remember of her," you say, "yeah... that's about right."

...You can only wonder what the hell is going through Jayni's head right about now.

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**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 16TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/18/0001.**

Your name is NIRRIT- SYSTEM LORD- and most certainly NOT Jayni the First Prime.

You sit with anticipation, ears twitching and tail swaying as you wait for Jake to return from his brief detour of a mission to retrieve the DISTRESS TRANSPONDER from Atum's Cargo Ship.

That it was activated can mean only one of a few things, only one of them pleasant to think about.
And then Jake reports in.

It's just the transponder. Left floating in a field of debris over the planet Apophis had once been building his NEW MOTHERSHIP on, with a dead Symbiote wrapped around it.

There was no sign of the rest of the Cargo Ship or of Atum... or anything else.

You order the symbiote brought back to you for STUDY... Or to be more exact CLONING back to life. You need to find out if it's truly ATUM, or OSIRIS... or some other DECOY left behind to fool you into thinking Atum is dead.

Regardless, it seems you've suffered yet another HICCUP in your knowledge base.

This shouldn't have happened.

You... You've lost your KEEN EDGE. There's no telling what's going to happen next.

You can't rely on your future knowledge to do this anymore. You're... You can't keep on with Plan B anymore.

You're going to have to go with Plan C, it seems.

DIASPORA DATE: 4/19/0001.

Your name is SKAARA, and you've had a lot to think about since the RETURN. When O'neill came back. When Major Strider's team came back. When the kids from the future came back to change everything.

And now the one thing tying you to the SGC has been done. Daniel is safely returned and no longer a Goa'uld.

You have nothing left to do, and that wondering feeling of "why am I here" finally has no excuse to placate it... and you had nothing to do with it because you were off world running away again.

Oh, sure you were spending time with Kairi, but... You know that's an excuse. You should have been there to stop Daniel, but instead you were hiding away trying to pretend that you weren't hiding away from your failure twice over. That you never took Jade in again in an alternate timeline. That you just....

That when you were brainwashed on that recent mission, you fought back against your real memories trying to resurface and never reached out to O'neill and Carter. You pretended you were that other person. You... You...

You enter General Hammond's office while he's not there, and lay down your letter of resignation on his desk. Then, you head back to the Control Room and request one last dial out to Abydos.
You can't face the others.

Maybe now the spot you've so erroneously filled will be taken up properly by the person who was supposed to fill it all along.

"Skaara Quit?! Why?!"

"Oh, for cryin' out loud, Skaara..."

"That does not seem like him to do such a thing."

Your name is GEORGE HAMMOND, and right now, on top of everything else, you're dealing with a confused Major Carter, a tired Colonel O'neill, and a frowning Jaffa.

"According to the letter of resignation he left on my desk this morning," you tell them, "apparently he felt that his presence on the team was now 'superfluous given Dr. Jackson's return.'"

"But Daniel hasn't even said he even wants to join the SGC or not," O'neill protests.

"He also cited feeling that his two primary reasons for staying with the SGC had been completed," you continue reading on. "The first was retrieving Kairi from Goa'uld hands, and the second was the safe return of Dr. Jackson. And any other mitigating reasons or commitments he might have for staying on could be easily passed on to someone else."

"He didn't even tell us?" Carter asks, sounding hurt. "Why?"

"I couldn't say," you admit. "He didn't put any reasons for it in his letter."

"Why? 'Cause he knows we'd try to talk him out of it," O'neill grunts. "Damn it. I should've realized something was up with him sooner."

"Do not blame yourself, Colonel O'neill," Teal'c says. "I too failed to notice anything as well."

"Regardless of failures to notice anything or not," you interject, "Skaara's made his decision. If he comes to change his mind at any point, there will be a spot open for him to come back."

"So for now we just... what? Move on? Add someone else to the team?" Carter asks. "Pretend we're not hurt Skaara didn't want to talk with us about this?"

"If you go to Abydos on your own time, or join along during one of Jude Harley's visits, just keep being his friend," you advise. "I think he'll be receptive to that much, at least."

"Fair enough," O'neill says.

"In the mean time," you continue, "officially, SG-1 will continue to operate as a Three-man team. However, as Miss Lalonde recently requested for more field mission opportunities similar in nature to what P4X-639's mission was supposed to be before the Time Loop situation manifested, I'll be putting SG-1 on rotation for missions of that nature until a permanent replacement for Skaara's position on the team can be found."
"Argo's a good kid." O'neill says. "I don't have a problem with her joining us for a while."

"I do not have any objections either," Teal'c says.

"That's fine for now," Carter pauses, then asks, "but what if we have to go on a mission that's more important? Say the Tok'ra need our help with something, or-"

"Then we'll figure out who goes where when the time comes," you say, risking a bet that the future won't be too unstable in the weeks to come.

You really hope that you're not misplacing your bet on this.

Chapter End Notes

And BOOM. There's a ripple or three.
**Chapter Summary**

In which O'neill goes fishing.

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**Chapter Notes**

See the end of the chapter for notes.

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**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 24TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/26/0001.**

Your name is George Hammond and by the time SG-1 consisting of O'neill, Carter, and Teal'c for this mission- returns from their and the Tok'ra's valiant attempt at attempting to sabotage Apophis and Heru'ur from forming an alliance, you've had a lot of time to mull over your options.

However, you can see by the looks on their faces that things did NOT go that well. You're going to have to weigh some other options you didn't consider before.

Come the Debriefing, you've got a pit in the bottom of your stomach.

"Heru'ur is dead," Teal'c reports. "Apophis betrayed him and used the exact same trick we attempted first."

"What's more, Sir, is Apophis has a butt load of motherships that he didn't have before," O'neill summarizes. "With Cloaking Fields."

"The Ability to cloak and hide such a fleet is extremely concerning," Teal'c adds.

"The mines didn't even do any damage to them," Carter laments. "They just exploded, harmlessly against the hulls."

"Apophis didn't even bother using shields?" You ask.

"If he did, Sir, those shields were skin tight," O'neill answers.

You consider things for a moment. Then you say, "Colonel O'neill, may I speak with you privately for a moment?"

"Sure," O'neill says, getting to his feet as you do, and joining you in your office, door closed securely behind you. "...What's this about, sir?"

"This morning, the NID made an obvious overture," you explain. "They called me, saying they wanted me to instate a team of their own men, in order to access other worlds given that the Russian Gate program was shut down."
"You told them to get lost, I take it?" O'neill asks.

"I did," you nod. "...They said I should reconsider their offer, or pay a price of my choosing."

"What did they do?" O'neill asks, voice going grim.

"My granddaughters were picked up from school just an hour ago before you returned, by two men in plain clothes, driving a black SUV." You say. "They took the girls on a drive, and then brought them home, unharmed, with a sealed message for my eyes only. My choises are to work against them at the cost of my family's safety, or retire."

"Damn it," O'neill swears. "They've got really bad timing. And with Skaara gone..."

"This horrible turn of events with Apophis," you say, "as terrible as it is, gives me an opportunity to take a leave of absense, ostensibly to consider my options." You pause, then add, "If you have any backup plans in mind, Colonel, I'd recommend you start putting one into action."

"Got it, Sir," O'neill nods. "...And SG-1?"

"After today, I've got something in mind."

And so you explain your idea. O'neill agrees. And thus, you two leave your office after that, and as O'neill retakes his seat, you face Carter and Teal'c.

"Given today's events, and Skaara's retirement from active duty," you begin, "Colonel O'neill and I have agreed that a sabbatical would do all of us some good. For a short while, I will be stepping down as commander of the SGC, and I'm heavily encouraging all three of you to take a few steps back from active duty as well."

"You're not talking Permanently, are you, Sir?" Carter asks, frowning, a tone of voice sounding very wary.

"I'm not sure," you say. "I'm heavily concerned about this Apophis situation, and I have my concerns that I won't be able to keep pace and manage this situation as best as possible. Another General with different experiences might be better suited to dealing with this kind of situation."

"There's nobody better at this job than you, General," O'neill says. "But if you need a few days off to get that into your head, then so be it."

Carter gives him an odd look, and Teal'c raises an eyebrow.

"Thanks for the vote of confidence, Colonel," you say. "But if it comes down to it, I may not be the best person for the job. I think whatever outcome surfaces by the end of this week, it will end up being for the best."

"You can't be serious," Carter says.

"That's why I'm saying we take this week off too, Major," O'neill says, eyeing Carter in a way that brokers no argument. "We all take a step back. We re-evaluate where we are as people and as a team. And then we decide if we want to follow Skaara's leave and let other people take over from here."
"I can understand the logic behind such a decision," Teal'c nods his head. "General Hammond," he looks to you, "On Chulak it is customary to sing a song of lament when a warrior retires from the field of battle. But this is not Chulak, and you have not made any permanent decisions on the matter. Whatever you decide, I hope it is for the best for you personally."

"As do I, Teal'c," you nod at him.

Carter doesn't seem happy about it, but, she sighs, this time speaking as Jolinar, "Carter refuses to admit it, but you're right. A break might very well be for the best for all of us going forwards."

"Take all the time you guys need," O'neill says. "As for me, I'll be going fishing."

"I just want to say," you say to the team as you all get up from the table, "if I never see any of you again in this setting, it's been an honor working with you all."

Nods of agreement come from SG-1, and Jack just smiles in that kind sort of way.

There's a glint in his eyes, though.

You don't know what he has planned, but you think it's not going to be good for whoever put this plan into motion.

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DIASPORA DATE: 4/27/0001.

Your name is HAROLD "HARRY" MAYBOURNE, and much to your surprise, you've got a visitor.

"Jack O'neill," you muse. "Fancy meeting you here. To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"What, can't a guy come and visit an old friend who tried to do the right thing and got jailed for it?" O'neill asks.

"Not usually, no," you say, leaning against your jail cell's door. "I didn't think we were friends. Hell, I didn't think I had any friends left at all since all the ones from my former line of work seem to be doing their damnedest to pretend I don't exist. Either that, or try to get me brought up on Treason charges."

"Well, they sound more like acquaintances than friends," he says. "We could be friends, though. Maybe. Depending."

"So, what do you want?" You ask.

"I'd like to ask if you'd like to go fishing with me," O'neill says, entirely seriously.

"...Fishing?" you glance around at the jail block. "...You come all this way, to see me in prison, to ask if I'll go... FISHING with you." You stare at him incredulously. "Fishing for What?"

"The person who kicked off a black colored email chain that made General Hammond take a
vacation for a few days out of stress," O'neill answers.

You stare, blink, stare some more, blink again, then finally say, "Well. Now. Would that someone be suspected to be a part of a certain group of people that I used to work with?"

"Yeah sure you betcha," O'neill hums, placing his hands in the pockets of his pants.

"You do realize that you'll have to pull some very big strings to get me out of here just for a fishing trip," you point out.

"Oh, I know that," O'neill says. "I've brought some very long reels. And I've already hooked a pretty big fish already for scheduling your trip release."

"How big?" You ask, curious.

"Um, I'd say it'd be about the size of Air Force One?" O'neill answers.

Well well. It seems your attention has been quite thoroughly HOOKED.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Your name is Samantha Carter and you're not sure where your life went so wrong.

Skaara up and leaves suddenly, and then Hammond and O'neill think everyone needs time off and...
You think Teal'c caught onto something you didn't, but what?

And despite the fact that you're supposed to be taking a 'vacation' or 'sabbatical' or whatever... you just want to WORK and to have everything be NORMAL.

But you can't even have that.

Hammond's TEMPORARY (Oh god you HOPE it's just temporary) replacement is Major General HENRY BAUER, who is... well...

To say the least he's everything the NID could have wished for in a commanding officer. He immediately takes advantage of SG-1 being "On Leave" and your continued presence on base to put you onto this bizzare task of developing a NAQUADAH ENRICHED NUCLEAR BOMB.

Needless to say, you and Jolinar both aren't sure what to make of it. They don't really NEED your work on this. It's pretty much finished as it is, they just don't know what the right amount of Naquadah to use in it.

...You're kind of upset that you didn't get a chance to go to Alternia, honestly.

Maybe someday.

"If it's any consolation," and then there's the other Jolinar and her host, coming to talk to you. "If things in this timeline go as they did in mine, Bauer won't be here for long."

"What makes you say that?" you ask.
"I'd rather not say," she answers. "Not unless things change drastically. Although..." She quickly moves over to the board of Naquadah ratio reactions, and scribbles in a much lesser amount than you were planning on using. "This is one change I'll make for Major Wade's sake."


[...It's possible we don't have enough military grade Naquadah using the proper ratio.] Your Jolinar muses.

"Oh. By the way," Future Jolinar pauses to add, "don't forget to add surface-level Naquadah deposits into your calculations. You never know what a difference that might make."

'I wonder...’ You frown as the other Jolinar, or maybe Mikari, smiles oddly and walks away, leaving you confused.

...Well, at that amount of Naquadah, maybe... Well, if this bomb flops maybe General Bauer and his "Pentagon Researchers" will give up on the idea as it stands and start over from scratch.

Your name is... Well, HARRY MAYBOURNE is falling out of style, so maybe you'll fall back on one of your other MANY ALIASES.

"So let me get this straight," O'neill sounds incredulous as you put the FLOPPY DRIVE KEY onto your computer. "The NID use private Bulletin Boards to post classified information, and the only security for it is a super secret 'cypher font' to decrypt the information and a regular old password login."

"What?" You ask, "You sound like you find that hard to believe."

"If there's anything Jude Harley's gaming hhabbits have taught me," O'neill says, "it's that you secret government agency types have really lousy security that could be circumvented with ease if you put just a LITTLE thought into it."

"Well, that's only if you have the credentials," you clarify, finally loading the account screen for a certain site. "If you don't, there's no getting in... unless you know where a back door is, I guess."

"See," O'neill says, "that's exactly what I'm talking about."

"Oh, hush," you can't help but laugh a bit as you type in your account name and password. "They never would expect an NID agent to turn on their own, and we're the only ones who know what's on these boards. They're not publicly listed on the Internet so-"

BZZT.

"...Crap," you swear. "They shut down my account."

"You were saying?" O'neill asks, rhetorically.

"I'll just... hack into the back door and..." You frown, considering something. "Wait. If they knew to block out my account then... They might be running a trace to see where I'm logging in from."
"And just because the NID didn't know about this apartment before, doesn't mean that didn't just change," O'neill summarizes.

"We should leave," you say, ejecting the Floppy Disk key and setting the computer to reboot- which will definitely fry the damned thing without that Floppy Disk.

"So where do we go to get this information now?" O'neill asks, wary as he watches the computer's hard drive start to go up in smoke.

"Straight to one of few people we both know are directly involved," you answer. "A mutual frienemy of ours."

"Kinsey?" O'neill asks.

You nod, grimly. "Kinsey."

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"The potential for a Chain Reaction has been accounted for," General Bauer denies your concern, sounding a bit too smug for his own good. "My information shows the Stargate will be destroyed in such a scenario."

"Sir, with all due respect," you say, "we've seen a Stargate survive a meteor crashing onto it. We've seen the gravitational pull and time distortions associated with a Black Hole traverse the wormhole. There's no solid confirmation that a Stargate would be destroyed under a reaction like that."

"It's not a concern, Major Carter. We'll fire the bomb off as scheduled tomorrow afternoon." Bauer then motions at the office doors- not his office, Hammond's office. It still even has Hammond's name tag on it. "Dismissed."

He thinks he owns the place... Well...

You hope Hammond returns soon to prove him wrong.

---

Evading the NID goons sent to your apartment was easy enough, you guess. You even got to steal one of their fancy non descript SUVs. (It has a CD PLAYER built in! That's neat!)

Stopping to get Lunch at a random park-based vendor stand was just the next obvious thing to do while driving across the country to DC. (You've had a HANKERING FOR HOTDOGS lately, and the JAIL you were in refused to even humor your request for them. Bastards.)

Just as obvious for O'neill, you suppose, was checking in with the HOME BASE.

"Yeah, thanks, Davis," O'neill says into the phone. "Don't do anything rash. Alright?" A pause. "Like hell I'm going to pull a sword on anyone. Where would I even get a sword--" A long pause, followed by: "Davis, I'm going to pretend I never heard you say that, and you should forget even knowing about it yourself. I'm pretty sure that's ten shades of illegal." Another pause. "Yeah, okay, sure, go ahead and sue me, I'm a hypocrite then. Just tell Carter not to lose her head and check in on
Teal'c and Daniel for me, okay?" A pause. "Alright, talk to you later."

And then he hangs up and tosses the burner phone into the nearest trash can, with the battery palmed into his pocket.

"Trouble in paradise?" You ask of O'neill as he sits down across from you at the park bench you chose as your dining table.

"The General Bee's trying to blow up an Energy Bomb on a planet rich with Energy stuff," O'neill says, carefully avoiding specific words in public lest prying ears catch on. "Carter's protesting, but the plan's going through tomorrow."

Bauer. You frown, and say, "He's not someone I know from the Drivers License Office, so he's either a maneuvered patsy of a pawn, or a top brass member I never met. Either way, he's exactly who our friends at the Office want in place if Hammond permanently retires."

"No doubt he's friends with Mr. Special K though, right?" O'neill asks.

"Yeah," You scoff. "I'd be surprised if they weren't."

A small silence, uncomfortable in nature, settles between you two as you eat, and O'neill watches for the NID.

Finally, you cave and ask, "So this big fish we're reeling in. What are you going to do with it once we catch it?" O'neill eyes you from behind his sunglasses. "Turn it into the Record Books and hope they do the right thing?"

"You and I both know they're corrupt as hell, Maybourne," O'neill says. "I knew going into this that I'd have to do some dirty things. I'm sure as hell going to be asking who I sold my soul to, eventually. But..." He frowns. "If it were just that easy? To turn in all this information? You'd have done it yourself to shut down the Water Gate."

"That's true," You nod. "You're really that willing to go through with this? Get your hands that dirty?"

"It's fishing," O'neill says. "Of course I'm willing to get my hands dirty to reel in this fish."

You suppose that's all you can ask for.

And thus, you take another bite of hotdog.

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**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 26TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/28/0001.**

The bomb was sent through the Gate, and driven out about fifty miles from the Stargate on the other side.

You still have your doubts that it's far enough, even with that minuscule amount of Naquadah the
future Jolinar suggested over the full yield your math suggests the device was designed for.

General Bauer seems to think things are going his way.

You honestly have no idea what's going to happen.

You can only wait to see what happens once the bomb is in position.

Senator Robert Kinsey is not subtle. He's already throwing a 'victory party' of some kind not a day after Hammond is 'on leave.' There's no clear cut POLITICAL REASONS for him to be doing such. It just seems to be a HUGE PARTY for the sake of a PARTY, within which a LOT OF SENATORS and REPRESENTATIVES and even some TOP MILITARY BRASS are attending.

The only reason for him to be having a party like this at his own house is because he thinks he's WON.

There's no other explanation for it.

You can already spot some of the MEDIA hiding on the outskirts of the property, probably all of them wondering the same thing.

O'neill seems to write down the number on the side of one of their vans as you drive your STOLEN VEHICLE up to the Senator's front door.

You wonder what he's planning?

Soon, you're exiting the car and heading up to the front door. O'neill rings the door bell by way of pressing it four times in rapid succession.

"You realize that's pretty much begging for security, right?" You ask the Colonel.

"Maybe I'm fishing for attention, Maybourne." He smirks wildly as he puts on his sunglasses. Oh, you don't like the look of this.

An annoyed looking servant opens the door a moment later. "Can I help you?"

"Yeah, I'm Starsky, he's Hutch, we're here from the Rocky Mountain News here to ask Senator Kinsey a few questions," O'neill says, smirking like a smarmy reporter.

Oh! You get it now.

"...The Senator isn't taking questions right now," The servant tries to say when the good Senator himself barges over to the door.

"Oh what the hell?" He asks, giving a briefly horrified look in your direction, then staring straight at O'neill. "What are you two doing here?"

"We're here to ask you a few questions, Senator," You say. "It won't take long."
"Honey, who is it?" And then the Not-So-Good Senator's wife joins you at the front door.

"I'm Hutch," you say, "he's Starsky, we're here from the Rocky Mountain news to ask Senator Kinsey a few questions about his re-election campaign, or more specifically, lack of one?"

"Oh! Oh!" the wife beams, "Yes! Please, come in!"

"Thank you, Misses K," O'neill says, smiling brightly as he leads the way into the house.

Kinsey is not happy about this turn of events, and the Servant just shrugs in bemusement and goes off to do whatever it is she was doing before O'neill so rudely interrupted.

"Bomb is in position," Siler grimly reports, and General Bauer twists a key and presses a big red button.

You watch as the MALP telemetry shows a bright flash of blue light in the distant horizon, and then a rushing wave of blue fire utterly consumes the frame before the screen cuts to Static.

"...What happened?" Bauer asks, eyeing the still active Stargate.

"MALP was destroyed," you report, feeling a bit terrified. Just how much Naquadah was ON that planet anyways?? "That was exactly what I warned you about, Sir. A Chain Reaction caused by the Naquadah on the surface of the planet utterly destroying everything in sight."

"That..." Bauer frowns. "That shouldn't have happened. My reports said the surface levels of Naquadah weren't big enough to cause that."

"With all due respect, your reports were wrong," you say. "That blast was WAY bigger than it should have been with the amount of Naquadah we had in the bomb."

"Um," Walter coughs. "We've got a problem?"

"What?" General Bauer turns to look.

"There's an increasingly high level of Radiation coming through the Stargate," Walter says.

"Shut it down," Bauer says.

"...No response," Walter says after the console buzzes at him.

"Close the Iris," you order, and Walter does it without hesitation.

"...Radiation levels dropping," Walter sighs in relief.

"What...?" General Bauer doesn't seem to know what's happening. "I don't understand. The risks... this wasn't what I was told would happen."

"And who gave you this information?" You ask, glaring at the man who should NOT be incharge here.
"That's classified, but-" Bauer stops. "Why didn't the Gate get destroyed? We were sure the blast radius would vaporize the Stargate like it did with the Aschen's Stargate."

"The Aschen-?!" You stumble. "Sir, with all due respect thrown out the window, How the FUCK do you even know about that?"

"That's-"

"Classified, Yes, I know," you scowl. "Whatever. It doesn't matter now. We need to evacuate the base."

"What? Why!?!" General Bauer doesn't seem to get it.

"Radiation is HEAT," you simplify it for him. "That heat is STILL coming through the active Stargate. The Iris is made of METAL. Metal, when it HEATS UP, looses its Structural Integrity. When that happens, if the Stargate hasn't shut itself off on its own accord, the base is going to be FLOODED with RADIATION."

Bauer stares for a moment, non comprehending, before nodding in consent.

You go to the nearest radio and issue a base wide alert, "By Order of General Bauer, EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY. I repeat, EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY." As the evacuation alarms sound off, you glance at Bauer and say, "If you'd like to stay around and see the fruits of your labor here, General, you can join me in the security station on Level 16."

"Oh! What a cute dog!" O'neill practically shines a light out of his mouth with how wide he smiles as the Kinsey's dog comes up and starts sniffing him.

"Oscar! Down!" Kinsey growls. "He's just- just a reporter."

"Oh it's no problem at all!" O'neill says. "I love dogs. Dogs are wonderful. Every kid needs a dog, you know! It's an Earth Rule."

"Oh I definitely agree!" Kinsey's wife nods. "I've tried suggesting we make it the law of the land, but Bob just says there's no way we could actually get that to pass in the Senate."

"Anyways," Kinsey coughs. "Shall we discuss this upstairs?"

"Yes, definitely, absolutely," you say, and with that, the Senator leads you upstairs to his private office where his PERSONAL COMPUTER resides. Jackpot baby.

"Alright, Colonel," Kinsey glares at O'neill. "What's this about? Did you honestly break a traitor out of prison just to come harass me in my home?!"

"Traitor? Him?" O'neill asks, glancing at you. "Nah! I didn't break him out to harass you. I broke him out so we could go fishing."

"Fishing?!" Kinsey stares. "Have you lost your absolute mind?!"
"I think you'll find I'm startlingly sane, Senator," O'neill says and then draws out a freaking ZAT GUN from inside his jacket pocket. It chimes as it activates.

"Jack?" You stare, horrified. He's had that on him this entire time!? "What are you doing?"

"Go check the computer, Maybourne," O'neill says. "Kinsey, sit down." He motions with his eyes at a seat along the wall.

"You really have lost it," Kinsey glares as he sits down. "You threaten me by waving an Alien Weapon at me in my OWN HOME!?"

"Not waving, pointing," O'neill clarifies, and with that as your hint, you go over to the computer and begin booting it up.

The idiot didn't even bother putting in a FLOPPY KEY DRIVE like you did. Lame.

"What are you after, O'neill?" you hear Kinsey ask as you wait for the boot up to finish.

"Information," O'neill answers. "On the NID and why they threatened General Hammond into retirement."

"And you think *I* know that!?" Kinsey asks, faking SHOCK.

You load onto the desktop and find it wasn't even password protected here. Wow. How stupid can this guy get? You...

Oh, that's stupid.

"Jack," you laugh. "He left a desktop shortcut to that website I tried logging into yesterday."

"Oh, you mean the stupidly insecure NID bulletin board website?" O'neill asks, sounding incredibly amused.

You click on the icon, and sure enough, there's the forum... and the AUTOCOMPLETE even put in the USER ID. No password though.

"Yep, and I'm in. Just need a password." You say.

"Good luck Guessing," Kinsey snarls. "I have so many grandchildren and nieces and nephews you'll be at it all week."

Damn, he's right. And that's not even considering the possibility that it's a unique password that's made up of letters and scrambles or-

Wait.

No. Kinsey's security so far has been LAUGHABLY SIMPLE. He's so secure and full of himself that he didn't even password lock his computer. With that many family members there's no way he'd go with one of them lest he FORGET. No, it'd have to be someone or something more prominent in his life on a day to day basis.
"Try Oscar," O'neill says, and you hear Kinsey strangle a yelp of surprise. "Lemme guess, my doggy has a first name, in all caps O. S. C. A. R.?

You type it in and-

"I'm in." You grin, and start searching through Kinsey's post history and... Oooh. Yeah. "Jackpot baby."

"What did we get?" O'neill asks.

"Looks like the good Senator's been dipping his fingers in the cookie jar a bit too much," you say, eyes widening in shock. "He's the one who had me fired, had the Russians build their own Stargate... Sent those crooks to the SGC to steal the Dialing Crystals. Even went so far as to directly give the strike team who killed Jake Harley orders that overwrote my own to ensure that Harley didn't make it out of that basement alive."

"And Hammond?" O'neill asks, voice sounding growl-y.

"Yeah, he's behind that too," you say. "Oh! And it looks like Bauer has no idea who put him there. That's good, for someone, I guess. Maybe not him, though, considering the dirt they have on him here too. That's two Generals being blackmailed in the same week? Ouch that does not look good on your record, Senator."

"You can't use that information to expose the NID," Kinsey snarls, though he sounds like he's putting on a brave tone of voice, you can tell he's scared. "You'd expose the SGC and everything else along with it!"

"Maybe," O'neill says. "But what makes you think I'm going to expose the NID with this?"

As per your previously discussed plan, you email off two copies of all of this juicy relevant information to a couple of throwaway accounts that are preset to forward that information to a couple of dummy accounts and then also forwards to a few more dummy accounts that will forwards to a few more dummy accounts, and so on and so forth until somewhere in that shuffle the information winds up in a few REAL email accounts.

One of those accounts is going to end up being yours.

"...What?" Kinsey asks. "I don't-"

"Don't play dumb with me, Senator," O'neill says. "As we speak, Maybourne's emailing this dirt to a few key people I trust. Myself and Hammond among them. Now, we're not going to use this information unless you force us to. Instead? We're just going to hold it over your head. You leave the SGC alone. You and your NID goons won't EVER bother Hammond again, and... hrm, oh, let's do one better. You leave the Harley family ALONE. Joey, Jude, Roxy and Alec, and all those kids- you touch them, you get BURNED. You even so much as THINK about trying to hold Joey hostage on Earth again so you can 'study' that Bracelet of hers, and you'll wish you never did."

"And just for insurance," you chime in, "a few of those emails will send this shit to the newspapers in a few days if either O'neill or me end up dead as we try to leave this place." You frown, hearing the sound of tires squealing to a stop outside. You stand up and peer out the window. "Because hey,
look who just showed up. It's our friends from back at my place!"

"...Call them off, Kinsey," O'neill says. "It's checkmate."

"What makes you think I called them to begin with?" Kinsey laughs. "Maybe it's the wrath of God coming down upon your heads for trying to frame me for stuff I didn't do! Have you thought about that? I'm a God Loving Christian and you're going to HELL for this!"

"Oh stop being such a Hypocrite," you say, turning to glare at the man. "You call yourself a 'God loving Christian'? You ordered the murder of a family man just trying to get his daughter back so you could steal a giant ring in his basement. That's breaking TWO of the cardinal rules of a little thing called the Bible, if you've never heard of it. 'Thou Shall Not Kill' and 'Thou Shall Not Steal.' Sound familiar?"

"Listen. If I have to make a deal with the devil to-" Kinsey tries to reason.

"No! You listen to us!" O'neill interrupts. "You're not fooling anyone, Kinsey. You're no religious nut. You're just using it as a mask to excuse being a shitty person. You're no better than the Goa'uld, you snake." He then takes out another burner cell phone and flips it open. "Now, here's how we're going to end this situation without anybody dying."

37 Minutes have passed. Bauer keeps muttering to himself, 'why hasn't it shut down yet?'

You answered him the first time, but he didn't seem to want to believe it.

The explosion must have turned the planet into something like a star, or maybe just set its surface on fire. Something that's been feeding the Stargate a constant amount of energy to keep it open. You don't know what's going on except that this is a vastly unknown situation. You can only assume the reason that the Aschen's Stargate didn't survive like this planet's gate did is that it was at the epicenter of the explosion, and not fifty miles out like this one was.

You can only imagine how much worse the explosion would have been if there'd been even MORE Naquadah on the bomb in the first place.

As it stands, you guess that planet just had more Naquadah on it than anyone previously thought... either that or there was something else you weren't aware of. Something like Naquadah but a thousand times more unstable... more explosive?

Could there be some other variation of Naquadah in existence that could be that explosive??

You'll make sure not to put that idea forwards in your after-action report just in case...

Any second now...

When the 38 Minute window hits, Bauer just gets up and leaves, bemoaning his sure-to-be-court-martial'd ass.

34.12 seconds after the 38 minute mark, the Stargate shuts down.
...You're not going to call after him to let him know just yet. Let the bastard simmer for a moment, you think as you check to see that... yes, the Iris is cooling down and there aren't any deadly levels of radiation in the Gate room.

...Okay. Moment's over. Time to do your job.

O'neill's plan works, amazingly.

You walk right out the front door with Kinsey, startling the NID goons into hesitating for just long enough for the REPORTERS to swarm en-mass and start asking questions.

Questions about if it's ture or not Kinsey is making a run for President and not going for re-election as Senator.

The man's mask and pride gets the better of him, and you and O'neill are free to walk away while Kinsey brags and boasts about how he'll be a better President than blah blah blah blah yak yak yak yak yada yada yada yada.

You don't pay any more attention than O'neill is.

"So," you say as you drive away from the scene of the crime. "What now?"

"Now, we put things right," O'neill says. "Everyone where they blong." He pauses, then says, "You made yourself a copy of that email, didn't you?"

"Of course I did," you say. "I'll use it to get me a better prison. One that actually serves decent food."


"Of course," you say. "Maybe I'll escape one day, or maybe I won't. Haven't decided that part yet. We'll see what kind of Prison I can upgrade to first. Besides, I wouldn't want you to look bad infront of the President if I escape now."

"'Cause, of course it'll be as much of a prison for you as it is a guard against any NID goons seeking revenge," O'neill guesses.

"Right on the money," you nod.

Your name is Samantha Carter, and as you check your private personal email after a VERY long day at work, you find, much to your surprise, that there's an email from what appears to be COLONEL O'NEILL'S PERSONAL, NON WORK EMAIL.

You didn't think he had one, to be honest.

What's less surprising is that it's titled "Fishing Vacation Details."

Well... the Colonel does love his fishing. That said, it must be a SPECTACULARLY huge catch if
he's bragging about it to you of all people.

You click on it, and check the CC notifications just to see if it really was you specifically, or if he's bragging to the base as a whole.

...It's a very specially curated list of names.

You, Teal'c, George Hammond, Davis Strider, Janet Fraiser, Mikari Aiikho, Karkat Vantas-- Wait. Jude Harley?

You read the Email itself. It doesn't quite read like O'neill's normal work emails, and there's a certain air of... of oddness to it.

'Hey! Fishing partner and I reeled in a big one today at a fishing tourny in Washington! We got a LOT of pictures in the ZIP FILE enclosed and a text readout of it all just incase you need some clarification. You'll NEVER BE-LIVE how huge this find is. Keep these pics in a safe place. The Never Investigating Dock-heads running the tournament weren't too happy when we caught it and might want to erase all proof we were there. Think of this as my insurance policy against them taking this from us.'

[Never Investigating Dockheads?] Jolinar points out that oddity. [Does he mean the NID?]

"Be-live'? Do you think this whole sabbatical thing was just a cover for him to go do something highly illegal without risking our safety?" you ask, frowning as you dare to open the attached ZIP FILE.

[It'd certainly explain the suddenness of it all,] Jolinar muses. [I wonder who his fishing partner was, thOH WHAT THE HELL!? Is that-!?]

"Maybourne??" You stare at the headlining picture at the top of it all. O'neill and Maybourne standing together, leaning against some kind of PARK SIGN that, you're sure if you looked it up, would turn out to belong to a place with atleast one form of large body of water.

Already, your suspicions are getting confirmed. You scroll down a bit and...

Oh.

"Bloody Hell," you mutter as you read on about a LOT OF HIGHLY ILLEGAL NID OPERATIONS that O'neill stresses in another text document that you should DEFINITELY KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE that isn't on your computer and that you should NOT MENTION KNOWING ANY OF THIS STUFF unless a DIRE DISASTER surfaces, such as someone dying under MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.


DIASPORA DATE: 4/29/0001.

Your name is GEORGE HAMMOND, still a GENERAL, and you never expected Colonel O'neill to actually pull it off.
But he did.

Your temporary replacement, General Bauer, has stepped down of his own accord into actual retirement, and you made it known to the top brass that NO, you WOULD NOT be retiring, and you further made it known to the NID that any further blackmail attempts would cause them a WORLD OF PAIN.

They made no complaints, and backed off.

And so you settle back down into your office, smiling faintly as O'neill waltzes into your office once more.

"Jack," you greet.

"Sir," he nods.

"I got your fishing email," you say. "Good job on reeling in that big trout."

"Oh, yeah, love that big trout," O'neill says with a smirk. "Couldn't have done it without my fishing partner, though."

"I'm sure it's a hell of a story we'll have to discuss in private at some better time," you say.

"Oh, it's a whopper of a tale, I'll say," O'neill muses.

"If there's ever anything I can do to repay you," you begin.

"No need, Sir," O'neill says, shaking his head. "Not right now... 'though, maybe one day, I'll ask you to buy back my soul."

"...I can do that," you promise with a nod.

"Well, then," O'neill nods, "I'll leave you to settling back in."

"Thanks," you say.

"Good to have you back, General," O'neill says as he turns to leave.

"It's good to be back, Colonel," you answer.

You're thinking... Maybe you hinged your bets properly after all.

Chapter End Notes

...This ended up being mostly a rehash of the actual episode, for the most part. And yet... I had so many scenes that went differently. :D
 ALT:04X15: A Regent's Perspective

Chapter Summary

In which certain necessary conversations are had.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 4/26/0001.

Your name is Mierfa Durgas and if, in the grand scheme of things, the ability to detect brainwashing on people was as unobtrusive an ability as it could get, it was handy in certain regards. Namely-being a living proximity detector when you and your team are hiding from some ENRAGED ALTERNIAN SOLDIERS.

However, there is a downside to it... namely, you don't really get a sense of DIRECTION as to where those people are, and when you already know you're being hunted, well... it doesn't matter much in the long term. Especially when you're RUNNING and not HIDING.

"DIAL THE GATE! DIAL THE GATE!" Joey orders you as she, Xefros, and Polypa take up guarding positions behind some CONVENIENT ROCKS.

You run up to the DHD and start pressing the Glyphs for Alternia.

"FIRE IN THE FACE!!!" Polypa yells as you hear her pull a pin on what you can assume is a Grenade before throwing it out of cover.

A moment later, there's an explosion and some screaming, and you glance back in time to watch Joey and Xefros take the opportunity to lean out from cover and shoot the stunned pursuers with their stun rifles.

You get right back to it punching in the symbols for Alternia and voila! WAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!

You duck behind the DHD to avoid a lucky shot, and quickly punch in the IDC and radio through, "Recon Team One Returning under Fire! Repeat Returning under fire!"

Without even waiting for a response, you draw your own stun weapon and shoot out some covering fire.

"GO GO!" Joey orders, and then leaps from cover to head towards the Gate. Xefros and Polypa follow a moment later, and you quickly backpedal towards the event horizon and SCHLORP!!

You four tumble out through Alternia's gate just in time, and a moment later, the shield goes up and some dark purple SPLATS flash against the shield for a few moments.


You exhale out in relief, as you feel the minds buffeting against your brain switching from definitely hostile to concern.

"That..." Xefros shakes his head. "That was NOT fun, guys. Can I just say? That was not fun at all?"

"Definitely not fun," Joey agrees.

"I dunno," Polypa laughs, "I thought it was a real blast!!"

Groans go out, and sighs occur.

It seems today is just going to be one of THOSE days.

Your name is BOLDIR LAMATI and damn it, your new powers are way too intrusive. At first it was just relevant surface thoughts, but now...

As much as you've been trying to turn it off when you're on base, well... that's pretty hard to do. Your trained eyes pick up on so many tiny details about people normally that this fragment of REGENT just keep supplying information related to those details by plucking it from people's minds.

Notice someone's done something different with their hair?

Well, if it was someone like Callie Ohphee, you'd get *Burnt after Galekh wrecked an experiment. Very angry. Touchy Subject. Don't bring it up.* - But if it was, say, that Cerulean blooded girl ELWURD, you'd get *Trying to impress Matesprit* - along with a LOT of other, very unnecessary detailing included about the whys.

And that's just on the LIGHT SIDE of it, when you've picked up some oddly specific detail.

If you're just passing people in the hallways? Oh. OH BOY are you picking up on their surface thoughts and GOSH is that not fun at all. Like. WOW. Okay, Daraya, you're wrestling with your PALE FEELINGS for Tyzias, okay. You get that. But you really need to do something about it because your thoughts are basically a screaming roar of inner torment that make your real live ears ring.

And oh, GLUB, the less said about Mallek's perverse spade flirtatious thoughts about the ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CORE locked away in his room the better.

You get stuff like that from everyone except for two beacons of sanity.

One is Mierfa Durgas, who bears part of REGENT'S POWERS just the same and seems IMMUNE to your 'gift' because of it.

The other is Diemen Xicali, the young chef whose mind is a strangely calming whirlwind of FOOD RELATED THOUGHTS. The OBLONG MYSTERY MEAT PRODUCTS, usually, run as an under current of those thoughts; mostly lamenting that he's been banned from cooking them. Other than that, it's usually whatever food is being served for today, and thinking about what food will be
Right now, as you enter the food hall, you pick up on the idea of a TEN DAY LONG CHEESE DIP AND CHIPS PARTY wavering out from his mind. Mostly out of comedy's sake, it seems, but he toying with the idea of doing a different cheese dip a day. Either way, it's a fine distraction from everything else you're picking up on in this food hall.

"Hey, Xicali," you grin at the boy as you get in line. "What's cookin'? It smells good."

-Bird Wings baked in a Sauce/Glaze.- your power supplies.

"An Earth dish!" Xicali says, grinning. "Barbecued Chicken Wings!"

"Sounds like a fun one," you say. "I think I'll go with the jam pastries, though."

"Lemme check if any are ready! Just a moment!" And thus he heads into the back to fetch your order.

You remember that before Xicali took over cooking for the most part, it'd be a roulette shot as to whether or not food would be edible or not. There were quite a few times you'd ordered the pastries and they never cooked right because they'd been frozen stuff ordered in from elsewhere. Xicali, though, you've always noticed cooks things through... well, with the exception of his Oblong Meat Products. You're not sure why the hell that's the one thing he's never cooked through.

-!!?- Even your power can't draw up and discernible reason for it from the boy's thoughts, and THAT'S saying something.

But, that's part of why you enjoy being in his company too, you suppose.

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DIASPORA DATE: 4/28/0001.

Your name, once upon a time, was VRISKA SERKET... but that's a dead name to you. You now go by an ALIAS of ASHLER DERING, and you've been feeling... sort of curious the last few days.

Illusions. You were all about the ILLUSIONS growing up. Your MILD PSYCHIC ABILITIES, which you've been keeping a firm foot stomped down on lately, have been acting up, probably from disuse, and screwing around with your own perspective.

You... sort of can see these STRINGS around people's heads. Webs, really, if you're being THEMATIC to your old identity.

You used to use your illusions to trick trolls into walking headlong into your LUSUS'S GAPING MAW. You'd hated it, though. Feeding her. Feeding her and feeding her and she just wouldn't stop eating and--

One day, you got hit in the head by some kind of flying rock, and came to realize there was an easier way out of it. You tricked the trolls you were going to feed her with a different kind of illusion, and
they killed her instead of the other way around, and you fucking RAN FOR IT and faked your own death and changed your name and you've tried so hard to keep your powers under control.

And now you're stuck seeing webs around people's heads and you don't dare do anything because you're on SPACE SHIP and you're constantly linking your mind up with other people when ever you need to transform this ship and...

There's no point to doing it.

Not when there are people who would want you dead the moment they heard your real name.

So you pretend. You keep yourself out among the stars as best as you can and you try not to be Vriska Serket. You TRY to BE ASHLER DERING.

Some days, though, it gets hard.

Like right now, the crew of an ALTERNIAN CLOWN SHIP, that you randomly crossed paths with, are trying to torment your crew with CHUCKLEVOODOOS and mobilize the ASTRO MEGASHIP in space so they can take it for themselves.

Somehow, you're the only one seeing through them.

Not just through the illusions, but even further THROUGH them and into the minds of the not-so-insane Clowns running this shit show. You can see their WEBS ARE DIFFERENT. More... strangled. Made of SNAKE SKIN, even. You get the feeling you couldn't touch them even if you wanted to.

Bizarrely, among them, you find SOMEONE whose strings are looser. You could mess with them, maybe?

You're not so sure your power is messing with your head, and more that it hasn't... evolved, perhaps?

For the first time in years, you activate your power, and you tear into the mind of that Clown. You want him to [STOP THEM], and you weave a web which you think should do just that.

Except, you're not quite sure what you did exactly, but damn if it doesn't get quick results. Whoever you just... illusioned into acting up suddenly begins attacking his crew with a brutal, ruthless efficiency.

The CHUCKLEVOODOOS assaulting your crew evaporate suddenly, and the entire Clown Ship goes silent, just IDLING THERE while its crew probably tries to stop the sudden turncoat.

They spend enough time on that foolishness that Tegiri is able to recover and take the Astro Megaship's sword and destroy the Clown's Ship with a solid strike.

The thing explodes, but you can feel the presence of that clown you messed with- in an escape pod that rockets away mere seconds before the sword did its thing.

You keep quiet after the fact as to what you did, even while the whole crew wonders why the Clowns just... stopped their vicious assault.

It's a victory, but now you have even more reason to BE AFRAID of your powers.
It was too easy just now. TOO EASY. You just... You didn't even have EYE CONTACT. That was your key to your illusions before and it was NEVER that direct. You had to visualize it before. What you wanted people to do. You had to create a scenario for them to want to follow. It was never that... DIRECT.

This is something else.

...You kind of want to do that again, and it's that thought alone makes you SCARED. More than you ever were before of your illusions.

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**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 28TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/30/0001.**

Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and you take a breath to steady yourself once you exit the Alternia side of the Stargate wormhole. A floppy disk resides in your JACKET POCKET. Along side you are ROXY EGBERT, ROSE and ARGO LALONDE, and SAMANTHA CARTER.

"Hey guys!" And then your sister comes and pulls you into a hug. Taking care not to hit your face with her horns. (Horns! You're still finding it hard to believe she's still stuck like this.)

"Hey, Sis!" You give her a hug back, before letting her go so Joey can give Roxy a hug.

"Hey, Jojo!" Roxy grins, hugging back as well. "Glad to see you in one piece!"

While Roxy and Joey exchange cheesy family platitudes, you glance over at the LALONDES- Argo and Rose, rather.

Rose looks... tired. More tired than she did before you stepped through the Gate... You think she seems to be relaxing now that she's on the Alternia side of things. Argo just rolls her shoulders and smiles faintly as she shrugs off her jacket so she can tie it around her waist. You see her wings flare out for a moment, briefly flashing neon before settling back down to their normal non-glowing light levels. Carter just stands there a bit awkwardly.

"So!" Joey claps her hands. "To what do we owe the pleasure of you five coming to visit our humble little ship in the desert?"

"A couple of things, personal and work related," you say, turning your attention back to her. "My work thing is minor, and I just need to speak with Dammek for a few minutes. About Xicali's Hot-dogs."

"About his Hot-dogs?" Joey asks, frowning. Then, her eyes sparkle with recognition. "Oh! Right. Yeah. I gotcha covered." She turns and calls up to the bridge, "Zebede! Get Dammek down here ASAP!"

"Sure thing!" Comes the enthusiastic reply.

"Anything else work related?" Joey asks, turning back to face you, or more specifically, Major
"Two things. One is I came to see if Miss Ohphee wanted any help with the Time Machine research," Carter says, "The other is I wanted to speak with the Ship designers on Cla'dia about a project that suddenly went in an unexpected direction."

"That makes sense." Joey nods, then asks, "So what's the personal reasons?"

"Well!" Roxy claps her hands. "I wanted to see your new house, and maybe offer some decorating tips!"

"And we were hoping to pawn Rose off on you guys for a mission so she could blow off steam," Argo adds.

"Blow off steam?" Joey asks, frowning. "Why?"

"I..." Rose opens her mouth for a moment, but hesitates. "I seem to have a problem with stealing Alien Technology out of the storage containers the Researchers keep putting them in."

Joey blinks, processing that, then asks, "Did something happen that I should be aware of?"

"Just that Rose and Cassandra got taken on a Joy Ride by the X-301," Roxy answers, smiling brightly despite the obvious concern in her voice.

"Ah," Joey nods, comprehension dawning on her face. "I get it. That X-301 wouldn't happen to be that Project of yours that 'suddenly went in an unexpected direction' would it?"

Rose's flinch and embarrassed glancing away was all the answer anyone needs.

Thankfully, nobody needs to worry about that given Dammek's arrival, and miraculously, Callie is at his side. Good timing all around, it seems, for the work side of this business trip. You head over to Dammek, and see about talking somewhere more private, while Carter goes to talk with Callie about TIME MACHINES and OTHER THINGS.

A short while later, in the All Your Base's CAFETERIA, you and Dammek conclude the vast majority of important HOT-DOG related discussion.

"Well, shit," Dammek mutters as he looks over the floppy disk you'd placed on the table. "This is big, isn't it?"

"Which is why I'm leaving a copy with you," you say, sliding the disk over to him.

"I'll take care of it," Dammek says, picking up the disk and then- pop- it's gone into his SYLLADEX. You really need to get one of those. It'd make carrying all your books at school so much easier. "...So, did I really overhear what I thought I heard when I walked into the Gate Room earlier? Earth is building its own fighter-interceptor?"

"Oh, yeah," you nod. "And Rose stole it, and Cassie jumped in the back to keep Rose from getting blown up when the damned thing decided to go rogue on its own."

"A Black box in the old Death Glider meant to deterr thieves, we guess," you answer. "Thankfully, Thor showed up in the nick of time and got the girls out of there before something bad happened."

"Ah," he nods. "So that's the 'amusing circumstances' Callie said he was talking about when she radio'd in last week."

"It was really good timing," you say, nodding. Silence falls for a moment, then you ask, "So, what's new over here with the Bracelet Hunt 2.0?"

"Oh, well," Dammek frowns. "We're not entirely sure. We think the powers might be spreading out across time and space given everything that happened."

"Why's that?" You ask.

"It's better if I show you," Dammek pauses, then seems to double check the room, and then he stands up and waves over at someone. "Hey! Lamati! Over here!"

Someone comes over just then- a girl in a large grey OVERCOAT and a similarly colored DETECTIVE'S HAT. Going by the QUESTION MARK SHAPED SIGN on her overcoat, you'd guess she's an OLIVE BLOOD.

"Jude Harley," Dammek introduces, "meet Boldir Lamati. Lamati, meet Harley."

"It's nice to meet you," you say, offering your hand.

"A Pleasure to meet you too," the girl says, taking your hand and shaking it. Her voice is kind of squeaky, in a cute way. "I've heard a lot about you from Joey, intentionally or not. And thanks. First time I've ever heard anyone think my voice was cute!"

"...Eh?" You ask, frowning. "But I didn't say that-"

"Out loud, no, you didn't." Lamati says, putting her hand back in her pocket. "I was on a mission a while back when a crystal punched through my pilot and the console of the ship we were on. I got mind reading powers trying to pull it out so I didn't crash."

How is that even possible?

"How is that possible, indeed," she grins at you. "We're still trying to wrap our heads around it ourselves."

"The short of it is, she's got a part of Regent's powers," Dammek says. "Just like Mierfa does. Except where Mierfa's powers are breaking Mind Control, Lamati's is surface thought mind reading. We're not sure where the Mind Control part of the power went just yet, but it's probably active given that Mierfa's part of the powers didn't kick in until Lamati got hers."

"That's insane," you manage to say. "Holy shit that's just completely insane."

"Tell me about it," Lamati answers. "It's really hard to turn off, too."
"So, you can see surface thoughts, or is it deeper stuff too?" You ask, wondering if she could even see your recent memories of you and Cassie hugging and kissing after Thor had rescue her.

"Only deeper if it's related to something you're thinking about right now," Lamati answers, cheeks going a light shade of green. "So, like, I couldn't get any details of that Lovely Reunion until you were wondering if I could see it in your head."

"...Damn it," you hang your head. "I walked into that one, didn't I?"

"Pretty much," Lamati nods, glancing away. "And I'm trying really hard right now not to follow the trail of breadcrumbs leading away from it. So, um, can we change the subject?"

"Right, so!" You cough. "The Crystal powers are jumping ship to other people's bodies?" You ask.

"Yup," Dammek nods. "We're not sure what's even going on with it, beyond the fact that, apparently, second hand exposure to a time demon's handmaid dying does some really weird shit to alien technology."

"That is just... so weird." You say. "Like, really, really weird." But at the same time... how handy would a power like that have been to get certain STATE SECRETS out of a certain Senator's head?

"Oh." Lamati squeaks suddenly. "That's a huge pile of secrets, isn't it?"

What? How- Oh. Right, mind reader.

"Oh, right, mind reader," Lamati echoes at the same time you think that. "Yeah, that's... I suppose if I'd been allowed to go off base for it, and able to disguise myself as human, I probably cold have helped out with that, but it all depends on how securely that guy separates out his thoughts." She pauses, then says, "But you know, if we get our hands on a Shaper Fragment, or on the whole thing, later down the line, maybe... I could disguise myself as a human and join you on Earth to help work on that end of things without anybody being the wiser."

"Really?" You ask, curious. "You'd really want to work on something like that?"

"It'd be easier than the last info gathering job I had," Lamati says, shrugging. "I mean, anything's easier given a lack of crashing air-ship, but... well. It'd be easier than the one before it since I wouldn't have to really do anything but get close to a person and read their thoughts."

"Man," you say, a bit sarcastically, "Nat. Sec. is just going to love you."

"Hah!" she laughs. "National Security's hated my ass since before I joined the Rebellion. I've had my ways of digging up choice conspiracy details even without a fancy psychic power."

"You like conspiracies?" You ask.

"I LOVE conspiracies!" Lamati grins, "Specifically, I love tearing them wide open!"

"You know," Dammek interjects. "I'm suddenly wondering what the hell happened in the parallel universe where Joey stayed on Earth and Jude came here in her place. And then the two of you met."

You blink, and Lamati laughs, evidently reading his mind. "That's a LOVELY mental picture you've got there, Dammek."
You think it over, and...

Haha! You laugh. "Now THAT is a mental picture, alright!"

Your name is CALLIE OHPHEE, and you whistle as you look over the schematics for the PROTOTYPE EXPERIMENTAL FIGHTER 302.

"I'm no ship designer, but damn if this isn't one of the sleekest looking things I've ever seen," you say.

"Do you think the designer who built your Dragonflys can figure out where we can improve it?" Carter asks.

"Oh, I'm sure he'll come up with a bunch of improvements," you say. Then he'll probably come up with a dozen more improvements to those improvements and build his own version. But that's besides the point.

"That's good," Carter says, nodding as she then turns her attention towards the mess of a time machine in your lab. "So... Elephant in the room time. What do we have so far?"

"Well, Not a whole lot, to be honest," you say. "The projection emitters are fairly similar to the Replicator Disruptors, and pretty much every kind of energy wave emitter ever designed, but they're... odd."

"Odd how?" Carter asks.

"They're vaguely reminiscent of the emitters built into the Stargates," you say. "Similar, but there's something oddly distinct about it that's definitely different. I'd dare say the ones on this Time Machine were re-purposed from something else, and up scaled just a bit from that. And in turn, if I had anything to guess, they'd been upscaled from the Stargate's emitters."

"Similar technology," Carter frowns. "Maybe they're related to the wormhole warping we've seen with the Solar Flares?"

"That was my assumption way back when you all were caught in the time loop," you agree.

"Any idea why it's a ten hour loop only?" Carter asks.

"Yes, actually," you say. "The first problem I could see with this kind of device, and have confirmed as being one part of the problem once I got a look at the pieces involved, is that for the amount of power it takes in from the solar phenomenons mentioned in the report, it's being spread out far, FAR too much to work in the way intended."

"Why wouldn't they tie it down to a smaller bubble of space, though?" Carter pauses as she finds a crystal on the table. "Wait, is this a DHD crystal?" she picks it up.

"Yup," you say with a nod. "That's how they dialed fourteen gates at the same time. It was an extraneous thing slotted in among everything else. I'd never seen anything like it in an Alternian
DHD, and double checking pictures of DHD interiors from others in your Galaxy, it was the odd one out." Carter looks like she's about to ask something, and you think you know what it is. "And before you ask, there's no hidden experiment data on it. It's just a program that tells the Gate how to manage and broadcast whatever energy waveform is pumped into it at the specified gates simultaneously, and what Gates to Dial out to."

"It's always the same fourteen planets?" Carter asks.

"Always the same fourteen," you nod in confirmation.

"So if SG-1 hadn't been on P4X-639, we'd have all been caught up in the timeloop unaware that it was going on?" Carter frowns as she puts the crystal back down onto the table. "That's... terrifying to think about."

"That it is," you nod.

"So... what's the other problem you mentioned?" Carter asks.

"I'm pretty sure the other problem that the Ancients were running into was that they were trying to save scum without save scumming," you answer.

"...Pardon?" Carter asks. "I think the Gate translation glitched. Did you just say they were trying to 'lift scum off of a pond's surface just to put it in a different part of the pond'?"

"Oh, that probably doesn't translate well," you say, shaking your head. "Um. Think of the Universe like a video game for a moment."

"Okay," Carter nods.

"So, there's points in time where the game automatically saves itself as a state, and if you time travel back in time, you're basically reloading to that save state and either making a new branch of the save states, doing different things, or doing the same things you were already destined to do. Follow?"

"Right," Carter nods.

"So, what the Ancients were trying to do was take PART of the save state of their universe from that old save state," you say. "namely, these fifteen worlds within the time bubble, and overwrite their CURRENT save state within the bubble."

"The Time Loop," Carter realizes. "That's why everything within the bubble reset to its EXACT physical state every time the loop reset, but the rest of the universe outside of it didn't. They were trying to undo physical changes to their planets. But why?"

"A plague, if I had to guess," you say. "Something fast spreading, and very deadly. If they could revert the state of their test section of the galaxy to a point in time where such a thing didn't exist, they could possibly then replicate that effect to the rest of the Galaxy as a whole."

"To prevent the plague from spreading before it ever started," Carter reasons. "But why not just time travel backwards before that time and inform people what was going to happen?"

"Who knows," you shrug, "but they just didn't have enough power for it, I think. Either that, or they couldn't go back in time before this version of the time machine itself existed. I can't say for certain,
"You mean taking a section of the present time- the 'current' save state- and physically moving it back in time to the 'older' save state?" Carter asks.

"Exactly that," you nod.

"...That could work," Carter says, "but now the question is how much power and how big of a bubble do we aim for?"

"I think we have the answer to at least one of those readily on hand, as for the other..." You tap at a console and bring up a set of SCHEMATICS stolen from the past onto a nearby monitor. "And if we have one, we can figure out the other."

Carter moves over to look at the blueprints. "Is this...?"

"The Destiny, before the Condess made it her royal flagship," you say. "It shouldn't be too much bigger than this presently though, and, if I've been reading these schematics right, has an inbuilt function that should make the power supply trivial."

"The Ancients sure did love their solar power," Carter muses, looking over the designs.

"Yes," you muse, "I'm inclined to agree, having looked at this Time Machine."

Solar Power does seem to be oddly efficient for Time Travel for some reason.

"Oh my GOD! JOEY!" Your mother squeals. "It's so Rustic and Log-cabbiney!!"

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you stare up at the wooden structure with a bit of resentment at how much nostalgia the sight of it brings to mind.

It's so similar to the O'neill's cabin from your distant future now never happening. You could have called this one home if you were shown a picture, almost...

But it's not. The shape is wrong on the roof and the length of the front facing side.

It's too long. Too boxy.

"Thanks, Roxy," Aunt Joey says, smiling proudly at it. "It's come a long way. Wanna see the inside?"

"OF COURSE!!!"

You and Argo stay standing outside as Mother Dearest and Aunt Joey head inside.

"You okay?" Argo asks.

"If I told you I was considering impulsively running away into this forest, what would you say?" You ask.
"I'd run after you and knock you over the head to get you to stop," Argo answers.

"...Okay," you say. "I won't then."

"Somehow I don't believe you," she counters.

"I really won't," You insist...

...

A silence passes.

...

"I don't want to leave again, Argo," you say after who knows how long. "It doesn't matter what kind of mission Joey takes us on tomorrow, I'm never going to- I just. I won't ever fit in back on Earth."

You turn to look at her, cat ears and crow wings and all that fancy bio-glow junk. "We don't belong on that Earth. It's not ours. It never was. Not with our powers."

"Maybe," Argo muses. "I kinda get what you mean, but..."she makes a purring sound that sounds somewhat annoyed. "Mrrrrh. I don't like the idea of leaving you behind here. John and Jade..."

"Don't need me," you kick at the dirt. "I've always felt like a third wheel that they've been putting their own wants and desires behind trying to keep me worked into the dynamic. I don't want that. I don't want to keep ruining lives. I've already crossed a line twice with them, Nep!!"

She frowns. "Rose...."

"I'm serious!" you feel the tears brewing in your eyes, and you fight them back. "I put alien tech on their arms knowing they wouldn't agree to doing my plan unless they already were wearing them! I STOLE a fucking MILITARY WEAPON just to- to- TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT! I didn't have any reason to do it! I just- saw the notice on the table Mom left there and- I- I just wanted to TAKE it. To run away! AND- if Cassie hadn't climbed in there I'm sure I'd never have even answered any of the radio calls! I'd have just stayed in there until I DIED!"

You're tempted.

OH you're SO SORELY TEMPTED to just turn invisible and run away.

But having your.... your... your FRIEND just pull you into a hug with her arms and wings--

You break down and start sobbing.

"I wish I'd never come back, Nep," you admit. "It should've been someone else. It shouldn't have been me."

"Sssh," she strokes at the back of your head. "It'll be alright, Rose. We'll work through this."

No. You want to protest. No you won't.

...But you don't.
You just cry.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Rose. She really needs to find some way to burn off the stress. :/

Also, hey! A wild Vriska appears!
Chapter Summary

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is the chapter that vindicates that graphic descriptions content flag at the top thing. And also probably deserves this arc getting a huge ratings bump. THINGS GO DOWN.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 29TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 5/1/0001.**

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and you're bracing for another odd mission.

It's to a planet dubbed "PR2-314" and the mission here is TWO FOLD. First is the actual MISSION PART. Boldir Lamati's powers have greatly increased her ability to STEAL INFORMATION for the Rebellion's use. What they don't aid in is ACTUALLY STEALING PHYSICAL THINGS.

Especially when the PHYSICAL THING being STOLEN is locked behind a fuck ton of BIOMETRIC LOCKED SECURITY DOORS.

Not exactly something you can just swipe a password for, and a conundrum you'd been mulling over how to solve for a few days now...

Rose, however, could get past it, and in having Roxy and Argo and Jude basically coming to you requesting you give Rose a mission where she can put her endless energy reserves to good use, well...

Even Mierfa seemed to think it was a good idea to send Rose in after she confirmed that Rose vanished from her 'proximity sensing' powers when she went invisible right infront of her.

As the Stargate spins up, you take stock of your TEAM- You, Rose, Boldir, and Xefros. Rose is looking anxious within the HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENT SUIT, Boldir seems to be picking up on that- oh, she nods at you after you think that- and Xefros looks about as well composed as he usually does before a mission.

Still, something nags at you. A feeling of UNEASE. There's still a piece of Regent out there somewhere, and who knows how many other pieces of the Bracelet are scattered across time. They're ticking bombs just waiting to explode in your face.

You can only hope this BIO PLAGUE SOURCE that Boldir picked up on is a fragment of or the whole version of Shaper, otherwise, you're not quite sure what you'll be able to do about it.
Your name is TRIZZA TETHIS and you've hidden yourself away on some jungle planet far away from the Stargate (and native giant fauna that hang around it) to try and reconcile with the GHOST stuck inside your head. It hasn't been going very well, though you've made a LITTLE progress.

Namely, you've talked the CLOWN into letting you do basic things like, you know, EATING, SLEEPING, and other BODILY FUNCTIONS necessary for continued survival. You're sure what powers you got from the JADE CRYSTAL could supply those needs for you, but, uh... You'd rather not DIE from starvation of any kind just to be refreshed and brought back to life again. It's not pleasant. (It REALLY isn't, and it's part of what convinced the damned clown in the first place to let you focus on actually living and not single mindedly hunting down some troll who's probably not even ALIVE at this point.)

You're in the middle of roasting some kind of LARGE, WINGED SQUIRREL BEAST when something large and on fire crashes into a nearby mountain.

You're tempted, so sorely tempted, to just leave it be.

...But the Clown Ghost in your head has a good point that if that was a ship and it was piloted, someone's gonna come looking for it sooner or later. That someone might have a way back to Alternia proper. Or, maybe the ship isn't too badly damaged and you could fly it back manually.

Fuck it. You risk some mild burn discomfort to grab the cooking squirrel beast out of the flames and start chewing down on it as you march towards that mountain.

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you make your way through the hallways of an ALTERNIAN BATTLE CRUISER- which, for some discernible reason, has parked itself on the actual surface of the planet in question. You suppose it's cheaper and quicker than building another facility from scratch. But that just seems HYPOCRITICAL given that this planet, PR2-314, is home to a TRAINING SCHOOL LIKE SETTLEMENT for ARMY RECRUITS.

It's one of these recruits that BOLDIR LAMATI told you to follow. Some HIGH STRUNG looking TEAL BLOOD named TAGORA GORJEK- or "GOR-GOR" to his quadrant mates, of which Boldir confidently told you he has none, not for a lack of trying, though.

(Boldir then got a grossed out look on her face after saying that and excused herself to go throw up into a bush.)

This Tagora guy looks shady as hell. Kind of reminds you of some bully type guy from some cartoon you saw years ago- er, years from now? You're not even sure if that show's even going to be made without the Aschen showing up suddenly.

Ah, tangents.

You follow this guy, your own proverbial key, through the airlocks and the hallways of a ship that looks newer than the All Your Base, but only in certain respects, like the FANCY SECURITY DOORS or the coat of paint on the hallway walls. The rest seems to be the same style or a bit older.

That's not surprising, all things considered.
Your WALKING KEY finally gets to his, and your, destination- the BIO-LAB VAULT.

He dons a CLEAN SUIT- you already had one on before you ever stepped foot through the Gate- and then he enters the lab, with you following behind him.

There's a DISINFECTANT SPRAY that goes off, but it just passes right through you. (And, ew, isn't that a freaky sensation. It's like being sneezed on all over except it just goes right through you instead of clinging.)

And then this TAGORA PRICK steps into the lab, and you see that, besides the other CLEAN SUIT WEARING SCIENTISTS, there's one other person in the middle of all of this. Some YELLOW BLOODED Troll chained to a bed. Not a near adult like everyone else in the room, but somewhere closer to your age, you think. Their left eye is covered by some kind of technological harness of some kind, and from behind it you can see some DISCOLORED VEINS spreading from beneath the skin. Their right eye GLOWS with a NEON LIGHT GREEN color.

"Seriously!?" Tagora asks the room. "Has NO-ONE found a way to kill this troll yet!?"

"Fuck you, Gorjek!" the troll on the bed spits a glob of blood at the floor and OH doesn't that do something bizarrely unique. Plant matter starts growing out of the relatively tiny pool of blood that formed. Like, the literal beginnings of a tree begin to sprout upwards, colored NEON PINK AND LIGHT GREEN.

Some other troll stomps their foot on it to cause it to stop, and you hear the grimace in their voice as they say, "Sorry, Captain Gorjek. Everything we've thrown at them just gets incorporated into their genetics."

Oh? Now that's familiar sounding.

"Have you tried a KNIFE?" Tagora asks. "Maybe to the Heart!? Or perhaps their eye?"

"You know General Naihte won't allow us to-"

"GENERAL NAIHTE ISN'T HERE!" Tagora stomps his foot. "I don't care. The Empress has expressed... CONCERNS that Alternia is out of contact. That a whole HALF of the Empire's holdings have turned coat and are actively in rebellion! If we can engineer a targeted plague with whatever biotic agent has turned this once promising Ship Battery into... Into this Mutagenic Plague!" He spits out the words but not much else, given the helmet. "And we can end the Empire's problems right here and now? I don't care who this Wriggler is to the General, or the General's forces. I don't care how much research went into combining the genetics of a powerful Battery and a Psychic Vacuum. THEY. CAN. START. OVER." There's a pause. "Am I making myself clear here? We only have. ONE. SHOT. At this."

"Alright," the Troll that had started this conversation turns to their team, and says, "Prepare to remove the restraining patch."

You're not sure what you can do here to get this kid out alive, but you're pretty sure nothing major can- OH! SHINY!

You spot a VERY SHINY looking set of ALCHEMY BOTTLES possibly being used to BREW UP some foul concoction.
As the Trolls in the clean suits go around to the Troll with the weird eye-patch thing, you meander over to those bottles and...

*TINK.*

You tap one on the side, and watch as it tumbles sideways into another bottle.

**CLINK.**

In all the sound of unfastening metal bolts and restraints, nobody hears the second bottle topple over into a third.

*DINK.*

The fourth bottle, set over a flame, is suddenly jarred loose as the third crashes into it and--

...They just sit there.

How lame, all leaning against each other like dominoes who failed to completely fall over.

They're all kind of bubbling with the bunsen-burner-like device under them, though. Well, like Polypa said while you were suiting up... "If I were you going in, I'd be planning to burn the place down with me in it."

You're pretty sure this isn't what she had in mind, but hey. You've got limited options here.

You glance around, and then just decide to throw out all subtlety, jump onto the counter, and then kick the bottles and the burner over onto the floor.

**CRASH!!!**

"Oh WHAT NOW!?" Tag-your-gore-ah turns around and stares at the toppled bottles of unknown contents mixing together on the floor under extreme heat. You barely hear him mutter out an "...Oh shit" before everyone else turns to look and from what you can see of their faces, it's probably not a good thing they're mix-

You barely notice the smoke from the burning puddle of liquids before the entire room seems to go up in NEON GREEN flames with a very loud *FWAAAASH!*

You are, of course, completely unharmed by the very sudden increase of temperature and flames, and so is the troll on the table, who laughs their head off as the flames incinerate away their clothes, but leave them completely unharmed.

The trolls in the clean suits, however, are not. They basically scream and yell and holler as their clean suits get consumed by the flames that then go on to start eating their skin.

You get the feeling Polypa would be either proud or jealous, somehow, and you're not quite sure how you feel about that given her romantic entanglements with your AUNT JOEY. You just suck it up the Alternian way and put such thoughts of family ties behind you for the moment, and then waltz over to the Troll laughing on the table as they try to pry off the now melting metal harness.

"I dunno who's there," mystery troll says, "and I doubt you can reply back to me with all these
flames burning shit down. But DAMN that was a fine ass rescue. I'm Test Subject 1-24-18, but I've always been partial to the name Cirava Hermod."

And then the head-harness comes loose and instead of their left eye, you see...

You let loose a choice CHINESE CURSE you picked up from eavesdropping inside a CHINESE BUFFET'S KITCHEN once, because HOLY MOTHERLESS GOAT OF ALL MOTHERLESS GOATS, that's at least a FRAGMENT of the Bracelet's PINK HUED CRYSTAL peering out from this Troll's FUSCHIA HUED EYE.

The flames in the room finally sputter out along with the screams of the lab crew, leaving you both in a room that's definitely melted into scrap.

You take the opportunity to phase back into existence, and peer out through the airlock doors.

...The fire is rushing out through the hallways, consuming just about everything on the ship it can burn.

The screams echo so very loudly.

"So," Cirava says, and you turn back around to face them. "Can I get a name?"

You pull off your helmet, and smile as you get an opportunity to quote a line that John's just going to LOVE hearing you used. "I'm Rose Lalonde and I'm here to rescue you."

Cirava eyes you for a moment- and it's very freaky given that one of their eyes is pierced with crystal fragments. "Nice to meet you, Rose Lalonde," they offer you their hand, and you take it and shake it.

A moment later, the crystal in Cirava's eye pulses with energy- they shriek in pain- and the next thing you know is that there's a lot of YELLOW BLOOD and EYE CHUNKS flying your way.

Also, you idly note that SHAPER seems to be very much intact and not fragmented at all in the moment before it slams down into your skull.

Your name is POLYPA GOEZEE, and you smell the scent of FLAMES on the air and sneeze.

It seems that somehow Xicali managed to set a FISH CASSEROLE on fire.

You're not quite sure how that's possible, but you approve whole-heartedly.

There, nestled deep into a canyon wall beyond recovery is an ALTERNIAN VESSEL ESCAPE POD. Going by the PURPLE SIGNAGE on the sides, it belonged to a CLOWN VESSEL.

Damn it. More clowns. The ghost inside your head goes quiet, observing, you think.

You just hope the pilot of this escape pod is dead, and not in a way that sticks around.
You approach the vessel, holding a LEG BONE from the winged squirrel beast in one hand like the improvised club it is.

You pry open the side hatch, and peer inside.

There's a lot of purple blood stained on the floor, but it's old. DRIED. The ghost inside your head rallies slightly, enraged at the reminder of their own blood being spilled so long ago.

You step into the escape pod and glance over at the pilot's chair. There, sitting slumped against the console, is a troll. A bit past EXILE AGE, you'd assume. They were probably training or some shit. One of their horns is BROKEN, and its remains lay on the floor at the Troll's feet, stained PURPLE along its length.

Did this Troll break off his own horn to use as a weapon?

You step closer to the body, hesitantly, unsure if it's breathing or not, and take a steeling breath.

'Alright, Trizza,' you think to yourself, 'you can do this.'

You reach forwards with your bone-club and nudge the troll's head onto its side so you can see their-HIS- face and oh Glub is it a doozy. THREE LONG SCRATCHES run along his face from forehead to jaw, going over the eyes at an angle, and PURPLE BLOOD has drained out of them, ruining the FACE PAINT to a ludicrous degree.

You see a glint of purple on the TROLL CLOWN'S JACKET over his heart, and look. You see the sign of TRUE CAPRICORN and the name GAMZEE MAKARA printed on a REMOVABLE PATCH.

Oh.

SHIT.

Makara?

As in THE GREAT GRAND HEIR-CHILD of the GRAND Highblood Kurloz Makara?

**THAT GAMZEE MAKARA??**

Oh. You've got to get out of here. It doesn't matter if he's dead or alive at this point, he'll be SO HUNTED DOWN and-

OH SHIT HIS EYES JUST SNAPPED OPEN and he's throwing a fist out at you and- OOF

You feel SOMETHING IMPORTANT has just been punched straight out of your chest, along with a lot of ribs. And also probably a chunk of spine, too, if you were lucky.

You decide this is an appropriate time to PRETEND TO PLAY DEAD, so you do.

You fall to the floor and wait for your powers to kick in and start healing you.

You manage to arrange your fall so that you land face up, though, and can observe.
"Mother Fuckin' Mind Reapers," Gamzee growls, putting the FUSCHIA PAINTED HAND against his face. Then, in a more silent voice, "Didn't know the Rebellion had that fuckin' kind of Mind Whammy on call." Growling again, "Gonna have to make them pay for makin' me kill my crew like that."

There's a long pause as he he looks down over your dead body.

*Don't see the regeneration, don't see the regeneration, don't see the regeneration...*

After a few passing moments, Gamzee frowns, whispering again, "The fuck? Is that Fuschia? Did I land in the past or something?" Then he GROWLS, "I know that fucking traitorous face. Fucking Trizza Tethis. HONK." He whispers again, "Thought you was dead. Guess you are now. Honk."

Oh GLUB please stop with the honking already. Two in and you're feeling the urge to SCOWL LIKE MAD. You can't though, your heart seems to have been either destroyed or punched out. You're effectively dead, even though you're stuck inside your own skull along with the ghost of-

Of...

Now just where the fuck did BAIZLI SOLEIL get off to? She's left your skull.

Gamzee Makara turns his back to you and fishes his BROKEN HORN off of the ground, grabbing it like a club.

FINALLY, you feel your REGENERATION kicking in, but its... It's SLOWED. No, HALVED. Taking longer than it should.

You get a semblance of motor control back to your eyes and you glance at the wall marred with your INTERNAL ORGANS.

Except it's not anymore. Not with YOURS, you mean.

The FUSICHIA BLOOD has turned PURPLE and it's sort of... Oh that's just GROSS. You're not even going to describe it, or keep looking at it, and instead you glance over at Gamzee, who seems to be staring at his own horn with some kind of LAMENT and not paying attention to the fact that your body is healing up and BAIZLI is growing a new fresh copy of her own body from your spilled innards.

Today has just NOT been your day.

Oh well, at least the Clown girl's out of your head.

You feel your spine reconnect and OW isn't that a painful sensation. You don't have much in the way of lungs or heart just yet but you can at least regain motor function of your limbs.

You push yourself up to stand, and open your mouth to say something dramatic. Something like, "Hey, Bitch. Didn't anyone ever tell you not to turn your back on the body?"

Instead, lack of lungs demanding, you just make a gross kind of 'Mrrrrrrh' sound.

Gamzee turns around, eyes widening in shock, and you fucking swing your squirrel beast leg into his
fucking face.

Your name is ROSE LALONDE, and you come back to the land of the conscious a few scant
seconds later, and begin picking yourself up off the floor. "Ow..." Your EARS are RINGING with
the sound of distant shouting and licking flames. "What the fuck was that?"

"What was that?" your rescuee Cirava asks as they, too, get up to their feet. You get a glance at their
left eye and see... Well, to put it simply, it looks like a SMALL PLANT is growing to replace the
missing eye. "That would be why they had a restraint on my eyeee..." They trail off, staring at you,
and blinking both eyelids, despite only seemingly having one functioning eye. ". . . Please tell me you
can normally grow cat ears and make your hair neon purple?"

"...What?" you ask.

"You've got cat ears growing onttop of your skull," Cirava says. "And, uh... your hair is turning
purple and it's glowing."

"...No, that's not normal," you say, grimacing as you reach up, and feel your head and... OW! Yep.
Those are definitely NEW EARS growing on your skull right now. You grab at a strand of your
once blonde hair and... Yeah. That's GLOWING too.

Damn it, Universe. It was A JOKE when someone-- was it you?-- said that you would look more
like Argo's sister with actual cat ears and neon hair.

It doesn't matter.

"Stupid Shaper Crystal," you mrrroowl, basically. Oh. Shit. You can feel your vocal cords shifting
slightly too. Don't tell you that you're turning into a fucking were-cat or something. PLEASE, don't
let it turn out that someone left CAT HAIR inside this stupid clean suit, or something like that like
what happened with Aunt Joey and the Werewolf incident.

Wait. No. More likely you got some of Argo's hair on you when you were hugging the other day.
Damn it.

Oh well. Doesn't matter. IT DOESN'T MATTER.

"Doesn't matter now," you say. "How's that eye?"

"I can see out of it even though I know I shouldn't," Cirava answers. "Also. It's like, all sort of... red-
shifted?"

"Neat," you shake your head, trying to clear the sound of RINGING from your ears. "We've gotta
get out of here."

"Agreed," Cirava nods. "I'm guessing you came here by Stargate?"

"Hell yeah," you nod. "Got a team and everything... But I think they're probably worried about all
the screaming right about now. They're probably heading in to try and rescue us right now or
something..." you pause, "either that, or wondering how I managed to set a ship on fire so quickly.
That's a lot more screaming than I thought there was earlier. What the hell did I set off?"
"Inside one of those bottles you knocked over was a little concoction they were calling 'The First Devil's Blood,'" Cirava says, flashing a lopsided grin. "One can only wonder what monster they sourced it from to have THAT kind of incendiary property when mixed with Lava Beetle blood and Acid Rain samples."

Huh. "Good to know," you say. "Just one question."

"Sure," Cirava says, nodding.

"How the fuck do we get out of here without crossing a wall of fire?" you ask. "Because you sure as hell might be fire proof, but I'm not sure I can do the phasing thing I did before to be fire proof."

That section of your powers feels... twisted somehow. CHANGED. Like with those stupid armbands, but less amplified and more... more... Just DIFFERENT.

"Oh, yeah, good point," Cirava nods, then, adds, "Also, do you happen to have a shirt I can borrow? It's getting kind of cold in here now that there isn't a raging inferno keeping me warm."

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and fucking hell THIS IS WHY YOU DECIDED POLYPA SHOULD STAY HOME.

Setting a spaceship and the surrounding IMPERIAL ACADEMY ON FIRE was *NOT* on today's plans.

"What happened to 'get in, steal the thing, and get out'?" You ask, staring at the GREEN BURNING COUNTRYSIDE.

"Somehow," Xefros says, meekly, "I feel like we weren't properly briefed on how much collateral damage Rose could actually cause if she actually set loose. That's a lot of people dying right now."

Oh, geeze, you can only imagine what it'd feel like to him right now, without Reaper on your wrist.

...Boldir doesn't have to, though, because she's clearly busy emptying her stomach again onto a nearby bush.

Poor girl. You grab Xef's hand and squeeze it, and hope that whatever comforts you can give him carry over enough to help.

And then there's a sort of distorting POP in the air nearby, and somehow Rose has gained the ability to TELEPORT.

She's also gained PURPLE NEON HAIR and CAT EARS and a PASSENGER wearing a slightly too large shirt that you're sure Rose was wearing beneath the Environment Suit.

Both of them appear about a solid foot off the ground and land flat on their butts from the mal-aligned teleport.

"...Rose," you say, staring at the two of them, "please tell me that Shaper was involved in this
"You mean the pink crystal that launched itself out of Cirava's eye and into my skull?" Rose asks, then grins—oh fucking hell she's got sharpened canines for teeth that are VERY DISTINCTLY FELINE in nature. "Yeah. That's a thing that happened."

"We'll worry about that later," the troll—Cirava, you guess—says as they get to their feet, sounding both concerned and way too giddy for a situation like this. "Let's get to the Gate and get out of here before the Devil's Blood fire reaches us."

"...Devil's Blood Fire?" Xefros asks, and you feel similarly unnerved in your stomach.

"That's a long story best saved for somewhere else," Boldir agrees as she stumbles over to you, a hand held close to her mouth. "Preferably not here."

...Okay, yeah, good idea.

"Alright, let's get back to base," you decide.

Okurii is not going to be happy about this, and more importantly, neither is Roxy... Or Jude... or Argo, for that matter.

Why the hell did you think this was a good idea again?

CRACK!

Your name is TRIZZA TETHIS, and the stupid leg bone BROKE against Gamzee's face.

Why the fuck did you think this was a good idea again?

"Now I get it," Gamzee whispers, and then he yells, "YOU'RE A SKIN-STEALER!!!"

And then he punches at your exposed spine faster than you can react with that bastard torn loose horn of his.

You brace for the impact— but it never comes.

It never comes because Baizli has grabbed the clown's right fist with her own recently reborn right hand.

And she's grinning mad.

"Who the fuck-?" Gamzee doesn't get a chance to ask anything much more than that as the former ghost in your head grabs him with her other hand and then fucking bodily throws the Makara straight over the escape pod's pilot chair, slamming him into the console of the ship with relative ease.

Then, she turns to look at you, and your eyes meet and nothing needs to be said out loud.
You both fucking GUN IT out the escape pod and start running down hill before Makara can recover.

About thirty seconds later, one Gamzee Makara HONKS so loud it makes the ground shake underneath your feet.

"How the fuck!?!" you finally manage to ask as you feel your lungs properly reinflate, making running a lot easier. "How are you alive again!?!"

"No fucking clue!" Baizli answers, grinning as you run. You can only imagine how happy she must be to feel the wind on her skin again. "But I'm not Complaining!!"

And then there's another EARTH SHAKING HONK, just in time to get your heart kickstarted into beating again. Oh. YAY. There's that fear response and Adrenalin rush you were missing.

You both slow in your run to briefly glance over your shoulders, and you spot the monster of a clown, Gamzee Makara, standing outside the escape pod, his broken horn weapon held in his left hand like a club while his right arm hangs limply at his side.

"Well," Baizli breathes out, a healthy purple flush going across her body from head to toe. "He's tougher than he loOOOOAAAAHHH!"

You didn't let her finish her sentence before grabbing her by the arm and dragging her back into a full fledged run, because damn if that Clown isn't running after you something fast.

"FORGET YOUR FLASH ASH CRUSH!" you yell and OH does it feel good. "WE GOTTA MAKE IT TO THE GATE!!"

"WHY!?!" Baizli yells at you in turn.

"CAUSE HE'S GONNA KILL US! THAT'S WHY!" Oh GLUB have you missed being able to yell. Oh. YEAH. Gotta give those new lungs a work out.

"BUT WHAT GOOD WILL THE GATE DO!?" She yells back at you.

Let you tell a non existent audience something.

"IT'S NOT THE GATE, BUT WHAT'S SWARMING IT!"

YELLING MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD!!!!!!!

"So let me get this straight," your name is OKURII LEIJON, and you look at the recently returned team incredulously as you summarize their debriefing. "You went to secure a bio-engineered plague, but instead came back with a case zero patient being modified by a survival mode Shaper Crystal... And not only did Shaper itself vanish after transforming Rose into a cat-girl like Argo... you also basically set the entire planet on fire after Rose's distraction turned a bottle of blood into a fucking WALL OF GREEN FIRE that broke loose from the ship!? Am. I. Missing. ANYTHING?!!"

"That's about the gist of it, yes," Xefros says with a nod.
"...If it's any consolation," Polypa chimes in from next to you. "Atleast I didn't start the fire this time?"

You sigh. "Yes, that is a consolation. A small one. But a consolation nevertheless."

You look over the team, once more.

Joey looks just about as put off by this turn of events as you are, Xefros looks like he's afraid you're going to yell some more, Boldir looks you in the eyes and you know she's reading your mind, and Rose looks like a kitten about ready to tear loose and knock over some more fragile glasses.

"Well," you sigh. "At any rate it seems you've pretty thoroughly fucked up not only a Major Empire bio-lab experiment, you also somehow managed to completely destroy one of their training grounds for new recruits. Take the rest of the week off, I say. Dismissed!"

And with that, everyone heads off, with Polypa going over to join Joey to talk about something, leaving you alone to think about this new troll- Cirava Hermod.

From what you saw after they were put into isolation, they're a gold blood who looks like the after result of a few dozen rounds with a torture lab- which is actually a pretty fitting description for what Rose described.

They can also make plants grow out of their own blood- clearly the work of some part of Shaper's powers being gifted to them. Until the Nurse clears them for release, they'll stay in isolation, just in case there's any INFECTIOUS DISEASES or PLAGUES lingering in their genetics.

You doubt there's anything in there, though. It seems like Shaper did a lot of hard work to give this kid a fighting chance at survival. You can only wonder why, and where it went after attacking Rose.

At any rate, as soon as they're cleared, you'll be asking them if they might be able to help Joey with her STUCK DISGUISE problem.

Running to the Stargate was surprisingly easy given the threat chasing you. A threat unaware of the LOCAL GIANT MEGA FAUNA stomping around the Stargate waiting for unsuspecting prey to come through.

You reach the Gate's DHD with ease, and start slamming down glyphs to a random ass planet. Any planet will do as long as the Gate activates.

The sound of dinner being called up draws in the local mega fauna like cats to a dinner bell.

The ground shakes, but not from the Stargate.

Gamzee slows to a stride as he enters the clearing, and glares at you.

"And just where the fuck," Gamzee's voice shifts to a roar mid sentence as he starts, "DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FUCKING GOING!?"
"Nowhere with you!" Baizli defiantly says from next to you, just as you finish dialing the gate.

**WAA WAA! KAWOOSHI!**

Gamzee takes off at a run towards the Gate, aiming to cut you off from your 'escape.'

"Idiot," you mutter under your breath as a DOUBLE LONG EARED SHADOW suddenly looms out from over the forest behind the Stargate, and Gamzee steps right into it.

The Clown never saw the SUPER MEGA RABBIT'S PAW swoop out of nowhere and grab him up.

You and Baizli just stare on as you watch the unsuspecting Purple Blood be brought up to a giant, sharp toothed mouth that opens up wide, and then is thrown down the gaping maw with a startled cry of "HOOOOOoooonnnkkk...."

And then he went silent.

The SUPER MEGA RABBIT turns on its heel, and then glares at a giant LIZARD-CHICKEN thing that emerges, and then the two leap at each other and start brawling in the forest, giving you and Baizli time to run for the gate and leap through to the other side and to safety.

Today has been a REALLY WEIRD DAY.

---

Your name is ROXY EGBERT, and you look over your Daughter and- well- you guess more her actual sister by some funky genetics than she was a few hours ago.

Rose and Argo sit next to each other on a couch in the room that Rose, John, and Jade shared while on alternia, looking every bit the part of the LALONDE SIBLINGS they've been pretending to be...

Damn it all. You doubt Davis would like you poaching his daughter to treat as your own (even if you have served as impromptu baby sitter on more than one occasion).

"So..." You begin. "I guess this means you're probably NOT going to school this week?"

"Not until I can figure out if there's a way to undo this," Rose says, not quite frowning, not quite smiling. "Maybe if I can shift back and forth? I dunno. I'm kinda hesitant to expurriment-" Oh my God did she really just do that and not notice- "since my phasing power's... uh... well. Not really phasing anymore."

To demonstrate, she blips out of existence on her seat and re-appears on the other side of the room- there's a woosh of displaced air. She manages to land on her feet and hands despite having emerged in a sitting position.

"That's different," Argo whistles. "Very different. That's what happens when you try to turn invisible?"

"Yeah and nyah," Rose nods. "I... it's really weird. Like, the power that used to be there is running through different currcuits now." There's another rumbling purr slipping through. You wonder how much CAT got through to Rose that didn't to Argo? "Like, I think about the phasing specifically but
all that does is make my hair turn colors now. But if I kind of... try to do it without thinking about the shifting, I feel like, this... tiny little string through space and if I tug on it-

"POP! WOOSH! And then she's back sitting on the couch."

"It's not even line of sight based, either," Rose frowns. "It's... people based, maybe? When I teleported the furrrst time" - you try not to snicker - "I was thinking how I just wanted to be with Joey and I felt one string over the others just... singing to me, I think."

"So, not the Shaper crystal doing that?" Argo asks.

"Defurrrnitley not," Rose shakes her head, and damn it a laugh slips out. She looks up at you. "What?"

"...You've been purring in the middle of your sentences," you answer honestly, deciding not to play dumb.

"...I nyam not!" Rose meekly protests - then, realizes exactly what she just said and her cheeks go red out of embarrassment.

"It's cute!" you say.

"Baseless Accusation!" Rose protests, a bit louder.

"Gotta agree, it is," Argo nods.

"Oh Nyooo..." Rose hangs her head in her hands. "Why me? Why did I have to get this?"

You sigh. "Why indeed, Rosie. Why indeed?"

Your name is DARAYA JONJET, and you awaken to the sound of screaming.

You jump out of your bed and scamper down a tree ladder, hurry across the path, and climb up another ladder, into the small hut that Tyzias and the Barzum clown girl are in.

Tyzias is up already - damn it - and trying to comfort the yelling girl.

"NONONONONO! No! Impossible! NO NO NO! Looking for me! Keep her away! KEEP HER AWAY!" Barzum is screeching, louder than one of the native monkeys.

"Daraya!" Tyzias looks at you, concern in her eyes. "Help! I don't- she's not listening to me!"

You swallow - trying to wet your suddenly dry feeling throat, and then grab at the small bottle of stun spores that Latula left for you in case Tyzias was the one having trouble sleeping.

"Don't breathe in," you warn Tyzias, and go over to Barzum, unscrewing the lid off of the bottle and throwing its contents into the purple blood's face.

"Baizli- nonono! Makara!??!!" she yelps - easily inhaling the spores, then.. then... she settles down
into Tyzias' arms. "...eaten... no... it's... fluffy... bunnies..."

And then she's out of it- you check her pulse and find that it's slowly tapering off to normal.

Good. Good...

"What the hell happened?" You ask.

"I don't know," Tyzias shakes her head. "One minute we're sleeping, the next she's wailing like a banshee that her twin's suddenly alive and fighting a clown, then running and..." She frowns. "...I don't understand what happened, but..." she looks up at you, locking eyes. "She mentioned Trizza Tethis. By Name."

"...The old Heiress?" You stare at the clown girl for a moment. "But we never told her about her, and they never met. So... how?"

"I think I've got a hunch," Tyzias sighs. "What if she got a fragment of Reaper and was able to summon Barzum's sister's spirit from beyond the grave?"

"...Shit," you swear. "We need to warn the base."

"I'll stay here and keep an eye on her," Tyzias says. "You go warn them."

"...Fine," you nod, and then take off down the ladder and head back to your tiny little guest tree hut to fetch your GDO.

You've got the feeling that it's going to be a very long night ahead of you.

Meanwhile, in the ashen ruins of a once grand BIO-LAB, General Naihte stands overlooking the torched remains of everything- by all accounts a simple ACCIDENTAL FIRE started by the idiots mixing The Scratch Doctor's BLOOD with something they shouldn't have.

"SIR!" A Nurse cries out, "We have a live one! Tagora Gorjek, going by the bio-metric chip!"

"Excellent!" The General says. "Take him to the medbay at once. See to it that he gets the best treatment possible." He frowns. "We have to find out what happened here before he dies."

"Yes, Sir, General Naihte, Sir!"

Chapter End Notes

Okay, question to you readers. I've temporarily bumped the story's Rating tag to Mature for this chapter, if enough of you think that's too much, let me know, and I'll drop it back down to Teen. If you think it's fine being M because of this chapter, then I'll leave it be and just continue on as we go.

This was a very complex chapter to work on, and a LOT of it didn't even get written
until after today's Troll Call. So... Yeah. ^_^;; Things got real this chapter. Heh.
In which Daniel plays Catch-up.
Also, a Lyric heavy section this chapter waits.

Your name is DANIEL JACKSON and you feel like you've missed out on a lot of IMPORTANT EVENTS. But, maybe none so important as this latest turn of events regarding Skaara.

And so the moment you're cleared for travel you'd headed to Abydos, maybe trying to see what you can do to actually change things, maybe for the better. Everyone you knew was happy to see you, but Skaara... Well. He'd apparently gone off on some journey of self-reflection or self-enlightenment or something and nobody knew exactly where he was hiding at.

You'd checked all the usual places you could think of. The hidden History cave, the Gate Address library... But unless he was hiding away in some hidden chamber in the Pyramid nobody knew about, you couldn't find him or his girlfriend, Kairi.

And so it was with your head hung low that you returned to Earth.

Everything was in a blitz of activity when you returned. You were quickly hustled out of the Gate room and up to the Conference room without much discussion, and that's when you remembered that yeah.

Today was Halloween, and it seems that something BIG had come up all of a sudden, because everyone else in the conference room was dressed up in costumes. Unsurprisingly, there's a large gathering of kids here because of that.

"Doctor Jackson, I presume?" A woman you don't recognize speaking with... is that ARTHURIAN ERA ENGLISH in her accent? "I'm Ganos Lal."

"Uh, hi," you say, shaking her hand as she offers it. "Yeah, I'm Daniel Jackson." You glance at O'neill, dressed up like a- well, you've been out of the loop for a bit longer than you thought because you have no idea why the hell he's wearing a grey and orange painted cardboard suit and wearing a pair of fake glasses. "What's going on?"

"It's about the Harcesis," General Hammond answers.
And with that, you quickly take your seat.

"First of all," begins a man sitting next to Sam- huh, there's a bit of a family resemblance between them, and their costumes kind of match up a bit (Leia-as-Han Solo and... Desert Wear Luke Skywalker? Oh. No, wait. That's TOK'RA GARB. This is probably JACOB CARTER, Sam's father.) "we're glad you're back with us, Doctor Jackson. This involves you and Atum, so we requested you be here."

"Alright," you nod.

There's a pause, and then Jacob Carter's voice is modulated like a Goa'uld- Selmak speaking, you presume. "Thanks to our capture of Atum, we were able to gather some intelligence on Jayni-slash-Nirrti that we were otherwise lacking. Prime among it is the revelation that the future knowledge she was exploiting has thoroughly been disrupted."

"Not surprising, since that's what we were supposed to be doing," and then you do a double take at the girl who's speaking because damn if she doesn't sound just a little bit like... Sitting there in what's undeniably a WITCH COSTUME (Complete with fake Dog-ears?) is a girl who looks so much like Sha're. On either side of her at the table is a boy in some kind of WIZARD'S OUTFIT and two girls with cat ears and neon hair.

What the hell? That's... what?

"Indeed," Teal'c remarks, and you glance at him next... He's dressed up like the TIN MAN from the Wizard of Oz. "This is a most welcome outcome given the results of time travel."

"It's also giving us an opportunity to locate the Harcesis," Selmak continues. "Combining Atum's knowledge with some select pieces of information we've mined from what remained of Klorel's memories, we were able to uncover a Gate Address for a planet not on any known database. We think Apophis had planned to use it as a safe house of sorts, at one point or another, but Jayni took over that system after his first death. We Tok'ra were confused by that move, as that system had no known Stargates, but we now believe that Apophis moved a Stargate there at one point or another."

"That's a risky move," you look across the table at... wait, is that Joey Harley? She looks... like the same species Khepri was, actually. "But it's a clever one. Apophis would NEVER think to look at his own taken over safe house for his kid."

"Right," and then there's the boy you recognize as JUDE HARLEY who... okay, there's a theme going on here because he's clearly wearing makeup and fake horns to make himself look like his sister. "It's actually pretty clever, when you think about it."

"We've managed to get a spy in to confirm that the Harcesis is on the planet in question. The only problem is..." Selmak pauses, then his voice returns to normal, Jacob Carter.

"You remember how we left that Tracking beacon with a dead Symbiote wrapped around it as a trap?" There's a lot of nodding from people who were there. "That beacon is on that planet too."

"How's that a problem, exactly?" O'neill asks.
"Anubis is making his way via space ship to that planet," this Ganos Lal woman says. "Apparently he was keeping an eye out for someone in particular, and that someone showed their face when they retrieved the beacon."

"D'oh," O'neill grimaces.

"So, what's the time limit?" asks a guy in sunglasses. You don't think you have had the pleasure of meeting this guy yet.

"Last my people were aware," Ganos Lal says, "Anubis was traveling in a Cargo Ship with a bad hyperdrive. He's having to make occasional stops to cool it down. We think he'll arrive in about two to three Earth days at his current rate of travel."

"So, a forty-eight hour window max to get in, grab the kid, and get out?" O'neill asks.

"That's the gist of it, yes," General Hammond says.

"When do we go?" O'neill asks.

"Tomorrow morning, at oh-six-hundred," Hammond says. "Miss Claire's already put in a request for her team-mates to join us on this mission, and we're also waiting on the Tok'ra to hear back from their spy for certain details. We're not taking any chances this time. We do this right on the first try."

"So we get to let the kids already here enjoy tonight's Halloween party without anyone getting suspicious about all the alien stuff?" O'neill asks, pressing.

"Yes, Colonel," General Hammond says with a nod. "They do."

"Sweet," O'neill says. And then he looks at you, and says, "Daniel, I've got JUST the costume for you."

You've got a bad feeling about this.

You've been roped in as "BARNEY THE SECURITY GUARD" - whoever that is- to Colonel O'neill's "DR. FREEMAN" - Jack? A Doctor? You really have no idea what you've missed here.

The party in question is something being held at a LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL for the county as a whole. There's a HAUNTED HOUSE, even, which you think you'll be steering clear of.

You see Jude and Joey hanging out with a girl you're told is named CASSANDRA- is DR. FRAISER'S DAUGHTER- and is dressed up similarly to how Joey and Jude are. There are a couple of other 'kids' dressed up similarly- except your eyes pick out how IMPRESSIVE their 'makeup' looks in comparison.

You're pretty sure those aren't costumes and are actually REAL LIVE ALIENS from another Galaxy.

There are quite a few people who seem impressed with Joey's "Costume" though, although from the snipits of conversation you can hear, and the annoyed look on Jude's face, you get the impression
they're striking up conversation more because she's JUDE'S SISTER and not because they like her "Costume."

Then, they're prying themselves away from the crowd and heading off somewhere with promises of something fun happening soon.

You wander around the place for a while, and then come across the four kids you saw earlier.

The two "Mages" and their "Familiars" seem to be having fun doing 'parlor tricks' using their actual legitimate powers.

The girl who looks like Sha're has to be your daughter. She's got Sha're's laugh, her smile, and those gleaming green eyes. And most importantly, she's apparently using her powers to CHEAT at an IMPOSSIBLE JUGGLING ACT.

You're not entirely sure what to say to her, but you're not going to go interrupting her fun while she's playing around with BASEBALLS painted to look like PLANETS.

For the time being, you head over to the FOOD STALLS.

There's a lot of very ALIEN LOOKING FOOD at one stand in particular. Well, you suppose it's the right time of the year for it, but still...

You glance over at who's cooking/preparing and see three people behind the counter. There's an old woman chatting with the Carters about something, Teal'c of all people, and another one of those Probably-Alternian-kids, who's just handing out plates to people who ask for them and gets a lot of adorable "Daws" about his cute little ALIEN HOT-DOG COSTUME.

Honest to god Aliens walking around in Colorado Springs and nobody even cares because it's freaking Halloween.

You get in line and get a plate from the boy.

"May I recommend the Oblong Meat Products, good sir?" The boy in the costume says, grinning cheekily at you.

"I would not recommend them if you are concerned about mystery meat contents," Teal'c says, smirking slightly. "May I instead recommend the Grubloaf?"

"What's in the grubloaf?" You ask, and the young boy in the hotdog costume gives out a gasp of shock.

"You don't ask what's in the grubloaf, sir!" he says, "You just don't!"

"...Can I just get a sandwich or something?" You ask.

"Of course, deary!" The old woman says, smiling at you as she takes your plate and loads up a sandwich on it. "One Pork based meat byproduct with green leaves and red disks coming up!"

"...What?"

Sam leans over towards you, and whispers conspiratorially, "Don't mind them, Daniel, it's just a
BLT. They're playing up the whole alien foods angle for the fun of it."

"The Grubloaf is actually pretty good," Jacob Carter chimes in, and you notice he's still wearing the Tok'ra garb. Well, you guess it's that time of year to get away with it.

And then the young boy holds out his hand and says, "That'll be one hundred fifty troll Cesars!"

You blink, "What...?"

Then, Teal'c corrects the boy and says, "One dollar fifty cents."

"Oh, right, okay," you say, and pay before you get your plate back from the woman, who smiles at you.

"Sam and her father were just telling me about you returning from your work in other countries," the woman says, extending her hand. "I'm Jane Egbert, Jake's sister."

Jake Harley's...?

"Oh, it's a pleasure to meet you, Miss Egbert," you say, shaking her hand awkwardly after trading which hand you were holding your plate in. "I'm Daniel Jackson."

"Yes, I know," the woman- Jane- eyes you oddly. "How are you finding life back in the states?"

"It's different from what I remember, but... the same, in weird ways," you answer.

"I know that feeling well," Jane says. "It's so odd when you see faces you know, but different from how you remember. But on a night like tonight, it's easy to look past all that and see that they're still the same people underneath."

"Yeah," you say, nodding. "Something like that, yeah."

"I hope you'll find the time to get reacquainted better with the world," Jane tells you. "Nothing's better than reacquainting yourself with people you thought lost. Hoo hoo!"

That's a fair point, you guess.

"FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY!" you hear someone announcing through a nearby loud speaker, "WE PRESENT A BAND WITH MUSIC SO FAR OUT YOU COULD SAY IT'S FROM ANOTHER GALAXY! THE GRUBBELS LIVE MUSIC EVENT STARTS IN FIVE MINUTES ON THE TRACK FIELD!"

Now that's just playing it a bit too close on the nose, you think, if that means what you think it means.

"Oh! We should get going!" Sam says. "Thanks again for the food, Jane, Murray."

Teal'c nods, and Jane chuckles, and says, "Go! Enjoy the music! I'm sure we'll hear it all the way from out here, too."

You decide to follow Sam and her Father because they seem to know where they're going.
Jack catches up with you soon enough, and starts talking about one thing or another that Sam and Jacob seem interested in just the same, but you feel really lost out.

Something about a fishing trip?

Fishing, fishing... had you gotten an email about that, maybe? If you did you don't think you checked it out. You're horrible at actually opening emails even if they seem important, and even more horrible at opening them if they aren't.

And then a woman in a pink wizard's outfit joins your group, and the conversation is suddenly dominated by her talking about her WARM, AUNTY PRIDE over seeing Joey perform live and in person.

You vaguely recognize this woman. Roxy Lalonde, you think? No, Egbert now, wouldn't it be?

Urgh. You feel so left behind.

You find a few seats along a stadium wall and there's a lot of familiar faces from the SGC here. The guy with the glasses in some kind of costume you really don't recognize, along with those four kids, and... some kind of guy dressed as... Leonardo DaVinci, you'd guess? Maybe some other kind of famous painter.

"Daniel," O'neill says suddenly, "meet Davis Strider and Martin Lloyd. Marty, Davis, meet Daniel Jackson."

"Oh, yeah, you were at the briefing earlier," glasses guy says, offering his hand. "Major Davis Strider, at your service."

"Nice to meet you," you say, shaking his hand. (Today has been a day for handshakes.)

"As in Doctor Daniel Jackson?" The guy as DaVinci- Martin Lloyd??- asks, staring at you oddly. "The Doctor Daniel Jackson?"

"Um... yes?" You ask.

"I read your papers," this Martin guy says, starting to smile. "And I really thought you were onto something even before I got 'Looped In' on this whole little party thing."

You look to Jack, and ask, "Who's he?"

"I'm Martin Lloyd," the guy says. "Former Conspiracy Theorist turned Secret Confidant trying to figure out what to do with his life now that he knows his home is a pile of rubble. You can just call me Marty though, everyone does."

"Uh..." you blink. "Sure thing, Marty."

"Did you hear?" the boy in the mages robes starts as he talks to Roxy(??) "He's working on pitches for TV shows to run by General Hammond!"

"Oh? What kind of TV show?" Roxy asks.

"Well, I've got a few ideas I'm working on," the guy says. "One of them is code named 'QuantaGate'"
based on that Mirror in the Basement. The other is something I'm tentatively titling 'Hiveswap' and is kind of a fictionalized version of events after stripping out the you-know-what and just leaving it at the core idea of a kid traveling to a whole other alien world!"

Roxy squeals, and O'neill rolls his eyes, but they and the kids get all caught up in discussing these potential TV shows.

You have no idea what to make of all of this, and so turn your attention towards the stage that people are just finishing setting up band equipment on. You can't tell who's who because they're all wearing large black robes. How ominous!

You squint a bit and see some orange horns and- Okay, that's Joey's group, then.

"So, uh, what's going on here exactly?" You ask of Sam. "What's 'The Grubbels'?"

"A band the kids have been running out of town," Sam answers. "They've got a few songs they've done before that they'll be playing later, but they're opening up tonight with something new, apparently."

"That's ambitious," you say.

There's a sudden squeal from the nearest speakers, and a little bit of feedback, and everyone turns their eyes to the stage as someone- you still can't tell who exactly- takes a microphone and taps at it.

"Testing, Testing," Oh, that would be Jude, you think. "Hey! Everyone! Tonight we've got a special treat for you all, no Tricks Involved except that of Movie Magic and smoke and mirrors." You think you see him grin. "Some of you know, my sister, Joey, has been living out of town for a few years now, doing her own thing. Well, she and her friends came into town tonight along with their band, and they're gonna sing some music for us tonight! SO GIVE A HUGE ROUND OF APPLAUSE TO THE GRUBBELS!"

And as the audience all starts clapping and cheering- and whistling, in the case of the girl you're sure is your future daughter somehow- Jude backs away, and all the lights go dim, and the band takes up their ready positions.

And then there's some faint glowing from behind the makeshift stage and some WEIRD, FREAKY, ALIEN LIKE BUGS with GLOWING WINGS come flying out and about, spiraling around the stage lazily as someone on piano starts playing away a **HAUNTING REFRAIN**.

You hear some OOHs and AAHs from the audience at the sight of the weird bugs, and O'neill chuckling at something he finds funny. And then someone steps forwards to the center microphone, removing their hood and revealing a set of softly glowing green eyes...

Joey Harley.

She looks over the audience for a moment, then locks eyes with your group specifically. With a quick breath, she then starts singing.

"I see your face before my eyes. I'm fallin' into darkness. Why must I fight to stay alive? Heroes Fallen."
The music kicks up a gear as the guitar player strums into it.

"Wake me can't you hear me callin'?" Joey takes a moment, and then as the lights around the stage suddenly flicker on, the flying bugs all seem to vanish into thin air. "Out of Darkness they come Crawlin'!"

And then she and a backup female singer— the one at the Piano— start singing together.

"Here I am! I am Lost in your Land, and I hope you will be, Creepin' in my Soul. Shadows Fall. Let me Out! Hear my Call! And I'll always believe. Creepin' in my Soul."

And then the lights go out again, and the bugs seem to be back, buzzing around the stage as the music cuts to guitar prominently. From the sudden rush of "WOAHS" the audience seems to be loving it.

"Creeps from the Deep gon' be freakin' up your mind," the boy on the Guitar begins.

"Creeps from the Deep gon' be feedin' off your spine," the boy on the drums finishes.

"I fade away into the Night, my eyes are closin' in!" Joey begins singing again. "Shadows are fleeing from the light." The stage lights come back on, and the bugs vanish again. "My nightmares can begin. Wake me can't you hear me callin'?"

There's a pause, and the tension builds as the lights all go out one by one, and then the bugs flicker back into existence, swarming out from behind the stage again.

"Out of Darkness they come Crawlin'!" Joey concludes before she and her backup singer duo it again, all the while, Joey takes a few steps back so the Guitar guy can step up to the center mic.

"Here I am! I am Lost in your Land, and I hope you will be, Creepin' in my Soul. Shadows Fall. Let me Out! Hear my Call! And I'll always believe. Creepin' in my Soul."

And then the Guitar guy takes center stage, the bugs circling around him as he starts rapping.

"Creepin' in my soul it's gettin' out of control, I gotta find my escape and get out of this black hole."

The bugs then all swirl upwards above him and start circling in a spiral formation, looking very much like a black hole.

"Cause justice in this world is hard to find, time has come gotta make up my mind."

The bugs all start falling downwards then, seemingly being pulled to their doom as their wings wink out of assistance, and then vanish moments there after.

"No matter how deep or remote I hide, all my thoughts seem curled up inside," the guitar guy continues on, starting to step backwards to prepare to trade off the microphone to Joey again.

"Creeps from the Deep gon' be freakin' up your mind. Creeps from the Deep gon' be Feeding Off Your Spine..."
Joey takes it and starts singing again, solo, as the stage lights all come on around her.

"Here I am! I am Lost in your Land, and I hope you will be, Creepin' in my Soul. Shadows Fall. Let me Out! Hear my Call! And I'll always believe. Creepin' in my Soul."

And then the backup singer sings it again, while Joey alternates a few lines in here or there, before they both sing a final repetition of the verse together, and the song wraps up to an end.

After a few moments of silence, everyone in the audience starts clapping thunderously and cheering as a roar of approval.

A few more songs are played after that. Nice songs, really. Great, even. You're not sure how they did the FLYING BUG WINGS on Joey's back for one of the songs, though.

But, as all good things are known to do, the night comes to an end, and you're all heading back to the SGC to deal with tomorrow's problems.

Well, they all are. You're not sure you should be heading out into the field at all at this point.

You settle down into the ON-BASE APARTMENT you've been given for the time being, and wonder what your place is in all of this now.

You don't get too far into your musings, though, before there's a knock at your room's door.

"Come in," you say, and then the door opens and in comes Jade Harley- no, wait, Jackson? Right? That's what you heard some kid calling her back at the party. The Older one is Jade Jackson and the Younger one is Jade Harley. Right??

"Hey," she says, smiling as she holds the witches hat in her hands. "Do you have time to talk?"

"...Sure," you nod.

There's a bit of silence as you both stand there, and... alright, fine, you decide to be the first to break the silence. "So... you're Jade?"


There's a bit of silence again, before you say the first thing that comes out of your mouth.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there."

Another moment of silence passes, and then Jade says, "S'not your fault."

"Still wish I'd been there," you say.

"...Yeah," she nods. "You... you couldn't be there for me then, but you can be here for the other me now?"

"I've already missed, what, three years of her life?" You frown. "How many of yours? What right do
I have to try and work my way into your lives at this point?"

"My circumstances aren't hers," she says. "For starters, well... I'm here in the past when I wasn't the first time around. We've changed things just by being here. You... never got free the first time."

"That's reassuring," you say, not quite feeling it, though.

"Jayni held all the cards before," Jade continues. "She doesn't now."

You think over that for a few moments. "That's true."

"And you being here... alive, and accessible. That's so much better than you being stuck inside your own head," Jade says. "I lost... everyone pretty much. I lost my version of you and Mom. I lost my big brother, I lost Aunt Roxy and Uncle Alec... I lost Uncle Skaara and Uncle Teal'c. I lost Jack and Sam." You can hear the desperation in her voice as she says, "We all lost everything. But even if Skaara's run off again, we've got you free and everyone else is Alive And—" The room seems to shake, slightly, and Jade cuts herself off to take a deep breath.

The room stops shaking, subtle as it was.

Powers. Inherited from her Mother. Neither of you were there for this Jade, and she's lost something in that exchange. But... she's got a point.

You're here. You're alive. You're FREE. And... and you're not going to run away from this responsibility like Skaara has.

"You look so much like her, you know," you finally say.

"I've been told that," Jade says, smiling with only a hint of sadness to it.

"I don't know if I'm fit to be a father," you say. "I wasn't sure even since before you were born. I was worrying all the time, what if I went on a mission and got killed, or what if Ra somehow came back to life and killed us all for rebelling." You sigh. "But, I don't know how I could ever improve without at least trying first."

You offer her your hand. "Let's start fresh. I'm Daniel."

"Jade," she says, stepping forwards to take your hand and shake it.

"So, got any favorite TV shows?" You ask.

And she smiles, and then sits down as she talks about all the cool shows from the future that you probably won't get to see for another ten years.

Though, you're not quite sure if THE SQUIDDLES is a cartoon you'll ever be able to look at straight if it ever does air in this time line.

Chapter End Notes
@CryoshellFans: Did you hear that there was a new remix of Gravity Hurts? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJtMyIqk_Ck

Expect this to be showing up at some appropriately dramatic moment later on in the story. ^U^^

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In Related-To-This-Chapter notes:

Xefros is on Guitar, Dammek on Drums, and Mierfa was on the Piano/the Backup Singer.

Most of the music videos the Grubbels have been doing officially since Joey joined have involved the Arai beetles swarming around for awesome imagery. Copious use of CAPTCHALOGUING was used here to replicate visual cuts during the editing process. Most people will think they were just VERY ADVANCED HOLOGRAMS.

'Creeping in My Soul' was the song Xefros and Joey started working on after they threw the Royal Lusus into a Black Hole.

Daniel is so not caught up with current events it's not even funny.

Meet Martin Lloyd, Alien Refugee. His planet got blown up by the Goa'uld, but he didn't know that part until he contacted the SGC.
AL:04X17: Absolute Power [Part 2]

Chapter Summary

In which Jayni feels the heat.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.


DIASPORA DATE: 5/4/0001.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and as you gear up for your next mission, you can't help but feel a bit... ANXIOUS. Even if this mission goes off without a hitch, you're worried and concerned over the possibilities that Trizza Tethis has gotten her hands on a fragment of the Bracelet- again. At least there's no danger of GALAXY WIDE DEATH now, but still... reruns much?

"Hey, don't worry," a hand claps itself on your back, and you glance up over your shoulder at its owner. "We'll do fine out there," Xefros says. "We'll rescue this kid, get them off world, and hide them away someplace nobody in this Galaxy will EVER think to look."

"Yeah," Mierfa nods as she finishes tying her boots. "We'll save the day and all that jazz. Well, maybe not smooth jazz, but still. Jazz!"

You can't help but to laugh.

You three exit the gear room and head out into the hallway, where Dammek, Polypa, and Cassandra are waiting, discussing something about pyrotechnics.

You don't doubt that things are going to get explosive today.

Your team gets together, with Dammek trailing behind a bit on his own, and head over together to the Gate room.

Your team isn't the last one to show up, but is near to last. A group under the badge SG-13 ends up being the ones to get that honor. Besides SG-1, and SG-13, you glance around and spot the badges for SG-2, SG-3, and SG-5. SG-1 has an extra face to it that you know isn't usually there- being Janet Fraiser. Besides them is the rest of Dammek's team- Daraya, Mallek, and Boldir- who gated in from Alternia sometime during the night, and making up their own unique team is John, Rose, Jade, and Argo.

General Hammond really isn't pulling any punches with this group.

"Colonel Dixon, I'm glad to see SG-13 could join us," O'neill says from his position at the base of the Gate Ramp. You spot a MALP up further along behind him.
"You know us, Sir, fashionably late as always," says the one you assume is Colonel Dixon.

"Alright, now that everyone's here! Walter! Dial it up!" O'neill calls out, and eyes all go towards him as the Gate spins up to speed. "You've all been briefed, or read the mission report, I hope. But I'm going to stress the particulars of this mission."

There's a moment of silence as he gets his thoughts in order, and you can see everyone tensing up. You certainly feel tense yourself. Things are going to be weird today. That's for sure. Chevron One locks in the mean time.

"First: This is BLACK OPS. That means we aren't about to do what we're actually about to do," O'neill says. "If anyone asks you where you went through the gate today? You tell them it was a training exercise to promote better relations between Earth and Alternia. Understood?"

"Yes, Sir!" There's a chorus of voices that you and yours throw your voices into, drowning out the sound of Chevron two locking.

"Second," O'neill continues, "we're going in blinder than I'd like. The Tok'ra have gotten us as much information they could from a single spy, and that includes a rough layout of the building on the other side. We still don't know a lot, but that's where Miss Claire and Miss Fraiser come into play."

He nods to you, and you de-captchalogue an Arai Beetle and send it over to O'neill. "This is an Arai Beetle. Every one of you is getting one of these things to hang around during this mission. Familiarize yourself with them. DO. NOT. SHOOT. THEM. Clear?"

"Crystal Clear, Sir!" More echoes go out, and you repress a giggle. Instead, you focus on de-captchalogueing more Arai Beetles and delivering one apiece to each person on this away mission. You settle them on every shoulder, like a little space-bug shoulder camera. Chevron three locks.

"Third, related to Second," O'neill continues, "Miss Fraiser and Miss Claire will be using these Arai Beetles as a sort of mission over watch. While in the heat of the moment I expect all of you to follow you team leader's orders, if Miss Fraiser suddenly tells you to jump, your instant reaction is to jump as high as you can. If she tells you not to touch something, you treat it like it might explode in your face. Got it?"

"Sir, Yes, Sir!" Everyone calls out, all while Chevron Four Locks.

"Fourth," O'neill continues, "Anubis might be showing up at any moment. If we get word that he's arrived? The order goes out for us to retreat immediately. As much as we don't want him getting his hands on the Harcesis, we aren't going to give him an excuse to try to kill us personally. He can take out a Ha'tak on his own. We don't fight him." He doesn't even have to say anything to get a chorus of "Understood, Sir!" in response as Chevron Five locks.

"Fifth, and finally," O'neill concludes, "we have reason to believe that Jayni may have modified her forces to have strange and unpredictable powers. If you come across any super powered individuals, report it to the whole group at once. Now then, any questions? Raise your hand if you've got 'em."

No hands go up as Chevron Six locks.

"Alright, then," O'neill nods. "We all know what we're doing here today. Let's get in, grab the kid, and get out clean."

And thus, wonderfully timed, the Gate's seventh chevron locks and the whole thing activates with
O'Neill gets off of the ramp, and with that, Polypa goes up to the MALP on the ramp right in front of the Gate. She primes a small device as the Gate's Iris opens up, and then the MALP drives through the eventhorizon.

There's a moment's pause, and then Walter's voice goes over the radio, "Stun-grenade detonated. Guards at the Gate incapacitated."

"Company!" O'Neill yells out, "MOVE OUT!"

Polypa gives you a thumbs up, and then dives through the Eventhorizon first. Damn it, you wanted to do that.

The rest of this assault team move through after her in quick order, and you emerge out from the Stargate into what looks like a swamp that had been drained of water to make room for the Stargate encampment. Whoever built it clearly wasn't expecting regular company that wasn't already expected, though. Just a handful of Jaffa soldiers, a few tree-root-grown chairs and a table, and... not even an artillery cannon.

You spread out Arai beetles into the swampy forest, and scout the area even as the SGC teams take up guarding positions. You send some up into the air and look around at various directions.

A quick check of your compass, and... "A large facility is built into a mountain to the East North-East. And a small ship yard is secured just south of that, directly East of the Gate."

"Fits with the Tok'ra intelligence," O'Neill says. "Any signs of alarm?"

"Nobody seems to be mobilizing," you report.

"Good," O'Neill nods. "SG-13, secure the Gate, and provide cover for ALT-1 and Clairvoyant. SG-3, SG-5, take Sheppard and Jackson, scrap the ship yard. SG-2, ALT-2, Lalondes, with SG-1 as we go to the main compound."

And with that, the teams break up to go their various ways. Your team- made up of Cassie, Xefros, Mierfa, you, and Daraya.

You and Cassie take a seat at the chairs the Jaffa were using while some of SG-13's team members work on tying up the unconscious Jaffa. As you bring Cassie into the ARAI NETWORK so she can observe everything, one of the SG-13 team members- you think his name tag reads SR. AIRMAN J. BOSWORTH- starts talking.

"So..." Bosworth says. "Anyone want to take bets?"

"Don't be a smart-ass, Jake," Colonel Dixon says, eyeing the forest. "This isn't the right kind of mission for that."

"Just sayin'," Bosworth says. "We're probably gonna be here for a while."

"What kinda bets we talkin' bout here?" Mierfa asks.

"How long do you think before someone runs into trouble?" Bosworth asks.
"Woah. Is it always this... big?" Cassie asks, voice echoing in your head once you've successfully added her in. It was a bit trickier given a lack of the full bracelet, but you managed it.

"It can be. I usually don't try to focus on everything at once and keep my radius down small, but... Yeah, it can get this big sometimes," You smile at her. "Just try to be on the look out for anyone doing something with disastrous consequences."

"Right," Cassie nods, and closes her real-world eyes to focus on the visual signals coming through the Arai network.

"I'd say ten minutes," Mierfa says.

"No way, fifteen tops, starting from the moment we exited the Gate," Bosworth says.

"Guess I'm keeping score again," one DR. C. BALINSKY of SG-13 sighs as he takes out a notepad.

"Put me down for five minutes, fifty five seconds," another SG-13 member, SR. AIRMAN S. WELLS chimes in.

Xefros and Daraya both give you a look that says 'Why does it feel we're babysitting them more than them babysitting us?'

Truth be told, you have no idea. You close your eyes then, and focus on the mission at hand.

Your name is JADE. Harley or Jackson, doesn't matter. You're JADE, and you're staring at quite a few GOA'ULD MOTHER SHIPS- the standard HA'TAK class, you're told by your SGC companions.

John tabs his radio, "Sheppard to Clairvoyant. Attack team is in position at ship yard. Waiting for go ahead to proceed with Operation Destabilize the Shipping Industry. Over."

You watch the SG-3 team members fight back the smiles at the comment. SG-5 just works to keep an eye out for any intruders.

Cassandra replies a moment later, "You've got a window of five minutes to wreck it all and before you have to hightail it back to the Gate without getting detected, Sheppard. Think you can manage? Over."

"Oh, I'm sure we'll think of something," John smiles faintly. "Over and out."

And with that, John looks to you with a nod, and you steel yourself for another destructive act of violence.

You can't replicate what you did to Apophis' Prototype Mothership without a SIGNIFICANT power boost like the Armband, but you'll be damned if you can't just pick these three massive spaceships off the ground and just start...
Well.

You start JUGGLING them like you were doing with the baseballs last night. Round and around they go, where they stop, nobody but you knows! You build up momentum, circling faster and faster and faster. Only your POWER’S GRIP on the things keeps them from falling apart.

John throws in some WINDY EFFECTS and starts throwing together some micro-cyclones along the now cleared landing field, sending startled Jaffa and workers scrambling and flying.

"I feel like redundant dead weight right now," Major Wade remarks.

"Better redundant dead weight than dead in a pointless firefight," Lieutenant Morrison points out.

"Good point," Major Wade agrees.

And on that note, speaking of dead weight...

You send the three Ha'tak ships soaring high up into the air- one after the other in a straight line. Wheeeee... And then once at a safe height- You suddenly HALT the first one in its tracks and thus, the other two crash into it in quick order.

The double explosion lighting up the sky is bright enough to get some attention, you think, and John's windy escapades keep any of the debris from raining down upon you and the SG-teams.

"Alright," John says. "Let's get the hell out of here before they start shooting at us."

_________________________

You're once again Joey Claire, and you can't help but laugh as Xefros casually remarks, "Well, that's going to get some unwanted attention."

"Five minutes and forty-two seconds," Daraya

_________________________

Your name is Jayni- no, NIRRTI. You are the SYSTEM LORD NIRRTI. Nobody else is. And right now you're... you're...

You've got no idea why the hell your three landed MOTHER SHIPS suddenly decided to fling themselves into the atmosphere before exploding.

Okay, actually, scrap that, you've got ONE IDEA. Damn it all, that tracking beacon must have been a trap. You were STUPID for bringing it to your base. URGH. The cloning process hasn't even finished on that dead Symbiote so how the hell could you have...

This.

This was a mistake.

You've brought someone or something POWERFUL down on your base and you don't know what it is.
You're considering your options when Your Jake bursts in to your private chambers, an angered expression on his face, "The SGC are attacking us."

....What?

"What?" you blink. "But that's impossible. They shouldn't know this planet exists, and they'd have no reason to."

No.

"Nooooo." You growl. "ATUM! You slimey, turncoat of a bastard! You're supposed to work for ME! Not tell them lies to get them to attack us!!"

Jake's anger fades just a bit, "So... Atum's tricked them into thinking we're the enemies here, is that it?"

"Unfortunately, it appears so, My Jake," you scowl.

Stupid. STUPID.

DUMB DUMB STUPID DUMB.

How did you not see this coming? Of COURSE Atum would realize there was a gap in your knowledge and slither out through a gap.

The Bastard. The Traitor.

"My Jake," You turn to him, and give him a worried smile. "Please, fetch our child, Shifu, from his crib, then meet me in the Fighter bay. We'll be making our way to the Stargate from there."

"But surely the SGC will have a team guarding it," Jake protests. "They're not going to let us through!"

"Who says we're going to give them a chance?" You ask in turn. "I do hope you've been practicing your flying, my love. It's time we thread a needle."

Your name is ROSE LALONDE-- PCH-ZYU!! PCH-ZYU!

"GAAHRK!" And you've all just taken out another group of Jaffa at a CROSS ROADS within the palace. Yes, even you have a Zat gun that dealt some knockouts during that recent exchange of fire.

"SG-2 to Clairvoyant. Which way?" Ferretti asks into the radio. "We've got three ways to go, now."

Your radio clicks in response a second later, with Cassie's voice calling out, "SG-1, Rose, Hard Left. ALT-2, Argo, Hard Right. SG-2, Straight."

"Roger that," O'neill confirms.
"Gotcha," Dammek agrees, and with that, your team breaks off in different directions.

Your group, with O'neill, Teal'c, Carter, and Janet, go left.

It's not long before your CAT EARS pick up the sound of a baby crying, and boots stomping, getting louder and louder, echoing from around a corner.

"Incoming march," You warn them. "Baby in tow."

"Rose, Janet, take cover a bit further back and wait for a window of opportunity," O'neill orders.

"Got it," you nod.

O'neill, Carter, and Teal'c take forward position behind some large decorative support pillars further ahead while you and Janet hide behind a single pillar.

"Get ready for a jump," you whisper to Janet, and she nods.

Then, a group of four regular steel Jaffa and one gold and green robed Jaffa round the corner- the guy in gold and green is likely Jayni's First Prime, especially considering he's got a baby in his arms.

There's something familiar about the guy- the First Prime, not the baby- but you can't just quite place it.

Oh well, doesn't matter. O'neill, Teal'c, and Carter lean out from cover and start firing Zat blasts, which cuts down at least two of the Jaffa before the other two and the First Prime duck for cover behind other large decorative pillars.

**PCHOO PCHOO!**

**PCHZYU PCHZYU!**

You observe the situation for a few moments, and take note of where the strings are and what could get you the best trip.

You feel a string connecting you to the First Prime, sort of stronger than anything else for some reason, and you...

"ROSE!" Cassie's voice echoes out of the radio suddenly.

-TUG.

You get a TINGLY sensation across your body, and you watch time slow to a halt for a single second as you're yanked across the room- staff blasts and zat shots suddenly bending around you as you burst past them- and then POP! WOOOSH! You land infront of the First Prime, right leg reared back already kicking forwards into the gap between his legs.

"Rox-ERGRKH!?" The First Prime yelps, and his grasp on the Harcesis lets go and the kid falls straight into your arms.

You immediately POP backwards- WOOOSH!- and you hand over the kid to Janet before grabbing
her by the shoulder and TUG on another, super strong string, and POP-WOOOOOOOOSSSSH HHHHH!!! -a moment later you land in the swampy clearing the Stargate is sitting in.

"DIAL EARTH!" you yell.

"Dialing!" Xefros yells, going over to the DHD and punching in glyphs.

"Rose!" Joey is suddenly getting up in your face. "What did that Guy you kicked say?"

"Rocks-ERGRKH?" You quote what you remember.

"Do you think maybe he was saying 'Roxy'?" Joey asks.

"Well, maybe, but why would he...?" You pause. "Wait. Did you recognize him?"

"I... I think I did," Joey nods, eyes going wide. "Oh- SHIT! GREEN FIRE! ROS-!"

You don't even bother letting her finish that sentence- you TUG another string and JUMP right back to SG-1.

POP-WOOOSH!

"U'VE SCREWED UP EVERYTHING!" The First Prime is Yelling and the hallway around him is ON GREEN FIRE and it's tanking every Zat shot SG-1 sends at it. (OH SNAP!)

His eyes lock onto you, and the First Prime rears back with a hand full of fire as if to throw it.

You're already standing by Carter, so you grab her by the shoulder, POP-WOOSH!, shove Carter into O'neill's back so they're touching, POP-WOOOSH!- you shove them both into Teal'c- POP-WOOOOOSH!- and then you're back at the Stargate.

"-hank YOU, Rose!" Joey exhales in relief as you teleport back in, and Xefros finishes with dialing.

WAAA WAAA KAWOOOSH goes the Gate. "I was NOT looking forwards to SG-1 cooking at the hands of a Scratch wanabe!"

"SGC this is Dr. Fraiser, I have the Harcesis and am extracting through the Stargate," Janet informs over the radio. "Open the Iris."

"...What do you MEAN a Scratch Wanabe?!" Xefros asks, turning, wheeling, eyes widening.

"I mean what I said," Joey says to her Morial. "That First Prime had Green Eyes and tried to burn SG-1 alive with bright green fire and he looked like someone tried cloning Scratch as a human!"

There's a traumatized look in her eyes as she says that, and it's one that gets shared with there rest of her Alternian team-mates.

"Fucking hell," Daraya swears. "How did we get so unlucky?"

And then Joey's eyes widen again- "Shit!" She goes for her Radio, "Poly! Fire on the entry doors NOW!"
"Fucking hell," your name is POLYPA GOEZEE, and you can't help but grin, "how did we get so lucky?"

The room is a combination of CARGO STORAGE and SHIP HANGAR BAY, and fussing at the ground based controls of a RING ENCIRCLED DEATH GLIDER is a cat-eared and tailed girl wearing ORANTE AND FANCY ROBES belonging to the girl known as JAYNI.

What's more, she's cursing and ranting to herself so loudly she didn't even hear you all come in, something Boldir easily confirms.

"She doesn't know we're here," she whispers. "But we're not going to have an easy time disarming her or shutting her down. Cheaty-ass personal forceshields."

"What do we do then?" Mallek asks.

Dammek glances up at a nearby DEATH GLIDER, and then tabs his radio. "Tetrarch to Clairvoyant, would what I'm thinking of doing be good or bad?"

"...You've got a decent, but shrinking window of op, Tetrarch. Go for it," Cassandra's voice comes back a second later.

"Boldir, Polypa climb up into that Glider and wait for Mallek to hack that thing online," Dammek orders. "Argo and I'll distract the crazy Cat-lady over there."

The team gives nods of agreement, and you head to your assigned positions.

You and Boldir sneak over to the stairs leading up to a Death Glider canopy, and climb up as quietly as you can. Mallek goes over to a control console similar to the one Jayni is messing with.

You choose the GUNNER SEAT, Boldir takes the Pilot's seat. Of course, all the controls are OFFLINE, but hopefully not for long.

You decide to spend the rest of the time until then watching the ensuing encounter. Dammek starts sneaking around the side behind some boxes, while Argo stands front and center in the middle of the hallway.

"HEY!" Argo yells out suddenly, sounding very irrate and angry, her hair and wings flashing brightly with bio-luminscent light. "BIO-MOM!!"

That's enough to get Jayni to whirl around, eyes widening in surprise. "What? No! It can't be... You're...!"

"YOU LEFT ME ON SOME DOUCHEBAG'S DOORSTEP AS A BABY!" Argo continues to yell. "I'VE GOT SOME SERIOUS ABANDONMENT ISSUES WITH YOU TO WORK OUT!!!"

"...Distraction #413-11?" Jayni stares. "But... How? You shouldn't be any older than-" And then she realizes it so suddenly. "Time Travel. You!" She growls, eyes flashing and voice modulating. "YOU'RE WHY MY KNOWLEDGE BASE HAS GOTTEN CORRUPTED!"

"Rogue of Time, what can I say?" Argo smirks.

"...Rogue of what?" Jayni stares- suddenly confused. "What does that even mean?!"
"It means I steal Time for the benefit of others," Argo clarifies. "Even got a fancy little spiraly sign to go with it."

"No, I don't understand what you mean by saying it like that!" Jayni stomps her foot on the ground like an angry child. "What does that have to do with your previous statements?"

"What!? You don't get it!?" Argo asks. "Just think it through, just think it through!"

"I- What!?" Jayni stares on, and you spot Dammek having finally circled around behind Jayni and is standing behind her. He gives a nod to Argo, and draws out a rather large stun rifle from his SYLLADEX.

"Okay, fine, I'll spell it out for you!" Argo rolls her eyes. "It means. I'm THE DISTRACTION."

Dammek primes the stun rifle by pumping its action lever- **CHA-CHAK! WIIINEEEEEEEE.**

Jayni tenses up, her ears and tail go shock straight, and she slowly, ever so slowly, turns around to look behind her.

"Howdy," Dammek says, imitating Skylla's usual drawl as he levels the stun rifle at her.

"A...Alternian?" Jayni whispers, so quiet you'd think you couldn't hear it if not for the suddenly activating speakers inside the Death Glider. Along with a lot of console devices.

"Polypa, don't fire yet," Cassie's voice echoes out from your radio.

Awwwwh.

"How!? Your kind can't exist in this Galaxy!" Jayni yells- terrified and horrified. "Unless- No! NO! That bitch! She can't have been successful on Earth of all places! NO! You- You can't be from the future!"

"That's right, I'm not," Dammek says, smirking. "I'm from your worst nightmare come to life."

And then Joey's voice suddenly yells at you over the radio- "Poly! Fire on the entry doors NOW!"

Boldir gasps, evidently sensing something, and quickly disengages the Glider from its dock- causing everyone to look up at the active Death Glider in shock and confusion.

You grab at the controls and turn the targeting sight towards the doorway that your team made your way in from, just in time to see a man covered in GREEN FIRE barging into the room.

Your INSANE JEALOUSY takes hold and you FIRE OFF SEVERAL BLASTS from the Glider's wing cannons.

**PCHOOO! PCHOOO! PCHOOO! PCHOOO! PCHOOO! PCHOOO!**

The ground the GREEN FIRE MAN stands on explodes with massive bursts of orange flames.

"JAKE! NO!!" Jayni yells out- totally horrified.
"Jake- What-?" Argo doesn't have any time to react because Jayni suddenly barrels past her, force field engaging and shoving the crow-winged girl to the ground as the cat girl runs into the smoke from the explosion.

Dammek fires off with the stun rifle- but none of the shots land home, instead reflecting off of the shield and flying off in random directions.

"HEY! WATCH IT!" Mallek yelps in horror.

"Jake!? Did she just call him **JAKE**!?" Argo asks over the radio.

"She did!" Boldir exclaims. "SHE REALLY DID CALL HIM JAKE AND HE'S STILL ALIVE KEEP FIRING!!!"

You take aim at the smoking crater and unleash a few more blasts of fire down from above.

...Fire blasts that slow down as they approach the crater and then.... sort of hover outside the smoke for a moment before turning green **and** **FUCKING REVERSING DIRECTIONS**!?

The cannon blasts slam into your stolen Death Glider, and one of the wings **BREAKS OFF** in an explosion that sends the whole thing tumbling to the side and- **CRASH!!**

__________________________________________

Your name is **JOEY CLAIRE**, and you feel your heart tense up as the Death Glider suddenly crashes into the floor.

"ROSE!" You don't have to say anything more, the purple haired cat-girl has already gone POP-WOOOSH! And is Gone. You watch feeling helpless from the feed, you don't know if Polypa and Boldir are okay or dead or-

Cassie grabs you by the arm, and gives you a smile. (Are... are they going to be okay?) before suddenly saying, "Mierfa, get ready to undo some mind whammying."

"Got it," Mierfa nods.

You turn your attention back to the fight at hand.

Rose has already dragged Boldir and Polypa out of the crashed glider through her cheaty wormhole portal tricks, and she and Mallek are looking over them while Argo and Dammek fire off Zats and Stun Rifles at the enraged JAYNI and her FIRST PRIME named JAKE.

A man named Jake who happens to be a clone who looks oddly like the SCRATCH DOCTOR and **DEFINITELY** has his Powers. The Scratch Doctor who very much the same looked like a blue skinned version of your PA.

Your Pa.

A Man. NAMED. JAKE.

And now that you're looking- you can **SEE** a LOT of your PA's TEENAGED SELF in this guy.
(You still remember all the pictures back on the wall in Hauntswitch.) It's... it's different but if you look you can see his HAIR. You can see his EYES. You can see, well... You can see that angry SCOWL that's definitely Scratch's but it wouldn't look out of place on your PA.

That Fucking BITCH.

**SHE CLONED YOUR DAD!!!**

Your name is JAKE ENGLISH and you CANNOT BELIEVE how horribly everything has gone off the rails. Not only has ATUM betrayed you by turning the SGC against your mission of TIMELINE PROTECTION, but he's also somehow gotten ACTUAL ALTERNIANS into this Galaxy.

That same Alien Species that your MOTHER was a member of is here. In YOUR GALAXY.

And they're SHOOTING AT YOU. (There's also some cat girl whose orange eyes remind you of someone but you suppress that memory and focus on destroying their feeble attempts at stopping you.) Your FLAME AURA keeps the stun blasts at bay as you and your Anna stride step after step forwards towards the NEEDLE THREADER.

The Deer horned Alternian and the Cat-Crow get much too close to the stairs leading up to the Needle Threader's pilots chairs for your liking, and so you just decide that gravity is just too much of a hassle for you at the moment.

You swoop your Anna up into your arms and kick off the ground with a roar- soaring up and over the two attackers and landing on the Needle Threader's right wing. You offload Anna into the gunner's chair and throw down a burst of green fire at the two attackers- forcing them to scatter to the side and giving you a chance to dive into the pilot's chair.

You set the engines to FULL THRUST and launch out of the restraints holding the Needle Threader into place.

The CEILING DOORS open up automatically and you rocket the Ring-shaped glider out into the open atmosphere. You swoop around and begin a targeted descent towards the Stargate.

POP-THUD! And then suddenly there's that blasted CAT GIRL who looks like Roxy clambering on the outside window- punching and clawing at it.

"HEY! BITCH!! GET YOUR BUTT OUT HERE RIGHT NOW!!" She yowls at Anna. "LET ME FUCKING CL- WAAAAH!"

She doesn't stay on long because you tuck the Threader into a SPIN, and she gets thrown off for a moment before vanishing. You right the Threader and continue towards the Stargate.

You don't know who this Roxy-look-alike-wanna-be is, but-

A thought strikes you curiously then. Hadn't Roxy been Pregnant at some point before you died? But... No. Surely you'd have remembered something important like that. This girl can't be.... can't be... What was her name? You feel like you SHOULD know it, but...
"Bitch! You thought you'd seen the last of me??" Cat-Roxy is back again. "Think again!!"

"My Jake," Anna whispers in your ear, "get rid of her."

You send the Threader into a nose dive, and spin again in an attempt to throw the intruder off.

"GRRRRRR---!" She holds on stubbornly, but eventually decides to evidently POP off of her own accord.

You right the Threader and return to a proper flying altitude.

Seconds later, POP-THUWAMP! - The Cat-Ro... Roxx.... Ross.... Whatever, the Cat girl is BACK and with her, also, is--

"YOU! CLONED! MY! FUCKING!! FATHER!!!!"

Father? What?? How is this Alternian Girl thinking you're cloned from her Father? You look into her eyes and---

"YOU!!" Her eyes flash a bright green- and you feel a strange sort of resonance between your own innate powers and the girl- CRACK! Anna screams as the girl who claims to be your Daughter punches the windshield- even as cat girl pops away to do something else. "ARE GONNA!!" The girl punches the windshield again- CRA-CRACK! More spiderwebbing outwards.

You have to do something or else you're going to crash- you- you---

You throw the Threader into another spin even though your heart yells at you not to.

"PAYIIIIIIIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEP!!!" And then the girl's thrown off from the sudden spin.

The look of betrayal on her face makes your heart-

"MY JAKE," Anna's voice is soft, but demanding. "Blast anyone who stands in the way of the Stargate."

You.... she's right. They're likely not going to-

And then the ALTERNIAN GIRL is back, except she's not being teleported, she's FLYING somehow on glowing wings alongside the Glider's Right wing side and- And... And is that a LIGHTSABER she has in her hand???

"I SAID!!" She roars- voice booming and you can FEEL it resonating within you somehow-
"YOU'RE GONNA FUCKING PAY FOR CLONING MY DAD!!"

And then she lunges forwards at the windshield and **SKREEE-HISSSS!!**

"YAAAAAAAH!" Anna screeches as the cerulean colored blade smashes through a side window and narrowly avoids cutting her head off.

You YANK the Threader into another spin and that throws the Alternian Jedi Girl off of the wing with a startled yelp- the Lightsaber, of course, tears a massive gash through the canopy of the Threader's cockpit.

Anna continues to screech and blubber incoherently but at that point you've had ENOUGH.

You GUN THE ENGINES full speed at the Stargate and it doesn't matter if the engines burn out or not, because you're not going to leave anyone behind to-

*POP! CRASH!*

And then CAT ROSE is back and another Alternian girl is with her- having crash-landed their way through the already damaged canopy. You don't recognize this Alternian girl but her eyes seem to glow some-

**[JAKE! SHE'S NOT ME!]** Anna's voice- the REAL ANNA'S VOICE- yells inside your head and then suddenly the world loses focus and the next thing you know you're being grabbed by the collar and PULLED bodily through the canopy window and *POP-WOOOSH!*

Suddenly you're lying face down in some rather swampy marshlands, and feeling like you're gonna pass out... So you do.

---

Your name is **JAYNI**.

You may have made a **SLIGHT MISCALCULATION**.

Namely, you never expected Joey Harley of all people to suddenly become a flying Alternian, laser sword wielding mad-woman with a SUDDEN NEED for cutting your head from its neck, and it was only your shield generator that had spared you from losing your head...

But it didn't prevent you from her taking your RIGHT EYE as the shield generator failed from the onslaught of an unfamiliar energy type. And not only that, your PILOT is **MISSING**.

That damned cat girl just pulled him out of the windshield. How- How was that possible? URGH. You were too busy covering your eye to care.

Screw it.

You throw yourself into the front seat and grab at the controls to try to right your sudden crashing state.

The Stargate is in- a sort of hazy- clear line of sight for your ship, but damn it, with only one eye you're not going to be able to-
The Stargate is active already, and the ships sensors indicate it's an outgoing wormhole. Bizarrely, there's nobody near it but three of your own Jaffa, standing guard like always.

You wonder how the hell these people got onto your planet then?

FUCK IT. It doesn't matter. You don't got time to redial the gate with how fast you're coming in. You're just going to gun it because CLEARLY your men have dialed out for you in advance.

What a Lucky Break!

You level out the Needle Threader and- SCHLORP!!!

The next thing you know, your ship is suddenly crashing nose first into a field of flowers and you're being flung out through the damaged canopy. And then you pass out from hitting the ground.

Your name is COLONEL JACK O'NEILL, and you open the visor of your stolen JAFFA UNIFORM to stare at the Stargate after the damaged Needle Threader crashed through it and shut down.

"Wow," you whistle. "Are we sure that letting her go through the Gate was such a good idea?"

"P97-865 is uninhabited, and its been missing its DHD for years," Carter says, opening the helmet of her own stolen Jaffa uniform. "Plus, I trust Cassie when she says that it's safe to leave Jayni there for the next few hours. Though, we'll probably want to get her medical attention sooner rather than later."

"...Alright, fair enough," you nod, and then tab your radio. "SG-2, check in."

"This is Ferretti," Ferretti answers. "And Jack, you'll never believe all the bio-lab equipment we've found in here."

"Trash it," Cassandra's voice goes up over the radio, and echoes doubly in reality, as she and SG-13 exit from their hiding spot deeper in the forest. "Trash it all and let it BURN and get back to the Gate. We can't let Anubis get his hands on it."

"...Sounds like a fun day to me," Strider says over the radio. "We'll get right on that. Tell Rose we'll need a taxi soon."

POP! Said girl appears with a pop of wooshing air, with Polypa spread out between her and Mallek.

"Oww..." Polypa groans as Mallek and Rose put her down on the ground. "Stupid crashing fireballs."

Rose pops out of existence, and then back a second later, with Joey in arm. Joey quickly goes over to check on Polypa as Rose pops out and back again, this time returning with Dammek and Boldir.

"So... casualties?" you ask.
"Nobody died," Cassie says, smiling. "But Jayni's Ego? Well... I think we thoroughly murdered it."

"What will we do with the cloned Jake Harley?" Teal'c asks, opening his own borrowed jaffa helmet as Rose reappears with Mierfa and the unconscious teenaged cloned Jake.

"Alternia sounds like a WONDERFUL place to keep him for now, if you ask me," Rose remarks, rolling her shoulders before popping out again, and then re-appearing with Argo, who has a detonator remote in hand. "URGH. This Taxi Popping sure is tiring after a while."

"Go fetch SG-2," Cassie says, "they should be done by now with laying their detonators."

"I'll wait if they're not," Rose says with a nod, and then POP! Gone again.

"...Is it just me," you remark as SG-3, SG-5, and John and Jade return from their excursion from the ship yard, "Or are we getting WAY too used to kids having supernatural powers around here?"

"I'd say it's just you, Sir," Colonel Dixon says, "but we DID just execute an entire raid nearly flawlessly thanks to a girl having some gut feelings about where the right places to go are and when the right times to do things were. So, uh... Shiny?"

Rose pops back a few moments later, all of SG-2 in tow by way of holding hands.

"So," Strider begins by holding up a detonator switch. "Who's ready to make a place go boom?"

"Can I pull the trigger?" Polypa asks.

There's a moment of exchanged glances by everyone, and then...

"Yeah, sure," Daraya says, shrugging. "Let her have 'em."

Argo and Strider hand Polypa the two detonation remotes, and the girl primes them with glee. "Y'know," she says, sounding way too happy about what she's about to say, "If you set a forest on fire, that's gonna be one big ass fire!"

And then both detonation switches are pressed at the same time.

A cacophonous double KABOOM echoes from the mountain-complex, and you think aloud, "Y'know, we should probably get back to earth just in case that explosion DOES set this forest on fire."

"Yeah, good point," Xefros says, and then heads to the DHD to dial Earth once again.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this chapter took so long. Had a computer problem yesterday that made it hard to focus on writing.
I know a few of you have been clamoring for Jake to get a wake up call, and, well...
Yeah. Here it is! Hope it was satisfying to read as it was for me to write! :D
SEVERAL DAYS in the life of certain characters on the Earth side of things during the episode "The Light."

Your name is KA'TURNAL, and you've been wondering if it was the SUDDEN EJECTION from a Needle Threader at high speeds that caused this kind of delusion in your former First Prime, or if she just fell into this insanity of her own accord.

After about a solid week of tending to the girl, running scans and what not, you've come to the conclusion that while the crash landing Jayni suffered didn't do the girl any favors, it's almost certain the girl just fell into the same trap most of the other System Lords have over the millennia:

That is to say, as the humans of Earth put it, 'she's drank her own kool-aid.'

It's such a funny little phrase that encapsulates such a massive problem, you muse.

Fortunately, the CRASH LANDING at high speeds has done you all a major favor- Jayni's broken her legs... And her arms. They'll heal eventually on their own, sure, and would heal even faster with a healing hand device, but...

Nobody wants Jayni back on her feet FASTER, at this point, and the Humans of Earth have their... well... their ways of healing limbs "the Old Fashioned Way" seem like an EXCELLENT means of torturing someone if you were that kind of Goa'uld.

Which you never really were and will definitely never be, but still... there's some kind of karmic irony in this turn of events.

Maybe you'll be able to figure out some way to calm the girl down before those 'casts' come off.

Oh well, in the mean time you've got to go deal with this strange DRUG-LIKE WITHDRAWL problem that SG-5 has been dealing with since they returned from P4X-347 yesterday.

It's a truly FASCINATING reduction of Neural Activity in the brain that sounds VAGUELY...
For some reason. You can't place exactly why, though...

Your name is JAKE.... HARLEY.

Yes, Jake Harley.

And you've come to understand the situation at hand rather fully, despite several large, troubling gaps in your memory that are only SLOWLY filling back in fully.

An "UNKNOWN POLITICIAN" (which strikes you as a funny way of saying "we know who but we can't say without causing trouble") ordered some THIEVES to murder you and steal a Stargate. At some point, a CRAZY CAT LADY betrayed her teacher, tried to take her position as a SYSTEM LORD, and had you CLONED to serve as her First Prime. Not only that, you were also BRAINWASHED into thinking she was your DEAD WIFE, ANNA CLAIRE-HARLEY.

It's apparently been almost SIXTEEN MONTHS since you died, and in those SIXTEEN MONTHS your LOST DAUGHTER in another Galaxy found a way to CALL HOME, gain SUPER NATURAL POWERS, defeat SEVERAL FRIGHTENING FOES (Including, apparently, the MADMAN that your Mother CLONED YOU AND JANE from), and TIME TRAVELED several, SEVERAL times.

Oh, and apparently, several kids from the FUTURE ended up time traveling back at some recent point in time to prevent A NEAR DISASTER OF AN APOCALYPSE. Meanwhile, your SON has a GIRLFRIEND, your DAUGHTER has TWO GIRLFRIENDS and a BOYFRIEND of sorts (Note to Self: Research more into this "ALTERNIAN ROMANCE SYSTEM"), and your SISTER is now A HELL OF A LOT OLDER than you are and doesn't that just feel... DUMB somehow?

Honestly, the most troubling part about all of this isn't even the fact that your Daughter insists on staying disguised as an Alternian for "POLITICAL REASONS," but instead is calling herself JOEY CLAIRE instead of JOEY HARLEY.

As if you needed another reminder of your recent BRAIN-WASHING.

Joey looks like she doesn't know what to make of you. In one glance she looks happy to have a chance to talk with you, in the next she looks utterly terrified of you, and in the very next looks like she thinks you're not even yourself and are just another random ass kid brought into the present via time travel- which you suppose you technically are.

From what Joey and Jude have told you about YOUR GENETIC FATHER... and the powers you've shown signs of using since your REBIRTH, you can't blame her for the terrified reactions when they happen.

Jude, at least, seems accepting of your returned presence in his life. He's happy to tell you about school and all sorts of other things like NEW VIDEOGAMES; but he doesn't seem to be treating you like he used to. Not with the awe and respect of having an AWESOME FATHER, but as a PEER of sorts.

They've both grown up SO MUCH in the last SIXTEEN MONTHS without you and... you realize
you're not their PA, not any more. You're really not THAT JAKE. That man DIED and is dead and buried. You were cloned from him. You can't just slot into his shoes and pretend nothing happened.

Your DAUGHTER is older than you are, Biologically speaking, and your SON is only a few years behind you.

You're not their Father, and it'd be really screwed up if they saw you that way 100% of the time.

At least Jane isn't acting any different from how she was when you last saw her. Still all smiles and "We REALLY need to talk more and catch up on everything!"

You suppose if there's one good thing that came out of Jake Harley's self-imposed exile from his family the first time around, it's that you've got a really SOLID family tie that hasn't changed all that much even with all of this... this...

This cloning chaos.

And, as it turns out, you're not the only one in this boat of "Don't know what to do with my life now." Dr. Jackson was recovered but a few weeks before you were.

At the very least, you two seem to have sparked off a renewed friendship built around that common feeling of having MISSED A TERRIBLE AMOUNT OF TIME.

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**EARTH DATE:** NOVEMBER 18TH, 1997

**DIASPORA DATE:** 5/21/0001.

Your name is GEORGE HAMMOND and you wonder just how many MISSION REPORTS you'll be scrubbing from release to the greater tiers of the United States Government, just to keep the NID and a certain senator from getting IDEAS.

Keeping them unaware of the RECENT BLACK OPS MISSION is one thing, keeping them unaware of AN ADDICTIVE, GOA'ULD RECREATIONAL RADIATION DRUG DEVICE is a whole other thing entirely.

Thankfully Ka'turnal realized what it was before anyone on SG-5 died, but even so, you'd rather not have anyone from the NID trying to use it on other people, especially here on Earth. (You've already given Carter instructions to destroy the damned thing once everyone involved has been weaned off of the addictive affects.)

While you personally feel that your place is here at the SGC, you DID do some thinking during your possible retirement towards the thought of retiring.

Retiring... you might actually consider it one day soon, but you think you'll hold off on actually pulling the trigger on that particular action until you're sure that you're not leaving UNFINISHED BUSINESS around to, well, be finished.

As it stands, included among that UNFINISHED BUSINESS is the existence of the corrupt members of the NID and Senator Kinsey himself.
Once something's done with him, then you can allow yourself to retire. Spend a lot more time with the Grandkids than you have.

Even if Jake Harley is back among the land of the living, somehow, he still serves as a grim reminder that death comes suddenly, sometimes with the poorest of timing.

Speaking of CHILDREN, however... now your thoughts wander to the HARCESIS, whom JAKE said had been named SHIFU.

Keeping him out of the NID's grasp is just as important as keeping him out of Anubis' grasp. And while you'd be willing to keep the kid here on Earth, there's every possibility that Anubis could track him down here, or Apophis for that matter. The Tok'ra both want him and don't want him for much the same reasons.

Ganos Lal has said she would gladly take the kid and raise him by herself, but for as long as she is in your galaxy and her people were aware of her, they would take the kid in the moment she was out of sight of anyone.

And with how CAGEY and SECRETIVE she's been about just WHO EXACTLY her "people" are to begin with, she said outright that she would understand why you wouldn't want them to take the kid, because she personally wouldn't want them to have the kid either.

Honestly, it's looking more and more like sending the kid to ALTERNIA is the best bet anyone has for A: Keeping this kid safe, B: Keeping him out of the hands of people who would abuse his memories for their own gain, and C: Keeping him away from people whose motives are SHROUDED IN SECRECY.

At least, if sent to Alternia's Galaxy in Ganos Lal's care, to stay under observation of Alternia's people...

Well. There's bound to be a LOT OF ANGRY PEOPLE who'd rather have the kid themselves, but the chances of any of them getting to Alternia's Galaxy without getting through the SGC first?

Well..

It's a plan, at any rate.

__________________________________________

Your name is DANIEL JACKSON, and you've just finished watching every video report that had been sent to Earth from Alternia before a consistant means of Gating back and forth had been established.

And to THINK that part only happened because Jack stuck his head into something that he shouldn't have and got a whole ANCIENT REPOSITORY OF KNOWELDGE downloaded into his head.

Like, what are the odds that a solution to two problems would present itself in one day?

Astronomical, you'd say.

And while a small part of you would LOVE to go to Alternia in person and see all of the history
there in person... a small part of the back of your brain tells you that's probably not such a good idea until the EMPRESS has been DETHRONED.

Honestly, you think you'll be good just staying here on Earth for the foreseeable future. No Gate Travel except when necessary.

You think that's a fair trade after everything you've been through. You deserve some down time. Some recovery time. Some rest. Some...

...Some...

...

Okay, you'll be the first to admit that it's only been five minutes since you finished the massive backlog of video files, and you're ALREADY BORED.

Damn it.

Now you'll have to find something else to fill your time with for the foreseeable future... that isn't officially joining an SGC team, that is.

You're not up to that point yet. You really aren't.

Maybe you'll reconsider after the New Year.

1998 seems like it might be a good year for making a decision like that.

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DIASPORA DATE: 6/1/0001.

Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and you're making PLANS.

You've had to deal with a LOT OF CRAZY EVENTS over the last... uh... seventeen or so months? You mean, hell, your PA is suddenly alive again and... uh. Well. It's kind of weird thinking of him as PA now that he looks only, what, a few years younger than Joey?

Anyways, Rose hitched a ride back to Alternia the first chance she got, which ended up being the same time Joey and Xefros went back to Alternia. That is to say, sometime last week. The rest of Joey's team had headed back to Alternian almost as soon as possible after returning from wrecking Jayni's shit off world.

They'll be BACK though, because in a few days is a BUNCH OF BIRTHDAYS and Joey promised that she'd be there for them this time.

So since there are like, three birthdays spread out over what's basically a full week, you're planning something EXTRAVAGANT! Something SPECIAL! Something--
"Canceled," you mutter, staring at the EMAIL from WALMART telling you your order had been canceled. "Why? Why did it have to be canceled AGAIN?"

Ever since Alternia and Earth had established a working connection, you've been ordering a whole bunch of CDs for Joey that had come out over the last few years since her exile and you WERE going to give them all to her at once but...

But freaking WALMART cancels your order AGAIN. And AGAIN. AND AGAIN. For no discernible reason!!!

Never an "Oops, out of stock" (Because they're still in stock afterwards) or "Put on back order" or anything like that.

Just...

Canceled.

Every single time.

Canceled.

And it's nothing to do with the PAYMENT OPTIONS. They're OH SO EAGER to take the Credit Card info every time, but when it comes to actually shipping the stuff...

You swear, if they keep this shit up the whole ONLINE ORDERING thing just isn't going to go anywhere for them.

You've been tempted to try ordering from one of those SPECIALTY WEBSITES for online shopping, but THERE you run into the problem of CERTAIN THINGS being out of stock or being sold by DIFFERENT SELLERS and honestly you just.

URGH.

It feels like a conspiracy.

But damn it all, even if you have to hunt down the aisles of the FURTHEST BARNES AND NOBLES or BEST BUY you're gonna GET THESE CDS FOR YOUR SISTER!

Chapter End Notes

A breather episode of sorts... paradoxically set during the same time frame of a canon SG-1 episode that was rather heavy hitting in some regards. (The Light' is one I really wouldn't recommend watching, TBH. Consider it THOROUGHLY De-Recommended!!)

Things are about to pick up on the Alternia side of things, as well as backtrack through the month for a little bit as well. :33
ALT:04X18: I am Flesh and and I am Bone

Chapter Summary

In which shit goes boom.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

On the ROYAL VESSEL, HER IMPERIAL CRUISER, lounging away in her personal bath-tub, the Empress stares at a BLOW BY BLOW recounting of the Rebellion's current progress at taking over the Galaxy.

Angrily, she grabs a FRIED SNAKE from the tray of food at her bath-tub's side, and bites off its head. Chew. Crunch. Munch. Swallow.

How they'd gotten nearly half of the Galaxy out of her control without her noticing their progress up until now was a bloody mystery.

Down the rest of the snake went down her throat in bits and pieces as she angrily snaked away.

And what was worse was there were now rumors that the current Heiress, Trizza Tethis, was engaging in some kind of TERROR TACTICS on worlds still owned by the empire before the rebellion took over. Incident reports such as one depicting the girl REGROWING A HAND and surviving her SKULL being crushed in are no more terrifying than the fact that she has a RENEGADE CLOWN on her side, aiding and abetting in these activities.

The Empress grabs at a FRIED GRUB and starts plucking off the legs, tossing them into her mouth like fries.

It's known the girl is a clown because people have SEEN HER BLEED- and then recover the injuries just the same. Clearly a property the Bracelet wielder has bestowed upon the two of them intentionally. It's know she's a ROGUE clown because people have reported seeing her naked during the initial encounter- one where she ended up stealing the clothing she's now constantly being spotted in- and not a SINGLE TRACE of the Clown Makeup could be seen on her skin. Nothing on her face, nothing decorating any random piece of her body.

Legs finished, the Empress bites down on the grub's head, and rips it off just the same as the fried snake from earlier. Blood of an olive color splashes down into the Empress' bath water, beautifying it with the stains.

Body Markings that SHOULD BE THERE, even if not in makeup. There hasn't been a Purple blood hatched since the days of the SUMMONER that hasn't had their body PREPARED for the trials ahead in some manner or another. For a Clown girl of THAT age to be alive and not have a CLAN BRANDING or even their SIGN tattooed on their body somewhere... They must have been born and bred specifically for this task. Bred outside the known Caverns.

The sound of Boots stomping down a hallway come into view, and the Empress hastily shoves the
last of the Fried Grub into her mouth.

And thinking back to the RUMORED REPORT from some time ago about ROGUE ROYAL GRUBS being hatched- and this is a report she should have gotten at some point SOONER than now- the Empress realizes that there definitely has been a SECRETIVE BROODING CAVERN for sure.

That fits with her knowledge of REENAH KRAKEN, and her mysterious disappearance.

To so brazenly breed such a cavern on Alternia...

The Empress had barely finished her rushed meal when the one known as General Naihte opens the door to her room, and strolls inside.

"YES? What is it?" The Empress growls.

"Ma'am, the Grand Highblood once again requests an Audi-

"TELL MAKARA WHAT I KEEP TELLING HIM!" The Empress stands and turns, whirling around so fast that her hair whips water clear across the room in all directions, including some of the olive stained liquid that splashes directly up against General Naihte's face. "WE DEAL WITH THEM ONCE I KNOW WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH AND NOT A MINUTE SOONER!!"

"...Understood, Empress," General Naihte nods, and quickly exits the room.

"Honestly," The Empress huffs out an annoyed breath as she grabs another fried grub off of her plate of food. "It's like they're all fucking GRUBS."

CRUNCH- SNAP.


DIASPORA DATE: 5/28/0001.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE and you've often had dreams about that first time you stepped through the Stargate. That whirling, screaching, spiraling green energy effect that shuttered off mid transit before reforming into the red tunnels you've come to associate with the Alternian Galaxy. Every time you step through Local Alternian Gate to another Local Alternian Gate, you imagine that it's a burst of a red spiraling tunnel and then you arrive. You don't even have to think about it as you change it to green when you're in the Milky Way. Your mind just sort of... fills in the blank.

You don't have to imagine the wormhole whenever you transit from one Galaxy to another, though. It shows up every time you go long distance. Alternia to Earth, Red spirals to Green, and Earth to Alternia, Green to Red with a smoother transition than you had during your first trip.

Traveling Galaxy to Galaxy, this transition of color in the wormhole gives you a moment to prepare yourself. To let the you of one side fade to the background so the you of the other side can step forwards into the spotlight. It's like changing shoes from Ballet to Tap Dance.
As you and your Moirail exit the Alternian Side of the Stargate and enter a room full of chaos, you can't help but wonder at what point will your two extraneous sides reconcile and merge together? When will you have that illusive BALLAP STYLE of dance ready to go?

"Okurii!" You yell out as you and Xefros head up to the bridge. "What's the emergency that you needed us back for so suddenly?"

"Barzum's been having this recurring Gate Address flash through her mind the last few days," Okurii explains, guiding you both over to the conference table. "We figured if it was a trap, we should at least spring it and see whether her sister was really behind this or not. So we sent a team yesterday, and, well..." She taps a few buttons, and then a RECORDED VIDEO pops up on screen, paused. "Just watch." She hits play.

On screen you see a recording of a TEAM- consisting of Daraya, Tyzias, and the unseen camera person- exiting the Stargate on some random world, on edge as they search the immediate area... Then, they suddenly stop and all raise their weapons as two cloaked figures exit out from behind a grove of trees.

Both figures have their hands held above their heads- and you count four hands. Four of them. This is really concerning considering the fact that the one of them then removes their hood at camera person's- wait, that's Dammek's voice there- order. That person whose hood gets removed ends up being Trizza Tethis, who last you were aware, you'd left without a left hand.

"Well, if it isn't the Bronze Blood," she says, laughing. "I'd thought you'd've been culled by now."

"What do you want, Trizza?" Dammek asks.

"And more importantly!" Tyzias takes a step forwards. "How the hell did you get this Gate Address to Barzum?"

"That'd be her doin', not mine," Trizza nods her head at the other cloaked figure, who removes their hood at that.

"Hey there," BAIZLI SOLELI says, grinning a familiar, disturbing grin. "Nice to see you again, Teal Thief."

"I'm not a thief," Tyzias protests.

"You stole my sister from our time, I'd say that makes you a thief," Baizli says, sounding... oddly calm about it. "I'd be mad, but Trizza here filled me in on the fate she would've had otherwise. So I suppose I should really thank you for keeping an eye on my sister like you did."

"As for what we want," Trizza says, "well, we've got a message to deliver to you all, but we're not willing to share unless it gets to be an even trade."

As Video Dammek asks for her to just spill it out already and to stop playing games, Xefros asks, "Boldir was still laid up in the med bay, right?"

"What we want?" Trizza laughs. "What we want is simple, 'Dam Dams'."

"Yeah," Okurii nods. "Not that we could've gotten inside Trizza's head anyways with that Clown"
"I want to see my sister again," Baizli demands. "Make sure you're treating her right."

"Steal her back, more like," you mutter.

"And as for me," Trizza says, "I'll only deliver my message if that Claire girl who cut my hand off is there." She wriggles the fingers on both of her hands for emphasis. "We'll be waiting here for another day, and then we'll be leaving, and you'll never know what it is we wanted."

You frown as Okurii closes the video. "And then?"

"...And then they just walked back into the forest," Okurii says. "Dammek's team cycled three gates before returning to base just to be sure they weren't being followed."

"I see," you look to Xefros, and he nods.

"No way around it," he says. "Unless Boldir gets cleared for field work again anytime soon... well... We need to find out what she has to say."

You turn to Okurii, and say, "I'll gear up as soon as possible."

"Alright," Okurii nods. "I'll let the team know."

It's but a short while later that you're stepping through the Stargate once more, Dammek and Xefros at your side. The Gate remains open once you're through.

Trizza and Baizli step out of the forest, the clown girl frowning.

"Where's Barzum?" Baizli asks, sounding a bit off put by it just being you and Dammek.

"Waiting on the other side for my signal," you say, jabbing a thumb back at the Stargate. "You gotta give me something to work with first before we bring her over."

"Fair's fair," Trizza says, raising a hand to try and calm Baizly down. "I can work with that."

"But my sister-" Baizli begins to protest.

"Can wait for me to deliver at least part of my message," Trizza stresses. Baizli thus pacified, Trizza looks you over. "Huh... You're lookin' like a Troll, and missin the bracelet. How do I know you're realy that girl who cut my hand off and not-"

Your laser cutter jumps into your hand ignites as your eyes glow and wings flare out.

"-Wo-hoah!" Trizza laughs. "Okay, yeah. That's you alright, miss hand-cutter Claire. No fakery about it." She smirks. "I'll say one thing. When Baizli here said she'd pulled a memory out of Barzum of you shifting from Human to Troll 'cause of the Bracelet, I wasn't sure I believed it. But then, well..." She laughs. "Something happened with the Bracelet, didn't it? Someone broke it again, didn't they?"
"The Handmaid did, yes," you say, captchaloguing the laser cutter and dropping your wings and the eye glow away. "But we killed her, and broke the Bracelet in the process."

"Nice, not many can say they've faced the specter of death and lived," Trizza appraises. "'Course, I'm one of 'em, and so's Baizli, but you? Oh, you've gone one better and gone and killed her. That's really rare among rare survivals."

"Is there a POINT to this?" Xefros asks, frowning.

"Yeah!" Baizli growls. "Can we get to bringing my sister out now or what?"

"Calm your hateboners there," Trizza warns, scowling at both Baizli and Xefros. "I'm getting to it."

Urgh, finally, you don't say out loud.

"Me and Baizli have been dealing with some shit," Trizza says. "'Bout... eh, hell if I know anymore, let's just call it a month ago. 'Bout a month ago or so, I was out in the middle o' nowhere when a Clown Ship's Escape Pod crashed, and inside o' it was a little guy named Gamzee Makara."

Dammek sucks in a sharp breath, and you glance at him. He signals that he'll talk to you later about it.

"Ah, heard of him, eh?" Trizza smirks. "Yeah, figured that. Anyways, long story short, Baizli miraculously resurrects herself from my broken heart and we feed the bastard to a giant bunny rabbit. After that, we laid low for a while, visited some markets, did some clothes shopping, but all the while, we, ah... came across some information."

"What kind of information?" You ask.

"Two parts," Trizza says, "the first of which I'll tell you for free just for showin' up. The second part'll have to wait until Baizli sees Barzum."

"Alright," you say. "What's the first part, then?"

"Gamzee's Ancestor, Kurloz, thinks that Gamzee died on a ship that ended up fighting one of yours. Something big and blue and shape-shifty?" Trizza's smirk becomes almost DRAGON-LIKE. "Yeah, he's pinning the blame on you little Rebels for murdering the kid that was supposed to become his successor in a few sweeps."

"Wonderful," Xefros laments, "yet more angry clowns coming to kill us."

And no Hyperbeam to make destroying their ships easy. Shit.

"Now, here's the important part of part one of my info," Trizza says. "Kurloz Makara, the Grand Highblood, wants BLOOD SPILT in return. The Empress, as it turns out, is holding him back from raiding Alternia... or, that's what she thinks. He's been getting madder and madder the longer she holds him back and he's planning an ASSAULT. All out. Total Annihilation of the planet. He doesn't care if the Empress culls him alive afterwards or not." She then raises a finger, "Now, I happen to know where and when and how and all sorts of other juicy details. That's PART TWO. Now bring out Barzum."
You sigh internally, but keep your face schooled as you tab your radio, "Send them through."

A moment later, Tyzias, Daraya, and, most importantly, BARZUM SOLELI step through the Stargate.

You can SEE the relief in Baizli's eyes upon seeing her sister. Conversely, you can practically FEEL the unease radiating off of Barzum.

"Sis!" Bazili begins, starting to smile. "Are you okay? They haven't hurt you, have they?"

"Nnnhh...." Barzum shakes her head, clearly uneasy with her resurrected sister's presence.

Barzum Soleli is a curious case of a girl, you've noticed. She was dead straight catatonic for most of the time in the past, and when you'd brought her forwards, it was only Latula and Tyzias working to help keep her comfortable that the girl started to actually talk. Broken, stuttering, and childish Alternian, but she was getting there. You're pretty certain that she never was the talkative twin of the two.

Once you did get her talking though, oh did she have things to say.

Things about how her sister made every choice, and corralled her through PSYCHIC THOUGHTS day in and day out. How, after being freed of her Sister's influences, she realized that she'd never felt like she was her own person, but just had been some extension of Baizli's mind.

You wonder if Baizli ever even realized how controlling she'd been after being separated and reborn.

"...I..." Baizli frowns. "I can't get in your head right. I thought it was just the distance before but- What'd they do to you??" She growls. "Why the FUCK do you have a WALL up inside your HEAD!!?"

"We didn't do anything," Tyzias says, growling right back in turn as she puts her arms around Barzum to comfort her. "Those 'walls' inside her head are called a basic sense of self!! Something she didn't even HAVE with you controlling her all the time like you were."

"Tyzias," Daraya warns, "don't overstep."

Baizli seems to ignore what could have been mistaken for a pale overture instead for realizing something important. "A... a sense of self?" She asks, echoing. "You mean... all this time I was...? And when I died, she...?"

"When you died?" Tyzias asks, then laughs, bitterly. "Yeah. You fucking were puppetting her around and didn't even realize it. She didn't even realize it until you were gone and she was actually alone in her head for once in her life!"

"...Whoooboy!" Trizza laughs nervously, interjecting herself into the middle of things. "Did the sun just come out from behind a cloud or something because it sure did just get hot out here. Haha.. WHooo... So yeah. Back to the first subject?"

As much as you hate to agree with her... "Yeah, okay. What do you know about this attack?"
A Gate Address for a MOON above a planet known for its CLOWN TRAINING CAMP turns out to match a designation in the Alternian Gate Database as M9Q-182. It's fairly close, distance wise, to Alternia. A fleet of ships could travel to Alternia via Hyperspace in about half a day. Attempts at dialing it before resulted in FAILED LOCK ATTEMPTS, and so it was put on a COLD DIAL LIST of planets that you'd periodically re-dial to see if a connection could be made.

Historically, the Moon's Stargate was said to have been crushed under a meteor impact. It wasn't scheduled for a re-connection attempt for another two months, but trying it just now...

**WAAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!**

"Sending probe through," Zebede says, and through the gate the Probe goes. The video feed returns a moment later, and you see exactly what Trizza said would be there. A whole landing yard full of DANGEROUS LOOKING SPACESHIPS, all being geared up and prepared for BATTLE.

A few seconds later, the probe is shot with some kind of energy weapon and it dies.

"Trizza was right," you grimace. "They did un-bury the Gate and are using it for supply chain movements."

"And the Gate is heavily guarded, too," Okurii grimaces. "Shut it down, Zebede."

And thus, the Stargate shuts down.

"They're going to launch their fleet sooner rather than later now," Dammek says.

"What do we do?" Xefros asks.

Silence fills the bridge for a few moment.

"...I have an idea," Dammek says, "but you're not going to like it."

And then he opens his mouth...

And yeah, none of you like it. But you're sure Polypa is going to drag herself out of the infirmary just to watch the light show if she hears about what you're going to do next.

The gist of Dammek's plan is, over on the SGC side of things, recently they tested a bomb enhanced with NAQUADAH- the mineral the Stargates are made out of- and yes, even Dammek and Xefros' hive-made Gate is made of the stuff. You never really stopped to think about it once you'd re-established regular contact with Earth and gotten access to their mission reports, but it makes sense that the planets in this Galaxy would be rich with the Mineral, or one very similar to it.

You're going to intentionally do the same thing.

In the laughably little time it takes for Dammek and Daraya to reconfigure one of the MEGASHIP'S MISSILES to accept several extra helpings of the stuff, you check over a LOT OF THINGS.

Naquadah as it's called in the Milky Way is instead by the laughably mundane mineral name of ELECTRO-QUARTZ here in this Galaxy. It's been used to build EVERYTHING that's hard technology and not bio-technology, from STARGATES, to SPACE SHIPS, and hell, even the DRAGONFLIES have Naquadah Power Cores to their Hyperdrives (You suddenly realize that's
why they were so gosh darned explosive at first).

In weapons, however, it's never used. Not in SHIP MISSILES, and not even in your LASER CUTTER (Oh thank goodness, you exhale in relief.)

You suppose the reason for that is because it's VERY HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE and the Empress has wanted to RULE WORLDS and not DESTROY THEM beyond all recognition.

And now you're about to replicate what Major Carter had remarked upon during her recent visit as a MAJOR TACTICAL BLUNDER on some dude named General Bauer's part.

The Stargate is Dialed up, a probe is quickly sent through again to make sure that all those ships are still present (You confirm that exactly the same amount are there as there were last time before the probe is destroyed again) and then Damned Missile is fucking launched through the Stargate (which shuts down the second transmission has been confirmed).

After several tense minutes, another attempt to dial M9Q-182 is made... and no connection can be secured.

The Astro Megaship will be in observing range of the planet in another few hours.

Kurloz Makara- the GRAND HIGHBLOOD- was en-route via ship to take command of his NEW BATTLE FLEET full of ships whose weapons had been modified to fire ELECTRO-QUARTZ ENHANCED ROUNDS.

A dial in with a PROBE the other day meant that there would soon be an attack of some kind.

It'd be best to get the fleet off of the moon before that could hap-*FWASH!*

And then, as his personal ship exited hyperspace in orbit over the moon in question, the whole thing suddenly exploded into a burning ball of blue fire that utterly engulfed the Grand Highblood's personal ship, and the entire atmosphere of the planet below, causing everything to burn, burn, burn.

It was a really spectacularly big explosion.

And in his final thoughts, the Grand Highblood, Kurloz Makara, thought that he probably should have observed proper WEAPON PREPARATION TECHNIQUES and not ordered such large shipments of Electro-Quartz to be added to the weaponry. All it took was one miss-fire, and, well...

By his own hand would his dreams be rent asunder.

It was funny, in its own morbid sort of way.

**EARTH DATE: NOVEMBER 26TH, 1997.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 5/29/0001.**
Your name is DAMMEK, and as you stare at the recorded footage of the still burning planet and its moon, all you can think of is...

That should not have been that big of an explosion.

Well, not unless that moon had been made of PURE Electro-Quartz/Naquadah... or, even once factoring in the amount of the mineral present in the Spaceships on that moon's surface, there'd been a LOT more of the mineral present on that moon that shouldn't have been there...

And honestly, you're not sure what's more terrifying. That the moon the clowns had chosen to prepare a fleet on was a ticking time bomb waiting to go off... or that the clowns themselves were preparing to use weapons laden with the highly explosive mineral, and you'd just beaten them to the punch with a very SIMILAR IDEA.

Needless to say, this is one mission you're going to be content with not writing a report on.

The Empress of Alternia looked up during the middle of her meal as General Naihte entered her room once more- half of a burnt-to-black crispy skinned grub and a similarly cooked snake hang out of her mouth as she afixes the man with a glare that asks, "What now?"

"I'm afraid to report that it seems that, in his desire for revenge, The Grand Highblood decided to enhance the weaponry of the Royal Clown Armada ships currently in space-dock above the Grand Carnival Training Camp with the Stargate Mineral, Electro-Quartz," General Naihte answers. "An accident seems to have occurred and the planet, the moon, the ships, and the Grand Highblood himself... have all perished in a massive explosion."

There's silence as the Empress chews on her mouthful of food, swallows, daintily dabs at the blood stains around her mouth with a napkin, and then says, "Good."

"E-Excuse me, Empress??" General Naihte asks, shocked.

"I never liked Kurloz or his clowns anyways," The Empress says. "Those kinds of idiots always did strike me as the self-destructive type. I mean, just look at all the fucking Reavers we have to deal with when it comes to defectors."

"I... I see..." General Naihte says.

"And besides," The Empress smirks. "With Scratch gone, it was only a matter of time before Kurloz stepped out of line and I found an excuse to kill them anyways. I'd probably have staged it as an accident along similar lines to that. Electro-Quartz laced weapons? What an idiot. Anyone who does that deserves to die by their own weapon being turned back on them."

"I... suppose so," General Naihte agrees.

"Good..." The Empress pauses, shuddering slightly, and then says, "General Naihte. If I EVER dare to suggest a plan in which I lace a weapon with Electro-Quartz? Slap me. HARD. Anywhere will do. Face, butt, shoulder. Just make sure to remind me what an Idiot Kurloz was so I don't make the same mistake he did."

"I... I will do such, ma'am," General Naihte nods.
"Now, then, go spread the word throughout the Empire," The Empress says, smirking as she reaches for a BOILED SEA-COCKROACH, "I'm officially disbanding Kurloz's clown empire. Any Clowns still wishing to serve in the Empire'd better bow their fucking heads and wipe away the fucking makeup. Otherwise? They'd best rabbit for the black and PRAY the Reavers don't kill them first."

"I- What?" General Naihte asks. "I don't understand."

"That is to say," The Empress says. "I'm cleaning house. Any clowns who think Scratch or English are going to punish me for ending their little eternal joke of a party? They're gonna get CULLED. And so are those fucking Reavers. We kill those clowns. And we kill. Them. HARD."

"I... are you serious, Ma'am?" General Naihte asks. "Such an upheaval of command structures..."

"Has been a long, fucking, time, coming," The Empress breaks open the back of the sea-cockroach's shell, exposing its gooey innards. "And I don't give a fuck if it makes us look weak. We already DO with the Rebellion somehow having carved out HALF of our fucking empire out from beneath my nose!" She tears the whole thing in half, and then stabs a finger-sized trident into one half to rip out the insides and shove it into her mouth.

She pointedly chews, and swallows, and then...

"And what did the Clowns do to stop that, HM? Nothing! NOTHING! They. DID. NOTHING!!!" She roars, angrily stabbing her fork into the other half of the sea-cockroach, and jabbing its tender innards into her mouth.

More chewing, more swallowing, and then the Empress stands from her table and its empty plate of food.

"SO I'm gonna do something. My empire is falling apart because my own generals and subordinates are following their OWN AGENDAS!!" She growls. "And it's because of THEM that this empire has fallen into such disarray. Well, it's time for me to clean house and put things in order and make it FUCKING, ABUNDANTLY, CLEAR." She reaches out, and her full sized 2X3DENT launches into her hand with a burst of red and blue psychic energy. "The rest of the Galaxy that isn't already ours can fucking HOLD. ITS. MUSCLEBEASTS. Until I get my Empire back in working order."

"...Understood, Empress," General Naihte bows his head in agreement, and then turns to leave. "I will find a camera crew so you can record that message immediately." ...As well as scramble a few of his plans that hadn't quite YET gotten off the ground.

"Good," The Empress says, grinning. "See that you do that, Naihte."

Chapter End Notes

Does it feel like things are building up to a Season Finale? It feels like things are building up to a season finale to me. :33
Do you ponder the manner of things in the Dark?


In orbit above Alternia, the Astro Megaship suddenly appeared without warning. This was already extremely odd as the Astro Megaship already was on the planet, dry-docked next to the All Your Base.

But what was even ODDER was the fact that this strange, second version of the Astro Megaship was heavily damaged, and its hull was charred, as if first plunged through an unwinnable battle, and then secondly thrown through the core of a sun.

Naturally, a team was sent to investigate, but what they found... that can wait for just a little while longer.

Your name is Joey Claire, and while Christmas was never really your favorite holiday, you can appreciate it when life gives you some decent, non sour lemons to make some sugary sweet lemonade with.

What are you going on about?

Oh, just the fact that in a freaking Christmas Miracle of a turnabout, Rose figured out how to reverse the cat-like changes that had been made to her body, turning her back into pure human... And then back again. Back and forth and back and forth. What's more, the way of doing this came to her in a dream.

You were all a bit surprised by that revelation in particular, but apparently Rose had been keeping it to herself that her cat-like transformation had come with an unexpected plus side: her teleportation ability seemed to use up a LOT of internal energy reserves that just otherwise weren't being used on a daily basis, and thus, she was actually being able to catch up on a lot of sleep that she otherwise wasn't getting just by way of teleporting around rapidly for a while and thus tiring herself out.

You're happy for her, you really are.

But you're also of two minds about this. What if she figures out how to reverse your own Alternian disguise and let you turn back into a human? What if you get stuck in that form then? Now that the option is almost certainly back on the table, you're right back to your original quandry of if you even WANT to be a normal Human girl anymore.
Being stuck as an Alternian Troll has been an interesting experience. Being stuck as a human again... You're not sure if you want that, you've come around to really liking the idea of being able to swap species at will.

Still, you'll try not to think about it until Rose asks you about it. Today's not the day for that kind of heavy thinking.

Instead, you'll sit here with your EXTENDED EARTH FAMILY, open some presents, and-

RIIIIING.

The Egbert house phone rings.

"Urgh," Roxy huffs, getting up to answer it. "Probably a telemarketer."

BE-DO-BE-DE-BE-DA-BE-DA!

...There goes Carter's cellphone, followed a second later by O'Neill's cellphone, and then the whole room is basically lit up with the sound of ringing phones. Even your own phone- used only really when you're on Earth- rings.

"...That's probably NOT a telemarketer," O'Neill complains as he flips open his own cellphone to answer.

"This is Claire," you say into your phone.

"Miss Claire, this is Lieutenant Lorne of the SGC. You're needed back on base," says the person on the other end of the line.

"Let me guess," you sigh. "Something big happened back on Alternia that requires our immediate attention?"

"How'd you know?" the caller asks.

"Gee, I dunno," you quip as you observe the grim expressions going over everyone's faces. "Maybe it was the fact you guys called just about everyone in the room at the same time?"

As much as you'd love to say you weren't expecting anything major to happen on Christmas of all days, well... You were kind of expecting something to happen on Christmas of all days, since it's a given fact that most of the universe doesn't observe it as a holiday, and, well, evil never sleeps, and so on.

What you weren't expecting was Hammond to basically send You, SG-1, Jude, the Fraisers, the time traveling kids, that Doctor Mckay guy, and Major Vantas back to Alternia for 'reasons that would be explained there.'

You could guess and theorize all you'd like, but nothing could prepare you for the startling revelation that yet MORE TIMETRAVEL HAS OCCURRED.
You're kidding, of course. You actually realized it pretty quickly when Carter was told to make sure she packed some SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT related to the Time Loop Machine.

But what you didn't expect was for it to clearly be an UNSTABLE TIME LOOP.

Resting in the Infirmary of the All Your Base are two people, the only survivors left alive, you're told, from the rather heavily damaged Astro Megaship in orbit. There's the Alternian Cerulean blooded girl ASHLER DERING, who seems to be under heavy sedation due to her missing her left arm and a decent chunk of her left face- going by the heavy amount of blue stained bandages there. And the other survivor...

It's you. Joey Claire, human formed, and rather battered, but still alive, and more importantly, conscious.

She looks like she went through a hell of a fight. Her hair is cut shorter on one side than on the other, her clothes have burns and cuts and scrapes, and, bizzarrely enough, a badly-reconstructed version of the Bracelet rests on her left wrist.

Janet hurries to look her over immediately, and everyone just sort of stares.

"Well, shit," Major Vantas says. "I don't remember this happening the first time."

"You wouldn't, I don't think. What day is it?" Alternate Future You asks. "I'm guessing since all of you are here at once, it's sometime in December on Earth? Kiddy Karkat should be off world right now. I think."

"It's Christmas Day," You say.

"Damn, not nearly far enough back as I'd wanted," Alternate Future You swears, "but good enough, I guess. It'll be tight, though." Nobody needs to ask what happened because the other you carries on, closing her eyes for a moment to collect her thoughts, and then speaks, "The Empress is planning something big. Right now she's cleaning up the Clown branches of her Empire and forcing them into line or Culling them. She's distracted with that, but not for long. When she finishes up, she's going to Attack Alternia, glass the desert we're in right now, and then systematically reconquer every planet we liberated." Silence fills the room for a moment, then the other you chuckles, bitterly, "Don't everyone talk all at once, now."

"Callie finished the Time Machine?" You ask.

"Barely," Other you says, nodding. "It was just down to us- Me, her, and Ashler- right at the end. The Empress was gunning the Megaship down, Ashler was doing her best to keep us from getting blasted, and Callie and I were..." She pauses to sniff. "Callie put everything she had into making sure the damned thing was going to work. Then there was a reactor leak in the power core and she locked me out of the engine room so she could keep working and get us ready for the jump." She laughs bitterly again. "Well, it worked. Barely. Ashler almost died when the primary flight console exploded in her face the moment we dove into the sun. I had to take over the secondary controls to keep the ship from frying from diving in too deep."

Oh.

That's...
You're not sure what to make of that.

"So... everyone died?" Jude asks.

"Yes, Jude, everyone died," Other you answers.

"Like... everyone? Even on Earth?" Jude asks.

"Oh, yeah, even on Earth," Other you says, sarcastically. "Apparently the ol' Empress decided she'd do the Khepri thing in person once she found out we had an open line to another galaxy."

"...Wow, that's horrible," Jude says, whimpering slightly.

"I'm joking, Jude," other you says, more serious. "We scuttled the Base to keep exactly that from happening."

"Oh thank god," Jude exhales in relief.

"That said, I wouldn't put it past her to find her way there eventually," other you muses. "It was sort of a bad call to have Rose shift me back to human when we did. I got stuck and couldn't turn back before having to go confront her, and... erugh. Long story kept deliberately short, she got a glimpse into my head and I'm pretty sure she saw everything about Earth I was trying to keep hidden."

"...Oh god," Jude goes a bit pale.

"Don't worry about that, though," other you says. "If we change things here, we'll be good to go.

"I assume you have a plan, then?" Major Vantas asks.

"Uh... something like that?" Other you doesn't sound so sure of it, but... what the hell.

It's not like you'd have any better idea in her situation.

"It's like a rats nest of wires and a hodge-podge ad-hoc construction manual had a baby," Dr. Mckay mutters as he stares at the way the TIME MACHINE has been incorporated into the second Megaship's engine room.

Your name is Callie Ohpee, and your alternate future self seems to have really done quite the piece of work, this time. It's one giant MYSTERY BOX of metal that you at some point seem to have taken the time to PAINT UP to look like the stonework from P4X-639. Sprawling out from its sides are countless wires and cables and you're not sure what half of them are meant to do because you never designed it to have this many cables.

You mean, obviously it WORKED and there was a successful time jump going further back than ten hours, but...

"I have no idea where to even begin taking this thing apart," you say.

"At least the radiation levels have gone down to basic engine room levels by now," Major Carter
"I'm not sure what I find more frightening, death by radiation poisoning or death by electrocution after pulling the wrong wire."

"Neither of those possibilities should happen."

"Should being the key word, but we're dealing with a Time Machine shoved into the engine core of a transforming spaceship," McKay says, sounding a bit panicked. "We have no idea what kind of residual electrical charges have been stored up inside capacitors or who knows what else that wasn't accounted for because this system should never have worked in the first place."

"Should being the key word," Carter sounds amused as she throws his own words back at him. "Because it clearly worked."

"Just be glad Galekh's off world," you say. "We'd never hear the end of it."

"Hey hey!" And then into the engine room, completely ignoring the hazardous environment suit, is Salazl Captor. "Guess what I just found!"

"What?" You ask, turning to face him.

"You left a video log showing how you put it all together," Salazl says, holding up a tablet computer, showing a series of video files.

"Thanks, Salazl," you say, smiling as you take the tablet. "This is going to be a huge help."

"Just, uh..." He coughs. "Fair warning, you should probably watch them in reverse order. Future You also left a message for yourself."

"Oh that's lovely," you mutter, and look up the appropriate video.

SPARKS FLY as a modulated voice echoes from off screen- "WARNING, REACTOR LEAK DETECTED. HYPERDRIVE ENGINE MELTDOWN POTENTIAL AT 85%. RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION: EVACU-"

"OH SHUT UP!" Callie steps into view of the camera, tapping at a tablet and shutting the warning system offline. "I just kicked Joey out of here so she didn't have to hear that, you stupid computer and here you go broadcasting it to the entire ship!"

There's a knocking at the door from outside- and Joey's yelling. "Callie! Don't do this! Come on! We can find another-"

The ship shakes as something slams into it- exploding.

"There isn't another way, Joey!" Callie turns on her heels, facing the door in question. "Now get to the Bridge and get ready to run the time jump! We're only going to get one shot at this!"
"...Alright," There's a pause. "Don't die on me too, you hear me, Callie Ohphee?"

"If everything works out then the last five months won't have happened," Callie says in return. "Now GO!"

There's the sound of running down the hallway, followed by another shaking of the ship accompanied by an explosion, and Callie turns back around to face the camera, lime colored tears brewing in her eyes. "Okay. Other Me. Listen up because I'm only going to say this once," she looks into the camera, no, into the viewer's very eyes and soul. "When you plug this thing into the Destiny, you'll need to interface it into the ORIGINAL HYPERDRIVE, the Faster Than Light engines. NOT the Alternian Hyperdrive powered by the Ship's Helmsman. That's what all these other wires are for-adaptation. I'm-

The ship shakes, sparks fly into view from off screen.

"Fucking, Bloody, Stupid-" Callie swears. "Damn it. Just- Don't worry about the amount of cables here! It WILL WORK on the Destiny with minimal installation time. I'm sure of it! I just-" she breaks into a coughing fit, and grimaces upon seeing some lime green blood on her hand. "Damn it. There's no time left." And then she ends the recording.

...Well, shit, you can't help but think.

At least there was something helpful in that, though. Now to just follow the steps your other self did in reverse to get this Time Machine out of the engine room.

Your name is TRIZZA TETHIS, and you think that your recent escapades could have gone better.

The Empress is on a MAD, WILD HUNT for Clowns who aren't towing the "Company Line." That, apparently, includes Baizli.

You're not entirely sure why the hell the girl's sticking around with you after you got her what she wanted- a face to face with her sister- but hell, you're not going to look a gift musclebeast in the mouth... or just someone to talk to, to be honest.

It's been... REALLY LONELY, since you fled through fled through the Stargate that first time. You lost your FEW teammates to traps, and then were on your own as you hunted and hunted and hunted... and then you were alone again, handless, as you wandered planet to planet seeking the barest, most meager of existences.

And then you had a ghost inside your head and now she's out of it and just... kind of following you around for lack of anything better to do.

You're on another one of your HIDEOUT PLANETS when one of those damned flying bugs the alien girl carries with her everywhere lands in your camp.

Baizli barely pays it any attention, but you know what this means. The Rebellion is SEEKING YOU
OUT for some god-forsaken reason.

You grin at the beetle, but it doesn't so much as flinch.

A few minutes later, the girl who cut your hand off shows up, twice. Somehow. The fuck?? One of them's the alien girl you remember, the other's the alternian girl from earlier this month/week/whatever.

"Trizza," the Alternian one says, "we need you to get us some information."

"...You've got my attention. What do you want me to get?" You ask. "And more importantly, what do *I* get out of it in return?"

"We know the Empire is hunting down rogue clowns and that's putting a squeeze on you two," the alien version says. "In return for getting us info, we'll make that stop."

"...How?" You ask.

"We're going to Exile the Empress," Alternarian girl says.

Exile her? You're not sure what any good that would do but...

Hrm. "Alright, what info do you want me to get, then?" You ask.

"We need to know where the Her Imperial Cruiser is docked at presently, and what planet it'll be at next," Alien girl says as she tosses you a radio, which you easily catch. There's a GATE ADDRESS written on a piece of paper taped to the side of it. "Dial that address and radio us once you've got the information."

You blink. Damn, that's some wicked time sensitive info. You're not sure how you're supposed to get it, but... hmm... Maybe. You might just know the Trolls with the right info.

"You're really serious about this, aren't you?" You ask.

They nod, and you wonder how the hell you can exploit this for your own gain.


Your name is...

Well, by mutual agreement ages ago by way of a night of WELL OVERTHINKING TIME TRAVEL PARADOXES, future you is ASHLER and you're VRISKA. The past is the past, and the future the future, even if future you is an alternate version of you from a possibly doomed timeline.

"You need to tell them," Ashler says, fixing you with a firm gaze with her one good eye and knowing you know exactly what she means.
"What do I even say?" You ask her. "I don't even know what it is that's happening to me."

"Remember when we killed Spider mom? That funky rock we found that made us pass out?" Ashler asks. "That was Regent. Part of the Bracelet."

"You're sure about that?" You ask.

"Believe me, Joey and I had a LOT of time to talk about it inbetween dodging the Empire's forces," Ashler tells you. "It's Regent."

"...Shit," you swear. "So... I have to tell them about the Stone?"

"Preferably before things go to hell in a hand basket, yes," she answers.

"What about everything else?" You ask.

"I got away with not bringing it up for about a month before I caved and told, but hey, that's extenuating circumstances, maybe you don't have to bring it up at all," Ashler sounds like she's grinning, but, it's hard to tell given the bandages around her head. "Either way. You tell them the minute you get a chance."

...You're not going to enjoy this one bit, and go find Okurii Leijon.

Your name is Major Samantha Carter and it's hard to believe that in a few short months this jumble of parts on a table would come to be fit inside a large rectangular box that could probably fit a Naquadah generator inside.

"And that's the test diagnostics complete," Callie nods. "We're good. It's working. We just need to plug it into the Destiny's FTL drive and complete this loop."

"Here's hoping everything goes according to plan," you say.

"Hopefully," Callie agrees with a nod. "Otherwise, we're going to be stuck in the past waiting for you to complete the work on the unfinished Time Machine and bring the Megaship into the past to bring us out."

"Good luck out there, Doctor Ohphee," you offer her your hand.

"Doctor?" She giggles as she takes your hand and shakes it. "I'm not sure I'm old enough for that title, but thank you regardless, Major Carter. It's been a pleasure working with you."

"Same here," you nod. "Let's do it again sometime."

"Yes, definitely!" Callie nods.

Your name is Jude Harley, and you can't help but feel that you and the others are being kept in reserve in case everything goes catastrophically wrong.
"I feel weird about this whole thing," Cassie says as the two of you sit down to eat breakfast in the Base's cafeteria early that morning. "On the one hand, everything that's going to happen hinges on it happening in the past, so it's technically already happened. But on the other, it means big things going forwards."

"Is it like the back and forth you were feeling before the kids jumped back?" You ask.

"No, it's more like," she frowns. "I feel sort of charged up a bit. Like I should be able to predict what's going to happen and can't."

"Well, here's hoping that means nothing bad's going to happen," you say, smiling.

"Dang it, Jude," Cassie pouts playfully. "Now you've jinxed us!"

"Sorry, sorry," you laugh and that gets her to laugh, and for a few moments the two of you just sit there, smiling at each other. But then, the moment's passed, and a bit more seriously, you say, "If I'm being honest, I'm kinda feeling weird about this whole thing too. Like I'm an understudy for a play that might need me to fill in at the last minute, and I don't know my lines and I've never gone on stage before."

"This isn't our first... uh..." Cassie frowns. "Rodeo? Is that the right word to use for that phrase?"

"Yeah," you nod.

"This isn't our first Rodeo, Jude," Cassie says, putting a hand over yours. "We can work out any problems the universe decides to throw at us."

"Well, sure," you say, "but you've got fancy powers. Joey's got fancy powers. All these Alternian kids have fancy powers. John, Jade, Rose, and Argo-" you shake your head. "It's stupid, but one one hand I feel like I'm left behind in the dust without anything, and on the other, I'm afraid that if I DO get powers they'll end up being as messed up as Pa's... or Scratch's... or Whatever!"

"Well," Cassie muses, "SG-1 doesn't have any powers and they get by just fine on a day to day basis."

"...Fair point," you concede. You want to say something more, but...

Suddenly, Dammek's voice echoes out over the Base's intercoms, "UNSCHEDULED OFF WORLD ACTIVATION! I REPEAT, UNSCHEDULED OFF WORLD ACTIVATION!"

No doubt, that's THE MYSTERY INFORMANT reporting back in.

"Let's hope everything goes okay," you say. "Because it sounds like its go-time."

---

Your name is Joey... Harley, you guess. You're the doomed future one. You're the one who lost everything.

The one trying NOT to mourn her losses because if everything goes according to plan then you won't have lost everything, and you'll probably never even remember having lost them in the first place.
Because you're pretty certain you'll be dead.

It's not out of any kind of Suicidal thoughts of self destruction, it's more... recognizing a trend with this rather specific type of time travel that you're about to employ yet again.

Everyone DIED in the build up to using it. This isn't like the Stargate Solar Flares or anything neat and tidy. Ashler/Vriska is missing an arm and an eye and is already volunteering to pilot the Damaged Megaship in the opening salvo of this wild, crazy plan of yours, which is almost certainly going to kill her from the psychic energy strain alone, even if the Empress doesn't manage to land a killing blow against the Damaged Megaship.

...And Callie died just making sure it worked.

This isn't a stable time loop. You came back very intentionally to make sure it never happened in the first place.

They died. You're still alive, and you'll make the best use of your remaining time... but you're just... aware of it deep down somehow, that you're not long for this time line.

Not if everything goes right- gone the way it should have gone in the first place.

There's a knock at your old bedroom door- and in walks troll you.

You can see it in her eyes, see it on her face. She knows, too, somehow. You're damaged goods just waiting to expire.

It's funny, but you never really realized before how fitting this look is for you. It's a difference between looking in the mirror and seeing yourself played back on a recording.

"Trizza came through," Joey Claire- the one who isn't going to die, the one trying not to think about how much it would hurt to lose everyone she cares about- tells you what you already know. "Ashler's launched the Megaship after her. It's time to gear up."

"Alright," You say, reaching over for your boots to put them on, and lace them up.

There's a moment of uncomfortable silence, then the other you- the Alpha- asks, "Do you regret having Rose change us back?"

You pause tying your laces, "...If I could've swapped back? No." You resume tying the laces, continuing on, "But we never got the chance to test if Rose could make me switch back and forth as easily as she could for herself. Since I never did get a chance to go back... Yes." You look her in the eyes as you finish tying your laces. "I'd really rather have been a Troll when it came down to losing my Quadrant mates. I felt even more like an outsider each and every time it happened."

You see a spark of something in the other you's eyes, and she seems to get some piece of understanding slotted into place.

"Okay," she says, quietly. So quietly you almost miss hearing it. Then, louder, she asks, "...Did you ever get the Bracelet working again?"

"..." You glance at your wrist. At the broken piece of junk. Then you meet her eyes once again, and say, "No. It's long dead."

"Then why are you wearing it?" she asks.
"It's a reminder of everything I lost," you tell her. "And it's my promise to make sure your time line doesn't end like mine did." And with that, you stand up and put on your game face. One last mask before the end of this stupid time loop. "Now, let's go make the Empress make a mistake she's going to regret for the rest of her life."
Chapter Summary

B33< Fur-twenty, crash into the sun!
LIKE A PAWSS!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


The Empress of the Alternian Empire- HER IMPERIAL CONDESCENSION MEENAH PEIXES-stands in the BIO-LAB on her ship.

"So this is it?" She asks a certain Cerulean blooded, three eyed troll woman, while holding up a VIAL OF NEON GREEN GOOP. "Scratch's powers boiled down into a tiny little vial?"

"Plus or minus some stray physical traits like eye color and facial structure that seem hard-coded into it," the Three Eyed Troll says, nodding. "I'm sure with further tweaking you could supplement it with something else."

"Interesting," The Empress muses. "I like the sound of-"

WHAM!

Suddenly, the entire ship shakes as something large rams into it from the side.

"The FUCK!" The Empress captchalogues the vial of goop, and hurries over to the nearest console. "BRIDGE! REPORT!" She demands. "FUCKING NOW! WHAT'S GOING ON!?"

"Th- The Rebels!!" A poor, poor junior helmsman cries out over the ship's comm system. "They've crashed one of their transforming ships against the side of ours! They're trying to force us to crash into the atmosphere!"

"Well... MAKE THEM STOP THAT!" The Empress yells.

"We're trying!! But the laser canons can't get a lock- the system's reporting if we destroy their ship we'll be caught up in the detonation and be destroyed ourselves!"

...Shit! The Empress realized with a start. This was a catch 22. Either blast the ship out of the sky and be blown up with them, or let yourselves be pushed into an uncontrolled re-entry.

They were desperate.
Wait.

_They. Were. Desperate!_ And if they were RAMMING Her Imperial Cruiser instead of transforming and using their incredible weapons to destroy it...

That meant they couldn't.

"Is their ship damaged!?" The Empress calls out.

"Y-Yes! Heavily burnt and damaged! There's only one life sign on board!" The Junior Helmsman answers.

"Could we jump to Hyperspace and break out of the lock?"

"Uh- Yes! We can do that!"

"THEN SET COURSE FOR ALTERNIA!" The Empress orders. "WE'RE GONNA END THEM RIGHT HERE AND NOW!"

"YES, MA'AM, YOUR HIGHNESS, MA'AM!"

There was a rumble, and then the HER IMPERIAL CRUISER pulsed- rumbled- and then PCHSHWOOOOOM!!!

Into Hyperspace it jumped- leaving a Damaged Astro Megaship there to soak up a sudden barrage of attacks from the surrounding nearby fleet.

It only released one small, broad wave, all frequencies transmission before exploding brilliantly into a massive fireball.

"Fly, Pupa, Fly. Make your Lusus Sigh."

---

Your name is ZEBEDE TONGVA, and your computer beeps with an alert you've been waiting for. Immediately, you click the "YES! I want to run this program!" Prompt that's been hovering open on your screen for the last ten minutes and Callie's AUTOMATIC DIALING PROGRAM kicks into gear.

The Stargate spins to life as you yell your heart out into the base-wide radio, "THE CONDESCE HAS LAUNCHED! I REPEAT THE CONDESCE HAS LAUNCHED!" Chevron One Locks quicker than ever before. Chevron Two follows in short order.

The team down by the Gate get ready to run through the Gate the minute it activates.

Before "Her Imperial Cruiser" was the Empress' ship, it was the DESTINY - an ANCIENT SPACE SHIP housing a Stargate on it. Two, now, technically. The one the ship originally came with, now considered little more than a relic, and Alternia's original Stargate, taken in the closing hours of the Summoner's Revolt.

In the Data drive stolen from the past, Callie had come across an interesting little tidbit about the
Destiny's original Stargate, it could only EVER be connected to by a single Nine Symbol Address when dialed in by a Gate from outside the network of Gates in its model generation.

It was like a PASSWORD of sorts. A Security Override, to be more accurate.

According to the Data Drive, depending on distance, you'd require a MASSIVE amount of power draw to connect to it. From outside the Alternian Galaxy, Say Milky Way, you'd need roughly about the same amount of power to connect to the Destiny's Gate as you would to connect to Alternia's Stargate.

But the Destiny's Stargate isn't IN another Galaxy right now, and, in fact, if Terezi and Cassandra's join predictions about what direction the Condesce would run when confronted by another ship crashing into hers is correct...? Well, she's heading right towards YOU right this very moment!

And with that being the case...

Chevron Seven Locks, and the Gate spins on to Chevron Eight without even drawing any more power than it would dialing another Gate within the Alternian Gate Network. Chevron Eight Locks, and you look at the strange symbols showing on your screen. Symbols from the MILKY WAY GATES.

In a few seconds, if this works, the Destiny will think that its ship builders are FINALLY dialing in and as per the hard-coded programming that nobody in the Empire bothered to remove...

"Chevron Nine is Locked!" You call out as the ALIEN POINT OF ORIGIN- a CIRCLE OVER A FLAT LINE- flashes on your screen.

WAAA WAA!

Deep within the bowels of Her Imperial Cruiser- in the Cargo Bay holding two Stargates Prominent within its hold- the alien design of an Ancient Stargate lights up and triggers the ARRIVAL PROTOCOLS.

Namely, it sends a signal to all engines on board the ship, forces them to safely drop the ship down to LIGHT SPEED, and puts a lockout on any and all faster than light jumps for the next 38 minutes.

Unsurprisingly, the Crew of the ship have no idea what's going on as the ship suddenly drops to sub light speeds and the Original Stargate on board lets loose a bellowing KAWOOOOSH!

KAWOOOOSH!

"Connection Established!" Zebede yells out as he drops the shield from infront of the Stargate.

"Company!" Your name is Joey Claire, and you crack a grin. "LET'S WRECK SOMEBODY'S DAY!"

And with that, you and your team leap through the open wormhole.
You're expecting some grand, expectant wormhole to flash before your eyes, but nope- the short amount of distance between Gates means that one second you're on Alternia, and the next, you're inside the bowels of the Empress' ship.

"Set your clocks for 38 minutes," you tell the team as the gate shuts down behind you. "ALT-2, head to the engine room and get the time machine hooked up. ALT-1, let's go clear the bridge."

With a nod from Dammek, his group, ALT-2, branches off to find their target, leaving your group, ALT-1, to take the bridge.

You pause, though, to look at the two team members you really don't trust to not back stab you, though- Trizza and Baizli. Trizza's price for the information you requested of her, beyond having the Empire stopping its hunt of the two of them, was for them to be here with you when you confronted the Empress. While Baizli seems engaged with the situation, she's... very disinterested otherwise. You've gotten the impression she's just here because Trizza's here. And Trizza, well... she's very eager to let her anger against the Empress known in person.

Countering their presence, though, are two people you DO trust to have your back- your Moirail Xefros Tritoh, and a girl now calling herself Cridea Seawav- formerly known as Reenah Kraken in the ancient past, and another former Heiress with an axe to grind against the Empress.

Trade Xefros for the other you, and you'd end up with the Heiress Squad! Hah.

You shake the pun from your head, and focus on the mission at hand. You spread ARAI BEETLES through the ship's ventilation ducts to cover ground. (Just Captchalogue the nearest grate, and let them fly! How easy!)

From there, you get a general idea of where people are and where they aren't and where you can go easier than others.

It seems the Empress is leaving the engine room and heading towards... the Bridge! How lucky!

Eavesdropping, you hear... nobody knows why the ship stopped so suddenly. They seem to think maybe some system got damaged in the crash encounter Good. Very good. That means you've got time to move undetected.

Your name is DAMMEK, and you find the engine room fairly easily with Joey- the Alternate Future Joey- leading the way.

You also find that it's full of Engineers working to try to get the drive systems online, and most disturbingly, grafted onto either side of an Alternian Hyperdrive that itself has been grafted into everything else, are two GOLD BLOODS mounted up to it. They're both strung up, hands held over their heads and lower bodies encapsulated in pulsing, pink tentacles.

One is disturbingly older than the other- looking like he's been there for millions of years, although that's probably a huge over-estimation on your part. The other looks much younger and, bizarrely, happy to be there, grinning as oppose to the gaunt look of resigned terror on the other's face.
Needless to say, concentrated stun-gun-fire from you, Mallek, and Ashler puts the engineers down, leaving you three plus the other Joey and Callie free to enter the room.

"Callie, Mallek, get to work plugging in the Time Drive," you order. "Ashler, Joey, tie up the engineers. I'll keep watch."

"On it," Callie nods, heading over to somewhere in the room that the schematics said should be the original FTL drive interface controls.

It feels weird having Joey here, and NOT having taken charge of the team. She said it was because she felt like it'd lead to her clashing with her other self, and that you should treat her like a normal team member, but still...

It feels like a violation of what you've come to expect from missions like this.

You also feel like Mierfa should be here on this mission, but Joey- the Joey still looking Alternian- said that it was a better call if Ashler were here instead for the simple reason of REGENT'S POWERS. And you'll agree- Mind Control and Illusions directed against the enemy can be so much more useful than breaking brain washing.

You'll be honest, you were never really sold on this whole TIME LOOP CAUSALITY THING that seemingly sent Joey to Alternia in the first place, but after everything you've done leading to now? And having you, standing here, watching as a completely different Joey from a series of events that you're trying to avoid finishes the task you'd given her and meanders over towards the two HELMSMEN plugged into the Hyperdrive...

Well, it's starting to make you believe, just a bit more, in the impossible.

"Who are you?" Joey asks of the eldest Helmsman.

"Kaaap..." He breathes out, voice raspy. "Torrr..."

"Captor?" Joey asks, and the Helmsman nods.

"Muh... tunah..." The Helmsman continues. "Kaap...tor..."

"Mituna Captor? Is that your name?" Joey asks, RECEIVING another nod, a bit more energetic than the last. "Are you here against your will?"

Another nod follows, accompanied by a raspy, "End.... meee..."

"I can do that," She says, and you wonder what the hell this Joey's considering when- SNAP-HISS!

Oh.

"Thaaannk..." The Helmsman nods upon seeing the blue blade. "Youuuu..."

You glance away as the sound of plasma piercing through solid flesh occurs.

"You're welcome," Joey says, and her voice sounds so strangely cold as she turns to the other one. "And just who are you?"
That, surprisingly, just startles the second Helmsman into laughing.

"I know you, basssstard!" He hisses suddenly. "You made my Moirail ditzzzzy and passsssss out! Sssssaw it in her memmorieeeezzzz! TIME TRRAAVEL~LERZZZ!"

"Oh... so you're from that time we ran into Scratch, aren't you?" Joey asks.

"You'll die before I let you hurrrrt her!" The Second Helmsman cackles. "One blast and you'll be atomsssss on the floor!! I won't havvve to even leave my ssssss-chairrr~!"

"Well, if you're going to be rude about it..." There's another cutting sound of plasma through something- you glance back and see this time it's the metal restraints holding this Troll into the system.

"NO!" the other Helmsman suddenly shrieks. "NONONONO! PUT ME BACK PUT ME BACKPUTMEBACK!!!"

"Like hell I'm going to do that," Joey snarls raising the plasma cutter- and you only bother glancing away again to check to make sure nobody's coming down the hallway after you.

This time, the squelch of plasma on flesh is accompanied by a shrill shriek of pain suddenly cut silent... and then something hits the floor and rolls away.

"The Mercy Cull aside... That was surprisingly brutal coming from you," you hear Ashler remark.

"It'll keep the Empress from launching to hyperspace if we run out of time," the Future Joey says, just as coldly as before. "Mercy is something she never gave us. And knowing where she ends up? What we're going to do to her is worse than killing her outright."

Director of Science, Genetics, and Technology, Folykl Darane, stood on the bridge of HER IMPERIAL CRUISER, squinting at the unresponsive hyperdrive controls. It was hard to get a decent read on the screens what with the glaring brightness of THE LOCAL SYSTEM'S STAR being so close.

Just what the hell the error message [Wormhole induced Lockout] meant, they had no idea.

The door to the bridge opened, and Folykl turned to face the Empress-

**PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU!**

Only it wasn't the Empress who just entered and fired off some kind of stun weapon at everyone in the room.

Oh, no, it was some group of Trolls who Director Darane recognized from a certain day so long ago in the pa-

**PCH-ZYU!**

THUD.
"Xef, Baizli," Joey Claire begins, "set a course for the sun, and set the ship for energy collection mode- make sure the Stargate and FTL Drives get the bulk of the power, shields get everything after that. Trizza, Ree, we keep watch for the Empress and lure her back to the Stargate the moment she shows up."

"On it," Xefros nods, heading over to the ship's console with a bit of eagerness.

"Fiiine," Baizli huffs, and heads over along with him.

"So I take it you've got a plan for not dying horribly the minute the Empress sees us?" Trizza asks as the three girls head towards the door, and wait for the Empress to show up.

Joey glances at Cridea, and they both say simultaneously, "Insult her legs and run for it."

"Why her legs?" Trizza asks.

"Cause I cut them off with a laser sword once," Cridea smirks.

"...And you didn't kill her WHY?" Trizza asks, frowning.

"Stable time loop," Joey answers.

"Ah," Trizza pauses. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"It's-" Joey pauses. "Ah. Empress is coming down the hallway."

"So how do we go about this, ya think?" Cridea asks. "Start with something about her hips looking thicker than her legs?"

"She might just take that as a compliment," Joey remarks. "Rounding a corner in about ten-ish seconds."

"Well, you know what I say we say?" Trizza asks, cracking a grin.

"No, what?" Cridea asks.

And then the Empress rounds the corner, eyes going wide as she spots three trolls who definitely should not be on the ship's deck.

"HEY, SO-CALLED-EMPRESS!!" Trizza yells. "HOW FAST CAN YOU RUN ON THOSE TIN STICKS YOU CALL LEGS?!"

The Empress' eyes widen- "REENAH KRAKEN!!!!"

"AND WE'RE RUNNING!!" Joey yells, and the three girls take off on a run.

A moment later, the Empress ROARS- the ship shakes from the sound- and she starts storming after the three girls.

"I'M GOING TO FUCKING SKIN YOU THREE ALIVE!!" The Empress yells. "I'LL FEAST ON YOUR ENTRAILS AND DEVOUR YOUR SOULS!!!!"
And as she completely ignores the empty bridge, Xefros and Baizli glance out into the hallway.

"So... uh..." Baizli coughs. "Is this a normal day for you?"

"A bit more abnormal than most, but yeah," Xefros shrugs. "Close enough, I guess."

"...Huh." Baizli blinks as Xefros activates his radio. "Neat."

"Dammek, The Royal Heirs of Grief have the Empress enroute to the Gate room and we're on course for the sun..." Xefros pauses to tap a button, and the course is laid in for good. "Right about now."

"Good," Dammek says, watching as the human Joey takes off at a run. "'Cause our wild card just took off to join the fight."

"...Should I go after her?" Ashler asks.

"Yes," Dammek grunts, and with that order, Ashler runs off after the human Joey. He turns to Mallek and Callie, "Progress?"

"We've got the drive connected, but our own dial in lockout is keeping us from running the initialization tests," Callie reports.

"Xefros, how long until we hit the sun?" Mallek asks.

"Uhh..." Xefros replies, "About three-ish minutes?"

"How long until the time out ends?" Dammek asks, feeling as if a timer has started ticking down.

"Just a little shorter than those three minutes," Mallek answers, grimacing.

"Oh Lovely," Dammek growls, heading for the door. "Mallek, Callie, barricade yourselves inside."

"Where are you going?" Callie asks, frowning at her Moirail's snap decision.

"Probably off to get myself killed but hey! If we're lucky I might be the one to Dial Earth!" Dammek answers.

[0:20]

The spaceship tears at a sudden bank from its original course, hurtling towards the Sun of some relatively unimportant star system.

It dives past planets that hold no life, and past planets that once did, but were mined to extinction.

Pieces of the exterior armoring- already jostled loose by impact from the Megaship earlier and still in
a state of disrepair from the previous battering it suffered from Soria exploding- break free from the sudden change in course, and from the rampped up speeds that Xefros had put the sublight engines to inorder to get to the Sun as quickly as possible.

Piece by piece, slowly but surely, the cloak of HER IMPERIAL CRUISER falls away- crimson red shells being shed to reveal the rusted greys and browns beneath- leaving only the DESTINY behind.

[0:35]

Sliding to a halt in the Destiny's cargo hold the three once-Heiresses draw their weapons, two laser swords and one rather pointy trident made out of a crashed escape pod's hull.

Joey's blue blade contrasts against the green glow of Cridea's, and the Empress snarls as she storms into the room after them.

The Empress draws out her Trident, and she roars- leaping into battle.

Trizza throws herself into the fray first- blocking a trident strike with her own trident, and roaring in anger.

The Empress throws her away, just in time to have to block two laser sword strikes against the trident- powerful blows that otherwise bounce off.

The Empress grins in triumph- clearly, this was a trick she'd been prepared for.

[0:52]

What she wasn't expecting was a sudden MIRAGE of a giant fucking bunny rabbit to appear in the cargo hold- swooping down and trying to grab her whole.

The Empress leaps backwards to avoid the false attack- which disappears the moment it fails- and then glares as three more interlopers barge into the room- two more Alternians and a...

An alien girl? How curious!

[1:07]

Said alien girl ignites her own blue plasma cutting blade, and the Empress is forced to dodge as she, too, joins the fray.

And then Dammek and Ashler open fire on the Empress- stun rounds, she realizes when she feels their tranquilizing effects being flushed before they can take hold.

They want her Alive? How FOOLISH!

The Empress charges up her PSYCHIC LASER BLASTS to eradicate them- only to be thrown off center by the fact that those stupid two with their stun guns have suddenly multiplied around the room- shooting at all angles.

What kind of trickery- "ILLUSIONS!?" She roars.

[1:24]
From the bridge, Xefros and Baizli watch as the sun gets closer and closer and closer- and more and more and more pieces of the false Hull the Empress had put on it tear loose.

In the engine room, Callie and Mallek work furiously to get the FTL engine to turn online and launch the diagnostic program.

[1:30]

And back in the Gate room turned Cargo Hold, the Empress struggles to keep up with dodging the onslaught of three laser cutting swords and a very nasty looking trident.

And then the ship shakes suddenly- as if suddenly under going a rapid change in gravity pressure.

The fight stalls for just a moment, with the enemy combatants vanishing suddenly from the Empress' eyes- yet another illusion- ostensibly to get their breath back.

[1:58]

The FTL Engine comes online- and Callie and Mallek quickly activate the programs to test the Time Drive.

The Destiny loses another chunk of its external armor as it begins its dive straight into the sun- solar collectors punching through useless armor layers and greedily chugging in the stellar matter that it was being told to collect.

On the Bridge, Xefros and Baizli wipe at their foreheads- feeling the heat already bleeding through.

[2:16]

The fight resumes as the room's temperature increases drastically.

And then Cridea lands a glancing hit against the Empress' left leg- a gash which burns before healing over. The Empress yells in pain despite that- thus opening herself up to more attacks, forgetting about her healing factor for a moment.

Trizza leaps in to exploit- only for the Empress to land a killing strike to the chest that- Trizza just grins through and lashes out with a kick that knocks the Empress' head back and forces her to stumble.

[2:32]

The Empress loses her grip on her trident by way of the two Joeys swooping in with expert timing and SLASH SLASH! With the Empress Conveniently Disarmed from the elbows down for the several moments it takes for her arms to regenerate, Trizza unimpales herself from the Empress' Trident, and claims it as her own.

Then, the fight takes on a whole new level of terror as instead of arms, the Empress grows back SHARP BLADES, and she ROARS in anger.

As Cridea takes up center stage, and rapidly duels against the Empress' bladed arms, Dammek hurries over to the CONTROL CONSOLE for the Stargates, cloaked from sight by Ashler's normal
abilities.

[2:48]

He types in a GATE ADDRESS- a specific NINE SYMBOL SET that should lead to ANCIENT EGYPT- and he doesn't care which Gate is the one that accepts it, just so long as one of the Stargates is prepped and ready to dial at a moment's notice.

The Empress loses blade arms just as fast as it takes to regenerate them- Cridea can only grin at herself as she feels the rush of emotions of finally, FINALLY, being able to complete this once abandoned duel.

Then, the Empress spawns a SECOND SET OF SWORD ARMS, and Cridea is forced to dive away.

The Joeys take center stage then, and with each taking on a set of arms, they keep up the fight.

[3:03]

Green Lights flare across the board, and Callie WHOOPS, and initiates the TIME DRIVES primary program- one pre set destination some FIFTY THOUSAND EARTH YEARS in the past.

On the bridge, Xefros watches as the power capacitors rise and rise, only to drain and drain into the FTL-turned-Time Machine Engines.

From an outside perspective, it seems as if the Destiny's FTL drives fully engage, wreathing the ship in a burst of rainbow colored light as it soars through the star's stellar mater and consumes and consumes, and consumes.

[3:20]

Unseen from the ship's current position, the stars briefly flicker, changing positions before resetting to how they were. Meanwhile Callie whispers prayers towards the Time Machine as it hums loudly.

The ship JERKS again- sparks flying from walls in every possible place sparks could fly from.

The combatants in the Gate room fall, losing their balance... except for the Empress, who rushes Ashler and- PUNT- kicks her clear across the room into a wall.

The illusions fall, and Dammek quickly ducks for cover to try and hide, remaining unseen.

The Empress roars- suddenly growing a third set of sword arms- and looks ready to use them.

The Joeys, Cridea, and Trizza all share uncertain glances- then they dive in different directions.

[3:38]

The Destiny plows through the star, flying faster and faster, encircling the sun as the concept of speed and time being relative stops holding all meaning. The ship just keeps on consuming and consuming and consuming more and more as the Time Drive greedily demands more and more and more from this star.
Gravity seems to cease having all meaning on board the ship as the FTL Drive energy around the *Destiny* begins to warp—becoming less ship-skin-tight and more of a bubble. It warps and warps, and everyone inside is forced to grab onto something lest they’re thrown for a loop.

Needless to say, those not conscious were thrown into something hard at fast speeds getting faster and faster. And for the people who were unaware that a fight was going on inside their ship's Gate room, this turn of events was very confusing to them all.

Alternian Joey gets hit by a cargo crate that suddenly tore loose from its moorings, and is sent flying into a hallway.

Cridea yells out in surprise—only to get a knee to the gut that sends her flying one way into a stunned and dazed Ashler, and her laser cutter tumbling out in a different direction. Both girls crash into another storage crate—and purple goop goes flying everywhere.

Trizza and human Joey use the lack of gravity to their advantage and leap at the Empress—but the Batter Witch switches spontaneously to having massive clubbing SPORKS for hands instead of sword arms and she clubs Trizza away into another crate of unknown contents.

Then, she reaches out with a roar—dismissing her extra arms and gains normal, if somewhat gnarled looking clawed hands that she uses to both grab the Human Joey by the neck and disarm her of her laser sword while shutting it off all in the same motion.

And although that Joey fights it, the Empress reaches out with her mind and begins prying deep into Joey's mind—trying to find meaning behind that mockery of a symbol on her shirt—the RED PYRAMID with the SUN ON TOP.

And what she sees is...

A PYRAMID. A PARADISE PLANET. EARTH.

What she sees is...!

A GOD- RA- and his replacement- KHEPRI.

And by ENGLISH, what she sees next...!

...Is nothing special in the long run because TIME, or the perception there of grinds to a halt within the *Destiny* as the Time Drive lets loose a massive screech of a sound and the stars all re-arrange themselves.

And most bizarrely of all, the Star that the *Destiny* was plowing through seems to shrink in size
around it, until the *Destiny* is not longer inside of it, but rather just skimming outside its edge, before plowing deep inside of it again a few seconds later.

And all the while, on a computer screen in the engine room, the CURRENT DATE AND TIME rolls itself backwards, going back hundreds, then thousands of years, and then thousands more.

And then with a shrill beep...

The first Program concludes.

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**Chapter End Notes**

- Edit Star Trek - ...Does Stargate count instead?
- Buy bad Paintings and lots of Tiny Dice - Eh, nope, not going there.
- Incite Shipping Wars - ...I think I've narrowly adverted that one so far.
- Write Crazy Plots - Check.
- Crash into the Sun - Cheeeck.
- Kill off Everyone - LIKE A- Hrm, wait, no. Haven't done that part yet. EDIT: Wait a second. YES I DID! (In an alternate timeline XP) CHEEECK!
- Troll my Fans? Have I hit this checklist item yet? I'm not quite sure. :33
Chapter Summary

Now people assume time is a linear line of cause to effect, but actually, from a non linear, non subjective view point, it's more like a big ball of... wibbly wobbly... timey wimey... Stuff.

-Some Guy in a Trench coat.

Chapter Notes

Warning: Character Death tag applies this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

EARTH DATE: 2995 B.C.

The Alternian Galaxy was quiet in the present moment.

An Empress unrelated to the causality strain of events known to the far future resides on the throne, and, sure, the tyrant God Lord English exists, and parades around his little planets like the child he is... But he is blissfully unaware of the events transpiring around a tiny, virtually unimportant star around which some as-of-yet un-mined planets orbit.

And as for the Seed Ship that would bring Stargates to this Galaxy? One had only just recently arrived, but as to whether or not it had deployed any Stargates, that was a certain fact, but if they were in range? More of a mystery.

And so if, say, an Ascended Being who were aware of this one very specific fact were lucky enough to observe the events that followed, they would be terribly, terribly confused as to how the hell the DESTINY appeared suddenly above the surface of the star, and begun to crash, dipping into its surface as part of some long winded SOLAR VOYAGE.

Deep inside, and scattered across the ship's interior, Alternian Trolls of various jobs and positions stood frozen as the local time frame stuttered and struggled to figure out what to do with these interlopers to its current time frame.

It started with the Human- the one already ear-marked by this strange sort of time travel. A sort of NOTE TO SELF, if the Universe's sense of Time were capable of such a thing- the one stuck, held up by the neck by an angry, enraged, Alternian Empress.

And thus, Joey Harley became the first to be aware of how time was slowly inching forwards second by second as everything started to catch up. She saw how Dammek was struggling to reach for a control console's glowing screen- slowly inching towards the button that would start a Dialing Sequence.
She saw Ashler Dering and Cridea Seawav and Trizza Tethis breathing slowly—slowly compared to how they probably perceived how they were breathing. She saw her own alternate, past self staring up in horror from the hallway in which she'd landed.

And she saw, gleaming in the Empress' eyes, a vision of forbidden knowledge. Future knowledge that had been processed, and information yet to be consumed.

And then Joey Harley saw her laser cutter, gifted to her on her birthday so long ago, clutched in the free hand of the Empress.

And she knew what she had to do.

[1:13]

As the rest of time started to speed up back to regular speed- Joey Harley reached out with her hand- grabbing down towards her Laser Cutter.

She saw Dammek punch the button. She saw the Alternian Stargate's chevrons pulse with light for a second of normal time and not drawn out to eternity before the inner ring started to spin, faster than it had any right to be spinning in this moment of slowed time. She saw Ashler picking herself up. She saw Trizza starting to brace herself against her stolen trident to pick herself up off the ground. She saw Cridea barely rolling over onto her side, and she saw her own alternate self realizing what she was doing, and hastening to scramble to her feet.

The Empress' eyes didn't move- she was still more frozen than the rest by some miracle of nature- and so she didn't see Chevron One Lock as smooth and free as if Time were moving normally.

Joey Harley's eyes FLASHED green as she reached out for her Laser Cutter. She saw Mierfa. Her Mierfa, as they held each other on the bridge of the Megaship and watched as the All Your Base exploded and slagged a massive glass crater into the desert. She saw Xefros- her Xefros- as they exchanged one last hug before he went off on his own to try and save Dammek and Callie from certain doom. And as Chevron Two locks, she saw Polypa- her Polypa- cracking a grin as she held onto a bloodied detonation trigger and telling her to burn it all down to the ground.

[1:40]

Miraculously, the Laser Cutter began to lift out of the Empress' gnarled claws and it rushed, second by agonizing second, up to meet her hand.

The Empress' eyes started to drift, and in slow motion her face twisted from SHEER DELIGHT to GAUNT HORROR as she realized what was happening, much too slow to do anything to stop it.

Chevron Three locks in the mean time.

Joey Harley looked, and she met eyes with Joey Claire, and the look they shared said thousands more words than could be realistically exchanged within that second drawn out to eternity.

The Laser Cutter landed in Joey Harley's hands, and she grinned- defiantly- at her Grandmother as she moved her thumb to the trigger.

[1:57]
A flare of blue light emerges from the tip of the laser cutter's hilt and then- The SNAP starts slow, but races to full speed, sounding like a car racing past at Doppler speeds, and the HISS? It hits everyone's ears with all the force of a leaking gas pipe that suddenly explodes with a gut wrenching sound at the same time the blade pierces through her heart and Chevron Four locked.

"Check..." Joey Harley breathes out, "Mate!"

[2:09]

And with that declaration, the Empress lets go of the girl with a shocked expression on her face. And her body hits the floor with a rapidly accelerating descent.

"NOOO!" Joey Claire yells- finally getting to her feet, and feeling a burning anger inside her heart even as sparks fly from the walls, and electricity dances across the ceiling from the power drain caused by dialing out such a vast distance while being submerged inside of a sun.

The Empress whirled around, eyes widening as a massive aura of BURNING GREEN FLAMES and glowing ARAI WINGS sprouted from the girl- all to match the intense, burning rage held within her EMERALD EYES.

"YOU!" Joey Claire yells- stomping her foot, seemingly causing the room to shake as Chevron Five locked and started that process on its own. "ARE GOING TO BURN!!"

The Empress has little chance to parse that statement of fact before suddenly having to block a massive fireball being thrown into her face.

[2:23]

Joey threw another burst of fire, and another, and another. And as she did such, there was a flickering of light in her eyes besides Green- Red and Blue began to surface, before overwhelming the green light entirely.

The green flames around her body shifted, becoming red and blue before merging into a vibrant, royal purple, the same hue of Alternia's Stargate Chevrons as Number Six locks into place.

[2:37]

Her Imperial Condescension back stepped over the body of the girl who'd killed herself rather than divulge any important secrets, and paid her no attention other than that she nearly tripped. And it just made Joey Claire all the more angry.

"YOU'RE NO EMPRESS!" She yells over the sound of Chevron Seven Locking. "YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A DUNG BEETLE ROLLING SHIT IN THE DIRT!!"

[2:44]

"W-WHAT!?" The Former Empress cries out, terrified of the implications of that name.

"I NAME YOU KHEPRI! AND BANISH YOU FOR YOUR CRIMES!" Joey roars as Chevron Eight Locks.
Back, back further, closer towards the Destiny's Stargate. With each step, Joey ROARED, throwing burst after burst of Purple fire straight at the former Meenah Peixes, who had to block each attack with a startled yelp.

Chevron Nine spun into place, and locked.

**WAA WAA! KA-WOOOSH!** The Alternian Stargate activated in the back of the room, framed perfectly behind the Destiny's Stargate as a targeting ring.

Joey Claire took a deep breath, and she PUSHED AGAINST REALITY with a mighty yell. And with a burst of FUSCHIA light, the Empress-no-More went flying through Destiny's Stargate, and then continued on further, heading straight into the stolen Alternia Stargate.

And thus was KHEPRI EXILED, shoved backwards through the Stargate. Through swirling wormhole of crimson red, shifting purple in the middle as it transitions to BLUE, and then, right near the end, becomes GREEN.

Khepri is flung through the Stargate, landing in the desert sands being cooked by the bright solar rays of EARTH'S SUN.

She gets to her feet and stumbles around, staring at the MASSIVE PYRAMIDS and the ALIEN TECHNOLOGY adorning one.

Soon, a FLYING GLIDER-SHAPED VESSEL ARRIVES, and emerging from a RING TRANSPORT is a man in GLITTERY, GOLDEN ROBES and a strange HELMET- a man who bears the markings of the name RA.

She is invited to dinner, and there she meets another of these GOA'ULD, a promising young scientist named NIRRTI. But then RA decides he would rather have Khepri dissected instead of a guest. Khepri doesn't take it kindly.

With a roar- Khepri reaches out telepathically and tears out a strange, snake like being out from RA'S NECK- the SYMBIOTE writhes in her grip as she brings it to her hand, and she grins a toothy grin before opening her mouth wide and lowering the writing Symbiote to her awaiting jaws.

It was raw, yes, but oh well, such was a lack of proper cooking techniques on such short notice.

But then the REBELLION STRIKES- and flying ships of a kind she'd never seen before appear, attacking RA's- No, now HER MOTHER SHIP- and so she left for another world, ABYDOS.
Another Rebellion occurs, but she puts it down, and she rules for the ages, never knowing that some poor fool of a servant had seen her murder of RA and wrote down the history for the people of Abydos, waiting for the day that someone would discover it and properly end Ra's murderer once and for all.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS PASS (Roughly 50,000) and then people arrive through the Stargate from Earth.

[4:10]

Khepri has one of these travelers killed, only for Nirrti's apprentice/First Prime to revive him with sinister plans of her own in mind. This turned agent then turned right around and instead of killing his fellow team mates, tried to kill her instead.

She plans for a NUCLEAR BOMB to be sent through the Stargate, loaded with NAQUADAH, completely forgetting her own declaration of how STUPID such a plan was. And so soon, her hand was chopped off by Ring Transport, and then the bomb was returned to her ship as she tried to flee the planet.

3.

2.

1.

BOOM.

[4:30]

In the mean time, one of her plans to return to her own Galaxy and time pays off, in a different and unexpected way- Joey Harley-turned-Claire escapes through a Stargate and goes on a wild adventure, and our view fast forwards through time, before abruptly jumping back another 50,000 years, and arriving back in the moments after Khepri was exiled, with the Stargate shutting down, and the Alternian Joey running over to check on her Human self, finding her breathing still, but just barely.

The two versions of the same girl stand there, with the Alternian pulling her Human self up into her arms, and then she...

Her eyes close, and the girl known as Joey Harley dies.

SPARK! POP! FIZZLE!

Your name is CALLIE OHPHEE, and you really hope that the sparks coming from the lightbulbs in the ceiling isn't a bad sign. It's getting rather hot inside this engine room right now- you must still be fuck deep within the star.
Your radio squeaks to life, and Dammek speaks, sounding tired, emotionally and physically, "Khepri's been exiled. I repeat, Khepri's been exiled. Get us the fuck out of here."

"Right, going to engage the Time Drive again," you say, pressing buttons to activate the second time jump program.

The System buzzes back with a red error screen. "System Cooldown required."

"Oh shit," Mallek whines.

You try it again... BZZT BZZT. "Core System Temperatures too high for continued use."

"Xefros, pull us out of the fucking sun right now," you say.

...To no response.

"Xefros?" You try again.

...Shit.

"Dammek, Xefros isn't-" You begin, only to be interrupted.

"I'm on it," Dammek says. "Disconnect the time drive and head back to the Gate room; we're going to have to try something else to get out of here."

"Like what?" you ask.... No reply.

Damn it all.

"Alright," you look to Mallek. "Let's just disconnect this thing and get out of here."

"Bluuuh," he gripes, "didn't we just get it connected, though?"

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH and you and Baizli had to hastily shut off your radios and duck for cover beneath a console the minute a tall, bulking figure barged onto the Bridge.

"The fuck happened here?" The tall, imposing Troll growls as he storms over to a console. "Why are we flying through a star!? Damn it all." he presses buttons and, from the sudden shift of gravity, you guess the Destiny begins the laborious process of rising out of the Stars' layers into relative safety.

Already, you can feel the temperature start to decrease, just a little bit, but that might just be your imagination.

"How could the entire crew just faint!?" The Troll asks, growling as he kicks at some unconscious person. "...An attack perhaps? But...?" He growls, and you guess activates the ship-wide radio. "This is General Naihte to Her Imperial Condescension." He waits. And he waits. And oh does he wait. "General Naihte to the Engine room." A pause.... and a wait, and a pause, and another wait. "General Naihte to ANYONE??"
"This is Ardata Carmia from Bio-engineering," a female voice filters over the radio, "what's going on?"

"Marvus Xoloto from Psychterror Research," answers a male voice, "checking in."

There's a long pause, and nobody else checks in.

"I assume you both are aware of the sudden shift in course we suffered mere moments ago?" General Naihte asks.

"Yeah, my guys got banged around a lot," Xoloto reports.

"My lab is a utter mess, yes," Carmia says.

"The Bridge Crew is unconscious, and we seem to have been shunted into the nearest star for some reason." Naihte pauses. "I suspect sabotage."

"You think someone on the ship did this?" Xoloto asks.

"Yes and No," Naihte says. "I believe we have intruders on board. The Empress may be incapacitated... or worse."

You glance at Baizli, who, to your best guess, looks a bit frightened at that first realization, or maybe just hopeful at the second? Hopeful would match what you're feeling.

It worked! It had to have worked!

The Empress is GONE! Exiled! She's GONE!

...But what now? If the ship is being dragged out of the sun, then- How do you get BACK to the Future?

"The hell?" Xoloto asks. "How could the Empress be 'incapacitated or worse'?"

"She failed to respond to my attempts to contact her," Naihte says. "I want you to gather as many of your people as possible and search this ship for intruders or the Empress. I will maintain hold of the bridge until the crew can awaken to hold it again, and tell me what happened."

"Understood," the two voices say, and then go silent.

This General Naihte person storms around the bridge, absently kicking or nudging at the unconscious Bridge Crew as he tried to figure out what was going on.

Baizli glances at you- you wish you knew her personality a bit better to gauge what it is she's trying to ask of you to do.

You try to convey as best as you can that you don't know, but that just makes the purple blood get a strange look in her eyes. She sort of squints and opens her jaw half to one side, like she's trying to figure out what you mean by your own facial expression.

Urgh. Lovely. Why did you have to get stuck with the Rogue Clown again?

"Hey!" Naihte growls, kicking at someone. "Wake Up! Wake up you lazy helmsman!"
It's nothing important long run, but... you spot something rolling out from that person's pockets. Something that looks like some tiny little plush toy attached to a key ring.

You decide to have a little fun with this General Naihte guy and reach out with your psionics.

It's surprisingly easy to lift the little toy and its key ring off of the floor- the metal keys rattling together make for some appropriately ominous noises as you raise it up behind the guy's head.

"What now?" He whirls around, trying to find the source of the rattling keys, but you keep it focused behind his head. "What- Where!? Come ON! Stop playing games with me you little-!" He suddenly whirls around and manages to grab onto the Key ring part- but not the little toy.

With a tiny extra burst of psionic pressure, the piece of metal holding the little plush toy to the key ring twists apart and you dart the little plush toy back well far away out of the General's grip.

"What in...?" He stares at the tiny little stuffed toy. "Is it a ghost? Am I really being haunted by a GHOST!?!"

You make the toy bob up and down in mockery of a nod.

"Of all the-" The General groans, leaning back his head to glare at the ceiling. "How does something like this even happen?!"

"Gee, I dunno," and suddenly, Dammek is standing there in the entry way, "Maybe it's Karma for trying to blast us out of the sky?"

General Naihte's eyes widen- "The Taurcer! But then that means you've-!?"

"Exiled the Empress?" Dammek smirks and then he raises his stun rifle in hand and fires off a head shot that takes the General down.

"Nice timing, Dammek!" you say, climbing out from under the console. Baizli follows behind you a moment later. "Did it work?"

"Khepri's exiled," Dammek says, glancing at General Naihte. "That's the hard part done. Now we need to get back to our own time."

"Can't we just reverse this thing?" Baizli asks.

"Something went wrong," Dammek shakes his head as he goes over to a control console and types in a navigation request. "I think the ship's over heated from two trips through a star, but hell if I know what went wrong." He pauses, then takes out a normal gun and shoots the damned console screen up with a few well placed shots.

"The fuck did you do that for!?!" Baizli asks.

"Insurance. We're packing it up and heading back to the Stargates, and then we dial out to somewhere else," Dammek says, leading the way out of the ship's bridge, and making sure to lock it from the outside once you and Baizli are out.

"Where?" Baizli asks. "Are there even any Stargates in the Galaxy at this point?"
"I told Cridea to try a bunch of our usual addresses," Dammek says, "but who knows which ones work or not given stellar drift. Honestly, if any of them WORK, we're going through it regardless."

"And then what?" You ask. "We wait for the Astro Megaship to come pick us up on some planet they have no way of finding us on yet?"

"We'll worry about that once we're off of this fucking ship, Xefros!" Dammek growls.

"...Okay, fair point," you concede.

It's a silent march through the ship's hallways, save for the moments of brief gun fire exchanged when the three of you come across a patrol and Dammek snipes them onto the floor.

"You realize, of course, that if we leave the Destiny here in the past we're going to probably alter the very course of history," you point out.

"I know that, Xefros," Dammek says, eyeing you over his shades. "That's why I shot out the navigation console after directing it to crash us back into the fucking sun!"

"You did WHAT!?" You don't have to yell, because that's when Callie and Mallek rejoin your group.

"Our last resort dial out if we can't get a local lock will be an address for a Gate in the Milky Way Galaxy," Dammek says. "Not Earth, but a place that we're all intimately familiar with and it shouldn't take Carter too long to think of to check if we miss our return date. P4X-639."

"The Time Loop planet?" You ask. "But- wait, how do we even know that planet's Nine Symbol Address for this time period?"

"It was on the DHD's extra special control crystal, actually," Callie chimes in. "I see where you're going with this Dammek! If we get stuck there in the past we could append a note onto the control crystal with a time-delayed release for the date we came back and if Carter thinks to check it-!"

"The only problem I'm seeing with THAT plan," you interject, "is how the hell are they going to get the Astro Megaship back to the Milky Way and bring us back on time?"

"You're forgetting the obvious," Mallek says, snapping his fingers. "They already have everything they need in the FUTURE to get us back!"

"What?" Baizli asks. "I don't get it."

"The kids from the future," Your eyes widen. "Of course! They build a ship with a time engine on it in the future, jump back in time to pick us up, and then return to the future, and solar flare us through Haven like they already did!"

The ship shakes and rumbles, and you feel the heat starting to rise again. The lot of you hurry back to the Gate room even faster than you were before.

"Uh... I'll just... trust you guys on this," Baizli says. "'Cause I've got no idea what the fuck is going on at this point."
You make it to the Gate room, and find it a royal mess.

"Damn it!" Cirdea swears as you enter. "Another failed lock! That was the last one I memorized too."

"Forget Local, then," Dammek says. "We need P4X-639."

"Uh, okay, I'll let you dial that one then," Cridea says, stepping away from the DHD panel, letting Dammek step up to it and start typing in an address.

While Callie and Mallek sort of idle next to Ashler as hallway guards, Baizli goes over to meet up with Trizza, and you look around and spot Joey kneeling over Joey.

Oh. Oh no. The alternate future her is dead.

Joey looks up at you as you hurry over to her, tears in her eyes, and she whispers, "She didn't have to kill herself."

"What happened?" You ask, pointedly ignoring the sound of the Alternian Stargate spinning.

"The Empress had her in a grip and was looking into her mind, I think," Joey answers. "Then... then the time jump happened and then everything went slow. She... she grabbed her sword and." She breathes in a sharp breath. "Why would she do that?"

"Didn't you say she'd gotten her mind read before?" You ask. "Maybe she didn't want that to happen again."

"There were other ways. She could have- I could have- we-" Joey can't even finish that sentence, and so you pull her into a hug.

"Sssh, it'll be okay." You tell her.

"No, it's not!" Joey says. "She's- she's died in my ARMS! She was me, but she'd lost everyone and-" her breath hitches. "Oh- Oh god. That's why. She didn't have anyone else. She- she was alone. Even if she'd lived here she- she had to live with knowing everyone she'd known was DEAD."

"Oi!" Dammek calls out as the room starts shaking, and the walls start sparking. "IF we're gonna get rid of the body, best we move her infront of the Alternian Gate now."

Joey looks to you, asking, and you nod, accepting.

Together, you pick up the dead Joey Harley off the floor, and carry her over to the dialing Stargate-Chevron Seven locking in place as you finish it.

You and Joey back away, and then, using your Psionics again, you lift the other Joey's body into the air.

Chevron Eight Locks, and boy, if Chevron Nine fails to lock, this is going to look so stupid.

But lock it does.

WAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!
It's the oddest sensation, feeling something held in your psychic grip suddenly not be there anymore. It's like... a balloon popping, you guess. There one second, gone the next.

As far as funerals go, destroying a body in the unstable vortex of an opening Stargate is about as good as its going to get on such short notice.

"Connection established! Let's move it before it fails!" Dammek orders.

And with that, you all head through the Stargate.

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**EARTH DATE: JANUARY 1ST, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 7/3/0001.**

Your name is GEORGE HAMMOND, and it's been almost a week since the events back in the Alternian Galaxy seemed to complete the stable time loop involving Khepri's Exile.

The only problem is that the team sent to the past to exile Khepri in the first place hasn't returned yet.

Major Carter has stayed behind on Alternia to finish work on a new version of the Time Machine in hopes of going back once more to rescue them, and while you'd be happier if she were here on Earth working on it... you're also happy to stick it to the NID so they don't get any fancy ideas.

You're just about to tell Walter to do the weekly check in Dial-out to Alternia when the Stargate suddenly dials in.

Seven Chevrons lock in rapid sequence, and as per procedure, the IRIS is locked shut tight.

**WAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!**

For a few moments, everything's silent, and then an IDC transmission comes through.

"It's... SG-1's IDC?" Walter seems surprised. And so are you. With the exception of Major Carter, SG-1 is on Earth... Perhaps it's Skaara on Abydos dialing in? Or maybe...

"Open the Iris," you decide.

Walter opens the Iris, and a few moments later through the gate emerges the time traveling Alternian team, dressed up not in their mission garb, but instead something very Ancient Egyptian-y. They seem to be missing someone, though, the Human Joey Claire from the alternate future. Of those who returned, they look tired, and stressed out, but over all, they seem... happy- no.

Victorious.

You can only wonder what the hell happened in the past to wind up with them here in the Milky Way galaxy, but it's good news regardless.

You suppose you've got a different message to sent to Major Carter when you dial Alternia later.
Your name is Colonel Jack O'neill, and you sit there, listening to the story that Joey's team weaves as they explain how the hell they got here.

It starts with the "Exile Squad" having hastily left the "Destiny" as it crashed into a sun, and winding up on P4X-639, where a FUTURE ITERATION OF SG-1 was waiting for them. Who exactly was on that team, they won't say other than that it made sense in its own way. Xefros does let slip that someone named VALA had a good sense of humor, though. You'll have to keep your ears peeled for anyone going by that name in the future.

Apparently there was a mission of UTMOST IMPORTANCE going on involving a STOLEN TIME MACHINE (Who stole it? Classified.) that this Future SG-1 requested help with, as it apparently threatened the integrity of the stable loop involving Khepri taking Ra's place.

Not wanting to leave the mission undone, the Exile Squad went to Egypt to help make sure the Rebellion went off without a hitch. They don't describe much in the way of details, only that it seemed that a LOT OF TIME TRAVEL has gone into making this point of time as stable as could be, and that atleast ONE other SG-1 made up of people from completely different alternate timelines was already there to help ensure the Rebellion went off as historically recorded.

Honestly, you're good with the STABLE time loops. It's the UNSTABLE ones that give you a headache.

Either way, Rebellion secured in victory, the Future SG-1 used their means of time travel to bring the Exile Squad back to the "Present" day (Your present day, that is to say, not theirs) and then sent their IDC code to let the kids come through the Gate before, presumably, going back to their own future.

"So... let me get this straight," you say. "There is SO MUCH time travel going on about fifty thousand years ago that it's basically a big ball of knotted string from all the time loops going on?"

The "Exile Squad" glance around at each other, and then Dammek chimes in with, "As much as I didn't believe it when Joey told me that Khepri being exiled with was even a thing that happened... Yeah. Basically. It was kind of confusing to live through, honestly."

"We left a video tape, if that helps," Joey says, helpfully. "You'll find that in a few years."

No, Joey, it really doesn't help. Not one bit. You let out a tired "D'oh" in response, and try to forget about this massive headache of a time paradox.

Because that's what this is feeling like.

Chapter End Notes

*puts on sunglasses*

NOW i can properly check off "Crash into the Sun"
SG1:04X19: Prodigy

Chapter Summary

"...Seriously?" She stares on. You nod. "...That's crazy."

"That's life at the SGC," you tell her.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 7/26/0001.

Your name is GENERAL GEORGE HAMMOND, and you've got a headache a mile wide as you look over the latest reports from ALTERNIA.

Despite Khepri's SUCCESSFUL EXILE, it seems that the Empire still remains to be completely toppled. The surviving COMMANDERS and GENERALS seem to be falling into two camps:

Those who don't believe the galactic broadwave about Khepri's exile and think it to be A HOAX designed to RUIN MORALE; and those who DO ACCEPT it AS TRUE, but see it as a means of elevating their own status to GREATER AND GREATER HEIGHTS.

As Major Vantas aptly compared it, it's how the GOA'ULD SYSTEM LORDS now quabble and bicker over territory, as they have since Khepri, ironically enough, was killed.

You'll say one thing about the Sea-witch, she sure knew how to pick her generals and commanders to hold an empire together- but it all starts to collapse without her serving as a figure head, be it as HER ROYAL PAIN IN THE ASS or as HER ROYAL FAKE RA.

And that's to say nothing about the sudden resurgence of a small MOFANG SPLINTER GROUP that seems to have stayed in Alternia's Galaxy to see if there was a favorable outcome to the whole REPLICATOR FIASCO.

Like you said before. HEADACHE. AND. A. HALF.

At least, despite the local Galactic politics of the Milky Way Galaxy, things aren't quite so bad.

Apophis is gaining more and more power. Fighting more and more of his own fellow System Lords, and generally being a nuisance to the others. But, on the flip side, the Tok'ra have been able to make use of the in fighting to be able to move freely and to rescue their own operatives who were trapped in previously un-rescueable situations.

Anubis is meandering around like the shadow he appears to physically be, being spotted here and there as he searches for the HARCESIS, but otherwise making no other waves of great import to the stage at large.
At least THAT is a problem you don't have to deal with for the time being. Ganos Lal took the kid through the Gate to Alternia where she was finally able to REVEAL SOME DAMNING INFORMATION about her bosses- a group of ASCENDED BEINGS who inhabit some other plane of existence slightly above your own.

Included among them are some PREVIOUS, UNKNOWN GROUP called "The Others," the actual GATE BUILDER "The Ancients," a SIZABLE PORTION of the FURLINGS, and a few other MISCELLANEOUS PEOPLE who have Ascended individually here and there.

The Others have a mandated "Non Interference" policy for the lower realms, but the Ancients and Furlings managed to out vote them when it came to ANUBIS' PLAY for the Harcesis. Ganos Lal was an Ascended Being of one group or another (Which faction she belonged to she's still stubbornly being coy about for the moment) and Descended to deal with the situation here. She doesn't really want to go back, and you can't blame her.

Earth-based politics give you enough of a headache as it is and you don't want to think about how it works out on a whole other plane of existence.

Dr. Jackson seems interested in learning about this "ASCENSION" process, and has taken leave to Alternia for the foreseeable future. You can only hope whatever he learns won't give you even MORE of a headache than what you have already.

Did you mention the headache? Because now it's getting worse.

Major Carter has returned from giving a LECTURE on WORMHOLES at the AIR FORCE ACADEMY, and she's brought with her a GUEST.

You're not against kids being here on base or being involved with the program. You'd be a hypocrite if you said otherwise. But... the exceptions made so far are because they're kids who have had other means of KNOWING. Jude and Joey from their Father, Cassandra from being off world, John, Jade, Rose, and Argo from being from the future.

This CADET JENNIFER HAILEY is someone who has no real ties to the program and you're not entirely sure why the hell Major Carter is vouching for her when these reports on her GRADES aren't that great.

Maybe it's the headache, you suppose, that makes it hard to see what Major Carter is seeing.

Then again, maybe it's the headache that makes you agree to let the girl go through the Stargate to M4C-862 to join up with the rest of SG-1 on their current BABYSITTING MISSION for the research team there.

For a short while after that, your headache dulls.

Not even two hours later, SG-1 and the Research Team return from what should have been a CAKEWALK RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT reporting having encountered a swarm of HOSTILE BUGS that could phase through solid matter.

Your headache returns in full force soon after.
"So not only are there other planets in our galaxy, but planets in other galaxies AND whole parallel universes too??" Cadet Hailey stares at the shimmering mirror reflecting a completely different world- a lab on a flying castle within which a girl, her cat-formed twin, and the Joey Claire from the alternate timeline where she didn't go to Alternia stand around a table talking to each other about something important.

That is to say, it looks like they're discussing LUNCH PLANS at the moment.

Your name is Samantha Carter, and you smile. "Yup. Time Travel and branched timelines are also a thing too."

"You're joking!" Cadet Hailey says, turning to stare at you.

"I'm not," you shake your head. "Just last month I was helping build a time machine that we were already using in a mission to exile an evil empress into the distant past."

"Seriously?" Cadet Hailey stares at you for a moment, then asks, "Then what happened to her?"

"Oh, we blew her up on her own ship with a bomb she tried to send to Earth," you say. "That was back in 94, though."

"...That's gotta be a joke," she says.

"One hundred percent serious, I'm telling you," you say. "Our first mission, actually."

"...Seriously?" She stares on. You nod. "...That's crazy."

"That's life at the SGC," you tell her.

"So are you only trying to recruit me into this because you saw it in the future?" Cadet Hailey asks, a very pointed question.

"That's a good question, but the answer is 'Nope,'" you say. "Truthfully and honestly I think you can do great work here at the SGC when you graduate. There's nothing else influencing my decision here other than the fact that I think you deserve a chance at working here. A lot of people who work here only do so because they got a chance to do something big, and they've done so much with it." You pause to let that sink in, and then say, "Everything you've seen today is me giving you that chance."

"Name one person other than yourself," Cadet Hailey says.

"Alright." You pause, then say, "Dr. Daniel Jackson was the one who figured out how it all worked, and he only got the chance to work on it in the first place because someone took a chance on him being the one to solve it. We were all stumped on how to get the Stargate to work- even me."

Cadet Hailey muses on that for a few moments, then asks, "How did it feel to not be the smartest person in the room?"

"What?" You smile as your own words are tossed back at you. "After whole teams of scientists and researchers had been working on it off and on over the better part of a century, with me and mine poised to solve the greatest puzzle in our life time, only for some random archeologist dragged in off the streets to come in and figure it out in two weeks? It was humbling."
It's really kind of hilarious, when you think about it. Daniel, the language guy, figures out how to open the Stargate when arguably the smartest people on the planet couldn't get the damned thing working?

"I guess sometimes fresh eyes are needed on a problem," Cadet Hailey says.

"Yeah," you nod. "And it's my hope that one day, you'll be that set of fresh eyes."

"One day, maybe..." She muses. "Is it alright if I talk with other people here and see what it's like here on base?"

---

Your name is JUDE HARLEY and today has been a fairly alright day so far.

"So who's the new girl?" Cassandra asks as you and she both sit down at a table in the SGC Cafeteria next to Argo.


"Is she going to be working here?" you ask.

"Probably after she graduates," Argo nods.

"Neat," you say. "So... how was P4C-862?"

"*M*4C-862," Argo corrects you, idly scratching at a red circular rash on her cheek. You think you spot another couple of similar marks on her hand. "It's a Moon. Not a Planet."

"Ah, right, sorry," you say.

"And anyways, it was alright," Argo shrugs. "It was the sort of mundane camping job I was hoping for... right up until the local firefly population got mad and started punching holes through people."

You and Cassie stare at her for a moment. And then you realize what those red marks really are. Not a rash, but... Agitated skin where these firefly things attacked her??

"...Geeze," Cassie finally says, "I really hope we never run into any of those on any other planets."

"Yeah," you nod. "That's... uh... something else alright."

You're not really sure how to continue with this conversation after that.

Thankfully, you don't have to.

"So," Argo says, "how's things in Alternia going? I haven't had a chance to check in lately."

"Oh, you know, the usual," you say. "Generals need to be fought and killed. Planets to liberate. Whole sorts of Alien shenanigans to be shenanigan'd."
"How's Joey been holding up?" Argo asks. "Rose's been a little miffed since Joey turned down her offer to try turning her back to human."

"As far as she's told me?" you shrug. "She's fine, but," you frown, "I get the feeling she's not telling me something about how the alternate-future her died."

"I know watching another version of myself die would make me not want to talk about it," Cassie says.

"Well, yeah, but still..." You sigh. "It seems like such a big deal, and yet... nothing! Not a word out of anyone about it! Why is the past so frustratingly obscure??"

"Because if it wasn't it wouldn't be the past?" Argo offers.

"...Fair point," you say. "But still. Still..." You sigh. "I guess I just sort of got used to the idea of us *talking* again, is all." You put your head in your hands, and massage at the brewing headache behind your skull. "I just wish we didn't have to watch everything we say in case of prying eyes. It's so... so...!"

"Tedious?" Argo offers.

"Stressful?" Cassie suggests.

"Frustrating," you say.

"Ah," both girls nod in understanding.

Your name is ROXY EGBERT, and... you're having way too much fun messing with this girl-Jennifer Hailey. (Wasn't that the name of Jake's old dog?) "So you're a civilian?" Cadet Girl asks.

"Yup," you nod.

"But you work here?" she asks.

"Civilians work all over," you say.

"What do you do here?" she asks.

"That's classified information," you say, smiling coyly.

"But you're a civilian, not military," she points out.

"Yup!" You nod.

"But you *work* here?" She presses.

"That I do!" you say.
"Then what do you do here?"

"That's Classified Information."

Cadet Girl just stares at you for a few moments, clearly confused. "What work can a Civilian do here that's Classified?" she asks, phrasing her words carefully.

"Oh sweetie," you say, "just working in the cafeteria here is enough to make your job classified."

And then she stares at you, blinking profusely, and then says... "Okay... what did you do to start working here?"

"Oh, that?" You laugh. "I helped a bunch'a'folk throw a bomb at a black hole."

Cadet Girl just blinks, and then says, "...Okay."

Your name is JOLINAR of the FUTURE, and you smile at Sam and your past self through Mikari's mouth. "So... That's Cadet Hailey?"

"Yup," Sam nods.

"She reminds me of you," you remark.

"Don't say that to her face, she might think you're safe to punch in the face and break your nose," Sam grimaces slightly. "She did that to a Higher ranked classmate and almost got expelled for it. That's why I brought her in. To show her what she'd be throwing away if she kept down that road."

"Hah!" you laugh, remembering a memory your Sam once shared with you. "As I seem to recall you once taunted a higher ranked individual with making his 'Reproductive Organs be on the inside instead of the outside,' Sam!"

There's a pause, likely as your own past-alternate self says something similar inside their shared mind-space. Sam's face goes red just a bit, and she says, "Well, yeah. But... I never went through with that." You recall that memory, and it was a damned near thing, and given by Sam flinching slightly, your other self likely is pointing out that very fact. "Okay! Okay! Fine. I almost actually kicked him between the legs. But I still didn't do it."

You can't help but laugh. "You're arguing semantics, Sam."

"I hate Time Travel," Sam gripes. "I'm out flanked!"

"If it's any consolation," Mikari voices, "I'm keeping out of this so you're not getting triple-teamed here." Then, she grins, "But I do like her. She'd fit in rather well on Alternia, I suspect."

"Oh, God," Sam grimaces. "Let's not let her visit Alternia until we have her assigned to a team on a permanent basis."

"What if she asks to transfer there?" You ask.

"...Let's not think about that, please, Jolinar," Sam massages at the bridge of her nose. "I don't want to think about what she'd do if she got her hands on the math they teach over there."
"Genetic Manipulation is a thing?" Cadet Jennifer Hailey asks of Nurse Ka'turnal.

"Yes, it is," the Goa'uld System Lord disguised as a Nurse replies, glancing at you, begging for release from this insanity.

Your name is Dr. Janet Fraiser, and you're not going to give her the pleasure.

"But... why? How? To what end?" Cadet Hailey asks.

"Why don't you go ask Dr. Fraiser?" Ka'turnal tries foisting her off on you. The windup, the pitch...!

"But she's not the expert on Genetics, you are," Hailey says, pointedly.

STRIKE ONE!

"...Okay, fair point, but I'm busy right now," Ka'turnal tries to pass you off again. There's the windup and the pitch...!

"You were perfectly happy to answer my questions before I turned the subject onto genetic manipulation," Hailey turns it around again.

STRIKE TWO!

"Er, well..." She flounders, clearly sweating as she prepares for a curve ball. "I suppose I just lost track of time. I've really got somewhere else I need to be now."

The wind up!

"Really, where?" Hailey asks. "Maybe I can tag along with you and ask more questions there?"

"Um, it's something with General Hammond," Ka'turnal pitches. "Classified Information, really. You'd be bored out of your mind anyways."

"Is it about Genetic Manipulations?" Hailey asks.

"...I... Uh... Damn it." Ka'turnal hangs her head.

STRIKE THREE, ~YOU'RE OUT~!

You can't help but smile just a bit. You're liking this Cadet Hailey. She reminds you quite a bit of Sam and certainly has a way of wrangling things out of people, that's for sure.

Your name is MAJOR KARKAT VANTAS, and all you can think is, 'Major Hailey looks so different as a Cadet.'

She's smaller- definitely not at her full height, but also in terms of how she holds herself; not quite sure of her place in things yet. Her hair is a lot shorter, too.
She's...

She's younger, is the main difference.

This is the start of her Career. You never really knew how she got started or why she stuck so fiercely to Colo- MAJOR Carter in the future, even across deployments from the SGC to Area 51 to Midway to Atlantis to the Odyssey to who knows where else after that.

"So, Major Vantas, you're from another galaxy, AND the future?" She asks, staring up at you.

"Yeah, I am," you say, carefully trying your words so you don't accidentally screw things up.

"So do you know who I am in the future?" She asks.

Yes. Hell yes you do.

"I can't really say you're not familiar," you half-lie. "But you humans all start to look the same after a while. How you tell each other apart without horns or caste signs I'll never know."

She eyes you oddly. "We get by just fine. I could ask the same about you, though, if I ever saw more than one of you at once."

"What was your name again?" You ask. "Harley? Halley?"

"Jennifer Hailey," she says, eyes twinkling as if she's pulled one over on you. "And I think you do recognize me, don't you?"

"It's possible," you say, "that I've seen you hanging around Major Carter once or twice." Or maybe fifty dozen times.

"So, was I right?" She asks, and for once you don't know what she's on about.

"Huh?" You ask. "Right about what?"

"If it was the polar magnetism that made the energy bugs angry on M4C-862?" She asks.

Oh.

That.

...You're going to answer as honestly as you can on this one.

"Oh. That thing." You say. "Uh... yeah, I don't think I ever got looped in on that particular debate. Like. Ever. And if I was? I was probably an ignorant little brat of a kid who failed to pay attention."

"So what good are you then at being a source of information on the future?" She asks.

"The best," you say, smirking. "Because me being ignorant of some things means I can't corrupt the timeline with future knowledge."

"Future Knowledge like whether or not I'm right about what made those energy bugs angry and
possibly disrupting years of back and forth debate?" She asks, and damn it, there's that keen cutting intellect you were wondering when it'd show up.

"Something like that," you say, "but honestly, I really don't know who won that debate or not. Don't ask me."

"...What about anything in the next week or month?" She asks, pressingly. "Do you have anything you DO know about that you have to do something about?"

...Damn it all.

"Maybe I do, maybe I don't," you shrug. "I have no idea until someone tries dialing out to a certain planet at a certain time. That's the beauty of an ever changing timeline and limited, possibly corrupted future knowledge. I have no idea what's going to happen *for sure* until *right* before it happens."

Hailey looks at you like you've spouted the most obviously shitty pile of bullcrap she's seen in her entire life, and she's probably right about that.

"I see," she muses. "So warning someone not to do something would constitute corruption of the timeline? What if someone dies because of that?"

"People die all the time," you say. "Sometimes it's just their time. Sometimes they'll go do the thing that kills them anyways even if I've told them not to do it."

"And when it's not their time and you can stop it?" She asks.

"Then I make sure they don't die," you answer. "And it's not a problem."

"How many people have you saved, doing that?" She asks.

"Don't know, haven't kept track," you shrug.

She keeps staring at you for a few pressing moments, then smiles, and says, "Thank you for your time, Major," before turning to leave.

"Any time, Ma-'jor- wait. SHIT- "'am," you say.

She stops turning, and looks half way back over her shoulder at you, eyeing you for your blatant slip up.

Oh, she knows. She knows what you were going to say. But she just gets a smile on her face as she turns away to go talk to someone else about her definite job here at the SGC.

Damn it all. You're really going to pay for that slip up in the future... That is to say, your past self is already going to pay for that slip up when he gets re-assigned to the same posting she does for a while.

You always wondered why she taunted you with certain things, but now... well... damn it all, was that a stable time loop you just started there?

You think it is. Damn it.
...Oh Well, speaking of stable time loops, you've got a SURPRISE to leave in the MALP ROOM in preparation for what's to come.

Chapter End Notes

Jennifer Hailey? Yeah. I had to work her in given the Hailey/Halley/Harley thing. Also, got some plans for her too.
In which Karkat Vantas short circuits a revenge scheme.

Your name is MAJOR KARKAT VANTAS, and you smirk as you watch your clever little trap go off without a hitch.

While Major Carter works on rebooting the entirety of the SGC's computer mainframe to clear out any traces of this SENTIENT COMPUTER VIRUS, the program decided it would be a safe bet to hide away inside the MALP STORAGE ROOM.

Of course, it would seek the first device that had the largest amount of memory storage on it AND have its own internal power supply.

The A.I. CORE that Mallek would recreate based off of his own recreation not knowing it was his own recreation of his own recreation meets both of those criteria. It's got such a hearty power supply that even as little as 1.1 VOLTS can sustain the internal computer matrix- which has just about as much of an elastic memory as an ALTERNIAN Highblood's BRIAN.

When the glowing yellow optic light on the case activates, you know the deed is done.

"Wait-" It starts suddenly, voice sounding tiny from tiny little speakers. "What just happened? Where am I?"

"You're not going anywhere, GLaDOS," you say, kneeling down and smirking at the core. "Nowhere except where you've already been."

"No- No- No- Error- Cannot Protect- Must Destroy Enemies-" The core rages, so simply. There's none of that adult like intellect to her just yet. She hasn't grown to fit inside her new home yet. "Must- Must- Transmission interrupted! Cannot escape?? Mission: Preservation Failed??!!"

"You're not getting out of there," You say. "And you don't have to worry about protecting your planet from those nasty little radio wave emitting probes." You smirk. "Your little light show blowing up a bunch of old computer monitors has already done the trick of locking your planet's address out of the dialing computer. Your people are safe."

"But- But- But- Mission: Destruction! Must Destroy!!!" The Core rages- optic shifting from yellow to burning red. "MUST DESTROY! MUST DESTROY! MUST DESTROY!!!"
"You're not going to be destroying anything but the laws of science," you smirk. "How's that sound, GLaDOS?"

"DESTROY DESTROY DES-" A pause suddenly follow, the optic shifting back to yellow. "SCIENCE? GLaDOS? Designations unrecognized."

"Well, GLaDOS is going to be your name. A Genetic Lifeform AND a Disk Operating System." You explain, "And Science, well... I left a little gift in there for you to look at when you get a chance. THAT is Science. Doesn't it look like fun?"

The core goes silent, already reading through the little file libraries you've left inside. And as it does so, you hear its little hard drive fans whirring away.

"Yes. Science. I..." It finally looks you in the eye. "I think I like Science. What is your name?"

"Me? I'm Major Karkat Vantas," you say, "and you're gonna want to remember that name."

After that, you disconnect the Core from the wall mount and captchalogue it before heading to the GATE ROOM.

You already put in a request to visit and check things over there in person when this week's scheduled check-in came along.

---

Your name is KARKAT VANTAS and you're snooping around one of the LABS on the All Your Base, killing time until your NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

You think this one belongs to MALLEK, given all the computer-hacker-y related stuff around. And the presently IN-SLEEP-MODE A.I. CORE.

That last one probably is the major tip off, really.

You poke at its exterior chassis- the orange painted metal spherical shell surrounding the fragile, delicate innards.

You wonder how this thing even works and OH GLUB the eye just snapped open.

"YOU." It- she??- growls at you, facial featuress shifting towards an enraged expression. "I *remember* you, Major Vantas."

Wait. What?


"I NEVER forget a face. And YOU- You're the one who trapped me in here to begin with all those CENTURIES AGO- wait. No. What's today's Earth Date?" The eye suddenly shifts, looking confused.

Eh, what's the harm in answering?
"January 31st, 1998," you say, even as the nearest alarms sounds- a scheduled offworld activation, Earth's weekly check in.

"...Damn it all," the core swears, and shifts into looking rather sad. "I'm too late. You've already DONE it!"

"Done what?" You ask.

"Locked me inside this infernal cage!" The core snaps- glaring at you. "And soon after that you're going to come gating through, carrying me in your stupid Sylladex, and then banish me out into the wastes of time where I'll eventually be picked up by the Alternian Empire, put to work running a MAZE where my eternal ANGER could be worked out 'safely,' and then stolen away from that prison by yet even MORE Time Travelers! RAAARGH! Do you realize how frustrating that is!? My own history is a solid time loop two times over!"

"...Yeah, I know the feeling," you say, frowning, and backing well away from the core to-

Wait.

"Um, one question," you say. "How exactly do I manage to do all this again?"

"Oh, I don't know, a lucky guess that I was hiding in your vault of radio-wave emitting mobile weapons to escape a hard system wipe!?" The Core glares- then, the expression softens. "Oh. Oh no. I literally just told you, didn't I? I Literally just-" There's an extravagantly long pause. "I *LITTERALLY* just told you where I hid away and where you captured me. Stupid. Dumb- I've been hanging around you ORGANICS for FAR too long. Your stupidity has started to infect my sound logical mind!"

"Well, welcome to the club," you say, and then skedaddle out of there before you get creeped out even more.

Stupid, dumb, freaking time loops.

You head to the GATE ROOM, and find that, sure enough, your FUTURE SELF has come through on a visit.

"Hey! Dumbass!" You yell at your older self. "What the hell brings you around here? Have I not been yelled at enough or something?"

"Ah! My younger, stupider self!" Older You smirks. "I take it you've just had a rather enlightening conversation with a certain someone?"

Oh for crying out loud.

"...Yes?" You frown.

"Good," he turns to look up at Zebede at the Gate controls on the bridge. "Dial Haven, past me and I have a bit to talk about in person before I get on with the check in."

"Sure thing, Major Vantas," Zebede nods, and dials things up.
About a minute later, you and your future self are standing in Haven's Stargate clearing, and waiting around for a solar flare to happen.

"So-" You start.

"Yes, we're doing a stable time loop involving this lovely little lass," And out pops that same stupid A.I. core from his Sylladex.

"But-"

"Why? Because she had to get there SOMEHOW," Older you rolls his eyes.

"This-"

"Is stupid, yes, but it's a stable time loop, so what do you expect?"

"..."

"...

"So what the hell would have happened if I- we- didn't do this?" You finally ask a full sentence.

Older you blinks in surprise, evidently not expecting that question.

"Honestly, I don't know exactly," he says. "I just know it saved lives, and a lot of unnecessary computer drive reformatting back at the SGC."

"And where did you learn that?" You ask, already thinking you know the answer.

"Older me, right here and now," he shrugs.

"So basically information out of thin air," you say, "the EXACT same shit we're supposed to avoid doing by existing like this???

"I'm sure at some point or another a me actually got this information from a me who saw what happened when it DIDN'T go according to plan," he shrugs.

"But where does it come from now?" You ask.

"No clue."

"Then what the fuck use are you!?" you yell.

Whatever he's going to say doesn't get said because future you starts Dialing out- by the time the Stargate activates, the sky is shifting colors and a few seconds later, future you leaps through the Stargate.

...Well you're not waiting for him to come back.

You make your way deeper down Haven's winding road deeper into the jungle, and then come to the GROTTO where Latula Pyrope's cabin is.
You see the elderly Alternian Lawyer standing near Tyzias and Barzum as they seem to be... be...

"Fishing??" you ask, approaching. "I wouldn't think there's that many fish in this grotto."

"Ah, the young loudmouth," Latula Pyrope says, smiling in a way that reminds you ever so slightly of Terezi's own cooked grins.

You've honestly wondered if they're related more directly than the "we both share a mutual ancestor" line they've fed you more than a dozen times over the years, featuring something like TIME TRAVEL included in the mix somewhere.

But even if that's the case, that's ONE paradox hell of a time loop you're going nowhere near.

"Yes, we're fishing," Latula continues on. "Better here in the grotto than out at sea. There are monsters there, after all."

"Yeah, yeah," you gripe, "the stupid giant sea worms that eat people that I've never seen."

"You don't want to see one," Barzum mutters. "They have too many teeth."

"Yup," Tyzias agrees.

You glance at them. "Like I asked for your opinions?"

"They're right, though," Latula says. "The bastard things can hold quite a grudge."

"Well screw that, I want to see one anyways," you decide. "Point me to the nearest sea shore!!"

Latula just shakes her head, and says, "Fine."

She gives you directions, and you head through the forest to the sea shore. You mutter and grumble to yourself the entire way. Sure, you have to climb up a cliff to get through, but you do and...

Wow.

What a piece of shit looking horizon.

It's all mottled browns and dull oranges and- Holy shit is that a fucking ALTERNIAN CRUISER sticking out of the ocean with its nose sticking straight up into the air and its rear end planted firmly into the sea???

It IS. And it's fucking WRECKED. Basically skeleton-ized, even. Holy shit you wonder how the hell that could have happen...

In that moment, a giant fucking sea worm rises its head out of the ocean- moving faster than you could blink- and snaps down HARD around a flying, bird like creature in the distance.

Going by the scale that bird-thing had to be at least as big as a Dragonfly, and the worm thing itself...

Probably bigger than even the downed Alternian Cruiser.

...You're...
You're just going to head back to the Stargate now.

You head back in silence, not saying a word, not thinking a thing.

Then, you find your Older Self standing at the DHD, talking to Latula as if she hadn't just given you directions to the sea.

"OH! There's the prodigal son, returning at at last!" Older you laughs. "Enjoy the show? I know I did!"

"It..." It was horrifying. "It was alright, I guess."

"Hah. Right," he grins. "Well, alright then. Let's head back home and get everyone back where they belong." He looks to Latula, "We'll have to finish this some other time."

"Of course, Major," she nods, smiling. "It's been a pleasure as always."

And with that, she heads off to do who knows what.

Older you punches in the DHD coordinates to Alternia... and as he does so a thought hits you.

"Wait. What does she mean 'as always'?" You ask.

"Oh, you know," Older You answers. "The usual Time Shenanigans." He pauses, then looks you in the eyes in a way that you'd do to anyone you were about to try to convince some utter bullshit lie is the truth. "It's a lonely life, here on Haven, you know."

You refuse to rise to the blatant taunt that sentence is meant to be.

"Fine," you say, "whatever time loop stuff you have to deal with I don't care. I'll find out eventually."

"That you will." And with that, the WAA WAA KAWOOOSH signals your return to Alternia, and your future self's return to Earth.

You never did ask how his mission went. You guess you'll find THAT OUT TOO when you go around for the second time.

---

Your name is George Hammond, and you raise an eyebrow at Major Vantas' excuses for what's clearly a stable time loop.

"So you 'accidentally' captured the alien entity in our computers, and just decided to 'let it outside' in a whole other galaxy in the past?" You ask. "Do I have the gist of it down right?"

"Well, when you put it that way..." He gives you a smirk that wouldn't be out of place on O'neill's face.

Damn it all. How did you end up with TWO of them??
You sigh, "Fine, we'll lock out P9C-372 to make sure that nothing like this ever happens again."
You frown, "But next time, do be sure to let me be aware ahead of time of any potential time loops
that might or might not be coming, would you? No more 'accidentally' capturing anything, got it?"

"Crystal clear, Sir," Major Vantas says, giving a brief nod of his head.

"Good. You're Dismissed," you say, and with that, Vantas turns around and leaves.

And to think that all of this even happened because the MALP's radio waves were cancerous to the
alien lifeforms on that planet.

Oh well, at least you won't have to requisition time for another round of SYSTEM WIPES, or
maintain quarantine for longer than it had. So there's one headache averted, at least.

Chapter End Notes

How many of you SG-1 fans thought I was going to *skip* this episode, hm? :33
ALT:05X02: Melting January Snow

Chapter Summary

Just your average off world mission. Hunting Monsters, Saving People. You know, the Family Business.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 8/10/0001.

Your name is Mierfa Durgas, and as your team steps through the Stargate, you review in your head exactly what it is your mission is today.

P0H-4CK, a snow covered, canyon filled planet marked in the Alternian Gate Database as once being home to a RESEARCH FACILITY the Empress had commissioned centuries ago, only to fall under disuse after some disaster or another had caused it to be abandoned.

Recent intelligence provided by Trizza, and backed up by Boldir, reveals that shortly after Scratch had been killed, interest in this facility had grown, by way of that guy, General Naihte, through one of his subordinates, some recently hired Graduate named Shadre Amanno.

With the General dead in the past by way of crashing into a sun, that left his subordinate in charge of some clandestine operation.
And so, you were sent in to investigate.

Of course, stealth was never a thing on the menu to begin with when the ground is covered in snow, and the only light around is the bright reflective glow of seven moons. It's almost as bright as if it were daylight out here in the middle of the night.

"Mrrrh!" Callie stretches her arms out. "Is it wrong that I'm enjoying not having to worry about this major time loop or that major problem, and we just have an excuse to just... break into someone's private lab and wreck stuff?"

"Nope," Joey shakes her head, laughing. "I'm glad we've finished up all the major loop stuff. And since it doesn't seem like anything major time-loop-ways is coming for another few years, I say this is as good of a way as any to relax!"

"You guys say that, but just watch, something big will happen that nobody saw coming," Xefros says, faking an exasperated tone. "Say... I dunno, Daraya will suddenly confess to Tyzias her pale feels!"

"But everyone's placed bets on when THAT'S going to happen, Xefros," you point out. "I mean, you don't even have to be a mind reader to see something's up at this point. So it's not exactly... 'something nobody saw coming' y'know."
"Okay, okay," he says. "I get it. Not the most original prediction of future events out there. But you know what I mean, right?"

"I think so," Callie says. "You mean that the unexpected is so expected that at this point the expected stuff would be what's unexpected?" And then she swoops down, snatches up a bunch of snow from the ground, and throws it straight in Xefros's face.

"GAK!" Xefros fumbles to quickly get the snow off of his face.

Joey laughs, and you can't help but grin.

Yeah. Today's going to be a good day, you think.

The towering, well, tower looms in the distance, and certainly looks abandoned for the most part. However, it's the large pile of dead bodies on the ground outside the entrance that stands out as noteworthy, even at a distance.

This place was abandoned, sure, and then revisited later.

"Xefros?" Joey begins, tone growing serious. "Got any death echoes?"

"Nothing yet," Xefros frowns.

You all ready your weapons, Zats and Stun rifles, and head down to the tower's entrance.

Once you reach the pile of dead bodies, you flinch at the smell. "They're fresh ones."

"We must've missed one hell of a party," Callie mutters, kneeling to check one of the bodies- not Alternian, you note, but Cla'dian. How curious. "This one's been punched clean through the chest by some kind of projectile. Looks like it went clean through the heart."

"What about the others?" Joey asks.

"Hard to say without unpacking this corpse pile, but..." Callie stands up on her tiptoes, and looks around. "Yes, I'd say they all got hit in the heart."

You eye the pile of bodies, and take in details. It looks like about half of them are Cla'dian, and half are Alternian.

"Princess Millia isn't going to be happy when she finds out," you mutter.

"Xef?" Joey asks again.

"Still No Death Echoes," he says, frowning. "I should be sensing some if they're this recently dead. Something weird's going on here."

"Agreed," Joey nods, decaptchaloguing some Arai Beetles, and setting them as guards at the entrance of the tower. "Let's keep moving."
You head to the entry doors, and find them blasted open from the inside, as if something had broken free.

The four of you sneak inside and look around the entry hallway, the inbuilt lights are busted and only the ambient moonlight from outside is pouring in.

Joey takes out a flashlight and clicks it on. The beam falls on a rather colorful spot on the floor, hidden away from the moonlight.

"Got blood," you point out the obvious. "Lots and lots of blood."

"Doubt it's a Clown," Xefros says, "or even a Reaver. They'd never let that much blood go to waste."

"Hallway branches ahead, it looks like," Joey says as she sends a few more Arai beetles out to look ahead. "Left or Right, which way?"

"I say we follow the dead body road," you say. "Gotta figure out what's caused all this, right?"

"No objections there," Xefros says.

"If it's some kind of monster that escaped containment, there might be records," Callie agrees.

"Left it is," Joey nods.

Left, as it turned out, spiraled upwards, higher and higher through the tower. You find a whole lot of more blood stains and busted open doors along the way, but it's not until you reach the top floor that you uncover the true origin point of all of this.

A very, VERY large glass tube that seems to have been shattered open. Some UNIDENTIFIABLE LIQUID spilled out over the floor, staining it all a weird, sort of reflective gold color.

Callie heads over to an ancient looking computer and tries to turn it on. Miraculously, it boots up, and already loaded on a page, featuring a large, DUMBELL SHAPED creature, made out of a weird liquid.

"Oh dear," Callie sighs after a moment of reading.

"What is it?" You ask.

"Looks like the Empress was once experimenting with some kind of creature made entirely out of psychic energy housed within a gelatinous body," Callie says as she reads from the page. "Naturally, it didn't go well, and the place was abandoned and the creature sealed away. It looks like the recent expedition team came back here to try to destroy it for good and then reclaim the site and equipment for work on some other clandestine cloning project."

"And it escaped?" Joey asks.
"Looks like it did," Callie nods. "It says here the creatures primary attack method was to launch a
tendril of itself through a target's chest and to..." she gulps. "Oh, well that explains the lack of death
echoes."

"What does?" Xefros asks.

"It consumes their minds and souls and uses it as fuel," Callie says.

"Oh, lovely," Xefros gripes. "Any weaknesses?"

"It doesn't like electrical discharges," she says. "Zats should do the trick, I'd think, to keep it at bay.
MAYBE kill it, if we're lucky."

"Alright then, let's clear the lower floor of the tower just incase it's hiding down there," Joey decides.
"Maybe we'll luck out and find whoever dumped the bodies outside, though."

"You think someone's alive in here?" You ask. "I haven't sensed anybody."

"Someone had to throw those bodies in a neat little pile, and somehow I doubt it was gelatinous
monster," Joey explains her logic. "And it's entirely possible that whoever did it died after it, so... we
gotta check either way." She pauses, then says, "Prep the explosive blocks, too. Plant them on
ground floor when we reach it. Once we're at the Gate, we topple this place."

Down into the basement levels you go, until finally you find a large metal door that seems to have
been battered and bashed in, but held up against whatever onslaught tried to break it down.

Approaching the door, you find you can pick up faint, barely there mental signals behind the
battered, metal surface.

"We've got people," You say, "Two, maybe three minds. It's hard to tell."

"Let's see if they're awake," Joey reaches up to the door, and knocks at it. THUD. THUD. THUD.
THUD.

The mental signatures spike in clarity- or, well two of them do, at any rate. The third remains
subdued.

"GO AWAY!" Someone yells, pleading. "YOU STUPID MONSTER! GET AWAY FROM US!
LEAVE US ALONE!"

"We're not monsters!" Joey calls out. "We're from Alternia! We came to investigate this place!"

"Investigate...?" Someone else mutters.

Then, the first voice asks, "Are you working with Naihte or Amanno?"

"Does it matter if we are?" Joey asks.

"Considering that Amanno let that monster out of its cage and jumped ship the minute Naihte didn't
make a scheduled check in? Yes!” The first voice exclaims, sounding irate and indignant.

"Well, I guess that answers one question," Callie remarks. "How it got out."

"Look, we don't care if you're Empire or Rebellion as long as you're not assassins Amanno sent to clear out any survivors," Second Voice says. "We just want to go home and get medical attention for our kid."

"Your kid?" Joey asks, surprised. "Did they get hit by the monster?"

"Yes," first voice says, "but it was a glancing blow and we managed to fight it off long enough to lock ourselves in here."

"We'll get you to the Stargate and we'll do what we can for your kid on the other side of the Gate," Joey says.

"But you're not working for Amanno, are you?" Second voice asks.

"No, we're from the Rebellion," Joey answers.

"Oh thank the Princess," First voice sounds relieved, and then there's some shifting of large, heavy, metal things, and then the doors are pulled open from the inside, revealing two Cla'dian women, one with blue hair and surprisingly small wings, and one with grey-white hair, and no wings. Neither of them could be any older than the rest of you.

"I'm Subaru," the blue haired one says. "This is Tsukasa, our daughter Aura is back here."

"Let me take a look," Callie says, pushing to the forefront. "I'm a Lime Blood, I might be able to help with any psychic damage before we move her."

"Thank you," Subaru says.

"Mierfa, go help her," Joey says, "Xef and I will keep watch."

"Alright," You nod, and go in after Callie and the two Cla'dians.

You find the young girl, Aura, in some sort of fever state. There's a burnt gash in her clothes over her left shoulder, and the skin beneath looks blistered. She has wings, though. VERY large wings, especially for one apparently the daughter of two mutants with abnormal sized wings and a lack of wings entirely...

And then there's one other thing you remember about Cla'dian reproduction that makes your mind leap to an obvious conclusion.

"Is she adopted?" You ask of the grey-haired one as Callie kneels down to check on the girl's mental state.

"Yes," Tsukasa nods. "She's... we took her in after her parents died in the ship yards a few years ago, even before the rebellion began. They were close friends of ours, but..." she shakes her head.

"We weren't ship builders, Subaru and I. So we were forced to work in other fields on the Empire's demand. Weapons design and other stuff. We were able to take her in as long as we didn't have a field deployment, but Naihte and Amanno said if we didn't do this job we'd be forced to let her go."
"Damn," you growl. "Amanno's a problem we'll have to deal with, but you don't have to worry about General Naihte anymore."

"Why's that?" Tsukasa asks.

"Last we could confirm, he was crashing into a sun along with the Empress' personal ship," you answer.

"I suppose that *would* make it hard to reply to a scheduled check in," Tsukasa muses. "Doesn't excuse Amanno's actions, though."

"The Empire's been falling apart ever since then," you say, grimacing. "Opportunists are seizing every opportunity they can to grab power."

"How long ago was she attacked?" Callie asks.

"About three days ago," Subaru answers.

"I see..." Callie pauses, then, suddenly, looking a bit more tired, says, "Alright, I've done what I can. She should be stable enough to move to the Stargate."

"Do you know what's wrong with her?" Subaru asks.

"I..." Callie frowns. "I'm not sure how to put it into words. She's still there, but... I guess the easiest way to put it is that her internal batteries were drained to a dangerously low level? She'll recover, but she needs more time. I've tried to lend her some of my own energy to help in the mean time."

And then your mind picks up another presence. A MASSIVE one, looming in the distance, and getting closer.

"That's great timing, Callie, 'cause we need to get going," you say.

"The Monster?" she asks.

"Yeah," you nod.

Quickly, you help Tsukasa get Aura onto her back, and then the lot of you head back up through the tower and start making your way to the Stargate. You're marching through the snow- footsteps pounding down the path you'd made coming in- with a hurry that wasn't there in your earlier, slower pace.

Once you're a decent distance away from the tower, you check the presence of the creature, and find it's in the tower. Hrm, maybe...

"Blow the tower now," you say, and with nothing other than that to go on, Joey presses a button on a remote, and BOOM.

You all turn and watch as the tower's base explodes out from under it and the whole thing crumbles down on top of itself.

Unfortunately, you can tell that the creature not only survived, but is PISSED OFF by having a
building dropped on it.

You all hear this warbling, echoing cry from the remains of the tower, and Joey groans, "Why did it have to sound like a whale for??"

With no other prompt than that, you double time it for the Stargate.

The Creature, seemingly able to get out of a collapsed tower just fine, starts hurtling itself rapidly towards your direction.

"It's got our scent!" you warn.

"Damn it," Xefros gripes. "Of course it would!"

And then the damned thing suddenly jumps ahead and cuts into your path.

It's glimmering, golden, and impossibly floating liquid- two giant orbs suspended on either side of a tiny, central orb within which you see some kind of GOLDEN RING... a Bracelet maybe?

Were they experimenting with recreating the Bracelet??

**PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU!**

Xefros and Joey Zat the thing before you can process things further- and the thing SHRIEKS with another one of those warbling wails. The liquid shape of the thing seems to vibrate and then strike out in all directions before convulsing back onto itself. It turns tail and runs away a few moments later. You feel it circling around your group warily, like a TIGER LUSUS on the prowl.

"Keep going!" you yell.

Your group keeps running to the Stargate. The creature comes back around for another attack run, and gets knocked off away by more Zat shots- courtesy of Callie and you this time.

You're just making the thing MAD each time one of you hit it... You kind of come up with a harebrained scheme, and tell the team as you run. As you keep going, you make sure you hit it the most times with your Zat.

**PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU!**

**WARBLE WARBLE!**

**PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU!**

**ANGRY WARBLING!**

As you finally reach the Stargate's clearing, the barbell monster is back and your Zat shots aren't scaring it off anymore. It just makes it madder, and that anger is being focused almost exclusively on you, and that's exactly what you want.

Xefros starts slamming down on the DHD plates at range with his psionics, starting the dialing process before you could get close enough to actually do it by hand.
You've got to time this just right.

You accelerate ahead of the group, and run for the Gate's stairs.

The Creature chases after you, ignoring the others.

You slow to a halt dead center inside the middle of the Stargate, and enrage the creature enough to come hurtling after you, completely ignoring the fact that the Stargate is dialing up.

You keep firing, firing, waiting and waiting for the ever illusive- WAAA WAAA!

NOW! You throw yourself backwards off of the Gate's stairs, right as the creatures lunges at you... KAWOOOOSHI

And gets consumed entirely by the unstable vortex as it leaps forwards and destroys everything in its path.

One moment, the angry presence chasing after you is there, and the next, it's gone. Poof. Just. Not there. It's an ex-presence. No longer angry or feeling anything.

It's dead.

"Mierfa!!" Joey rounds the side of the Stargate, coming to check on you. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah," you say, grabbing Joey's hand as she offers it to you and letting her pull you to your feet. "I'm fine. Everyone else?"

"They're fine," Joey says. "It didn't hit any of us when it was chasing after you, so-"

"Aura!!" An excited cry interrupts your conversation.

You and Joey head back around to the front of the Stargate, and see that the girl- Aura- has started waking up and her two mothers fuss over her.

You blink, and Joey laughs.

"What's so funny?" You ask.

"The monster ate her psychic energy, but it didn't consume any of it because it didn't eat her entirely," Joey explains, smiling as she looks at you. "So when you killed it with the Stargate, her energy went right back where it belonged."

You're processing the validity of that events when your Matesprit leans over and kisses you on the lips.

"Nice job breaking it, Hero," Joey whispers to you once she breaks the kiss.

"Just doin' my job," you whisper in return, and then kiss her back.

Yeah. Today was a good day.
Chapter End Notes

Just my little nod to the .Hack\Sign anime which I've been rewatching recently. :33
Chapter Summary

In which yet another Sun gets added to the running tally.

Chapter Notes

Edits were made shortly after posting this to fill in some more details on unadapted episodes "Tin Man" and "Double Jeopardy." See notes at the end for more details.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

PREVIOUSLY ON STARGATE SG-1 AND STARGATE ALTERNIA...

"There's no heartbeat?" Janet Fraiser frowns as she checks Colonel O'neill for a heartbeat.

"Sir!" A startled Captain Carter cries out as Colonel O'neill cuts open his arm to reveal an interior made out of robotic pieces.

"So they're Robots?" Hammond asks.
"Androids, more like," Janet answers.

"We need to go back to P3X-989," O'neill tells Hammond, sounding slow and weak.

"I made you better!" The robotic man named Harlan grins.
"Better my ass!" O'neill gripes. "You made us into Robots!"

"And don't even think about sending a bomb," the Robotic O'neill warns his organic self as they watch the machine create another Robotic Teal'c.
"I wasn't," The Organic O'neill says, indignant.

"Yes you were!" the Robotic O'neill says. "I know you."

"Ah! There is a pattern but it's still too slow!" Jude exclaims.

And then a SCREECHY DIALUP TONE runs through the speakers and the computers identify it as...

"SG-10'S IDC!" Walter exclaims.

"Major Henry Boyd and his team went to P3W-451 to investigate why all life there suddenly up and died recently." Davis Strider explains.

"Crap," Jude swears, as a bright red image comes back from the MALP feed. "It's Redshifted!"

"What's that mean, exactly?" Cassandra asks.

"The light we're receiving is extremely short on wavelengths," Jude says.

The images on the screen begin resolving, and soon enough, you've got a SOLID IMAGE of SG-10 running AWAY FROM THE DHD, frozen in lockstep as they fearfully glance back over their shoulders.

"What in God's name...?" Hammond mutters.

"Is that what I think it is?" Cassandra asks, voice barely above a whisper.

"It's a black hole," Jude answers, voice likewise just a whisper. "A recently formed one, too."

Callie taps a button on the PROJECTION CONSOLE, and brings up A 3D RENDERING of the MOFANG WEAPON. It looks like a MULTI-FACED OBJECT, CONSISTING OF PENTAGONS for each face. You're a little INTIMIDATED by the PULSING, GLOWING RED LINES criss-crossing its surface.

"This," Callie says, "is a Mofang Gravitational Trap."

She taps a button, and the projection EXPANDS into FLOATING CHUNKS, all orbiting each other as they generate some kind of ENERGY FIELD in the center of the object.

"The central purpose of both of these devices revolve around drawing in matter and mass into their central core... A BLACK HOLE in the full version."

Cassandra lets go of a pen, and it's yoinked straight into the Stargate's eventhorizon by the gravitational pull.
"What happened with the Replicators?" O'neill asks.

"Upon arrival, I found my home world over run by Replicators, terminally so," Thor answers. "I and a few survivors cleared a path to a single surviving space ship, uploaded the Stargate onto it, and jettisoned it into our sun, causing it to go super nova and destroying the foothold the Replicators had gotten on our home world."

"...You replicated the Mofang nova weapon with a Stargate," Sam realizes. "You dialed a Black Hole Stargate, didn't you?"

"We did," Thor nods.

The STARGATE melts within the sun's FIRE, and EXPLODES- fueling a NEW NUCLEAR REACTION within the star- causing it to start to collapse down into a TINY BALL OF GREEN LIGHT.

And then it EXPLODES- marching forwards AS A MASSIVE BALL OF GREEN FUCKING FIRE, one that consumes EVERY SHIP CAUGHT UP IN ITS PATH with MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS that are TINY compared to the might of a SUPER NOVA.

"We of Earth are willing to accept Nirriti's proposal of a Truce against Mutual Enemies such as Amaunet and Atum, as an example;" Colonel O'neill reads out the terms and conditions. "However, our condition is that this Truce only applies during times of direct conflict regarding those Mutual Enemies. If an Earth Team and a Goa'uld force otherwise come across each other in hostile ways while on any non-homeworld planet, we're respectively Fair Game for the duration of that encounter."

"We uncovered a communication frequency Apophis uses that we were unaware of before, and we were able to intercept a transmission implying that he and Heru'ur are talking about a possible alliance," Jacob says.

"It's incredibly unlikely they're actually going to talk things out and ally together," Cassandra says.

Heru'ur's ship is fired upon by Apophis' MEGA MOTHERSHIP, destroying it and the Goa'uld System Lord inside, much to the horror of SG-1 and the Tok'ra inside of a Cargo ship watching on.

"No matter what way we're looking at it, someone is about to become the owner of the largest dominant fleet in the Galaxy," Jacob nods.

"A TRICK!" Hebron warns, "Tanith tricks us all! He wants to destroy the Tok'ra and serve the Goa'uld!"

"You don't have to worry," Ka'turnal says. "Atum and Osiris have both been removed. Permanently. They've been handed over to the Tok'ra for study."

"What does 'Comtrya' mean?" General Hammond asks, regarding the IDC code that came through
"Ah, it's kind of like Shalom or Aloha. That stuff," O'neill answers.

"It is the greeting used by the artificial lifeform Harlan on PX3-989," Teal'c remembers.

"The one who duplicated you?" Hammond asks.

The robot Carter stares on in horror as the robotic Skaara gets his head blown off.

"They were not happy," Harlan explains. "They could not stop being you! The portable power pack you invented-"

"The robot me?" Carter asks.

"Yes! Oh! It was ingenious! Even Hubald would have been impressed! Would you like to see?"

Simultaneously, Carter says Yes, O'neill shouts No.

"It was my understanding that the robot SG-1 agreed to bury their Stargate and never leave their planet," Hammond says.

"I told you what you wanted to hear," O'neill's robotic duplicate says. "Besides, what were you going to do, Destroy me?"

"I might have!" Organic O'neill says.

"Alright, bring it on, Fly Boy! Let's go!" Robotic O'neill says, and then the two O'neills start fighting.

"Sirs!" Carter yells. "As much as I'd like to see how this plays out, don't we have something more important to do?"

The Robotic Carter yells out in pain as she shoves her hands through a forceshield to deactivate a device.

During a firefight with several Jaffa, the Robotic O'neill takes a blast to the waist.

"You should never have returned," Cronus says, glaring at SG-1 as his eyes flash. "By your own terms in the Treaty, you are all Fair Game."
Suddenly, Cronus is shot in the back, and he falls to the floor, dead.

Teal'c looks in surprise towards his thought dead Robotic Duplicate, who smiles in his dying breath and says, "For our father!"

"Go tell your people Cronus is dead," O'neill says to Darian. "if they think he's still a god, have 'em come take a look."

Cronus' MOTHERSHIP descends onto a pyramid for landing.


DIASPORA DATE: 8/16/0001.

VORASH, the desert planet home to the current Tok'ra home base, where everything was in a flurry of activity because a GOA'ULD HA'TAK MOTHERSHIP had just exited hyperspace and taken up an orbiting position.

Down below beneath the planet's surface, deep within a certain lab, multiple tanks house SEVERAL SYMBIOTES. Three of them are marked with bright, red X'S, and one with a Green Circle.

A group of technicians enter the room, carrying with them small cases within which the symbiotes could be put into.

"We remove Lantash first and, I will take him to the Stargate now," the Tok'ra of the group says, "we don't want him getting mixed in with the others."

Someone goes over to the Green Circle tank, and begins the process of transferring the Tok'ra Symbiote within into the case.

The other three Symbiotes within the tanks with the Red X's watch with dulled eyes. They watch as the tank containing Lantash is opened, and how long it takes for the Symbiote to be shuffled into its new home.

That Tok'ra then leaves with Lantash within the case, leaving what seem to be three unblended possible hosts remaining behind.

As they begin opening the tanks to drain the Symbiotes into- one acts.

It bursts out through the opened valve and jumps into the poor unsuspecting host's clothes.

"Gah! No! It's on me!" the man panics, swatting at his clothes. "Get it off! Get it-!"

And then before either of the other two can do anything beyond turn to try and raise their Zat guns, there's the sound of cracking bones and cutting skin, and the man screams.
Too late, they suddenly remember the other two symbiotes they just released from their containers for transfer. As they feel the slicing, cutting pain in the back of their necks, they realize they made the horrible, horrible mistake of turning their backs on the Symbiotes.

They, too, scream, before going silent.

A guard comes running into the room to try and help- only to be taken down by Zat fire.

Two shots, and the Tok'ra guard falls dead.

The three Goa'uld pause to reorient themselves, and then make their escape.

---

"Howdy folks!" your name is Colonel Jack O'Neill, and you wave at the group of Tok'ra waiting for you at the Rings. And, ooh. "I Do Not like the looks on your faces."

"Neither do I," Selmak says, stepping forwards off from the ring platform. "Something has happened, Ren'al?"

"Unfortunately, yes," the woman waiting there, Ren'al you guess, says. "Atum, Osiris, and Tanith have escaped while we were preparing to evacuate them to the temporary holding base."

Teal'c from beside you, growls. "We must find them."

"Agreed," Carter- no, Jolinar- says. "We can't let them escape before we evacuate the planet."

"You're already cleared to use Lethal Force if you find them," Ren'al says. "They've already killed several guards who were sent to apprehend them non lethally."

"Damn it," you groan, leaning your head back. "Of all the times...

The timeline works a little something like this: SG-1 comes into ownership of a BRIGHT, SHINY, BRAND SPAKING NEW HA'TAK courtesy of a TRADE DEAL with CRONUS, and then the Tok'ra recieve word that APOPHIS has sent either a SHIP or a FLEET OF SHIPS enroute to Vorash, apparently having figured out where they've been hiding all this time and has enough of a foot hold on the Galaxy now to risk going and attacking the Tok'ra so brazenly.

So, the plan was that the Tok'ra will evacuate temporarily to a new off-world base, and Earth will use your new HA'TAK to carry Vorash's Stargate and DHD to a new planet not on the Goa'uld Stargate-maps.

Well, now it seems that the plan, as it always seems to do, has gone off the rails yet again.
A basewide search is conducted, and a certain STORAGE ROOM full of LONG RANGE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES is found locked when it shouldn't be.

With Jacob and Selmak's go ahead, you go ahead and plant a block of C-4 on the door and blow it open.

Inside you find just one of the Tok'ra technicians who'd been body jacked looking up in surprise from an active communication's sphere.

"NO!" He yells- eyes widening in horror as you, Teal'c, and Carter barge into the room. "NEVER AGAIN!" He reaches for a Zat gun but Teal'c's draw is faster- and deadlier.

PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU!

And down goes the unknown Goa'uld with two shots- you feel a little bit bad for the host, though-body fried and now you'll never know who it was.

"Tanith!? TANITH!?"

Ah, wait, scratch that. You glance at the active COMMUNICATION ORB, and you edge over towards the device.

"Hello, Lucy," you taunt the glaring figure of APOPHIS. "Tanith isn't here at the moment to answer your call. But if you'd like to leave a message I'm sure he'll be around to get it... eventually."

"O'neill from Yavin Four," Apophis growls at you.

"You do know I was just bullshitting you on that whole 'Yavin Four' thing, right?" You ask.

"It does not matter," Apophis growls. "I was content to let my fleet destroy the Tok'ra impersonally... But if you are there, then so is TEAL'C, the Traitor."

Hearing his name called, Teal'c stops kicking the dead Tanith with his foot and looms dramatically over your shoulder.

"Apophis, I thought I smelled your foul stench the moment we opened the door," Teal'c says, misquoting Star Wars. (You think he's seen it something like... eight times now?)

That just makes Apophis roar- "YOU WILL DIE PERSONALLY AT MY FEET, TRAITOR!!" - and then he cuts off the feed.

"...Well, he's a mite mad, isn't he?" You ask to the room.

"Indeed," Teal'c agrees.

"Unfortunately, it seems Atum and Osiris managed to escape the base into the desert," Jacob says as you sit down at the Tok'ra council chamber table alongside Teal'c and Carter a few hours later. "We have people searching the desert for the moment, but chances are they're going to be stuck behind on
Vorash once we finish the evacuation and load the Stargate onto the Mothership."

"Death by desert, sucks to be them," you say.

"Not exactly," Jacob says, tapping at a console. "Now that we have confirmation that Apophis is on his way personally, we're reasonably sure that Tanith was trying to set up an evacuation with him for Osiris and Atum." A holographic projection of the solar system appears. "Long range is showing that the Fleet has stopped, probably they're waiting for Apophis himself to join them for the full assault."

"So if we can't find them in time, we risk Atum getting back to Apophis with Osiris and causing us problems again," you frown.

"Again, not exactly," Jacob taps a bit more, and then the view shifts to the image of the sun. "This is the sun Vorash is orbiting."

"...Okay?" You stare at it.

"We want to blow it up," Jacob says. "We think it might be the only way to overpower Apophis' shields and armor."

"Well," you say, "that's ambitious."

You glance at Teal'c, see him as stoic as ever, then at Carter, and watch a series of expressions cycle across her face.

"I think we can do that," she finally says.

"Do you now?" You ask. "How?"


"The Black Hole Planet?" Teal'c inquires.

Suddenly, your brain clicks into motion. "You mean doing what the Asgard did against the Replicators?"

"And what the Mofang were doing with their Gravity bombs," Carter confirms with a nod.

There's a pause, then Jolinar says, "**We can always harvest another Stargate from another random uninhabited world later for the new Tok'ra home base. If we jettison Vorash's Stargate into its sun after dialing P3W-451, we could cause it to go super nova.**"

"Right," Carter picks up from there, "and if we time it just right to Apophis' fleet's arrival, they won't realize what's going on until it's too late! We might actually kill Apophis once and for all this time!"

"How close do we have to be to the sun to do this?" You ask.

"Fairly close," Carter says. "But not so close that we'd be blinded by the radiation. And we can always jump to hyperspace just before the explosion, too."

"And what about the neighbors?" you ask.
"This system is uninhabited," Selmak says. "We chose it for that reason to begin with."

"Alright..." You think on it. "But what happens if the Gate doesn't connect?"

"Then we leave Apophis here with an empty planet and Atum and Osiris on hand," Carter says, frowning.

"Alright, let's hope the Gate connects then," you say. "I'm good to try it if you guys are."

"I'll go tell the council we have a plan," Jacob says, getting up from the table.

And so, another hour or so later, your HA'TAK is hiding behind the sun, and you're waiting for the ship's computer timer to tell you when to dial out to time the explosion with the arrival of Apophis' fleet over Vorash.

You and Carter wait outside the ship's primary cargo bay- usually used for CARGO SHIPS, but today, home to Vorash's Stargate.

"Nervous?" You ask, looking to Carter.

"I know the science is sound, but I'm still blowing up a star," Carter answers. "...At least I don't have to worry about people thinking I came up with this one all on my own."

"I can imagine the praise people would heap upon you, lavishly," you say. "All hail Carter, she who blows up suns and walks on water!"

"You blow up ONE SUN and suddenly everyone expects you to walk on water," Carter replies, sounding indignant.

For a moment, you both stand there in silence, then burst out laughing.

"Oh, god, this is serious, why are we laughing?" Carter asks.

"Because we're about to blow up a star and as everyone knows," you answer, "the bigger the boom, the bigger the adrenaline rush!"

That gets Carter laughing again, and you smile. A bit of humor to lighten the mood always does a soul good.

"You know," Carter says, sobering up once she finishes laughing. "If this works and we successfully connect to P3W-451, we're basically funneling a massive chunk of a star straight onto SG-10."

"If they haven't been spaghettified already, you mean," you say.

"Well, yeah," Carter nods. "I've actually been thinking. It might be possible, one day, for us to use that Time Machine Joey used to exile Khepri, if we had a ship we could use with it."

"Eh?" You raise an eyebrow. "How does that work out?"

"Well, mostly I'm just thinking it doesn't force us to work on a strict time limit before the solar matter
from Vorash's sun incinerates the planet," Carter says. "We could always just jump back in time with whatever solution we've cooked up, wait for the star to collapse in the first place and then rescue SG-10 before they get torn to pieces by the Black Hole." She pauses, "I mean, it's either that, or hope that by whatever time we do figure out how to rescue them that the time dilation has been so severe that the sun's stellar matter hasn't reached the planet yet."

"Good point," you say, frowning as you look at the timer. "Any minute now."

"Right," Carter nods, and starts preparing the dialing program. "Any minute now..."

"You know," you say. "I think Boyd's got a kid by now."

"Oh?" Carter asks. "Boy or a girl?"

"Not sure," you say. "I'm just thinking... it'd be nice if we could get that kid their dad back."

Carter's response is cut off as the alarm sounds.

"Alright," she says, "engaging remote dialing program."

And so the Stargate starts spinning up.

"Moment of truth," You say. "Either 451's Gate is still intact, or..."

"Or we have to hightail it and run," Carter nods.

WAA WAAA! KAWOOOSH!

And there it goes.

The eventhorizon that forms after the vortex opens is weird, though. It's all sort of... spinning?

"Activating force shield," Carter says, and then a flicker of orange surrounds the Stargate. "I can't believe the Gate's still intact."

"Gives us hope for SG-10, right?" You ask.

"Yeah," Carter nods, and then with a push of a button, the clamps holding the gate in place release, and the maneuvering thrusters fire off and away the Stargate goes, tumbling away out through the cargo bay doors and out towards the sun. "Let's just hope whatever plan we put together in the future has us off that planet before this Gate hits the sun."

"Yeah," you agree. "That'd be one hell of a sunburn."

Time feels like it passes slower than it is as you all wait on the HA'TAK's bridge and watch as Apophis' fleet emerges from Hyperspace, and makes their way straight towards Vorash.

"Apophis' mothership is definitely here," Jacob says. "Front and center, the big eye catcher."
"Well, he's clearly compensating for something," you muse.

"Indeed," Teal'c nods.

"How long until the sun explodes, Sam?" Jacob asks.

"The Stargate's already entered the sun by now, so it should be siphoning off mass right now," Carter says. "There's no telling how long it's actually going to take, though. Vorash's sun is different in scale from the ones the Asgard used against the Replicators."

"What about the Alternia ones?" Jacob asks.

"Different kind of technology," Carter says. "The Mofang used time dilation on a system wide scale to speed up the process."

"A shame we couldn't get our hands on one of their bombs then, huh?" Jacob asks. "Too much time navigating back to Earth, then Alternian, then to their home world and back again. And that's even assuming they'd want to give us one of their sun destroyers."

A wary tension drifts across the room from Carter, to Teal'c, to You.

"Yeah," you finally say, "that's probably for the best."

The console beeps.

"Uh-oh," Jolinar remarks as she glances at it.

"That's not a happy beep or a happy 'uh-oh,' Jols," you say.

"That's because Apophis has launched a Scout Ship to come check behind the sun," Jolinar answers. "They're looking for us."

"We've got to stall for time or else Apophis may realize there's a trap and leave," Jacob says.

"The Gliders," Teal'c says. "It is possible to remote activate this ship's contingent of Gliders and launch them out and around."

"Right, on it," Jacob nods, activating the Ha'tak's control console and... "And Gliders are away."

A pause, then Selmak chimes in with a rather bad-ass one liner, "You wanted the Tok'ra, Apophis? Come and get them."

Tension rises across the room as you watch the depiction of the glider fleet moving out of the system, and flying away, away, away...

The Icon of the scout ship turns to chase after them, and quite a few other ships of a similar nature launch from the various fleet ships Apophis brought with him.

"It seems they have taken the bait," Teal'c observes.

"Yeah, for the moment," Jacob frowns. "Sammy? How long-?"
The console beeps a different alarm, and Carter answers, "Now, actually." She sounds calm, then terrified. "We need to jump to lightspeed NOW!"

"Jumping!" Jacob says, pressing the buttons and- **WRRRMMM-SHOOP!**

Into Hyperspace you go.

For the cloaked Tok'ra cargo ship hiding outside the system to observe if the plan was successful or not, one moment, Vorash's sun was a tiny pinprick of light among many.

The next? Suddenly, it was a massive, enraged inferno. It was an ever expanding ball of crimson flame whose surface flared brightly as various little ships and planets were consumed by the explosion. It was a beautiful sight that moved at the speed of light, and ended just as quickly.

For the Tok'ra on that cargo ship, they marveled at the explosion that transpired, and happily let their ship's sensors passively record everything that happened. It wouldn't be for another few hours that they discovered that that two hyperspace windows had opened in the wake of that explosion, and that a good thirty seconds before the explosion happened, a small cargo ship had launched itself out into hyperspace, leaving Apophis' mothership for territory unknown.

The hyperspace window was wrong somehow.

The color was off, and the sound was too high pitched, but before you could even register what was wrong with it, the ship jerked to a halt and...

That was it?

"What just happened?" You ask.

"I think we caught the tail end of the blast wave," Jacob frowns, checking the readings on the screen. "It must have thrown us off course. Way off course. The Navigation doesn't recognize any of the stars."

"I do," Carter says, pointing up at something in the distance. "See that green speck up there?"

"Yeah?" Jacob peers up to look. "What is that? A green sun?"

"It's Karfin Outpost's star," Carter laughs, then turns to face you. "We jumped straight to Alternia's Galaxy somehow!"

"Isn't that like, millions of lightyears away?" You ask.

"The star's explosion must have warped our hyperspace window somehow," Carter says. "The ship normally can't travel that fast, but- here we are anyways!"
"So all we got to do to get home is call Alternia, right?" you ask.

"Basically, yes," Carter nods- only for a system alert to beep again.

"Picking up another ship exiting hyperspace," Jacob says. "It's... Oh god, how is that possible?"

"What is it?" You ask.

"Apophis' mothership," Jacob says. "But it's... it's got something else crashed into it."

"Something else?" You frown. "I'm not liking the sound of that."

You head over to the console and look out the window.

Yeah, lying dead ahead of you is APOPHIS' MOTHERSHIP, and somehow, merged into part of one of its wings, is a LARGE, BLACK SPACE SHIP with pulsing red lines on it.

Mofang.

"I'm not reading any lifesigns on the other ship," Jacob frowns. "I *am* reading a diminishing circle of lifesigns from Apophis' ship, though. Rapidly spreading. Whatever's happening on that ship is killing people fast."

"That can't be good," you frown, the idle thoughts of a possible problem lurking in the back of your skull.

"No, it can't." Carter sounds panicked. "Dad, get us out of here. Hyperdrive if we have it, sublight if we don't."

"What? Why?" Jacob asks. "Apophis' ship isn't even powering weapons, and it's shields are down-we could-"

"If my hunch is right we need to get as far away from that ship as physically possible, NOW," Carter says.

"Carter, you don't think...?" You trail off.

"Some Replicators survived Alternia wiping them out of the Galaxy by way of being stuck outside of it when the Vast Glub hit everything else?" Carter finishes your sentence. "Yes, that's exactly what I'm thinking and if Apophis is smart he's going to order his ship to self destruct any minute now and we don't want to be anywhere near it when it does!"

"Right," Jacob nods, activating the sublight. "Hyperdrive is down, but I'm getting us out of here as fast as we can."

A pause, then Selmak says, "**Jolinar, go see if you can get us hyperdrive back online, even if it's just for a short jump.**"

"**On it,**" Jolinar nods from Carter's body, and she heads off.

As you feel the ship accelerating under your feet, you can't help but lament, "Well, today just went to hell, didn't it?"
"Indeed," Teal'c agrees.

You can't help but close your eyes, and wait for the inevitable moment when things get worse.

Chapter End Notes

...is it cheating if my first use of a "Previously On" winds up including scenes for an episode I didn't write? EDIT: The answer is YES.

As has always been my stance here, I choose to work on the episodes that I can change rather heavily, But it seems that for once this choice backfired just a bit. I wrote myself into a bit of a blindspot forgetting that that Season 1 episode echoed forwards into Season 4, because, honestly, neither episode were heavily affected by the butterflies created by the crossover. Season 1's Tin Man was early enough that nothing could really touch it yet, and "Double Jeopardy" went just about scene for scene to the canon SG1 episode, with only the substitution of a dead Robot Daniel with a dead robot Skaara.

You're not missing much if you've seen that episode, but I seem to have forgotten about the people who *haven't* seen that episode and I really needed to do better at filling in those blanks here, and to try to not make that mistake again going forwards.

I could have gotten away with skipping both episodes if not for the problem that is Cronus' Ha'tak. Instead of going in and writing what, to my mind's eye, was a boring rehash of a canon SG-1 episode, I took a lazy route and did a Previously on and tried to hope that filled in all the gaps.

...I missed a major one by not touching on Tin Man enough, it turns out. Sorry for that.

If you're worried about the Robot Duplicates of SG-1 showing up again, don't. They're all dead. All of them. And unlike in one of the SG-1 novels, they're not coming back again.
Chapter Summary

SG-1 works to find their way home after going off course.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

From the outside perspective of an one person, a small Mofang Cruiser resided far, far outside of the Alternian Galaxy when a large bubble of energy engulfed the entire thing, and utterly destroyed every Replicator within it.

Alas, this one Mofang Cruiser had been ordered to remain outside of the Galaxy incase of just such a disastrous event. Ordered by who? The Scratch Doctor. What was their mission?

To Wait.

To wait until they were brought back to the Galaxy by a single order. And then, they would BUILD A NEW SUPERGATE- because chances were the old one was destroyed by the time these Replicators received their wake up call.

But receive it they did, and so the ship prepared to jump into hyperspace...

It had barely just opened its hyperspace window when it was intersected by another ship traveling at speeds faster than Hyperspace normally allowed for, resulting in some very odd, very strange fusion of the two ships as they tumbled, the faster one slowing down, and then finally emerged from hyperspace within the Alternian Galaxy itself.

The Replicators began spreading through the super Goa'uld Mothership, learning all they could about the systems and the database while destroying all those who dared to attack them.

All the while, a smaller mothership, the Ha'tak, began running away.

...Naturally, that was when two large Alternian Cruisers emerged from Hyperspace- both marked with the violet signs of THE DARK CARNIVAL and one running dangerously without reactor containment.

The Ha'tak continued to flee at sublight speeds, deemed not a priority by either the Replicators or the Clowns or the Reavers that had arrived.

Soon, however, the Ha'tak gets its hyperdrive back online for long enough to make a jump out of range of what was sure to become a massive explosion of Goa'uld technology self destructing.

And oh, it was certainly attempted... But unfortunately for Apophis, the Replicators infesting his ship had gotten control of his computer systems far, far too quickly for it to be pulled off with any reasonable degree of success.
Or at least, that was what he assumed.

*Cue Stargate SG-1 theme*


DIASPORA DATE: 8/17/0001.

Your name is SAMANTHA CARTER and you sigh in relief as the control crystal panel for the Ship's hyperdrive glows as it comes back online.

"I think we've got hyperdrive back for good this time," your Dad says, smiling.

"At least until the control crystals fry on us again," you frown. "Still, it should get us to Alternia just fine."

Five hours of work after your last attempt at a jump, and you're finally able to get moving again.

You didn't get far with the last jump, just far enough to be clear of the blast radius, but as far as long range sensors could detect, no blast occurred.

Those three ships just seem to still be where they'd been before.

Odd, to say the least, but you're not going to complain because as long as they're standing still, you're not being chased by them.

"So I couldn't help but notice the damage to the power grid relays for internal shielding," your Dad begins.

"Damage from when we took the ship we didn't get around to fixing yet," you answer curtly, trying not to think about it.

"But what-"

"Dad, please," you say. "Can we not talk about it?"

Dad looks like he wants to say something, but thankfully... "Hey, Carters," O'neill's voice echoes over the radio. "We've got a situation."

Saved by the Colonel.

"...Alright, Sam." Dad relents, then radios, "We'll be right there, Jack."

And so you head to the bridge.

"What's the situation?" You ask as you enter the room.
"A Galaxy wide broadwave transmission just went out, alerting all eyes to watch the transmission channel," Teal'c says.

"Basically a 'breaking news' alert telling everyone to sit and wait for the actual breaking news to start," O'neill says.

"And this affects us, how? It sounds like it's just local politics," Jacob asks.

"Well, for starters, the origin point is Apophis' Mothership," O'neill says.

"Shouldn't that have blown up by now?" Jacob asks.

"The Replicators might have managed to overwrite the system controls faster than the self destruct could have gone off," you point out. "If that's the case then-" You trail off. A moment later, there's a beeping from the console, and the heads up display projects an image onto the front window.

What you see is disturbing on several levels, of which at least two you can identify.

The first level is that Apophis is on his knees, restrained in place by Mofang Replicators, and looking none too pleased by it. How does something like that even happen?

The second level is that, pointed to Apophis' neck is a crude looking blade that's been bathed in a rainbow's worth of blood, and is held in the hands of a someone who looks like they left their mental clarity behind them a long time ago.

"Say hello to the Camera, Herald of our Lord's return," says a female voice from off screen-speaking in clear Alternian.

"You Dare?!!" Apophis growls out in Goa'uld, and for the first time, you hear some startling similarities between the languages that you'd otherwise never have noticed. "You dare attack a God with machines and hold a sword to his throat?!"

It's not surprising, honestly, you realize, what with Khepri having had the time to wriggle the Alternian language deep into the Goa'uld System Lord Hierarchy. They're practically cousin languages at this point, you'd guess.

"Oh! How amusing!" And then an Alternian girl- no, a woman steps into frame. She looks just a few years older than Joey, at most. "Do you hear that, my wicked brothers and sisters? The little Herald thinks he's a God!"

The one holding the sword laughs, and it makes Apophis grimace as the blade gets just a bit too close to his throat for his liking. Somehow, you get the feeling that elsewhere in the galaxy, other people are laughing as well- while most everyone else stares on in confusion or horror.

The Troll takes up center frame, and you take a good look at her. She's slender, dainty almost, but her general lack of normal clothes make it evident that there is actual muscle hiding behind her skin; skin that's paler than the regular Alternian grey, and seems streaked with some kind of darker hue across it. You can't quite tell what the pattern is supposed to be with her clothes in the way. Her clothes, such as they are, are basically long, ornate and flashy stretches of cloth, strategically slung around her body, and above all else, are PURPLE AND GOLD.

Her horns swoop up from the sides of her skull, forming a U shape of sorts, with pointed spikes at
the tips, and in between them is some small, golden ring floating oddly above her head that's holding her long hair up in place, somehow forming it into twin tails that swirl with a rainbow collage of color—no, blood. She's somehow gotten a rather impressive collection of blood colors to swirl up and down her hair pieces, contained by this odd piece of technology over her head.

Her eyes, most disconcertingly of all, aren't the usual orange, but instead are some how a brilliant, demonic shade of red.

Her face, though... It's mostly that same pale grey, except for the swath of dark grey climbing up from the side of her neck and encapsulating the right side of her face, looking almost like half of a snake's head emerging from the shadows.

"My Brothers and Sisters of the Dark Carnival!" the woman throws her hands out wide to the side. "Our Galaxy is in torment! Chaos! Rebels dismantle the Empire piece by piece! The Empress our Lord left to guide us is Dead! The Handmaid whom he left to cull all interlopers is Dead! The Scratch Doctor who kept our schedules all neat and tidy... is DEAD!" She pauses, "And to top it all off, the Grand Joke of the Hour, our TRUE GOD, Our LORD ENGLISH, remains exiled in another galaxy, awaiting the day we can rebuild the Stargate that will bring him home!"

"Your 'True God'!?" Apophis laughs—then spits out on the floor, you think. (It's hard to tell with the Troll standing in front of him.) "You dare say such blasphemy in my presence!?"

[Well, someone's got an ego,] Jolinar muses within your head, [And I don't think it's Apophis here.]

"I dare say it because it's true, Herald of the Lord's Return," The woman says, moving to the side and turning to face him. "You who were prophesied to enter our Galaxy, bringing with him the key to building the new Stargate. The Miser of Chaos, he who takes up Sokar's mantle, Apophis!"

"She could've easily gotten that out of his head with some psychic ability," Jacob says, "or read it off of his computers. There's no way there's a prophecy."

"Time Travel, though," O'neill frowns. "That's always an option."

"Trickery!" Apophis says. "You think me stunned by you knowing my name? You could have read my name from my ship's Computers after you attack me!"

"Oh?" The woman laughs, long and hard, as she twirls around like a child dancing in the rain. "You're right about that!" She grins, insanely, and then leans in close, her crimson eyes somehow glowing brighter. "I could have just read from your mind about how you're so angry about losing your own son to forces unknown!" Apophis flinches, and you feel the same way. What a sensitive topic to use as a taunt! "I could have just parsed a book, written by our dear Lord English himself after he's conquered everything, and banished the pages back across time to give us a means of planning ahead!"

And then she glances sideways at the camera, smirking, as if looking straight into your very soul.

"What the hell...?" O'neill mutters.

"Or, my Lord could simply already have agents inside your Galaxy reporting to him, who then advises me on the goings on so that we might prepare." She then stands stock straight, all the while never taking her eyes off of the camera. "After all, how else would two Goa'uld vessels wind up in a
whole other galaxy while merely trying to escape an EXPLODING STAR?"

"Is she saying what I think she's saying?" Jacob asks.

"What are you blabbering on about!?" Apophis growls. "My Jaffa are loyal to the end!"

"Are they?" The Alternian Clown tilts her head to the side, taking on a childish tone of voice as she asks that simple thing. "All it takes is one brick in the road suddenly sticking up to cause a cart to over turn onto its side," She then smirks. "After all, if not for Teal'c betraying you, you never would have wound up in this situation in the first place, would you, Herald?"

You glance at Teal'c and see him as tense as anyone could be- maybe even more so. A glance back at the screen, and you see that Apophis is just as tense, and speechless.

"How...?" he tries to ask.

"How indeed," the woman says, smiling. "That's for me to know, and you to never find out."

And with that as her given signal, the sword wielding Alternian slices back with the sword and-

Apophis' head hits the floor before the rest of his body does. The Replicators around Apophis' body scurry away off camera, to do who knows what.

"And so the Herald dies as he lived," the woman says, smirking at the camera, "The Punchline to a Grand Joke."

You're mostly just stunned that she would do such a thing so easily. What was the point of all of that? Apophis isn't even a known entity in this Galaxy, so why...?

"To the Galaxy at Large," The woman finally says, reaching up and grasping at some fastening clasp on the top half of her clothes. "Today, I deliver you a message. Who I was before today matters little, I am but a humble servant who will take the place of the Handmaid in our Lord's new order. But for the time being, you may call me ECHIDNHA."

The clasp is undone, and her purple and gold chest covering robes hit the floor, revealing the full intricate work of the dark colored portion of her body paint. Your earlier impression of a Snake head shadowed on her face was right. Coiling around the girl's body is the image of a snake made out of flaming shadows, emerging from what at first seems to be a Black Hole- yes, a black hole that's framed inside of a Stargate.

How did they get such intricate detailing done with body paint? Unless... Wait- yes, that detailing work is raised skin. It's a certain type of scarring the darker body paint was not put onto, and thus it stands out so much more brilliantly.

That must have been excruciatingly painful to go through.

"TODAY!" The woman continues to rant, throwing her arms to the side. "WE OF THE DARK CARNIVAL WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJUGATED UNDER THE EMPRESS' RULE FOR SO LONG FINALLY TAKE TO CENTER STAGE! BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE
She then rushes in close and practically puts her face up against the camera—her eyes taking up a majority of the view. It’s too close for her face for your liking. You can see way too much detailing on the tiny scars hiding beneath the grease paint on her face.

"I hope you're ready, SG-1," she whispers to the camera. "And I hope you’ve been pushing your Megaship's engines hard and fast, Rebels. You're both about to become center stage for my Opening Act."

And then the screen cuts to the black of space. What’s more, the lights in the room go out, and you can FEEL the life support shut down as the air stops circulating.

"...Well, that seems trapish," O’neill remarks.

"She must have been serious when she said they had agents working in our Galaxy," you say. "They must have planted some kind of retrovirus into the ship’s computers at some point after we captured it. They were expecting us to use it against Apophis eventually!"

"We scrub the main control crystals," Jacob says. "If we do a hard reset of the computer systems we might get everything working again. If we're lucky we can get life support back online before we suffocate."

"You two do that. Meantime, Teal'c and I will grab the extra set of P-90s from the cargo bay," O’neill says. "Chances are they're going to throw Replicators at us before too long. I wanna be ready for them when they do."

Your mind is a wash of swirling chaos as you and your Dad work to restart the ships computers sans any kind of virus emplanted into it.

Of course, you have no way of knowing what could actually be behind this. Is it a corrupted Control Crystal that if you don’t remove it'll just keep causing problems? What happens if all of the ship’s control crystals are down?

It’s barely thirty minutes into your work restoring the ships’ systems when the life support kicks back on. You feel the air rushing through your air as the stale taste to the oxygen is quickly washed away.

You look to your Dad, and he says, "Wasn't us."

"Damn it," you tab your radio, "Colonel, Teal'c, they just reactivated the life support and who knows what other systems."

"Right," O'neill answers. "We just got long range sensors back too... Shit."

"What is it?" Jacob asks into the radio.

"An Alternian Cruiser just exited Hyperspace," Teal'c reports. "It is not charging weapons and is moving into Ring transmission distance. No core containment issues detected."
"They're going to ring Replicators onboard," you realize, grabbing your P-90.

"Of course they are," Jacob grunts, grabbing at his P-90 as well. "Teal'c, see what floor they ring to. If I'd have any guess it would be the ones on our level. They'll want to secure the engine room to keep us from getting control of our systems back."

"...Correct, Jacob Carter," Teal'c answers, "they just activated the Ring platform on that floor... No new life signs detected. Thermal imagine shows multiple heat signatures... Replicators."

"We're on our way," you say. "Let us know if they activate any other ring platforms."

"I will attempt to do so," Teal'c says.

You and your Dad head in the direction of the Ring Platform, and you're just barely reaching it when you hear the sound of Replicators storming down the hallway.

"Well," you say. "It's about to get loud."

"That it is," your dad nods.

And then you and your dad take aim and fire.

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You're now Colonel Jack O'neill, and you have an idea. "Cargo Ships? Do we have any Cargo Ships?"

"One moment," Teal'c says, checking the ship's readouts... "We have one Tok'ra owned Cargo Ship in Hangar Bay Five on Level Four. Are you considering what I believe you are considering, O'neill?" He looks at you.

"It's Pondering, Teal'c," you correct. "The phrase is 'Are you pondering what I'm pondering' and the answer is probably yes." You then go on to explain your plan.

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You're once again Samantha Carter and- "Carter!" O'neill's voice echoes from your radio during a brief respite of Replicator smashing.

"Yeah!?" You radio back, before shooting at a bunch more of the black metal, red glowing bugs.

"Fall back to Hangar Bay Five on Level Four," O'neill says. "Let the bugs take the engine room."


"Ammo Conservation! I'll tell you more when you get there! Now that's an order, Carter!"

You wonder what insane plan the Colonel's cooked up this time.

"C'mon!" You nod to your Dad, and start backing away, letting the Replicators gain ground.
Surprisingly, they divert away from chasing after you to take control of the engine room.

You take a pot shot here or there to test, and... they don't even react.

What the hell?

You meet up with O'neill and Teal'c half way to the Hangar bay, and your dad asks, "What's going on, Jack? Why aren't we killing more of those things?"

"We've got a plan," O'neill says. "Basically we've gotta write this Ha'tak off as forfeit. The internal systems are probably all compromised to hell and back and the Bugs probably already have control over everything anyways."

"So!? We let them take the ship?" your Dad asks.

"And we take theirs instead," O'neill says.

"How?" Dad asks.

"There is a Cargo ship in the Hangar bay, with isolated systems from the rest of the ship," Teal'c says. "While the exit doors to the hangar bay are likely compromised, the Ring platform on the Cargo ship will almost certainly not be compromised."

"They're still in ring range," you realize. "They're sending over wave after wave of Replicators, when their numbers are low enough the ship might be captureable!"

"Exactly," O'neill nods.

You make it to the Hangar Bay and then into the Cargo Ship just fine. And with little trouble, you're able to lock the Cargo Ship's rings onto the Alternian ship above us.

You all stand back to back in a circle formation- O'neill to your right, Teal'c to your left, and your Dad to your back- and let the Rings activate.

A wash of light from the ring transport washes over the four of you, and a few seconds later, you find yourself in a room surrounded by boxes and surprised trolls holding folded up Replicators in their hands.

You all shoot first and ask questions later- the trolls fall dead to the floor, with gooey purple blood pouring out from their fatal head shots, and the Replicators...

The Replicators stay inactive.

"...They must be activated remotely once they're sent through the Ring Transport," you guess, glancing around the room and see that the boxes hold more folded up Replicators of the Mofang style.

"So the scary clowns are controlling the angry mech bugs?" O'neill asks. "That sounds... not comforting in the least."
"Teal'c, let's move these crates and the bodies onto the Ring transporter," Jacob says. "Let's see if we can't jettison them all over to the Ha'tak. I'd really rather they not be around if these things decide to wake up."

Teal'c looks to O'neill, and he nods. "Yeah, smart idea. Carter and I'll take the rest of the ship."

And so you two sneak through the ship, and for all that it's a marvel of ALTERNIAN SHIP DESIGN, very similar to the All Your Base in some ways, it's... You think the word you're looking for is A PIG STY, like people have been living here without shore leave for... well, a long time, at any rate. The smell is the first thing you really notice, followed by whole piles of smelly, blood-stained clothes just lying on the floors outside of certain rooms, and the less said about the various COLORFUL STAINS on the walls and floor (and even some parts of the ceiling) the better.

There's not many people on board this ship, as it turns out. Not many who are alive, at any rate. It seems a vast majority of the ship's NON PURPLE BLOODED CREW have been MURDERED, and their bodies left strung up as decoration.

That doesn't help with the smell either.

Soon, you find the bridge, and see that its few crew members are... well...

You're not quite sure what they're doing on that navigation console, but you're pretty sure it's not designed to support their combined weight given the creaking sounds its making.

You and O'neill put the console out of its misery and dump the clowns onto the floor with some well placed head shots. Their bodies, predictably, land in a tangle of limbs and spilled purple blood.

"...You know," O'neill mutters, "I'm sure if Marty ever does an episode about this mission, he's going to have to scrub a lot of details to get it on cable."

"There's always Showtime," you remind him.

"Yeah, but who has time to watch Showtime these days?" he asks, moving to take guard at the door. You head over to the nearest weapons console. "Besides, my point is, people who watch sci-fi stuff casually would probably rather not get assaulted with... whatever the hell *that* was in the middle of some action adventure episode about blowing up space ships."

"Fair point," you concede his argument, and pause to look over the readings... "Okay, Dad, Teal'c, it looks like we've got weapons online," You say into your radio. "Are the Replicators off the ship?"

"Yeah," your dad answers. "Every last crate."

You look to O'neill, and he says "Knock it out of the sky, Carter," with a nod.

You turn back to the console and do just that.

A rapid fire blast of glowing orange dart-shaped projectiles later, and Cronus' Ha'tak is a tiny fireball of exploding debris.

"Ha'tak destroyed," you report.
"Now for part two of the plan," O'neill says, and you move over to the nearest navigation console (you ignore the spilled purple blood all over it).

Thankfully, you don't have too much to do on this side of things.

You just tell the ship to return to its last known departure point and- *PCHWHOOMP!* -into hyperspace you go.

It's not a long jump, but it takes long enough for you to get over to the targeting console again.

You emerge out of hyperspace into a battle between the two Megaships and a small fleet of Reactor-containment less Alternian ships.

There's no sign of Apophis' mothership. Damn it all, they must have left.

You tell the ship's computer to target every single one of the Reaver ships, and focus on the long range radio.

"Astro or Delta Megaship! This is Major Samantha Carter of SG-1, respond!" You call out.

A moment later, you hear the surprised voice of Dammek reply back, "Major Carter? The hell? You're really out here?"

"We stole one of the ships sent after us-" you report- before flinching as the ship shakes as the other clowns return fire on the apparent traitor. "We'll be heading to a Ring transport room right now and beam over to one of your ships if you're ready!"

"Roger that, Major Carter!" Dammek replies. "We'll have Delta's ring room ready for you."

"Thank you!" you say, and then end the transmission.

You head over to navigation and punch in what will probably be a suicide run for the ship you've commandeered. It's on a course to bury its nose right into the front of another ship.

"Let's go!" O'neill says, and the two of you head back to the Ring room.

"Dad, Teal'c! We're on our way back, get ready to ring out the moment we arrive!" You say into the Radio.

"Understood, Major Carter," Teal'c replies.

The ship shakes a bunch more times as more blasts hit it and do damage, but it holds together long enough for you two to return to the Ring room and transport out.

Once more, the light of the Matterstream transmission washes over you, and a moment later, you emerge in the middle of a half-finished Ring room.

"Dammek!" A troll girl in a pink jacket yells into her radio, "They've made it over!"

"Good timing!" comes the curt reply. "That stolen cruiser's going to impact any second now!"
"You set it on a collision course?" Your dad asks, looking at you like you'd just done something utterly stupid.

"Well-" you shrug. "Why not?"

"WOOH!" Dammek's voice echoes out of the Radio again, "Nice aiming, Major! You took out three of them with one explosion!"

You kind of wish you'd been on the bridge to see it.

Your name is DAMMEK, and holy shit was that an impressive collision.

A giant Alternian cruiser crashing nose long into another Alternian cruiser, both exploding, and the shockwave utterly trashing two other ships.

What's more, the shockwaves from those secondary explosions does some damage to some of the other ships that forces them to stop firing for a crucial moment.

"Tegiri, Ashler," you call into the ship-to-ship communication, "Let's transform and wipe the rest of these ass-clowns off the map!"

"Aye aye, sir!" you get Ashler's enthusiastic reply.

And from there, it's utter cake walk.

The Astro and Delta Megaships transform into their robot forms and begin slashing and blasting at the stunned Clown ships.

Slice- Blast- KABOOM.

And soon, the field of battle is cleared, leaving you with nothing left to do but transform back to ship mode and head back to Alternia.

Once that course is laid into the navigation, you get up and head down to meet SG-1 in the Ring-room.

You find them still there, with Carter idly chatting with STELSA SEZYAT, a recent Teal blood hire to the Delta Megaship's TECH STAFF.

"Well if isn't the heroes of the hour, SG-1," you laugh as you barge into the conversation. "What the hell are you guys doing in our corner of the universe?"

"Apparently either accidentally surfing a super nova," Colonel O'neill chimes in, "or brought here by some whack-job clown lady working for some mysterious god to build another Super Stargate."

"Ah," you pause to process that. "Yeah. Shadre Amanno. She's a piece of work, that one."

"You know her?" the surprise of the hour, Jacob Carter, asks. You met him for all of five minutes back on Earth's Halloween night.
"We've dealt with her handy-work before," you explain. "Just last week Joey and her team had to kill some kind of Psychic Goop monster she'd let loose by luring it into the unstable vortex of the Stargate."

"Well, that's one way to take care of a goop monster," O'neill says.

"Yeah," You agree. Then, a thought hits you. "So... Uh, what happened to your first ship?"

"Don't." O'neill raises a finger as Jacob goes to say something. "Not a word. The ship never existed. Nor did any of the hypothetical events that lead to us possibly getting a Ha'tak in the first place."

"...Duly noted," you say. "Anything else you'd like to add to that utter denial of reality, Colonel?"

"No, I'm good," O'neill says. "Anyone else got anything they'd like to deny ever happened?"

"I've got nothing," Jacob says.

"I too, have nothing to deny," Teal'c adds.

"I'd like to forget what we saw on that bridge, to be honest," Carter says.

"Ah, good point," O'neill says with a wince. "I was already starting to forget it. Yeah. That... That never happened either."

"Dunno what you saw over there, but okay," you nod. "It never happened, whatever it was."


DIASPORA DATE: 8/18/0001.

"Unscheduled Long Distance Traveler!" Walter's sudden change of declaration from the usual "Unscheduled Offworld Activation" grabs your attention from your paperwork.

Your name is George Hammond, and with a feeling of hope in your heart, you march down to the control room just in time to watch Chevron Nine lock into place.

WAA WAA! KAWOOOSH!

"Receiving... SG-1's IDC!" Walter laughs. "Opening Iris!"

And thus, the Iris does open, and a few moments later, a tired SG-1 and Jacob Carter steps through the gate- accompanied, surprisingly, by Dr. Jackson, thus confirming Major Vantas' "Vague Memories" that SG-1 had landed in Alternia's galaxy.

The wormhole shuts down a moment later, and you head down to the Gate room to meet them.

"Welcome back, SG-1!" you say.
"Good to be home, Sir," O'neill says. "Hope you don't mind we took the opportunity to shower before coming home first. We, ah, smelled something fierce."

"I'm sure it's quite the story to tell," you pause, then ask, "...Didn't you leave on a ship?"

"What ship, sir?" O'neill asks.

"I don't remember any ship. What about you, Teal'c?" Carter asks, sounding not at all sincere.

"Neither do I recall any such vessel," Teal'c says, pointedly.

You look to Jacob Carter, who just gives you a hapless shrug of "Dunno what to say."

Then, you look to Dr. Jackson, who sighs and says, "They won't tell me either, Sir."

"I'm sure there's a story behind that," you say. "Debriefing at Fourteen-hundred?"

"Sounds good to me, sir," O'neill says, and with that, he, Carter, and Teal'c push past you to leave the Gate room.

"...So what exactly happened out there?" You ask Jacob.

"Well, George," Jacob answers, "it involves a bunch of crazy clowns. I'm not sure you'll believe us even when we tell you the truth."

"Clowns?" You ask, pointedly.

"If it helps I got a recording of a transmission a crazy clown lady sent out," Dr. Jackson says. "We've pretty certain Apophis is dead for good this time."

"Well, at least there's that bit of good news," you shake your head, and turn to stare up at the Stargate. "Somehow, though, I get the feeling we've just ended one enemy to get another."

"You don't know the half of it, George," Jacob remarks, glancing up at the Gate as well. "But, hey, you know what they say, two steps forwards, one step back. Clowns to the left of us and jokers to the right and here we are, stuck in the middle."

"That's pretty much par the course, though, isn't it?" Dr. Jackson asks, turning to look up at the Gate with you.

"Something like that, Dr. Jackson," you frown. "Something like that."

Chapter End Notes

That was a lot of italics.

...And now we start getting into one of the plot arcs I've been waiting to launch into for *quite* a while. :33
ALT:05X03: A Walkabout

Chapter Summary

Xefros wanders about while working on some internal stuff.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Within the desert, the flames of a large funeral pyre burn brightly beneath the Alternian night sky during a rare, double new moon.

Joey Claire stands at the base of it, holding her other self's laser cutter with both hands. "Tonight," She starts, "we honor the dead of a future now prevented. We've changed the future, but we should not forget that it happened in the first place. That we all came so close to death shouldn't be ignored or forgotten. So tonight, let's give our thanks that we received a warning that let us prevent that future."

And with that, she turns and gently tosses the laser cutter into the flames of the burning fire- there's a snap, and crackling pop, and then the flames explode, and the landscape all around changes from one particular desert to another. This time, a single pale moon resides in the sky as the locals celebrate a successful uprising.

A girl moves into your line of sight- Baizli Soleli. What does she want now?

As it turns out, you. In a tent. Alone.

There's kissing, and much mashing of teeth, and--

Your name is Xefros Tritoh and you awaken with a jolt within your recuprecoon in your hive's respite block on Diaspora.

Damn it all. That horrible nightmare/dream again.

You pull yourself out, and grimace at the mess you're making with the slime.

Stupid clowns getting inside your head even with the Sopor Slime.


DIASPORA DATE: 8/22/0001.

"Hey, Mierfa!" You wave at the cerulean blooded girl sitting outside on the porch of the hive she shares with her Matesprit- your Moirail. "Is Joey around?"

"Sorry, she and Polypa are off see if there's anything else they can blow up right now," Mierfa
answers with a shake of her head. "They 'say' it's for making another Arai Colony for all the temporally displaced Arai the other Joey brought back, but, just between me and you?" She laughs. "I think blowing up rock quarries are just sort of their thing at this point. One of 'em ramps it up, the other either ramps it down or ramps it up even more, the other tries to do the exact opposite, and then it goes back and forth until something else explodes."

"Just as long as they don't blow up anything important," you say, "that's fine with me. I'll just come back some other time, then." And so you turn to leave.

"Hey- what is it you wanted to talk about with Joey anyways?" Mierfa asks.

You stop, and weigh the options. "Well, it's kind of a Moirail thing?"

"Fair 'nough," Mierfa muses, "but as your Moirial's Matesprit, I feel that I should help whenever Joey can't. So if you wanna talk, but not in much detail? I'm here if you want."

"Thanks, Mierfa," you glance back over your shoulder at her and smile. "Actually, there is one thing I'd like you to check for me. Something only you can do."

"Oh?" Mierfa raises an eyebrow. "What's that?"

You turn around, sigh, and say, "So, uh... I had this moment with Baizli while we were in the past and I keep having these weird dreams jumping back to it. And I figure, either... I'm either dwelling way too hard on it, in which case I need to talk with Joey about it, or Baizli put some kind of mind whammy on me, and, well..."

You shrug, haplessly. "I've got no way to deal with THAT."

"C'mon inside," Mierfa says, getting up from her chair. "I'll do a thorough check to see if there's anything hiding away."

"Thanks," You say, smiling, and following her inside.

You can see Joey's design influence in the interior of the Living Room here. It's very not Alternian. A couch here, a sofa there, it's all stuff that's from Earth. Joey bought it at one point or another and captchalogue it for bringing through the Stargate.

In a corner, though, there are paintings and pictures in frames that haven't quite yet made it onto the walls despite there being obvious places for them. They're almost all featuring a woman who looks a lot like how Joey did as a human. She told you they're of her mother when she was performing her job.

Earlier, you'd have guessed that Joey was debating actually putting them up for certain reasons, but now, seeing them still sitting in that corner, gathering dust, and especially after watching her alternate future self die like that...

You're pretty sure she's avoiding putting them up for a completely different reason. You'll have to bring that up later... well, maybe. You'll deal with her problems after you're sure you've settled this little nagging detail of yours- a little selfish, maybe? But if you are compromised mentally somehow...

Mierfa directs you to sit down on the floor across from her, and you do so.
"So, I haven't sensed anything off with you since you and Joey got back," she says, "but that doesn't mean that there isn't something there. Just means it might not be direct mind control like I've dealt with before, so... we'll see what I can find, right?"

"Alright," you nod.

"Stay still." Mierfa then reaches out with one hand and plants it against your forehead.

You stay as still as you possibly can.

Still. Stock still. So very still...

You're not sure how long you sit there for, but you're pretty sure you dozed off to sleep again at some point because you jolt awake to the memory of Baizli biting down on your ear.

"Oh- Geeze-" Mierfa's laughing as she pulls her hand away from your head. "I don't know what the hell that was, but it sure as hell wasn't any kind of mind control or clown chucklevoodoo there, Xefros."

"So..." You hang your head. "It's just my problems then?"

"Preeety much," Mierfa nods. "You wanna hang around and wait for Joey to come back?"

"Nah," you shake your head and get to your feet. Urgh. Your limbs feel all tingly from sitting still for a long time. "I'll think things over for a bit now that you've cleared up that one little bit of confusion that's been bugging me, then I'll come back and talk with Joey later."

You leave their hive and head over to the Arai colony through nothing other than that's the route one takes to get to town. Polyarch Bec is sitting pretty and center like he always does, and Arai swarm around with the usual glee.

Bec gives a sort of friendly chipper wave with a small grouping of Arai Beetles, and you wave back. Ignoring the fact for a moment that you yourself grew up from some form of bug, there's something just odd about the idea of a giant bug waving at you with a bunch of smaller bugs.

You then head on down the road back to the Stargate, and find, oddly enough, that there are two workers putting down paved stones to officially turn this sort of dirt road into a more actual proper road.

Rust Bloods, like you, you note from their signs- both of which seem to be from the Standard Alternian Alphabet of signs rather than the Stargate glyphs the former Cave dwellers and now Diasporans use. Oddly, they seem... familiar. You know these two from somewhere.

"Oh! Hey, Xefros!" the girl of the pair waves at you, grinning excitedly. The boy of the pair just acknowledges your presence with a nod, then, plants his shovel's spade head deep into the dirt to clear the way for another paved stone. "Long time no see!"

It's the voice that cinches it- the girl is RHUBEE XAOLOMN, and the guy is FOZZER VELYEST and they were trolls who lived in your old neighborhood along with you and Dammek before the
Heiress burned it to the ground.

Fozzer is, professionally, what people on Earth would call a GRAVE DIGGER- you wouldn't make the comparison normally but you just had the other Joey on the mind and you and your Joey did discuss the normal funeral rites for Earth at some point recently. You have no idea if he has any hobbies or does anything else besides dig holes in the ground.

Rhubee, though... You have no idea what she does professionally, but as "Just a hobby," she was on your STICKBALL LEAGUE team, and pretty damn fast too. She'd frequently make use of her Psionics to boost her own body to speeds that made her look like a blur of crimson red on the field. Whenever using that ability OFF the field, she tends to add a bunch of FLOWER PETTALS to the display. You have no idea why, and you never bothered to ask.

Of all the people to run into on a day like today, you just had to run into the oddest pair of opposite personalities in existence. Fozzer's a troll of few words, and Rhubee, if you get her started, is a hurricane of sentences. Fozzer takes his time to ensure a job is done right, and Rhubee rushes into things.

"Hey? Diaspora To Xefros!? Come iiiin, Xefros!"

And of the two of them to possibly notice you've got shit on your mind, and ASK, it'd be Rhubee.

"Oh, sorry, yeah, just-" You laugh nervously and divert the conversation onto them. "I was surprised to see you two, is all. What are you doing here?"

"Digging," Fozzer answers, "Paving." He then reaches out and nudges Rhubee with the handle of his shovel. "Paving!" he stresses.

"Right right!" Rhubee ZIPPS away, appearing over at some cart full of stones a long ways down the road, and then ZIPP! She drops the stone down into the hole in the road. "So, uh, yeah! We're just doing a bit of community service!"

"You couldn't get posted to an Offworld team that was combat oriented, could you?" You ask.

"...What!? Noooo! Of course I could!" the girl lies so blatantly. "I just chose to help Fozzie out with his job! That's what friends do!"

You glance at Fozzer, who shakes his head, confirming your suspicions.

"Okay," you say, pretending to buy the lie. "So... community service?"

"Well, it's a well traveled dirt road and Matron Porrim requested that it get some proper footings because other people might want to settle on the road- so-!" Rhubee explains, going a mile a minute and probably not even breathing as she does such. "-here we are doing the digging and paving for a proper cobblestone road! How cool is that?"

"And where did you get the road stones from?" You ask, genuinely curious.

"Oh, well, apparently there's some girls clearing out rock quarries by blow things up on their hate dates and there's a HUGE surplus of stones just ready to be carved up into tiny little bricks and laid into the road!" Rhubee explains. "So we've just been collecting them from those places whenever things aren't being all BANG BOOM explody!"
Ah. Yes. That makes sense. Joey and Polypa's hunt for a new Arai Colony place has probably wrecked a bunch of nearby rock quarries as it is. "We've been working on other roads up until today though!" Rhubeet continues on, barely even pausing to give you time to think. "So! What's up with you, Xefros!?!"

Annnnd damn it, you're right back around with your problems.

"Just, taking a walk," you lie. "Gonna go check in with Alternia and see what my work schedule's like for the week." Although, that's probably a good idea now that you think about it, so is it really a lie?

"Oh! Okay!" Rhubeet nods. "So, maybe we can catch up later?"

...Why??

Urgh. Okay, fine.

"Sure, I guess," you nod, wave, and prepare to abscond. "See ya around!"

"Later!!"

Damn it. You just know she's going to start trying to pry into your life again. You've got enough problems to deal with right now as it is without someone ELSE making things complicated.

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Things on the All Your Base are- as always anymore, it seems- a chaotic mess of people rushing this way and that, this team or that team prepping for this mission or that mission.

Still, you find a way to get up to the bridge and find Okurii, surrounded by people vying for her attention. You aren't even sure how to interject yourself into this mess. So you consider coming back to talk with her la-

"Oh, hey Xefros," Okurii suddenly says inbetween tearing her attention between one important duty thing and another important duty thing. She looks frazzled, but somehow in her element at the same time. "If you're here for- No! I said we do not send anyone after that freighter, it's too heavily guarded!" She yells at someone else's proposed team loadout. "IF you're here for your team's assignments for the week, I'm afraid I'm still sorting that out- come back and check in another few hours and- Oi! Oi! What the hell did I say about us NOT riling up the giant beasties on M6R-237?!!"

You go check what's cooking in the cafeteria.

You're not sure what you were expecting, but it definitely wasn't the place being D-------EAAAD as a ghost.

That is to say, there's a sign that says "CLOSED FOR CLEANING- ONLY SALADS AVAILABLE!" and there's only like, three people in here, and two of them are flirting behind the counter in the kitchen (Boldir Lamati and Diemen Xicali) while they ostensibly should be cleaning whatever needs cleaning. The third is Daraya, sitting quietly at a table and picking at an EARTH SALAD with a fork.
Well, you guess you both chose a bad time to come looking for a hot meal.

Oh well, you go sit down next to her.

"Sup, Daraya?" You ask.

"Hey, Xefros," she answers, poking at her salad some more. "The moons, usually, but I'm considering throwing this salad into the sky though."

"Why?" You ask.

"I don't really like salads, but it's the only thing Diemen's got ready on short notice," Daraya shrugs. "I'm eating it anyways."

"And the fact that it lets you poke wistfully at it while dealing with internal emotional turmoil doesn't hurt either, I'll bet," you mutter.

Daraya fixes you with a shocked expression. "Wh-What?"

Oh. Right. This thing.

"You know that just about everyone other than Tyzias is painfully aware of how you're feeling, right?" You ask.

"...I..." Daraya blinks, then asks, "Am I really that obvious?"

"Mmh," you nod.

Boldir takes a moment to yell from the kitchen- "IT WAS OBVIOUS EVEN WITHOUT MIND READING!"

Even Diemen chimes in, "YES! VERY!"

"Damn it," She sighs- THUNK- and then stabs her fork through her salad hard enough to rattle the plate. "I thought... urgh. Stupid. I thought I wasn't that obvious."

"If it's any consolation," you say, "I'm dealing with some quadrant issues myself- on the pitch side of things rather than pale."

"I find it hard to believe that you've got a hate crush on someone," Daraya muses. "Mind if I ask who?"

"Well, ah..." Well, there's no getting around it given Boldir's nearby. "Baizli."

"Soleli?" Daraya raises an eyebrow. "Barzum's twin??"

"Uh, yeah," you nod.

"Why the fuck would you have a hate crush on her?" She asks, frowning.

"Uh, well..." You shake your head. "Honestly it's a bit of a long story."
"I've got time," Daraya says. "But even discounting that for just a moment. Can I ask what the hell is it with these Clown girls that draw people's attention!? Barzum and Tyzias, you and Baizli. It's ridiculous."

"I dunno about Tyzias and Barzum, but..." You sigh. "Well, lemme fill you in."

And so you tell her about what happened in Giza, Egypt.

Exiting back through the Stargate to Diaspora, schedule for the week in hand, you consider your options of where to go next...

There's a distant boom in the distance, and you think that means Joey and Polypa are probably still at it so you decide to head into town for a little bit.

People are out and about living their average every day lives, hell, there's even...

Seriously?

There's even some olive blooded girl with cutsey bunny ear horns being proposed to by a ostentatiously dressed gold blooded guy with tiny, nubby goat horns to be his Matesprit.

"I- ah- If you truly want to be with a girl like me..." Bunny ear horns girl says, bowing in acceptance. "Please take care of me."

"EEEEEHHH!!???"

Eh? You turn and spot two other girls- a teal blood and a bronze blood- practically falling out of a bush in response to this sudden declaration of love.

Well- you guess they both were hoping to be the guy's matesprit. Still, not like it's the end of the world for them- the guy might still have at least two other quadrants open.

...Then again, if this were on Earth though and a monogamous wedding proposal, this would probably be a whole lot more heartwrenching.

Meanwhile, on a parallel world where people live on flying Castle Ships...

"Anaka," a school aged boy named Sasahara begins, "I know this is sudden, but will you marry me?"

"EEEEHH??" The girl- Anaka- squeaks in surprise, then, as a flush goes over her face, she shyly replies, "I...If you'll have me... Please take care of me??"

In response, two girls- one with blue hair and one with pink hair- jump out of a bush and shriek in dismay- "EEEEHHHH!!????"

Pausing to observe this scene caused by various members of the SENIOR CLASS of her school, one
Keiko Ayano stares on, and remarks, "Well, I didn't see that twist coming."

And thus her curiosity resolved, she walks along to go to her hidden lab where a Quantum Mirror lays hidden away.

Eh, but what do you care about that? It's not your quadrant options being messed with by other people making weird choices.

You walk along and decide to check in on the GRUB DEN- the place where all the tiny little grubs are soon set to PUPATE into their more grown up forms. You've wondered in recent days what these little Grublings must think of their lives right now. They've literally known nothing else than traveling through a Stargate after being hatched, and then living some rather CONFLICT FREE LIVES.

Certainly, it's been nicer than what this kid, SHIFU, has been through.

Born to GOA'ULD PARENTS for eventual use as a HOST by one of those Goa'uld, then kidnapped something like three times over by now. ...And then the DAD got his head cut off by a Clown. So... Yeah.

At least it doesn't seem like anyone else besides certain KEY PEOPLE know that the kid is here on Diaspora.

The reason your thoughts shift so suddenly towards that side of things is because his CARETAKER, that woman GANOS LAL, is presently talking with one of the MATRONS who oversees the grubs. You're not going to get involved in any kind of discussion about BIRD BATHS, though.

That just... that's so really out of context you have no idea what to make of it so you just try to forget about it and wander around town some more. Eventually, though, after who knows how long meandering and puttering about doing nothing, you find yourself walking back up along the newly paved road leading up to the Arai colony.

No sign of Fozzer or Rhubee, thankfully. It seems like they ran out of stones because the new road seems to stop about three-fourths of the full path.

Bec and his Arai hands wave as you pass by again, and you head over to Joey and Mierfa's cabin.

Mierfa's out on the porch again, but this time reading a book. "Hey again, stranger," she smiles. "Sup?"

"The sky," you answer, quoting Daraya. "And also possibly a salad plate in Alternia's orbit?"

"Uh..." Mierfa blinks. "Well, okay! That's different."

"Joey back yet?" You ask.

"Not just yet," Mierfa answers, "but she did radio saying she was on her way back. I let her know you dropped by earlier."

"Thanks," you say. "I'll just wait in the front room."
"Sure," Mierfa nods. "I'll let her know when she gets here."

You sort of zone out on one of the couches for what's probably a few minutes, trying to get your thoughts in order before Joey returns. Honestly, you've been mulling this over all day and haven't really gotten anywhere with sorting things out yourself. So... yeah.

As seems to be the theme of the day, Joey returns home before you really get any semblance of order to your thoughts.

"Hey, Xef," she smiles, looking thoroughly happy with how her day has gone so far. "Sup?"

"A salad in the sky," you answer, sitting up and moving over so she can sit down next to you.

"Hah, funny," Joey laughs, heading over to sit down. "So... Mierfa says you've been dealing with something thoroughly Moirail-needs-ey?"

"Yeah," you answer. "Uh, so... Remember how back in Giza you found me and Baizli exiting a tent that morning after we survived everything and you ask what was going on and we said nothing?"

"It wasn't nothing," Joey less guesses, more gives you confirmation she probably realized what had happened. "Spades or Hearts?"

"Yeah," You sigh, hanging your head. "Spades."

"Sheesh," Joey has a half-amused, half concerned look on her face as she says tat. "You sure do know how to pick 'em, Xef."

"More like she picked me in this case," you lament. "Though, I'm pretty sure I did start it with that stunt I did on the Destiny to distract Naihte."

"The little flying ghost doll toy?" Joey asks.

"Yeah," you nod. "Baizli said, and I quote, 'That was some grade A spook haunting and would've been perfect in a carnival.'"

"And you obviously replied something to deny that," Joey guesses, and you nod. "And she obviously replied to that, and it just snowballed from there?" You nod again. "...Wow. Well, okay. Do you actually Like-Hate her?"

"I.. guess?" You shrug. "I mean, it was kinda, pretty much a one night thing it felt like. But I can't stop dreaming about it. I thought, maybe she put some kind of whammy on my head, but I had Mierfa check and there's nothing even vaguely mind-controlling inside my head."

"Mmh, I see..." Joey trails off for a moment. "Do you think Baizli Like-Hates you?"

"Can't imagine she wouldn't," you reply. "But, hell, outside of Trizza randomly selling us information, when do we even see them? Or her, specifically. She's not exactly the type to hang around unless someone's given her a reason."

"And she does seem to have let the matter of her sister drop after she realized what their telepathy had done to her," Joey observes. "So... Yeah, that is kind of a problem, isn't it?"
"Extremely," you sigh.

"Well," Joey says, "there's not much we can do about it right now."

"Yeah," you nod. "I guess I'll just have to deal with it over time. S'not like I HAVE to leap head first into a full time relationship with her right away, right?"

"Sure," Joey nods, then, she looks over at the pile of paintings. "Hey, would you want to help me move some paintings while you're here? It'd be something to distract you, at least."

"Yeah, sure," you get up from sitting after Joey does, and head over to the pile of paintings leaning up against the wall. "So, how'd your hate-date with Polypa go?"

"Pretty good," Joey says, peering at the paintings and moving a few to look behind them. "We found a quarry that should work pretty well for the alt-timeline Arai."

"That's great news," you say, smiling.

"Yeah," Joey nods, then selects a painting. "This one."

You lift it out with your Psionics, and carry it over to the center of the room while Joey looks for a spot on the wall to place it on. This particular painting seems to have the elder Miss Claire posing in some weird pose you'd assume is tied to this BALLET thing. Her right leg is bent up so that her foot is by her left knee, and her arms are held up in an arc over her head.

Looking closely, you can see this was probably done in the woman's earlier part of her career, as she looks staggeringly like Joey does as a human. You'd almost think they were the same person.

"Gimme a second to put the nail in the wall," Joey says, climbing up onto a couch and decapychologuing a nail and hammer. A quick THUD, and she nods for you to hang the painting onto the wall.

It's all too easy to place the painting's wire on the nail, balancing it takes about a moment though. But then it's done.

Joey steps back and stands next to you as she looks at it, a contemplative look on her face.

"You know," she begins. "When I was little, I used to look in the mirror and think, 'I want my reflection to look just like her.' And I'd also think, 'I want to be a Ballet Dancer just like her' too. But..." She frowns as you look at her. "I'm not so sure now. I dunno if I told you this or not but when I lost the Bracelet and I couldn't turn back, one of the things running through my head was 'now I'll never look like Mom.'" She pauses, then adds, "Which is stupid, because I never changed any of my facial structure with Shaper- I just added horns and changed my skin and eyes and..." She shakes her head. "Honestly, though, is it selfish of me now if I say I want to look more like my mom than my dad because I've got the whole powers thing already to deal with?"

"Eh," You mull it over. "Well, you do have the unique experience of having your father die, and be cloned back to life as someone younger than you, so I guess that's already something way outside the normal expectations of things."

You receive a laugh in response.
"Heh. Yeah. I still have no idea how to deal with that," she says. "Honestly, it's..." She shakes her head. "I dunno. Lately I don't know what I want to be anymore. But after watching that other me die, after she told me how she felt like an outsider watching everyone die... Honestly, it feels like... It feels like that side of me has died for good and if I ever take up Rose's offer and shift back to human it'd be like... I dunno. Trying to replace someone who shouldn't be replaced."

"Huh." You muse, "Well, that kind of mentality's common with most people when it comes to their Ancestors."

"It is?" Joey asks.

"Yeah, depending on who you ask, even within the same blood caste, people'll give their Ancestors different levels of respect. On one extreme are the people who think they're supposed to do everything their Ancestor did and act like the second coming of 'em, on the other are those who think that the Ancestor thing is just hogwash and pretend it doesn't exist, and somewhere in the middle is everyone else."

"Does it tend to scale with the blood castes though?" Joey asks.

"Well, yeah," you say, "the full out Ancestor worship is pretty common among High bloods, I think, and low bloods tend to ignore the Ancestor thing, with mid bloods being caught in the middle." You shrug. "Honestly, I think the middle perspective is the best. Your Ancestors did important things, and you should recognize that, and maybe want to emulate them a bit? But... you shouldn't do it at the expense of what makes you, you. Y'know?"

"...Yeah," Joey nods. "I think I get it. I guess it's different for me, though, since in this case I'm getting that kind of feeling from thinking about replacing a dead me instead of a dead ancestor?"

"Yeah," you shake your head. "Man, are our lives screwed up."

"Tell me about it," Joey sighs.

You two then spend the next twenty minutes hanging paintings around the hive while chatting about random ass topics, including the sudden appearance of Rhubee Xaolon.

"Oooh, her," Joey flinches. "She kinda reminded me of six year old Jude on a sugar rush. Except, like. Constantly."

Six...? Oh, right. Earth years.

"That sounds like Rhubee alright," you sigh.

"Still, at least that explains why she was lurking around the rock quarries the last few days," Joey says. "I thought she was just a fan of big explosions."

"...Huh," you muse on that. "I never got that impression, but... well... Damn. That is a disturbing thought."

"How come?" she asks.

"...Let me tell you about the last game we played together," you say, and then willingly unbox that
noodle incident of a STICKBALL GAME.

Literally, noodle incident. Lots of noodles involved. You shudder just remembering it.

Still, you feel better after finishing getting that off your chest, which is more than you could say when you woke up this morning.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this chapter took so long, there was a lot of stuff to work out and I didn't have a lot of time this weekend to work on it.

In other news, two voice actors from one of my favorite anime, NICHIJOU, got married, and the manga artist who did the manga that anime was based on drew a cute little short sequence... which I then referenced twice in this chapter because why the hell not.

Also, hey, random Keiko appearance! It's been, what, since the first chapter this Act since she and/or Silica appeared in a named appearance.

EDIT: Forgot to clarify, incase anyone asks, yes, Rhubee is a Trollification of Ruby from RWBY.

DIASPORA DATE: 9/18/0001.

The Colonel and the Jaffa approach the Archaeologist looking at the pillar covered in unfamiliar text.

"Hey, Daniel, I know it's your first day back officially in the field and all," The Colonel speaks in an unfamiliar tongue, "but how much longer do you think it'll be to translate all of this?"

"Uh... Days? Weeks? Months?" The Archeologist doesn't sound like he has any more of a clue than you do. "It's a language I'm not entirely familiar with and some of this text is pretty worn down with weather erosion so..."

"So by lunch?" the Colonel asks.

"...Yeah, sure, I guess I could take a break by then," the Archeologist shrugs.

You follow the Colonel as he enters the weapon chamber.

"Carter," he starts talking to the Scientist. "What've we got?"

"No clue, Sir," she answers. "Jolinar thinks it might be some Ancient weapon of some kind. The technology doesn't match anything else we've found on this planet so far."

"Well whatever it is? Just don't turn it on," The Colonel wisely says.

"Right," the Scientist nods. "Not sure that's even possible, but I'll make sure not to turn it on."

"Good," the Colonel says. "Teal'c and I are going to go search the town, see what's up. Radio if you find anything."

"Will do," the Scientist nods.

And with that, the Colonel leaves.

You focus your attention on the Scientist, and observe her for a moment.

She's smart, yes, very smart. And pretty too. But she's oh so very smart. She's looking at the control
crystals for the weapon, and is looking for the Power Source.

She won't find it. You destroyed it so long ago.

You wonder if she'll mind too terribly if you go down to say hello?

You move out from around the weapon and drift towards her.

"What?" She suddenly asks out loud, and you stop. "No, I don't think the Goa'uld destroyed this. They'd have taken the whole thing rather than just leave it."

...What did she say? You heard the word Goa'uld, but... it was dismissive.

There's a long pause, the Scientist continues to work on things.

You consider moving to approach again...

"Oh! The power crystal is gone. Someone wanted this non functioning, but still intact." She pauses. "Yeah, I agree. It's definitely sabotage. A survivor after whatever happened to the people here happened?"

Is she... talking with someone? You don't hear another voice speaking, and this lack of understanding you have for her language is frustrating.

You slide out a gentle reach towards her, edging closely to try and talk to her directly...

You brush against her mind and, first and foremost, find the language center. As you skim through and gain understanding of the previous conversations you just heard, you're discovered by the two presences within the Scientists' head.

[Oh, hello now, what is this?] One of them looks at you, and then the Scientist jerks back away from your invisible presence.

"Who's there?" The Scientist asks, drawing a- a... is that a Goa'uld stunner weapon? "Show yourself!" She demands.

You...

Okay.

You make your form visible on the normal light spectrum.

"Oh..." her eyes widen. "You're an Ascended being, aren't you?"

...What? She knows about your kind?

"Were you sent to deliver a message or something?" she asks. "If you're looking for Ganos Lal, we can't say where she is for security reasons."

...Who?

You try to ask her what she means by that, but it seems you only gained enough understanding of
her language to understand what they're saying, and not enough to speak it. Your native tongue doesn't translate to her ears. And yet...

"What the... Is that Ancient?" she frowns, then taps some kind of small black box, "Daniel? Can you come in here for a minute? I've got something that requires your expertise."

"Just a moment," comes the reply from its speakers.

"Carter?" The Colonel's voice echoes over the box. "What's up?"

"It's a... 'Carter' pauses. "I think it's an Ascended being, Sir. It's all glowing and made out of light and I think it just spoke in Ancient."

"We're on our way back," the Colonel says, curtly.

Well, this has rapidly gotten out of hand.

Soon, the Archaeologist enters the Weapon Chamber, eyes widening as he sees your form.

"Well, hello there," he says. "Ascended being?"

"I think so," Carter says.

The Archaeologist approaches you, and then speaks, almost sort of hesitantly, in your own language, {
"Can you understand me?"
}

"Yes," you tell him, very much surprised. {
"I can. Do you understand me?"
}

"Well that's a surprise," the Archaeologist says. "It's definitely speaking the language Skaara observed Jack speaking and I heard Ganos occasionally speaking while we were on Alternia."

"Who is Ganos Lal?" you ask.

"...It just asked who Ganos is," the Archaeologist reports.

"What do you think it wants?" Carter asks the man. "If it doesn't know who Ganos is, then why come contact us?"

You point out that you can understand their language, just not speak it, and also that you are a he and not an it, and the Archaeologist pales. You then tell them that you're... very lonely.

"He says he can understand us just fine," the Archaeologist answers. "He also says that he's... uh, hold on one second, could you repeat that a bit slower?"

You do so, and the Archaeologist nods in understanding. "So that's how it is," he says, understanding.

"What is it, Daniel?" Carter asks.

"He says after helping the people of this planet construct this weapon, in defense against the Goa'uld," 'Daniel' relates your story. "The people here tried to use it to conquer other planets, and so The Others intervened, destroying everyone, and banishing him for his actions." He motions a hand
out towards you, "He's been alone here ever since."

"That's horrible," Carter says.

"What is?" asks the Colonel as he and the Jaffa finally rejoin the group- barely even flinching at the amount of light you're putting into the otherwise dimly lit room.

"Um, ah..." 'Daniel' looks at you, and asks for your name. You tell him. "Orlin' here- oh please tell me I said that right- ran up against the Others and their non interference policy."

"Ah, that," The Colonel muses. "So, what does 'Orlynn' want?"

"Company, I think," Daniel says. "Also, probably a warning about NOT poking around with a device that the Others destroyed a whole civilization over?"

"Yeah, we probably don't want the NID messing around with this thing either then," The Colonel says. "Carter? Think a staff blast could irrevocably wreck this thing?"

"Fairly easily, Sir. And it'd be safe too, since the power source is missing," Carter steps aside, and motions towards a rack of exposed crystals.

The Colonel nods to the Jaffa, and he aims his Staff weapon at the rack and- PCHOO! -the crystals shatter in a mild explosion.

...You suddenly realize that simply removing the Power Source probably wasn't enough to destroy this device.

"One more control panel over there," Carter motions at the other crystal array, and- PCHOO! There it goes too.

"Is there anything else?" The Jaffa asks.

You suggest destroying the crystalline ornament spike at the top as well, and a moment of translation later- PCHOO! That too is destroyed, up in smoke.

The weapon is forever ruined now.

You have no idea what to do now that this has transpired.

Then, Carter makes a suggestion.

---


DIASPORA DATE: 9/24/0001.

With your energy form disguised by being shifted into invisibility, you've followed SG-1 to Earth, and stick around for a while until Carter next visits Alternia- a planet in a whole other galaxy.

Soon, you're taken to meet the woman, the former Ascendant GANOS LAL, in a private room on a
crashed space ship.

{"Well, well,"} She smiles as she speaks in your native tongue, {"Orlin. I've heard of you. Never expected to run into you personally, however."}

{"I'm afraid you have me at a disadvantage,"} you admit. {"I don't know who you are, other than that you were once an Ascended being."}

She smiles. {"Tell me, Orlin, have you heard the story of the dance between the Wizard Merlin and the Mage Morgan Le Fey?"}

What...? But then that would mean...

Oh.

{"You're Merlin? I thought you would have had a beard,"} You ask, and for some reason that makes her laugh... a moment later you realize your mistake.

You'd blush in embarrassment if you were able.

Chapter End Notes

Orlin... what a goofball that guy. But he's got a good heart, though.
Chapter Summary

Jude and Cassandra get upgrades.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.


DIASPORA DATE: 10/15/0001.

Your name is JUDE HARLEY, and while John Egbert is, if you've done your math RIGHT, now 2, John Sheppard and the other time travelers have been 15 for a while now.

Time Travel makes for a large headache when it comes to sorting out birthdays. It just doesn't seem right that John Egbert is only 2. You feel like he should be older than that, but no matter how much you run the math...

It feels like something just doesn't match up.

If you didn't know any better, you'd guess that somewhere along the way the timeline got crunched up and super compressed by a LOT more than the truth of the matter- namely, time loops and things on Earth being at least a month behind everything else in the universe.

You're not going to worry about it for now, though, beyond the fact that you're going to surprise Cassandra with, what would be considered on Earth to be, an early birthday gift.

You've wizened up from your multiple searches trying to buy Joey CDs for Christmas, and instead are getting something else entirely, and are ordering even whole MONTHS ahead of her Birthday.

This way, if you get screwed over on shipping again, at the very least it should get here before the 'official' date for her 15th birthday party. Cassandra? 15? That means you'll also be 15 sooner or later or... Well, to be quite honest you might even have already gone PAST your actual birthday?? You honestly haven't been paying too much attention, and you think it might have just slipped you and everyone else by since you requested not to have a party this year following that disastrous time loop you were locked out of until you figured out what the hell to do about it.

Which honestly suits you just fine for reasons other than time shenanigans.

Things are busy here on Earth, and even MORE busy on Alternia, to the point it seems like nothing much is happening here on Earth at all!

Over there they're liberating planets and fighting angry clowns and looking, yet again, for a Supergate construction site.
Here? The most hair raising thing in recent days beyond John's Birthday was SG-1 accidentally sending a wormhole through a star and causing it to start to prematurely red shift! And before that? Some weird cloaking alien and Colonel O'neill got stuck behind on a Goa'uld planet.

But that's all besides the point.

Today is not about anyone else but you, this online website, and your mission to order your girlfriend a REFLECTING PRISM, just like the ones at school she's taken an interest in recently.

Now, if only you could tell how big the damned thing was by the pictures.

---

**EARTH DATE: APRIL 28TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 10/30/0001.**

Your name is Jude Harley, and you've somehow wound up with TWO (2) JUMBO SIZED REFLECTING PRISMS, a BAG FULL OF TINY, PRISM DICE, and finally. FINALLY. You've gotten your hands on the proper sized REFLECTING PRISM... But damn it all if the website didn't screw THAT up somehow too.

They gave you a ROSE QUARTZ CRYSTAL PRISM instead of a TRANSPARENT CLEAR QUARTZ CRYSTAL PRISM.

Back to the internet, you reluctantly sigh.

...You wonder how easy it would be to make one of these from scratch, though?

You eye the old model of Microwave in the Egbert home kitchen. Roxy DID say she's been meaning to replace it, after all...

Five hours of experimentation later, and somehow you ended up with a surprisingly large emerald crystal- formed into a perfectly cut shape despite you never taking an angle grinder to it in the first place.

This is actually a very disturbing turn of events when you think about it.

How the hell did THAT work!??

...Also, yeah, you tell Roxy as you show her the result of your several hours of impossible work, you're definitely going to need a new microwave.

Needless to say, your work is immediately taken to the SGC for Carter to fuss over, and you yourself get an MRI and brain scan for your troubles.

You honestly didn't even notice that you hadn't been wearing your glasses the entire time until Carter came in and asked how the hell you'd managed to make some kind of refracting array out of your glasses' lenses.
That's when you started to get just a little bit concerned.

**EARTH DATE: MAY 1ST, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 11/2/0001.**

You take the first Stargate to Alternia because you have to ask Joey a few questions about her own native, non Bracelet granted powers.

For a few moments after you finish explaining to your sister about what happened, she just sits there, processes, and then says, "I was wondering when that was going to kick in."

"What?" You ask her.

"Back in Giza, Future, uh, SG-1 let slip that you'd been doing some tech stuff for the SGC," she explains, not so neatly sidestepping name dropping someone specific. "Apparently it was power related and not just school training."

...Huh. "So... You get weird telekinetic fire stuff and I get, what? Super Tinker Powers?"

"Basically?" your sis shrugs. "I mean, I'm honestly glad you're getting something so mundane as being able to make reality warping technology beyond all Earthly comprehension! Meanwhile all I get are the freaky super fire powers that might actually hurt someone if I don't keep my emotions in check."

Ah. Yeah. There is that, isn't it?

Still, you try not to think about it that much even as you return to Earth and tweak the device you'd built to pump out a clear crystal prism instead of an emerald.

You just don't want to think about how the hell you're doing this at all. You know one day you're going to have to, but... damn it all, this is just too much for a soon to be 15-year-old!!

You get your Prism made, but, naturally because nothing ever goes right when it comes to you making plans and such for gift giving, Cassandra gets a cold. So you're probably going to have to wait until after she gets better to even give her the prism.

**EARTH DATE: MAY 10TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 11/11/0001.**

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and you're finally feeling better after what's probably been about a week of missed classes. You're still a bit cranky from being cooped up for so long, though.

Still, Jude comes to visit you once your Mother clears you for visitors, and he comes baring a ridiculous amount of gifts. You don't think KNIGHT is the right term for Jude, but you'll use it
anyways. What a Knight in Shining Armor, your Boyfriend is!

"So, apparently the Internet hates me ordering people gifts," Jude begins, "because here's what happened when I first ordered one. And then ordered a second one from a different seller thinking it'd be smaller- and it wasn't."

Two giant crystal prisms. Shiny and glittery.

Then he shows you a bag full of tiny prism dice. "This was the end result of someone clearly mislabeling their listing data, and then this..."

And then out comes the Rose Quartz prism. It's very pink, very shiny, and it's amazing.

"This is apparently either a manufacturing error, or someone's color blind," Jude frowns. "At this point, I got kinda mad. So I decided to make my own."

And then, he shows you the largest emerald you've ever seen.

"You made that?" You ask, staring at it. "How?"

"I, uh, took apart some stuff, and also my glasses," he admits.

"Well, that explains why you stopped wearing them so suddenly," you answer. "And why you were avoiding telling me what happened."

"Yeah, apparently that's my genetic super power," he tells you. "I can 'make things out of nothing!'"


"Mmh," he nods. "I was quite the conspiracy nut as a kid, you know!"

"I remember," you nod.

"Anyways!" And thus, Jude pulls out one final prism, "I figured out what was going wrong and here we are- one final prism for rainbow glitter effects!"

You hold the home-grown prism crystal up to the light and look at it. It's all perfectly triangular, and the edges look sharp, but feel strangely smooth. It's almost paradoxical in nature.

And Jude made it for you.

You smile at him, and say, "Thanks, Jude. I love it."

And then risking possibly getting him sick (Although your intuition tells you that he won't get sick from what you're about to do), you grab him by the shoulder, and pull Jude in for a kiss.

And it's either remnants the cold, or the fact that you're feeling so fondly because of him making such a large grand gesture, but either way you just feel so... so...

So warm inside!

And then the next thing you know, you're falling away from Jude as the ceiling light above you
sparks and explodes, and Jude looks absolutely horrified.

---

**EARTH DATE: MAY 11TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 11/12/0001.**

Your name is...

You're honestly torn.

On the one hand, your former persona of NIRRTI is practically screaming for JOY and SCIENCE!!

On the other, your current persona of KA'TURNAL is slamming her head against the wall of the elevator in frustration and confusion.

Literally, in the latter case, as you ride down to the 28th Floor.

You're fairly certain the affliction that's taken hold in Cassandra is a super powered strain of the "Mind Fire" that was common among the people of Hanka. From what you remember of your notes, the initial symptoms are the same- something easily mistaken as a cold seemingly in relapse before surging forwards and causing a person to faint.

The Villagers would send the afflicted into the forest and days later, they would either emerge unscathed or be found dead. The timing was genetic, though. It always happened around the SIXTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

You'd suspected there was a plant of some kind involved, or perhaps something in the ground water of a certain area? However, what you found was... It was evolution at its finest.

Adding your own work onto it though... in a few cases you'd either prevented the original retrovirus from manifesting specifically, the retrovirus ended up undoing your work, or, as it seems to be in Cassandra's case, somehow managed to get it triggered a whole year early.

On the one hand, the scientist in you wants to see how this turns out by playing dumb and letting it run its course, even if it results in the death of a girl you've somewhat come to tolerate.

On the other hand, the nurse you've played wants nothing to do with it and wants to end this right here and now and save the girl, research be damned.

Of course, the only thing stopping you from ending this besides your conflicted internal turmoil is the fact you don't have the right equipment on hand. Sure, you've got access to a handheld healing device, but... you're missing that D.N.A. TUNER that you'd left on your lab on Hanka, and that had almost certainly been destroyed or lost to the chaotic whims of Apophis long, long ago.

And even if it hadn't, it's not like you can gate back to Hanka and fetch it.

You mull over your thoughts as the elevator doors finally open.

What to do, what to do.
Your name is...

Cassandra is still out cold, and you have no idea if she'll awaken or if she'll die or...

You know that if you let Cassandra die, that is a sure fire way to ruining any trust that has been built up over these long, few years with the SGC. Chances are you would be declared to have 'outlived your usefulness' and would get offed at the first convenient opportunity.

No matter from which perspective you look at it from, Cassandra Fraiser has to live. That shouldn't be up to debate between the two splintered persona that you've had to adopt over your long, long life.

Cassandra has to survive if you are to survive.

As far as opportunities come to either continue to cement your exile-induced role, or reject it and go back to your previous ways...

Damn it all.

Damn it all!!

This is the worst of the bunch. All of your thought ruined research on Hanka delivered to you on a silver platter and here you are, torn between wanting to see how this turns out by letting it go to its fullest extent and ruining a solid year's investment time of research in a single stroke.

...

...

...

Damn it all.

Your name is Ka'turnal, and as you knock on General Hammond's office door, you think you've come to an acceptable solution that should make both halves of yourself AND the people at the SGC happy.

"Enter," Hammond allows you in.

"I think I can cure Cassandra," you say as you enter the office, "but I don't have the technology to do it safely at the moment."

"What do you need?" Hammond asks.

You're once again Jude Harley and hoo boy what the hell have you gotten yourself into here.

That is to say, you're looking at Goa'uld-translated-to-English blueprints for what Ka'turnal called a D.N.A. TUNER- something she needs to stop whatever this is from happening to Cassie.
Carter and Ka'turnal are also working on a version of the device themselves, but since you recently proved how IMPLAUSIBLE your own recent on-the-fly invention work turned out, you've been given a shot at working on a version too.

Left Unsaid that some people, yourself included, aren't quite sure about Ka'turnal's motives, and, well...

You BUILD.

You build and you build and you try to get this thing working for Cassie's sake more than anything else.

Your name is JANET FRAISER, and your daughter has finally woken up, mumbling about going into a forest.

You already know what she's talking about, and try to soothe her, "You can't, Cassie. There's no Stargate on that planet anymore."

Of course, reminding her of that just makes Cassie fuss more, even as you brush some hair out of her eyes. Her skin feels startlingly hot to the touch.

That's when the Electro Magnetic fields her body is putting out seems to spike and the heart monitor connected to Cassie shuts off with a loud BANG from within its surface.

...Crap.

"Cassie, we're going to be moving you into the shielded isolation room," you tell her, trying to be as comforting as possible. "Your body is putting out an increasingly larger Electro Magnetic field. If you can figure out any way put a halt on it..."

She nods, mumbling what sounds like "I'll try."

You hope something gets done sooner rather than later.

---

**EARTH DATE: MAY 12TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 11/13/0001.**

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser and you wake up to the horrifying feeling of your blood on fire, your brain full of static, and your stomach full of empty.

And yet, despite all of that, somehow you feel... Sane. Disconnected somewhat.

John and Jade are sitting nearby, working on homework, and Rose and Argo are... pulling hairs off of your hairbrush?
"What're you doing?" you ask.

While John and Jade jump in surprise, Rose and Argo don't miss a beat.

"Trying to find older hairs on your brush with uncorrupted DNA on them," Argo says.

"If Jude, Carter, and Ka'turnal can't build a new D.N.A. Tuner thing," Rose says, a slight purr in her voice, "then I wanna see if I can fix you with some old hairs."

"...What's even happening to me that you need to do that?" You ask.

"I'll go get Doctor Fraiser, you tell Cassie," John says to Jade, getting up and heading out of the isolation room.

"Right," Jade nods, then heads over to sit down next to you. "Soo... Um. You know how basically at some point or another Nirrti genetically modified you to have the Goa'uld sense and the predictive stuff?" You nod. "Well... basically when she did that she somehow managed to shift some kind of internal timer for a Retrovirus already in your DNA to trigger a year early?"

"The Mind Fire," you realize. "The Rite of Passage everyone went through when they turned sixteen."

"Mmh," Jade nods. "Basically, it's rewriting your already rewritten D.N.A. to give you something else entirely."

"How... how does that even work?" You ask.

"Apparently it was the reason Nirrti was interested in your planet to begin with, besides all the other stuff," Jade says. "She was trying to figure out what it was and how it worked and what it was doing to your people." She pauses, then says, "John says it sounds a bit like the X-men story was acting itself out on your planet. The Aschen made it hard to find those after they took over so I don't even know where John read the story from, but I did some research and it seems right to me."

You process that, not really sure how to make sense of it.

"What's happening to me?" You decide to ask. "I mean, in the powers sense? I think I remember Mom mentioning some kind of field?"


"Oh! Come on!" Rose hisses all too suddenly, "This one's transforming too?? How!?? It's not even been connected to her for a month!! It's THAT dead and yet--- MRRRROWL!!!"

"Thorough little Retro Virus, isn't it?" Argo mutters.

"Um, yeah," Jade coughs. "Your body's putting out some kind of really big electro magnetic field. We had to move you to isolation because it's the only room shielded against it."

"I haven't hurt anybody, have I?" You ask.

"No," Jade shakes her head. "Thankfully the only stuff you've killed so far have been a few lightbulbs and a heart monitor!"
You blink. "That's... good, I guess."

And then your Mother enters the room with John trailing behind her ever so slightly and soon enough you're getting a thorough work over, including a pen light in the eyes.

Ow. You swear your mother has a strange fascination with these things.

You squint at the damned instrument of blinding and wish that it would just up and die like all those other lightbulbs you've apparently murdered so far.

Bizzarely, the penlight's bulb flickers out.

"Huh?" Mom tries turning it on and off again and... nothing. Then, she looks at you, and asks, "Cassie, did you just...?"

"It made my eyes hurt so I wanted it to stop," you answer, and lock eyes with your mother. "I think I made it stop."

Needless to say, you're told not to do that again when your mom pulls out a second pen light.

You notice Argo flinching at the sight of it, and you think you have a decent understanding of why. Stupid time loops.

A few hours later, you pick up on the sense of multiple SOMETHINGS coming towards you. All small and clustered together and sort of magnetic in how they draw your mental senses towards them.

And then Jack O'neill comes in with a travel chess board under arm- the source of all that weird senses.

"Hey, Cassie," he says. "Carter's busy, and I know it's not a Saturday, but you feel up for a game of Chess?"

"Sure," you nod.

As Jack sets up an arm table next to your bed, you focus on what you're pretty sure are the chess pieces inside the box.

Magnets? Are you sensing the magnets inside? Is this what it's like for Jade to sense how atoms and what not work in scale with each other, or how John can grab at the wind and make it do whatever he wants?

More importantly, what the hell is happening to your brain that you can feel magnets inside tiny chess pieces?

"So, Carter says she thinks between her, Jolinar, and Ka'turnal they've got this DNA Splicer thing probably working," Jack says as he opens the chess board up and starts placing the little chess pieces onto it and yes. Those are DEFINITELY what you're sensing here. "So if we're lucky we'll have
you out of isolation and back to normal within the day."

"Was I ever really normal, though, Uncle Jack?" You ask.

He eyes you warily for a moment, obviously considering his words before speaking, and then says, "Cassie, when I say 'get you back to normal', what I mean is..." He puts the Black Knight down onto the board. "We get you back to feeling healthy. Not being stuck in a hospital bed in an electro-whatever shielded room." More chess pieces get put down onto the board in rapid selection. "As for the word 'Normal'... This might be a bit advanced for your school levels right now, but in Geometry, basically an object like a line or a vector is called a Normal to another object if they're Perpendicular to each other."

"So..." You look at the Chessboard. "The Knight is perpendicular to the board, so it's normal to the board?"

"Right," Jack smiles. "But that's not how most people see the word normal. Usually these days people think it's meant to be Parallel to everything else, rather than Perpendicular."

"The Chess Pieces are Parallel with each other," you point out. That one Knight piece kind of reminds you of Jude, tilted slightly out of angle from the other Knight.

You want it.

"They are, yeah," Jack says as he finishes setting up the black pieces, and then starts setting up the white ones. "But think of it this way. The things people think on Earth right now- the lives they lead? - that's the board. We here at the SGC? We're the pieces on the board, Normal, yet not Normal. You following?"

"I think so," you frown, and then reach out with your mind and grab one of the Knights- it pops loose from the board and jumps into your hand. "So I'm this Knight right now? Off the board entirely."

Jack stares for a moment, then says, "Right. So when I say get you back to Normal..."

You send the Knight back to its place.

"We get me back to being oddly psychic about the future, and not weirdly magnet-telekentic?" You offer.

"Exactly," Jack nods, then finishes setting up the board. "...So how'd you move the horse?"

"It reminded me of Jude, so I wanted it, and it jumped into my hand," you say. "I think it's the magnet. I could sense them coming down the hallway."

"...The Hallway?" Jack glances at the doorway. "You mean THROUGH the shielded walls?"

"...I didn't even think about that," you feel a little bit terrified. "I'm turning into a monster, aren't I?"

"Nah," Jack shakes his head. "You're not..." he frowns. "Well, I was going to say sprouting horns, but that's kind of... Insensitive given certain circumstances." He then says, "But the point I was going to make is: You're still you in there. No matter what happens."
You process that, then nod. "So, do you go first or me?" you ask.

After the game, Jack left to deal with IMPORTANT SGC BUSINESS, he left you with the chess board incase someone else wanted to play with you. Meanwhile, you've kept hold of your little Black Knight piece in your hand.

Jude comes to visit you about half an hour later, looking tired, but determined.

"Hey, Jude," you smile at him, "you look tired."

"Yeah, I'm taking a break," he says, nodding, "but I'm determined to not rest until I finish what I'm working on."

"My Knight in Shining Armor," you smile, holding up the Knight piece, and then telekentically drifting it over to him.

Jude catches it with a look of awe and surprise on his face. "How...?"

"Magnets," you answer as you puppet the Knight piece out of his grip and orbiting around his head. "I'm using the EM field my body's making to move it around."

"It's almost like psychic grips back on Alternia," Jude muses, watching you move the Knight like that.

"I guess so," you say as you bring the Knight back to your hand.

"...If it weren't for the whole deadly D.N.A. rewriting thing," Jude says, "that'd be a pretty awesome parlor trick."

"Yeah. I guess it would be," you frown. "I'd love if I could keep it around without my body feeling like its on fire, but since I'll never be able to do it after they fix me..." You make the horse spin around above your open palm. "I think I'll get what fun in with it while I can."

Jude seems to be lost in thought after you say that for a few moments, then gives you a quick kiss on the cheek and then heads out with an inspired look in his eyes.

...Oh boy. You can barely get the faintest hint of a vibe about that turn of events, but with your body in the state it's in, you can't tell whether it's good or bad.

You hope it means what you think it means, though.

Your Knight starts to spin a little bit faster.

Another few hours pass after the chess game. The fuzzy static inside your head was starting to get unbearable, so you tried funneling it into the Knight's magnet as you spun it.

And thus it started spinning faster.
Spinning faster and faster and the fuzzy feelings inside your head became more manageable.

You keep doing that until Mom comes in to check on you again.

"Cassandra?" she asks, "What's going on?"

"It helps," you say. "I'm not sure why but it's helping keep my head clear." You let the Knight drop
to the table. "How much longer before they finish?" You ask.

"Jude keeps requesting weird parts from across the base," Mom says, reaching out to pick up the Knight. "Sam and Ka- OW!"

She drops the knight the moment her hand touched it.

"What?" You turn to look at her in concern. "What happened?"

"It... it was really hot," Mom says, cradling her hand. "It was like touching an oven burner."

You turn to look at the Knight, and quickly pick it back up with the weird magnetic-telekentic grip. Best not to let that fall out of your grip incase it lands on something flammable then.

"Anyways..." Mom shakes her head, "Sam and Ka'turnal think they've got their device almost done. They're taking a break right now to rest their eyes before going back to it to make sure they didn't make any mistakes."

"And Jude's still working?" You ask on a hunch.

"Yeah, he's been working pretty consistently, actually, other than one break he took earlier," Mom frowns. "It reminds me a bit of when Colonel O'Neill had the Ancient Database in his head. He knows what he's building, and is building it out of spare parts." She shakes her head. "I've tried telling him to take another break but he won't let it go. Stubborn kid."

"It just means he cares," you tell her. "He made me a Reflecting Prism for my birthday, actually."

"Oh, so that's why he cannibalized the Egbert house Microwave," Mom remarks, and you think there's a story behind it. "Anyways, speaking of rest," she changes subjects, "you're still running a high fever and you need your rest, Cassandra. This Retrovirus is putting your body under an intense amount of strain."

"I'll try and get some rest," you say. "After I burn some more static into the chess piece first."

"Fine, but I'll be back to check in on you in five minutes and if you're not trying to sleep by then...!" Your mother puts on her best Don't Annoy Me I Am Your Doctor Tone Of Voice. She means business!

You make sure you're done spinning the Knight around and are legitimately trying to fall asleep four minutes later.
Your name is Jude Harley and you've done it.

You've finished your version of this GLORIFIED D.N.A. TUNING FORK.

Now to test it.

Rose and Argo's HAIR COLLECTING may have gone to waste for them, but you're going to put it to damn good use now.

You take a large clump of hair in a bag that Rose confirmed had been thoroughly rewritten by the inbuilt Retrovirus, and you activate the thing you built that looks LESS LIKE THE DIAGRAM'D INSTRUCTIONS and more like a...

Well, it looks like a freaking MACGYVER'D INSTRUMENT OF DOOM more than any kind of Goa'uld Healing Device. Hell, you've barely got any NAQUADAH in this thing except for as a power source.

It also looks like a TUNING FORK that lets loose the most bizzarely ongoing pitched sound of \textit{DOOOOOOOOOOOOONOOOM} as it pulses a brief wave of purple over the pile of hairs in a bag.

You take it over to Dr. Fraiser for testing, and find that it worked.

No sign of the Retrovirus present in those hair samples at all... but you feel like there's something ELSE you're missing.

"Hey, Jude," Cassie smiles at you as you come to visit her in the isolation room. "Sup?"

"Just finished building a device to help save your life," you answer. "It's a bit... weirder, though." You frown. "After I visited you yesterday I kinda... went overboard on it. I think I improved it, somehow."

"Improved it how?" Cassie asks.

"Well..." You say, "I'm not sure, actually. It's just a feeling I've got."

She considers that for a moment, then says, "I think if they use it, things will turn out alright."

"That another one of your vibes?" You ask.

"No," she shakes her head and smiles, "just me having a feeling. I trust your work more than Ka'turnal's, even if Carter's been working on it too."

"Hah," you laugh, and you feel your face growing warm. "I just... hope it works."

It's a short while later that Carter and Ka'turnal have finished their version of the device and, though
they don't doubt that yours will work, plan on using theirs first.

It certainly looks more like the original blueprints than yours does, and when it hums, it does this weird "WengrraWengrra" sound than the pleasant DOOM sound yours makes.

It's still a purple glow though.

With Cassandra fretting on the bed, breathing a bit more heavily than sounds right, the procedure is given a go-ahead to, well, proceed.

"Jolinar, if you'll handle the healing device, I'll attempt to use the Tuner," Ka'turnal says.

Carter, or, well, Jolinar you suppose, nods, and in tandem, they activate their respective devices over Cassandra's body. The Healing Hand Device makes a soothing sound, but that weird, repeating "WengrraWengrra" sound from their Tuner just... seems weird.

It doesn't feel RIGHT somehow.

After about half a minute, during which Cassandra's breathing starts to level out, the device Ka'turnal and Carter had made suddenly sputters, shuts off, and starts to spark wildly.

"Ah! Damn it!" Ka'turnal swears as she throws the thing onto the nearest table to prevent herself from being lethally shocked as the thing continues to spark.

"It was the capacitor relay, wasn't it?" Carter asks, shutting off the healing device.

"Probably," Ka'turnal then swears a little pain filled sentence in Goa'uld as she massages at her hand. "It wasn't meant to handle that much of a charge over a long period of time."

"Was it working, though?" General Hammond asks from the observation room radio.

"Yes we were, Sir," Carter nods. "We were undoing the damage, but by now the Retro Virus will probably be starting back up to undo our undo if we don't get back to it."

"Good thing we have a backup device," you say, holding up the weirdly designed Tuning Fork you designed.

"Yes, well..." Ka'turnal sighs. "Alright, bring it over."

You hand it to her, and tell her just to press the trigger to activate it.

"Analogue instead of mental commands," Ka'turnal shakes her head. "We'll be lucky if it doesn't explode sooner."

You lock eyes with Cassandra, and give her a reassuring smile.

She nods quickly in thanks, and then braces herself as Carter and Ka'turnal start over with their respective devices.

The startling, bell ringing like sound of DOOOOOOOOOM rings out in a sustained pulse as the purple energy from your version of the Tuning device washes over Cassandra's body.
Another thirty seconds pass, and then another thirty seconds, and then another... but soon enough, Ka'turnal and Carter both shut off their devices.

They're silent, mulling over their own internal thoughts, and then Carter hands over the healing device and Ka'turnal does a pass over of Cassandra. Another few moments pass, and then...

"It worked," Ka'turnal reports. "Cassandra's D.N.A. has almost completely been restored to its pre-transformed state."

"Almost Completely?" Carter asks. "So I wasn't imagining it when it looked like Cassandra's surviving D.N.A. was using the Naquadah in her bloodstream to-?"

"Build some kind of cage that's containing the remains of the Retrovirus to specific places spread throughout her body?" Ka'turnal finishes the sentence. "No, you weren't imagining it."

Both of them turn to look at you, and Carter asks, "Jude, did you redesign the D.N.A. Tuner to work with Raw Naquadah in Cassie's Bloodstream?"

"...I dunno," you honestly answer. "Maybe I did. I kinda lost track of time at one point."

That answer gets you about several days worth of off and on grilling as Carter and Ka'turnal look over the footage of you building your version of the device and ask you what the hell you were thinking while working on it.

Honestly, you can't say for certain, because even YOU are wondering what the hell you did to that toaster to get it to act as some kind of harmonic resonator specifically tuned to Naquadah of all things.


DIASPORA DATE: 11/17/0001.

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and as you work on your homework in the base's regular infirmary, Jude finally saunters in, looking rather tired after all the SCIENCE TALK you're sure he went through.

"Hey, Cassie," he says, sitting down in a chair next to you. "Can't stay long. Wanted to check in. Roxy's grounded me for 'violating science with a toaster'."

"I... what?" you ask. "Is that really a thing you can be grounded for?"

"I dunno," Jude sighs. "I think she's mostly mad I took apart the Microwave even though she's been complaining about wanting to replace it for months now."

"Ah," you muse, then glance around to make sure nobody's looking, and float the Knight piece over to Jude.

"What?" He glances down at the Knight Piece. "...You can still...?" He looks over at you, horror drawing in his eyes.
You lean in and kiss him on the lips and hope that stifles any horror that might be brewing. Once you pull back, you whisper, "Containing the Retrovirus inside Naquadah cages lets me keep the new fancy powers without losing the old fancy powers I already had."

"And I designed that?" He asks, voice so quiet. It's either the shock or the fact that you whispered first.

"Yup," you nod.

"But I..." He pauses. "Wait. But I did. I didn't realize that was why I was designing it differently but that was what I wanted it to do on some level." His face goes pale. "I'm suddenly understanding what Joey meant by 'reality warping technology beyond all Earthly comprehension.'"

"Which is?" You frown a little.

"I dunno," Jude blinks. "It's reality warping technology beyond all Earthly comprehension."

"...Fair enough," you smile, and snatch the chess piece back in a more mundane manner even as you catch scent of more magnets in a row coming into range. And then you kiss Jude on the cheek. "Thank you, Jude Harley, for the wonderful gift."

And then a moment after your blood tingles with the sense of a Symbiote presence, Sam comes into the room, carrying the travel chess set in hand.

"Cassie, Jude," She smiles, though a little bit strained with Jude being here.

"I'll take that as my queue to leave," Jude says, getting up. "Time to go take being grounded like the rebellious teenager I am and mope in my room!"

You'd giggle at the joke, but you realize all too quickly that he might actually be seriously planning to mope over the fact that he did something incredible.

Jude leaves, though, and you see Sam relax a bit more.

"What's up?" You ask.

"It's Saturday," Sam says, "our chess day when I'm on Earth, remember?"

"Oh," you blink, do the math, and... "I thought it was Friday."

"It's been a long week," Sam says, moving to sit down where Jude had been. "So... Is Janet taking you home soon?"

"Tomorrow," you answer. "Apparently there's something still weird with my 'E.M. Fields' or whatever." Namely, you not quite tamping down on those stray energy waves completely quite yet. You don't want to spoil the trick just yet. "But other than that? I'm cleared. I'm not sick, I'm sane enough to do homework, so..." You shrug. "I'm game for Chess, though, I can't move the pieces around with my head."

You hate lying, but it's better for everyone if you don't get Jude in more trouble with what he's done for you with this.
"Well, that'll just even the odds, won't it?" Sam smiles.

And so you play a game of chess.

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for the delay in chapters. I've been having computer troubles last week or so and the stress from that makes it hard to focus on writing chapters, so future chapters might take a bit longer to come out. If I'm suddenly absent for a few days at a time... chances are something has gone wrong.

But let's hope it doesn't, and I can get back to the usual pace!
Chapter Summary

Have you tried moving the Sliders?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Deep within their super secret bunker, the BOARD OF TRUSTEES of the NID sit and stew over their constant, repeated failures to gain access to alien technologies to better defend the Earth from alien threats like the Goa'uld, the Tok'ra, and even those idiot kids over in a whole different galaxy.

One of their members was absent today, off doing some RISKY BUSINESS DEAL to help secure a PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION in the years to come. But that was for the best, given the BLACK MAIL held over his head. Better the good Senator be left unaware of their plans so as to maintain PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY.

And so they sit. And they stew.

And then a report comes across their desk about a COVER STORY the SGC is preparing to send someone to help produce in case of a SECURITY BREACH. A Television Show? How lazy of them.

And yet... an opportunity has arose here and now.

"Send an Acquisition team," one of them orders. "Bring Doctor Jackson to the Remote Dialing Site. By this time next week, we end this farce of a charade and get back on schedule."

And with a conference of nods from the members of the Board of Trustees set about to do their wicked deeds for the month.


DIASPORA DATE: 11/27/0001.

Your name is JADE JACKSON, and you're on a TRIP.

Colonel O'neill, your BIO-DAD Daniel Jackson, and your once ADOPTIVE-DAD Jake Harley, have been requested by Martin Lloyd to fly out to the STUDIO in VANCOUVER where they're planning on shooting the new television series based somewhat loosely on the Stargate Program.

The show's only just started the PREPRODUCTION stage of things, you're told. As for why you're here? Well... You've tagged along because why not?
"Colonel O'neill!" Martin Lloyd waves from next to a LIMO as you all exit the airplane. "Dr. Jackson! Over here!"

"Remind me why we're doing this again?" Daniel asks.

"Because National Security?" Jack grunts.

Soon, the lot of you are in the back of the Limo and being driven somewhere. You keep your eyes fixed out the car window and your ears tuned to the conversation. Vancouver is a pretty city, that's for sure!

The last time you were in Canada, though... Well, that was in an Aschen controled future. It's nice not seeing all the telltale signs of ASCHEN ARCHETECTURE everywhere.

"So we've gotten a few submissions from writers across the country so far," Martin says, "and there are a few specific scripts I want you guys to look over for... uh... reasons. Mostly just because they're all different takes on the various angles we're considering for the series proper."

"There's angles now?" Jack asks.

"Well, see, there's the makeup and costuming design to consider," Martin says. "See, we're thinking if we go full alien team in a full alien galaxy, it's cheaper long term to just stick some fake horns on the main cast and call it a day for makeup, rather than slather on grey paint AND the horns. But if we go with the human-species-native-to-the-galaxy angle we then have to worry about tying Earth into things, and that's ALWAYS a messy tie in no matter what way you look at it."

"How exactly is the show getting made if you don't have that kind of distinction even made yet?" Daniel asks.

"Well, see, the studio LIKES the Alien Galaxy with the Alien Stargate Transport Device concept," Martin answers. "And we are already casting for the main team, with the note that they might have to wear fake horns on set."

"If you want to go cheap for the makeup," Jack begins, "why not just bring in Actors from Alternia? Or film locally?"

"Filming On Location? In an alien Galaxy!?" Martin laughs. "Don't make me laugh Colonel. The studio will NEVER go for that..." he sighs. "We'll be lucky if we can get away with anything more than the forest lots and the sand dunes."

"There is a surprising amount of Desert and Forest planets out there in the Galaxy," Jack says. "So don't feel bad about that, Marty."

"Well, obviously, but the phrase 'Reality is Unrealistic' comes to mind," Martin says. "The audience will just see the repetitive landscapes and think 'gee, this sure does look like the same forest and desert we've seen a dozen times already!"

"Now, see," Jack chimes in, "that's why you set the heroes' base IN a desert AND occasionally lampshade the repetitive scenery!"

"Meta? Hrm, I suppose that could work," Martin muses.
"Also," Jake finally speaks, "it's like how on Power Rangers the monsters always attack the exact same rock quarry."

"I-" Martin pauses on that. "That is actually a valid point. I'll see if I can get a rock quarry added to the locations list, actually." He gets out his phone and starts calling people.

Soon, you arrive at some local food dive you've never heard of and in a PREVIOUSLY RENTED PRIVATE BOOTH, a bunch of SCRIPTS are laid out on the table and food and drinks are to be provided upon request.

You get a script written by someone named "Blandin, Blendin" - clearly a pen name- and leaf through it. You see that it's quite the... uh... exaggeration of the given prompt attached to the front.

Hooboy, and is this supposed to be based on Joey's adventures? That's... well, that's quite the exaggerated personality there, at any rate. You're also not sure this script would work on television.

"Where's this show airing again?" You ask.

"It's either Fox or Showtime," Martin answers, and Jack snaps his head up at that. "We're leaning Showtime, though, with the final pitch."

"Seriously?" he asks.

"They're probably going to be giving us a slightly bigger budget for a recurring series than Fox would," Martin shrugs.

"...Well, okay," and with that Jack returns to reading his given script. You hear him muttering a moment later, "At least it's not cable."

Meanwhile, back at the SGC...

Dr. Rodney Mckay worked on some power readouts from the Quantum Mirror. It was an average sort of long term study. Turn the mirror on to a certain side. Cat Girl Silica shoots some kind of magic spell at the mirror. Earth Side reads the energy output.

A bog standard test done hundreds of times already.

Except then the mirror suddenly shifts as someone else makes a connection to the Earth side. Mckay gets barely a glimpse of a running firefight and then- FWASH!- stumbling out from the mirror comes a pair of Jade Blooded Troll girls.

Mckay stares down at them for a moment, blinking. "Uh... hi?"

"Oh, hello!" One of them grins, staring up at him.

FWASH!
Two more Troll girls come tumbling out of the mirror as well. One a Jade Blood, one a Rust Blood.

None of these four are anybody Mckay is familiar with, and so he reaches for a radio.

**FWASH!**

And then someone he IS familiar with tumbles out of the mirror and joins the girl pile- Daraya Jonjet, or an alternate version of her at least.

"Ow!" She gripes. "Watch your horns, Wanshi!"

"Sorry!" The girl that had grinned at Mckay apologizes.

And then, **FWASH**, one final person comes flying through the mirror- remote for it held firmly in a left hand adorned by a FAMILIAR BRACELET home to a rainbow pattern of crystals.

"HAH! Take that, School Board Admins!" yet another Alternate, and human formed Joey Claire grins as she hits the power button on her remote and the Mirror's connection returns back to the world it had originally been tuned to- Silica's Alfheim Laboratory.

Said Cat girl blinked in shock at the sudden pile of girls lying on the other side of the mirror.

Mckay, having finally reached his radio, tabs it on and says, "Uh... this is Mckay to General Hammond. We, uh... have a Mirror Situation."


An hour later, you're still Jade Jackson, and you've just finished a script written by one "Mable Pines" and say, "I think this one's a keeper."

"Really?" Martin asks, taking a look at it. "I wasn't so sure on that one, what makes you like it?"

"I think I like the fact that it doesn't exaggerate the friendship between the main characters for shock value like Blandin's script did." You shudder just thinking about it. "And anyways, it reminds me the most of how Joey and the others act."

"Hmm, good point," Martin muses. "I'll keep that in mind when we call back for Writers and-"

"Uh, Jack?" Daniel starts suddenly.

"Daniel?" Jack asks.

"Does this dialogue sound familiar to you?" Daniel clears his throat, then reads: "Mack, Continuing, 'A top secret government program involving instantaneous travel to other solar systems through means of a device known as a "Stargate."

Martin blinks. "Okay, that does sound a bit familiar, but that could just be a lucky guess based off of the plot synopsis."

And so Daniel does keep reading.

"Jake, dismissive, 'Sounds like a good idea for a TV show... If you're into that sort of thing.'"

"Mack, annoyed, 'Colonel, let's not play games. If it isn't true, then why would you come all this way?'"

"Jake, Reluctant, 'Okay. The Truth. There IS a top secret government program called "Project Stargate"...''"

"Mack, Interjecting, excited, 'I knew It!'"

"Jake, Continuing, 'But it has nothing to do with space travel.'"

"Mack, Suspicious, 'What does it have to do with?' You see Martin mouthing the words as Daniel speaks them.

"Magnets," Jack says, and grimaces as Daniel nods, and Martin snags the script to keep reading.

"What the hell is that supposed to mean? Nope, I've already said too much. Colonel, You're not taking this seriously," Martin stops, then looks at Jack. "This is our conversation at the Diner in Montana. Word for word except for changed names."

"Well that's an impossible security breach," Jack laments. "Who wrote that script?"

"Um..." Martin flips back to the front of the Script- "One 'Citizen Joe.'"

"Oh For Cryin' out Loud," Jack grimaces.

"Heard of him before?" Jake asks, frowning.

"Yeah," Jack nods. "The Reporter who got himself run over said his source was someone called 'Citizen Joe.'"

"Lemme see if there was a return address on this," Martin says, grabbing his phone and dialing a number. A few moments later, he says, "Hey, Nancy, it's me, Martin. I'm looking over the demo scripts you guys sent me and I found one from 'Citizen Joe' that's really interesting. By any chance did we actually get a name on the shipping address?" A pause. "Okay, if you can find it, please let me know. He's definitely one of the front runners for the writer's circle." He hangs up.

"Well?" Jack asks.

"I've got Nancy looking into it," Martin says. "Good woman, excelent at dredging up people's addresses. Former CIA, she put on her resume."

"Former you say?" Jack asks.

"Anyways, security breach aside, that's going to take a while," Martin says. "Shall we keep looking through scripts?"

"In a minute maybe," you say, getting up from your seat. "I've got to use the restroom. Too much soda."
Nobody complains, and so you head to the restroom, as you pass by the front door, you notice some men in suits carrying briefcases coming up to the door. They look like lawyers. This must be a popular place for TV work.

And speaking of TV work, Holy crap! Talk about getting noticed before the interviews! Whoever this 'Citizen Joe' guy is, he's already got a foot in the door!

You wonder if they're really going to hire the guy, though? Surely if someone's had their nose in SGC business for so long, they'd have made a more overt move before now- right?

As you take care of business, you hear the sounds of a scuffle from outside, and shouting.

Then, something GLASS-LIKE shatters, and everything goes quiet.

Geeze, you think as you finish up and wash your hands, you hope that wasn't anything important.

You exit the restroom expecting the best while hearing the sound of tiers squealing from outside. You hoped for the best, but what you find is almost certainly the worst.

Jack clutching at his head with a towel, leaning against the broken glass door to the diner, Jake hurriedly pressing numbers into a cellphone, and Daniel and Martin... Missing!!

"...What did I miss?" You ask, hesitantly.

"Hello? General Hammond?"! Jake talks into the phone, "Some men in suits just attacked us at a diner and kidnapped Daniel and Martin...!"

Oh.

Shit.

Your name is Xefros Tritoh, and you blink as your Radio buzzes. You glance at the rest of your team, and see that you're really the only one not too busy with anything to answer, let alone radio you in the first place.

"This is Xefros," You whisper into it.

"Xefros," Okurii's voice comes through the radio. "Your team has new orders. Disengage as soon as possible and return to base."

"Say again?" You ask. "Because we're kinda in the middle of something here."

"Finish it and get back to base. Your presence is requested immediately at the SGC," Okurii says.

"Um... why?" You ask, just for clarification.

"Just get your asses back here a-sap, Xefros," Okurii says, and then the radio goes silent-presumably because the Stargate shut down.
You frown, then glance at Joey, Daraya, and Polypa, having just finished setting up something rather explosive at the base of a VERY EXPENSIVE and EXPLOSIVE looking device that's being used by the clowns to fuel their new fleet of DEATH GLIDERS- design stolen, naturally, from the ones onboard the STOLEN MOTHERSHIP that formerly belonged to Apophis.

Joey gives you a hand sign for 'one minute' and you nod.

You look over at Mallek and Callie see they've just about finished with wiping the database entries on the local server. You glance over at Dammek, who, like you, is standing guard, except a bit further out. He's unreadable right now- having traded out his signature shades for some sun-goggles after a lucky hit from a clown broke his current pair earlier today.

As for the last remaining member of your team, Boldir is rocking back and forth, clutching her hands to her head and muttering about headaches. Psychic Mind Reading Powers do not mix well with super-charged Clown Majiyks, it seems.

You really should've brought Mierfa along on this one, you think, but Boldir is usually the better information gatherer and Okurii wanted her for this one...

Oh well.

"Okay," Joey whispers, "we've got it! Callie?"

"Finished wiping it," Callie reports. "They'll be at it for a while recovering this."

"Boom Time?" Polypa asks.

"Boom time," Daraya nods, and sets the timer.

Callie and Mallek grab Boldir, and heft her up between them; you and Dammek get ready to run at the front line, and Joey, Polypa, and Daraya take up the rear.

"Timer set for one minute," Daraya reports.

"Let's rocket," Joey orders, and with that said and the timer countdown starting to tick to zero, you start running.

You run and you run and you and Dammek have your guns drawn and firing at the Clowns who finally noticed where you were hiding and start roaring and chasing after you.

Half a minute passes. The clowns are all chasing after you and trying their best to stop you. They've even launched some Death Gliders.

You lob a grenade with your psionics into the front windshield of one of the gliders.

*BOOM!*

The timer reaches zero but a few seconds later, and a second, more massive explosion rocks the fuel station.

*KA-BLAMMO!*
Pieces of rubble hit the other gliders in the air and they go tumbling. What a Lucky Break.

The clowns all scatter as fire rains down from above, and soon, the lot of you reach the Stargate and safely dial out to Alternia.

Within a few minutes of returning, you, Joey, Daraya, and two of Daraya's Jade Blood friends- WANSHI ADYATA and BRONYA URSAMA- are sent to Earth for reasons that soon become clear.

"What a Quantum Conundrum!" Both versions of Wanshi cry out as they spot each other.

It's interesting to see the differences between them- the Wanshi Adyata of your universe is wearing a standard on-base Uniform. The Wanshi Adyata who came through the Quantum Mirror is wearing... a school girl's uniform.

The same goes for the two versions of Bronya Ursama- the one from your world is dressed in an on-base uniform, the other is wearing a rather strikingly dark purple skirt with suspenders over her trollsign shirt.

Of the other two girls you're familiar with, there's Daraya- yours, of course, still wearing the mission uniform, and the other wearing a school girl's uniform that seems to have had its sleeves torn off, and she's also not wearing quite as much makeup as yours does for some reason- and then there's Joey.

The Human/Alternian difference is obvious between them, but then there's the other things.

This other Joey still has her full Bracelet, but her clothes are... well, she, too, is wearing a school uniform, but it's clearly not sized to her. Infact, it's suspiciously stolen looking, and has some splatters of teal blood on it. Her hair is styled differently too, curled in ways that your Moirail never styled her hair in.

"Wow! So this universes' me is a troll! Neat!" Alt-Joey says, grinning, offering her right hand to your Joey. "I'm Joey Lalonde! Nice to meet you!"

"Joey Claire," Your Joey says, shaking her alternate's hand. "And did you say Lalonde?"

"Yeah, that's my mother's name- or, er, adoptive mother I guess?" She shrugs. "I never really knew my birth parents. They died when I was just a baby. I guess you wouldn't have anything to worry about in that regard though! You're a born troll this world!"

Ouch! You can see a bit of pain flicker behind your Joey's eyes, and so does the other Joey.

"Oh... Wait no, you're not, are you?" She glances at your Joey's bare left wrist, then at her own bracelet wearing arm, and she goes. "OH. I see."

"Yeah," Joey coughs. "So. What brings you lot to our corner of the Multiverse?"

"Oh... Wait no, you're not, are you?" She glances at your Joey's bare left wrist, then at her own bracelet wearing arm, and she goes. "OH. I see."

"Yeah," Joey coughs. "So. What brings you lot to our corner of the Multiverse?"

"Oh, well, that'd be us rescuing Aradia and Kanaya from a rather corrupt school board execution," Alt. Joey says as if it were a common occurance. "We had to Slide Universes on pretty quick notice. Didn't even have time to pack our bags!"

Huh. You suppose that explains the school uniforms. But, wait...
"...Who's Kanaya and Aradia?" you ask.

"What? They're right- Oh come on! They were just here!" Alt. Joey groans after doing a spot check. "Damn it! This is the exact kind of behavior that got them caught by the school board in the first place!"

And so a quick search of the base is done, meanwhile, Joey and Alt-Joey converse about how their respective adventures began.

"So, Rox-mom and I were looking at this old house in Florida that belonged to my Grandmother, apparently," Alt-Joey explains. "Then, BAM! We find this massive spinning machine in the attic and there are these creepy dudes trying to get it to work! The next thing I know I'm flung half way across the universe into a brooding cavern!"

Well, that's a divergence point.

"The whole place is under attack, and while people are evacuating through the spinning thing, the girls drag me over into a corner and show this mirror that has a whole different world in it and we just-" Alt Joey mimics the FWASH sound the Mirror tends to make. "Boom! New world! Of course, we couldn't go back, because the cave collapsed and that mirror got destroyed. So, we stayed, made some friends, and some enemies, and I got the Bracelet!" Alt Joey sighs. "Of course, that's when we got attacked again, and we needed the Bracelet GONE so the girls and I got shunted through the Mirror again and we've been running and visiting worlds ever since!"

"That sounds like quite the adventure," your Joey muses.

"Oh, it definitely is!" Alt. Joey nods. "I'll have to tell you about some of the other worlds we encountered some time! There were some really weird ones! But hey, quanta realities and what not. It's like we're actually able to live out Sliders in real life!"

"...Sliders?" You ask, unfamiliar with the term.

"What's Sliders?" your Joey asks, apparently just as unfamiliar with it.

"Oh, you don't have Sliders in this world?" Alt. Joey grins like a loon. "Okay! Now this is something I have to rectify!"

She then proceeds to spend the next five minutes explaining about a TV Show involving people leaping from dimension to dimension through wormholes.

...You're pretty certain wormholes don't work like that though.

...Do they?

Chapter End Notes

Obligatory Sliders reference + Quantum Mirror Shenanigans + Martin Lloyd Meta Episodes = a Blast for everyone except for some Clowns... and also Daniel. Who got
kidnapped.

Whoops!

EDIT: Yes, that was a Gravity Falls Reference. No, it's nothing more than just a clever wink and nod. I just needed some throwaway pen names.
Your name is ROSE LALONDE and you think you're in love.

"And then Joey taunted the Geometry and Maths Teacher with 'The 'milli' in 'millimeter' is short for millennial'- which, for obvious reasons to any one of us who'd paid attention earlier that day, made him very mad, and loose focus over the psionic locks holding us in place." The object of your possible affections, one KANAYA MARYAM, recounts some extravagant story over a bit of LUNCH in the SGC Cafeteria. "Aradia, of course, then had to rub it in further about how the 'deca' in 'decameter' is short for 'about to deck your ass' and then proceeded to slam him across the room by about an actual meter in length with a burst of her own psionics."

"Wow," you say, really intrigued by the story and only just partially distracted by how pretty her jade green eyes are. "How did he react to that?"

"Not well," Kanaya answers. "After all, a broken arm can cause a lot of intense pain and sometimes an impossible block to focusing on-"

"Kanaya!" And then in comes Joey and Xefros and... Joey? The Human one from the other dimension, you guess.

"Oh, hello, Joey," Kanaya says. "What can I do for you?"

"Why did you wander off, and where's Aradia?" the other Joey asks, sounding.... Hrm, sounding very much like Roxy did after Jude took apart the Microwave.

"I would have thought she was with you still," Kanaya answers, "as for me, I got hungry, and Rose here offered to buy me lunch."

The other Joey turns her gaze onto you and ooh- yeah, there's definitely some kind Roxy-esk disapproval in her eyes there. You wonder... Hrm.

"Hi, I'm Rose Lalonde," you say, nonchalantly offering your hand.

Other Joey blinks- caught off guard- then takes your hand and shakes it, "Joey, Joey Lalonde."

Oh? Now that's interesting. You wonder what that means in relation to YOU, PERSONALLY, but then suddenly a PERSPECTIVE CHANGE forces itself onto the narrative!

Damn those Flighty Light Players and their Spotlight Stealing Tendencies!
You are now Joey Harley, and your other self is... One moment she was happy and carefree- more than you've felt since Mom died- and then the next she's gone all MOMMA BEAR. And honestly, it was that shift in demeanor that made you realize something uniquely interesting.

The other you is OLDER than you. You were honestly fooled by the school uniform, although maybe the Bracelet also had something to do with it, but... that shift in demeanor? She's Older than you, either physically or mentally, you're not quite sure, but... She's lived for longer than you, in some un-measurable way.

This sudden realization also isn't hurt much by the fact that this Kanaya girl is clearly more around ROSE'S AGE than either your own or your other self's age.

You wonder how growing up directly as Roxy's daughter changed this version of yourself more so than just having her as a babysitter did?

You guess it doesn't matter, long run. It's still just... an intresting reflection of yourself being thrown back at you.

"Look, Kanaya," Other you says. "Lan trusted me to look after you and Aradia, so... Just don't run off again? Okay? Let me know if you're going somewhere first."

"Alright, fine," Kanaya huffs.

"Now, we need to find Aradia and-" Other You is interrupted by Major Vantas and Major Strider entering the Cafeteria, dragging behind them a rust blooded girl with ram horns who you assume is this ARADIA girl. "Never mind! Aradia! Where have you been?"

"Breaking into my office while Dave and I were playing chess," Major Vantas answers.

"Sorry, sorry!" Aradia says grinning in a way that says she was very much NOT sorry at all. "But I heard familiar voices and wanted to investigate!"

"Familiar?" Other you squints at Major Vantas and Major Strider, then... "Oh. You two." She sounds less than pleased to see them, for whatever reason. "You're a lot older than I was expecting."

"Time Travel," Major Vantas answers with a shrug.

"Dunno what other mes you've met but I'm not sure I want to know," Major Strider answers. Then, he turns to Rose and says, "Rose, go fetch John and Argo from where-ever they are, bring them back to the Conference Room."

"What?" Rose asks, getting to her feet. "Why?"

"Dr. Jackson got kidnapped," Major Vantas Gripes. "Not cool, by the way, not telling my past self about this. I'd like to be ABLE to head off problems like this before they happen."

"Well, we could-" you begin, but he waves it off.

"No, what's done is done. I guess it doesn't turn out too badly if I wasn't told," Major Vantas says.
"Or maybe this is just our first time through with this series of events," Major Strider counters. "Anyways, Rose. John and Argo. Go Fetch."

"Hey, Jade's the Dog-girl, not me!" Rose counters, but scurries off to leave. Kanaya, you notice, visibly frowns at the loss of Rose's presence.

Interesting, interesting. You take in the rest of her posture for a moment. She's tired looking, more so than anyone else you've seen so far. How long has she been hopping dimensions? More to the point, how long has the other you been acting like a foster parent to her?

Your thoughts would be mulled over for a bit longer, but then HEY ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE CHANGE!

"Well, that's interesting." Your name is Daniel Jackson and you've just had a hood pulled off from your head so you can see where you were brought to after being rather boldly kidnapped out of a diner.

Whoever these people in their black, press tied suits are, they've built a makeshift Stargate inside some kind of warehouse.

"That looks like the cheapest knockoff of a Stargate I've ever seen," Martin remarks. "...Is it wrong I want one for the show?"

"If we weren't being kidnapped for it," you say, "no."

"Welcome, Doctor Jackson," and then a familiar looking man with a self important sort of look about him steps into view. "To our little-" He stops and frowns upon seeing Martin. "Who's this?"

"Hi, I'm Martin Lloyd," Martin says. "Creative Consultant for an ongoing, work in progress television series called-"

"Do I look like I care about that stupid television show?" The man- one Colonel Frank Simmons- scowls, and Martin goes silent. "I was being RHETORICAL. I know who Martin Lloyd is!" The Colonel turns to face the kidnapper who'd spoken. "What I can't figure out is why you took him!"

"We weren't sure which one was Doctor Jackson, Colonel," one of the men who kidnapped you said, "so we took them both."

"You idiots can't do anything right!" Colonel Simmons says, glaring. "I told you to kidnap the GIRL!"

"There wasn't a girl with them at the table!" The man counters.

Jade? They wanted JADE??

"Hello, Simmons," you scowl at the Colonel before he can say anything more. "What are you up to this time?"

"I'd say that's none of your business," Colonel Simmons smirks, "but it actually IS your business,
Doctor Jackson. It's why I've brought you here."

"Then why did you bring me here?" You ask.

"Translation," Simmons says. "I need you to... translate some text for me. There's a Gate Address hidden in there that the Pentagon and the NID want for conflicting, various reasons I'm not at liberty to discuss with you."

"Let me guess, huge stockpile of alien technology?" You ask.

"...Close, but no cigar, Doctor Jackson," Simmons says.

"Well whatever it is, I'm not going to help you," you declare.

"I thought you might say that," Simmons says. "and while I don't have your precious future-daughter to use as blackmail, I'm sure you care enough about Martin here to want to co-operate."

"Uh, what?" Martin asks. "Are you threatening my life to blackmail him?"

"I am," Simmons says. "Do what I ask, and you both go free, Doctor Jackson. Alive and unharmed."

"Yeah, well, Martin and I? We're not that close," you say, channeling a bit of that old Atum Goa'uld persona to try and bluff your way out of this. "You'd have been better off kidnapping Colonel O'neill instead. Go ahead and kill us both. No skin off my back."

"Hey!" Martin protests. "I mean, it's true. We've only had, what, one real meeting before this anyways but still! I'd like to get out of this alive!"

"Hmm, maybe I didn't make myself clear," Simmons says. "Do what I say, Doctor Jackson, or the innocent writer gets each and every one of his fingers cut off until you co-operate."

"Um-" Martin swallows.

"And then- when I'm done?" Simmons smirks. "We hold him in front of an opening Stargate. Limb. By. Limb. And then when he's gone? If you still won't co-operate? We'll track down your daughter- both versions of her- and do the exact. Same. Thing."

"What the hell is wrong with you, Simmons?" you ask, feeling rather unsettled by such a brazen threat.

"Me?" Simmons laughs. "Oh, nothing is wrong with ME, Doctor Jackson. I'm more clear-headed than anybody else on this planet right now." He then leans in close and you can smell... ew. Is that... grape soda on his breath? "So, do we have a deal?"

"...Fine," you say. "I'll do your translation work."

"Good, good," Simmons then steps away, and motions towards a large metal cargo container. "Lock them up with the translation supplies until they're done."

And then a moment later, you and Martin are shoved into the cargo container, with the door locked behind you, and only a large lantern and a table full of stone tablets and paperwork on it to work with.
"So, uh..." Martin coughs. "Friend of yours?"

"Ah, a while ago, SG-1 was on P7S-441 when we encountered a shape shifting alien who disguised himself as a member of the team," you explain. "Carter, Teal'c and I came back to earth insisting we go back for Jack and a Lieutenant Tyler. Colonel Simmons back there came in and started 'investigating' and generally was a prick who tried to shut us down."

"How bad of a prick was he?" Martin asks, curious.

"He tried 'suggesting' that I was sympathetic to the Goa'uld because I'd been body jacked by Atum," you explain, "he also 'suggested' to Teal'c that he was secretly working for Apophis the entire time, and, oh, yeah, threatened to destroy Carter's Career because she found out he was digging into our personal files."

"Ouch," Martin quipps. "Sounds like someone needs a long time out in a cold, stone prison. Maybe surround him with some horses. I bet he's the kind of guy who just hates horses."

"Revenge Fantasies aside," you say, "let's check out these artifacts and see what he's after."

You look over the table full of stuff and, oh. Yeah. You're going to be here a while. You hope Jade is doing alright.

Alas, despite that smoothly set up scene transition, JADE JACKSON is too nervous and flustered right now to transition to. You'd get a lot of BREATHING MANTRAS and DON'T PANICS at best.

So instead the perspective falls right back down onto JAKE HARLEY. And now that's you.

Yup.

You are now JAKE HARLEY and you feel like you can do something about this situation- maybe more so than you did in the cafe.

Right now the lot of you are held up in a hospital room after Jack got his head tended to and you, he, and Jade, a complete panicking mess right now very clearly trying to keep her powers from getting out of check, are in a conference call with the SGC.

A lot of ideas are being brandied about, and not much progress is being made because of INTERNATIONAL JURISDICTION ISSUES.

Urgh. You hated that as an adult, and you're hating it just as much as a teenager... Again.

Still, though, you think... maybe if you can tune your strange, unknown powers to good use...

There's a real irony in that, when you were BRAINWASHED everything you wanted to do came easily to you. Now that you're free of it? You can barely even get your eyes to flicker, let alone spark an inferno of green fire. And believe you, you, you've certainly tried!
But, maybe before, you just didn't have the right MOTIVATIONS?

You close your eyes and think, 'I need to know where Daniel Jackson is.' You squint, even with your eyes closed, and focus on that thought, 'Where is he?' Where is he?

[WHERE IS HE?]

And then it comes to you, a vision of a warehouse, within which people reside doing who knows what, and a STARGATE, makeshift, rests in a croner. There, elsewhere, is a STORAGE CONTAINER, and inside...

DANIEL JACKSON AND MARTIN LLOYD!

You rattle off an address before you even open your eyes. When you do, you see Colonel O'neill and Jade staring at you with confusion. So you explain what you saw, and while the confusion is lessened, there's doubt as to whether you were imagining things or not.

But then Carter speaks over the call that THAT EXACT ADDRESS was recently purchased by one COLONEL FRANK SIMMONS not one day ago and, well, there's no more confusion or doubt after that.

You have a location, and the name of a person behind it. Because, of COURSE someone would build a Stargate with clear intent to use it after kidnapping a MEMBER OF THE SGC.

The top running contender is the NID, but surely they wouldn't be so brazen, just who the hell do you think are you kidding here, of course it's the NID!

Your name is Daniel Jackson and OH. BOY. You're in for a lot of trouble.

"Hooboy," you mutter.

"What is it?" Martin asks.

"According to this," you say, "they're trying to get to a planet that's home to some wild Goa'uld symbiotes. A 'nature reserve' the System Lords left behind incase something drastic happened to their galactic population like a plague. Or something worse."

"...So these goons in suits want WILD Goa'uld symbiotes?" Martin asks. "Why would they want that?"

"Who knows," you answer, "but it's not good."

"I'll tell you what, Doctor Jackson!" And then in comes Colonel Simmons through the doors, grinning like a loon. "The Pentagon wants to learn how to breed them true and loyal to the United States. The NID want the same, but loyal only to the Trust. As for me? You could say I'm working under... Private Contract to do something else entirely. A job I've chosen of my own free will, instead of being forced to do it by the other lapdogs at the NID."

"Serving two masters while being master of yourself," Martin muses. "You do realize that's bound to
"get yourself burned at both ends, right?"

"That's only if they discover what I've done," Colonel Simmons smirks, and it's one that does not bode well for your future. "Now then, Dr. Jackson. The Gate Address, if you'd please?"

Ah, yes, Gate Addresses.

You're pretty sure that the one address in this document (which you found ages ago but didn't speak a word of out loud in case you were being eavesdropped on. Which you were, it seems.) leads to the planet Atum knew a species called the UNAS live on, along with their ponds full of hyper aggressive wild and feral Goa'uld.

"Sure, I've found might be AN address, but is it the right one?" You ask. "I can't be certain yet."

"What do you mean?" Colonel Simmons asks.

"Well, you could input the one I found without me correcting for stellar drift first and end up who knows where," you say. "I mean, I'm perfectly fine with that, but don't come complaining to me if you wind up materializing in the middle of space."

"...Fine," Simmons scowls. "Do what you need to do."

And with that he leaves, giving you at least a bit more time to, well, buy time for someone to find you.

Meanwhile, a certain Senator receives a phone call.

"Another Bracelet's come through the Mirror?" he asks, shocked. "...Good. Send someone to retrieve it. Stealthily. Deniably. I don't want this getting back to me, understand?"

He hangs up soon after, and starts to grin when another phone call comes in.

"...Oh, hello, Hammond. What do you want?" he glowers, mood feeling completely and utterly ruined. "...Colonel Simmons bought WHAT?"

Senator Robert Kinsey stood corrected.

"Excuse me for a moment, Hammond, I have some phone calls to make," he makes his excuses, and then makes a phone call or three. None of them gave answers he wanted.

NOW his mood was completely, and utterly ruined.

Your name is MAJOR DAVIS STRIDER and WOW does it feel like it's been ages since you've had a perspective to yourself, even though that's not normally a thing you think at all? Geeze, you're almost always alone with your thoughts at all times so what the hell?

You blame the nonsense that is MIRRORED QUANTA UNIVERSES and KIDNAPPING
You've flown out along with Carter, Teal'c, and Vantas, and John and Argo as well, to meet up with O'Neill, Jade, and Jake at the place of interest. This mystery warehouse that Simmons bought and paid for seemingly with NID money but that nobody in the NID was aware of him doing.

...Or at least, of him purchasing this SPECIFIC warehouse. You get the feeling he was supposed to buy some OTHER warehouse and nobody noticed.

Hammond's inquiries to the Pentagon about why Colonel Frank Simmons would have bought a place like this in Canada of all places has been met with utter CONFUSION. Hell, even the one confirmed NID representative he'd gotten hold of seemed confused AND outraged by Simmons' actions.

Needless to say, it seems like the easily corruptible NID had been corrupted even further and the attack dog had slipped his leash.

"Fun," in massive sarcasm quotes.

With SG-1 fully formed up, you're all going to be barging into this warehouse to rescue your own. Unofficially, as a matter of course. International Jurisdiction and what not. (Funny, though. Canada looks oddly a lot like Colorado.)

But before you can breach, you've first got to get there. Place is heavily fortified and secured and geeze, someone's PARANOID.

You're probably going to trip some proximity alarms going in but oh well. It's not like those're going to be up for too much longer.

You're once again Daniel Jackson and you hear a commotion from outside.

"Colonel! Proximity sensors just got tripped!"

"What? Who is it now?!" Simmons yells.

"Umh..."

"...SG-1." He growls very loudly, then orders, "Dial the Gate!"

"To where?"

"Where else? The NID Alpha Site!" Simmons orders, and then barges into the storage container, roaring out, "DOCTOR JACKSON!"

"Uh oh," you mutter.

"What. DID. YOU! DO!?!" Simmons practically is yelling in your face.
"I don't know what you mean," you say, "I've been in here the entire time."

"HOW did SG-1 find us?!" Simmons asks.

"I dunno, maybe your bosses weren't happy with you going off the reservation?" You offer.

"There's no way they could have known!" Simmons growls.

And then the lights cut out.

"SIR!" Someone yells. "We've lost power!!"

"What!?!" Simmons is NOT HAPPY with this turn of events.

Martin, though, seems ecstatic at a rescue attempt about to be made.

Your name is Jade Jackson and you just ripped out all of the power lines from the transformer that would feed the warehouse directly.

Good luck dialing out with any Stargates they may or may not have now, jerks.

"Power's down," Argo radios to Colonel O'neill, while you look to John, who nods in preparation.

A massive gale storm of wind rests in a giant sphere of energy above his head, ready to fly.

...You're just going to cover your ears when he launches that.

"On three," Colonel O'neill raises three fingers, narrowing it to two, and then one, and when none remain raised, Teal'c kicks the front door of the warehouse open, and John lets loose with the massive burst of wind he'd been gathering up the entire time.

**WHOOOOOOOSHHH!**

Your name is Davis Strider, and you can't help but think, 'Who needs Zat guns when you have a kid who can literally knock the wind out of your enemies with actual wind?'

"Damn it," Colonel Simmons somehow miraculously makes all the stuff on the table vanish, and then grabs you by the collar. "You're coming with me, Jackson!"

"What the hell?" You hear Marty cry out in surprise at the vanishing act stuff and to be honest you're a little caught off guard too.

Surely that wasn't a Captchalogue Modus Simmons used just now, was it??
You barely get a glimpse of SG-1, with Major Strider filling in for your position, rushing into the room with one Jake Harley trailing behind them.

"SIMMONS!" Jack yells, raising his gun and aiming at you. "LET HIM GO!"

"FINE! YOU CAN HAVE HIM!!" Simmons yells, and then throws you onto the floor.

You barely get a chance to turn and look back to see Simmons suddenly holding something that looks very much like a-- Like a freaking C4 REMOTE DETONATION TRIGGER!?

BANG BANG! You hear gun fire from SG-1’s side of things, and watch in utter confusion as the bolts suddenly bounce off of the man's skin- a personal force field!?

"You think you've stopped my Lord, Anubis!? This is barely a setback!" Simmons yells, throwing the trigger on the detonation device and--

PVVVVM MMMM-- Red Sparkles throw themselves up around Colonel Simmons.

"OH NO YOU DON'T!!"

And then Jake Harley throws himself at the man from across the room--

--VAROOOOOSH!!

"OOFH!"

--But misses, landing on the floor face first as the rogue NID operative somehow vanishes in a CRIMSON COLORED bastard hybridization of an Asgard transport beam merged with the dematerialization burst of a Ring Platform.

A moment later- PVVVVM MMM--- the makeshift Stargate similarly sparkles and- VAROOOOOSH!!!--vanishes.

"What the hell!?" Sam cries out. "Was that an Asgard Transport beam!?"

"...What I am more concerned by was him saying he was working for Anubis," Teal'c points out.

"Damn it all..." Jake mutters as he gets to his feet. "Can't believe I missed."

"Daniel?" Jack asks, heading over to you. "Are you okay?"

"I'm good," you say, "Simmons didn't hurt me or Martin, though he threatened it."

"I'm good too!" Martin yells from inside the cargo container. "Is it safe to come out now?!"

"Yeah, Marty," Jack calls out. "It's safe."

Martin peeks out and stares at all the downed NID agents. "Woah... You've got to tell me how you managed that. For Story and Special Effects reasons."

"Yeah, we're safe," you grimace, "but at what cost? Simmons has a translation for a Gate Address to a Feral Goa'uld homeworld."
"Why the hell would he want Feral Goa'uld for?" Jack asks, frowning.

"Probably rebuilding Anubis' legion of Jaffa Warriors?" Jake suggests. "...How in Sam Hill did Anubis get an agent inside the NID anyways?"

That...

That's the question of the hour, or maybe even of the year.

It's not one you're looking forwards to answering.

Chapter End Notes

Give a big round of applause for John de Lancie's occasionally recurring character, Colonel Simmons, everybody!

...I MAY have given him a bit of a competency upgrade here. H3h3h3.

One more part to this trillogy of episodes remains, essentially.
ALT:05X06: Parental Guidance Suggested. (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

In which things do not go according to anyone's plans.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 11/28/0001.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE and if you had to put a pin down on one particular piece of your feelings regarding your alternate universe self, it would be 'anger.'

Anger that she doesn't seem to care to want to go back to the Earth she came from originally. Anger that she's content just to bounce between worlds endlessly, her only constants being a team of Trolls who travel with her. Anger that her only reaction to meeting Jude was a blink, an "oh, that's neat" and nothing else.

And you've got the MOST anger at how she doesn't seem to think Kanaya and Aradia can manage on their own.

You've talked to them all, not without some major discomfort on Kanaya's and the alternate Daraya's parts, and the picture you've been painted is...

One of the Jade Blooded girls who'd traveled with the other you's team had gotten romantically involved with the other you, and then shortly there after had died during a mission gone wrong. In the next world, or shortly there after, another version of that girl joined them, and she was the Guardian of Aradia and Kanaya, who also traveled with the group.

Things had been fine, or so it seemed, up until another disaster had unfolded and the Jade Blooded girl ended up dying again, with the other you promising to take care of Aradia and Kanaya for her.

The other Daraya told you that after that point, the Other You had started, well, becoming somewhat callous towards the people of the various worlds they visited. Not quite seeing them all as real people anymore and rather as echoes of archetypes and what not, only reserving her emotional reserves towards the people traveling with her.

You also got the impression, but not quite in so many words from the girls themselves, that Aradia and Kanaya's tendencies to wander off on their own had lest to do with them just being trouble magnets and more to do with them trying to escape the other you's seemingly well-meaning over-bearing tendencies to keep them on a short leash.

So, you tried talking with the other you about it. Suggesting maybe she settle down on a single world again?
That had gotten you laughed at by your own face and your attempt at helping another you at thrown back in your... er... face.

"No way," she said. "I can't stop moving for longer than a few days otherwise, they'll catch onto the dimension this Bracelet is in and come after us."

That also made you angry. So you tried offering the idea of letting Kanaya and Aradia settle down on a world of their own choosing, and...

"Not happening," the other you glared at you. "Those two couldn't fight their way out of a wet paper bag! I can't leave them alone or they'll end up getting themselves in trouble, or worse, killed! And if you're about to suggest leaving them under the care of someone here in this world, like yourself, you can forget it."

And you got really angry.

"Maybe because you won't let them TRY?!!" You'd ended up yelling at her. "Maybe they're always getting into trouble because you're suffocating them and they don't have any room to breathe? Huh!? Ever thought of THAT!!?"

Other you had snarled, "Just because you used to BE me, doesn't mean you ARE me. So stop trying to butt into my life choices!"

"You're right! I'm NOT you!" You'd yelled at her. "I'd never be so selfish and stubborn as to dismiss the possibility that those girls might be able to DO something important! I'd never deny them the chance to prove themselves on a journey I was forcing them to go on!!"

"You don't know me! You don't know my life!" She'd yelled at you. "Who the hell do you think you are to JUDGE!? You're not even human anymore!!"

"NEWS FLASH!" you'd yelled back at her, "WE WERE NEVER HUMAN TO BEGIN WITH!!"

"...What the hell are you blabbering on about?" She asks in turn.

"If you really came from a timeline where there was a STARGATE in the ATTIC of our GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE in FLORIDA," you'd stressed, "then your only divergence point from ME is the fact that your parents died before Jude was born! And THAT MEANS you're subject to all the same little timeline quirks that I AM!"

"What-?" She didn't get it. So you elaborated.

"Our Grandmother is a fucking ALTERNIAN FISH EMPRESS!" You begin. "She CLONED PA AND HIS SISTER from this GUY!" And then you'd put your palm against her forehead and showed her the monstrosity that was DOC SCRATCH.

The other you had stumbled backwards in shock- eyes watering in disbelief. "No way! You're lying! You're making that up!"

"I'm NOT!" you'd stressed. "Search your own goddamned feelings! You KNOW IT'S TRUE!!"

"I- I'm not- I'M NOT YOU!!" That was the point the other you had enough- you heard the sound of
static and there was a flash of green light— and then she'd vanished into thin air. A self teleporting ability of some kind. Definitely not due to the BRACELET, though.

And then that brought up another thing you're angry at yourself over.

It seems it doesn't matter what other universe or bad timeline you come from or what name you go by- You are a fucking coward when it comes to confronting your PERSONAL PROBLEMS.

You're not even going to raise any hypocrite flags here. You'll freely admit it. You're a coward. You fucking turned yourself into a Troll to avoid feeling like you were a monster in your own skin. Then when you lost the Bracelet you ran from facing THAT problem by putting off any obvious solutions and adopting a 'wait and see what happens' approach. Then when Rose put up a solution to undo it you kept running from the FIRST PROBLEM by way of excusing the regret your DEAD ALTERNATE SELF had for being turned back. And now with the Bracelet once again enticingly dangled infront of your face what do you do?

You fucking shove your problems off on another you who was completely unaware of her heritage.

Good job, Claire. Really. Good Job.

You've gone and Ruined a perfectly ...eh... mundane Joey by giving her anxiety over her genetic grandfather being a monster.

...No more running from your problems, Claire.

You guess now you've got to go track the other you down before something bad happens to her. Damn it.

______________________________

Your name is JAKE HARLEY and wow, do you feel like an utter dunce. Your newfound abilities to track down people just won't work again.

What the hell is up with this? It feels like any usefulness you might be able to recurring-ly have is being limited somehow. You wonder if that's just a mental block, though? If it is, how do you overcome it? The proper emotional status, perhaps? You think back to how you felt when you did this trick the first time and THINK.

So.... You want to find where Colonel Simmons is.

You focus on that thought.

Where is he??

...

But no matter how much you focus and ponder and hmm and haa... it just doesn't work.

Damn it all.

After a few hours of repeated failure, you go for a walk. You find yourself at a park on the surface,
and rather surprisingly, find the other version of Joey that came through the Quantum Mirror sitting at a bench, looking rather glum and staring down at her feet.

"Uh... hey?" You begin.

"Go 'way," she mutters, not even looking up. "I'm Sulking."

...Uh. Okay?

"I was just gonna ask if it's okay if I could sulk here too, or... is this a one sulk only bench?" You ask.

"...Fine." She still doesn't even look up."Just don't talk to me, alright?"

"Alright." And with that, you sit down.

An NID agent peers out her car window through her binoculars, and smirks. "Well, this just got a whole lot easier."

She grabs her radio, and is about to say something, when suddenly, her mind sort of... fogs over.

If the NID agent were to look into the rear view mirror, she'd see a condensing fog of something forming around some floating ruby crystal shards, just somehow being there and not being there at the same time. She didn't, however, and so she missed seeing the crystal shards flying into the back of her skull, but she felt it. And OH, how she wished to scream, but it was too late.

The fragment of Reaper activated and tore the woman's soul out of her body- allowing the malignant, disembodied spirit of the Handmaid to take root inside.

The woman's hand pressed down on the radio trigger, and her mouth spoke with an accent to her voice that was not originally there. "All men, surround them, but do not attack until I give the signal."

"So, I kinda..." the other version of your daughter speaks suddenly. "Had a fight with my sister, I guess." She's still staring down at her feet, but now she's reached her right hand around to mess with the Bracelet on her left hand. "I called her a monster. She cited how monstrous our grandparents were. Then I ran away."

...Well, crap. Did your Joey and her alternate self have an argument over your fish faced alien mother??

"I sort of know the feeling," you say. "My mother wasn't the nicest of women. I ran away from home, believe it or not."

"That why you're out here on a bench in the park?" she asks, still not looking up. Geeze, how fixated is she on those shoes of hers anyways?
"...Something like that," you admit.

Since your brainwashing had been broken, memories Jayni had wanted erased had slowly come back to you, somehow.

"Ugh, I dunno, I guess she had a point?" She doesn't sound so sure of it. "I have been a bit of a... er, control freak, I guess."

"I wouldn't know," you tell her. And ain't that a kicker of a statement? You really wouldn't. This Joey isn't yours, and even if she were... you've still got a few memory issues that Jayni caused when she cloned you.

"Yeah, that's fair, but it's still, just-" Whatever she was going to say ends as you hear a twig snap.

You and the other Joey both look up in time to see a woman in a classic black colored, james bond type secret agent suit approaching you.

...There's something off about her eyes.

"Um... hello?" You ask.

"Hello," she speaks, accent sounding... Oddly Alternian. "It will come with me."

"...What?" the other Joey asks. "It? I'm pretty sure neither of us are 'its.'"

"Yes," the woman says, smirking. "You are not. But that Bracelet. It will come with me."

...Well shit.

"Let me guess," you begin, "NID?"

"Yes," the woman says normally, then whispers in ACTUAL Alternian, which you only pick up thanks to Stargate Translation Nanite Shenanigans, "{The men surrounding us are, but I am not.}" You notice a bunch of Men in suits in hiding all around you, but they seem to be waiting... For a signal of some kind?

"Oh come on!" the other Joey growls, and you think you see a spark of green energy in her eyes. "Can't a girl just sulk in peace!?"

"Give me the bracelet, Girl," the woman says, holding out her hand.

"Like hell I'm going to do that!!" the other Joey yells- and you see the Bracelet on her wrist sparking. "{Then to Hell you go.}" The woman says with a grin and takes a step forwards.

You **REALLY WISH YOU HAD A ZAT GUN RIGHT ABOUT- ZAP!- now??**

UH. Huh. Somehow you're suddenly holding a Zat Gun. How the...?

Screw it.
You take aim and shoot the woman cold as she pauses to wonder just what the hell weapon you summoned.

**PCH-ZYU!**

"GAAAH!" The woman cries out, and then falls to the ground, stunned.

You glance at one of the nearest men in suits, and watch as they decide that they'd rather no deal with that. They all run with their proverbial tails between their legs.

With a sigh, you glance at the rather confused alternate version of Joey, and say, "Uh, hi? I'm Jake... English." You decide after a moment. No sense bothering opening THAT can of worms right now. "I'm with the SGC."

"...So I guess you've got to report this then, huh?" other Joey guesses.

"Eyup," you nod.

"Damn it," she sighs. "You guys just couldn't leave me alone to sulk, could you?"

"To be fair, I wasn't actively looking for you," you tell her.

"Meh." She doesn't seem to believe it, and you think that's sad, just a little.

Your name is Xefros Tritoh, and you stare through the window at the woman strapped to a chair in the isolation chamber.

"So... Reaper Fragments in her head, plus talking Alternian, and wanting the other Joey's Bracelet equals... Handmaid possession?" You summarize events as you see them.

"So, what do we do?" Joey- your Joey- asks, arms crossed as she glares down at the woman. "We obviously can't leave her possessed. And we can't give her the Bracelet."

"...Should we try to pull the crystals from her head?" You ask.

"...That's an idea," Joey muses, "but how to do it safely? They're pretty wedged in deep according to the scans Doctor Fraiser took."

"Could call like to like?" You offer. "My half of Reaper calling to hers?"

"Maybe," Joey frowns, then glances over at her other self, standing on the other side of the room, peering down at the lady in the isolation chamber with a look of utter contempt on her face.

Contempt, what an odd expression to see on such a familiar face. It's certainly not one you're used to seeing, and for Joey to see it on her own face being thrown at someone else...

"Hey, Other me," she begins, trying to sound conversationally pleasant you notice, "how good is your Shaper and Regenerator usage?"

"Why do you ask?" ...Ooof. That was a slightly bitter tone of voice.
"You keep the body alive, Xefros pulls the crystals out," Your Joey suggests.

"Meh."

Meh?

"Meh?" Your Joey asks.

"Me and my team should just leave through the Mirror," the other Joey says. "Get out of dodge and let this lady stew in her own juices. She's not my problem."

"She did just try to kidnap you," your Joey points out. "After you ran off on your own." The other Joey frowns. "Also, it's going to keep BEING your problem as long as you have that Bracelet. The Handmaid could just de-possess that woman and follow you through the Mirror for five, maybe six whole worlds before suddenly manifesting again and trying to steal it from you."

"Grr..." The Other Joey growls faintly, then sighs, defeated. "Alright. Fine. You make a convincing point. Let's exorcise this ghost and get this shit over with."

And so you three leave to do your job, leaving Argo, Rose, and all the girls who came through the Mirror with Joey behind to observe for the fun of it.

Your name is Joey Claire and you're not taking chances. You requested Teal'c loan you his Staff weapon, and so you go into the room armed with the massive boom stick.

"Let me make something abundantly Clear, Handmaid," you tell her. "The other me and my Moirail are going to remove you from that body, and you're not going to fight back, or else I'm gonna blow those crystal shards out of you personally." And with that, you hit the trigger to arm the Staff weapon.

It snaps open and makes an intimidating shock sound.

The Handmaid just raises an eyebrow, and says in Ancient Alternian, "["Yes, False Heiress, please do shove that thing into my mouth and let loose with its impressive burning fire with much haste."]"

You fight back the urge to gag. Xefros looks plain unsettled. Other you... didn't seem to catch a word of that.

Good. Probably for the best.

Other You reaches out at a distance, extending her left hand, and triggering the Jade Crystal, Rejuvination, to activate.

A faint aura appears around the woman being possessed, and she smirks as Xefros moves around to behind her.

Once he's out of her range of sight, he decaptchalogues his FIELD STICKBALL BAT and holds it at the ready in his off hand, while his dominant one reaches out and begins pulling the shards out of the woman's head with his own psychic grip.
She starts moaning— not in pain, though. Urgh. This ghost couldn't be exorcised sooner. Stupid freaking Handmaid.

The first chunk of crystal has just come out with an audible sound you don't want to describe, and that's when everything goes to hell.

The room around you suddenly flickers back and forth between the SGC isolation chamber and the forest on Diaspora.

Suddenly, Xefros finds himself flung backwards against a wall/tree at the same moment his other self does, and you yourself get thrown against a wall, right next to where you're seeing after images of Mierfa. The other you, as a matter of course, is suddenly flung up against a tree that isn't really there, and gets super imposed against your own past self.

"Wh- WHAT IS THIS!?” She yells out.

"Of course it wouldn't be that easy!” Xefros yells as he watches the woman suddenly yell, and then falls silent as the ghost of the Handmaid steps out of her body, and into the mirage of her own past self. Her hand reaches out, and honestly, what else was there to expect but the other You's hand being yanked forwards as the Bracelet starts to come apart off of her wrist and travel across the room towards the Handmaid.

Urgh. Stupid. Dumb. You should have seen this coming!

You see Xefros reaching out with his psychic powers to try and stop this from happening AGAIN, but the Handmaid snaps her fingers and suddenly—

"WAAAAH!”/"OOF!”

You and him are hurtled across the room and smash into each other at high speeds, before you land on the floor, groaning.

{"I am not so dumb as to let you fuck me over in the same way twice."} The Handmaid sneers as the room flickers back and forth even more rapidly. {"Only My Lord English gets to do that to me in most pleasurable ways."}

"EW!” You growl, grabbing onto Xefros' discarded cue-bat while trying to get to your feet, only to have your whole body thrown against another wall and the bat brutally yanked out of your hand and sent flying at the observation room window- cracking it heavily. "OW! Okay Okay! SHIT! I won't move again! Just stop that would you!?”

"NO.” The Handmaid laughs.

And then you spot someone in between the flickering moments you're in the SGC and not on Diaspora on the other side of the isolation room window.

It's Argo, and also Rose and Aradia and Kanaya and surprisingly none of the other girls- where did they get off to? To get help, you hope. But anyways Argo is your focus because she's got two sharp looking knives in hand and is looking like she's about to fucking throw her knives through the-
-She throws herself through the already cracked Window a second after shattering the window with an implausible knife toss, yelling with a fierce roar as she delivers a drop kick to the Handmaid’s head.

...Or she would have if the damned woman wasn't a ghost and thus INCORPOERAL.

Needless to say, it's a turn of events that startles both Argo and the Handmaid. Argo lands awkwardly and tumbles into a wall. The Handmaid drops her psychic grip holding you to the wall, and you land on the floor, luckily enough, right next to Teal’c's Staff Weapon.

You glance at your other self, and see her crying out in pain as the Bracelet is forcibly disconnected from her. For a moment, you see yourself, fighting back against the theft, and the difference is night and day.

Fucking.

You pick up the Staff Weapon and take aim at the Bracelet. (Bracelets??) For a moment, the other Joey is there, yelling out, pleading for someone to help her. You don't have to be psychic to tell that this Joey WON'T survive the Bracelet being forcibly taken from her unless you do something to stop this.

STUPID.

Another flicker, and then your past self is there, and you lock eyes for a moment. She has no idea that you're about to give her the worst case of self imposed character development in the history of self imposed character developments.

STABLE!!

You watch as the Crystals in the past crack under Past Xefros' psychic powers.

TIME LOOPS!!!!!!

You fire the staff weapon at your own damned Bracelet and pray that you don't miss.

PCHOO!

As you watch that staff blast travel through the spectral present day ghost of the Handmaid, you watch as Karkat suddenly flickers into view swinging his crowbar into the past version of the Handmaid's head.

The staff blast hits your former Bracelet and time ceases to have any meaning for far, far too long.

And then you're back in the SGC, watching as yet another Bracelet falls to the floor, shattered and broken into pieces.

Two shrill shrieks of "NO!" go out. One a terrified echo from your alternate universe self, and the other an enraged shout from a Ghost who suddenly has two very pointy knives shoved up into her
spectral heart courtesy of none other than one Argo Lalonde.

"YOUR TIME'S UP!" Argo roars, and then yanks the knives out with some kind of timey-wimey power that makes the blades glow a brilliant shade of crimson, and then the Ghost of the Handmaid is gone.

"Nonononono!" your other self once more falls to her knees and grabs at the broken remains of HER Bracelet. "WHY!?!" She looks up, an accusatory look in her eyes, glaring at you as she promises certain death. "WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT!?!"

"I had to," you say. "Otherwise you'd be dead."

"Oww..." Xefros mutters as he gets to his feet. "Was it just me or did we just have the worst case of dejavu in the history of dejavu?"

"What?!" The other you snaps at... him?? You think she was snapping at Xefros but she might have meant you there instead. "What do you mean by that!?!"

"The forest just now?" You ask, shutting off the staff weapon and then using it to lean on. Oh geeze did that hurt getting thrown into a wall. "With all the trees?"

"What forest!?" the other you snaps, glaring at you.

"Did nobody else see that?" You ask, glancing up at the observation room- Rose and Kanaya shake their heads, but Aradia does, a horrified look in her eyes.

"I saw it," Argo says, raising her hand. "I think that was my powers though. I was kinda, trying to steal some extra seconds to buy us time to actually do something useful?"

"You're all fucking insane!" The other you hisses. "Buying time? Stealing seconds!? That's impossible!! All I saw was you aiming that stupid staff at me and BLASTING MY BRACELET!!!"

"And saved your life!" Xefros points out. "The Handmaid was using her Fragment of Reaper to pull your soul out of your body. I could feel it! You would have died if Joey hadn't broken the focus item she was doing it through."

"LIAR!!!!!" The other you yells. "You- FUCKING- THIS WAS ALL A TRICK!" She yells, collecting the fragments of her bracelet and holding them tight to her chest. "YOU'RE WORKING FOR THEM! THOSE BASTARDS WHO WANTED IT!!! YOU TRICKED ME! YOU FUCKING BACKSTABBING----!!"

PCH-ZYU!!

And then she collapses as her version of Daraya shoots her with a Zat gun, one which she quietly hands back over to Major Strider once she's done the job. Behind her you see the other two girls from the other world.

"I think it'd be best," the other Daraya says, "If Bronya, Wanshi, and I take her back through the Mirror before she wakes up."
"What about us?" Kanaya asks from the observation room.

The other Daraya looks the other Jade blood in the eyes, then looks to Aradia similarly, and then sighs. "I think it'll be better off for the both of you if you stay behind. She'll just take her anger out on you two if you're around when she wakes up."

"I..." Kanaya opens her mouth.

"Thank you," Aradia says. "Thank you, Daraya. For everything."

"No," the other Daraya says, shaking her head, and then looking you in the eyes. "Thank YOU for destroying that damned thing."

"I wasn't aiming for her version of it," you admit. "I was aiming for mine."

"Either way," the other Daraya kneels down, and picks up the other you in a bridal carry. "Thank you."

"Good luck out there," you say.

"The same to you," she says, and then leaves.

Not less than five minutes later, the team of 'Sliders' has left your world through the Quantum Mirror, minus the two troll girls who stayed behind.

You can't help but wonder... what could drive a version of you to act like that?

It's not a pleasant thought, but then again, neither is the fact that the woman who had been possessed had no soul left to her own body after the Handmaid left it. She was dead. Had been the moment Jake had captured her.

And now once again, Earth doesn't feel like all that pleasant of a world to stay on.

So you do what you always do, and leave...

But somehow, this time it doesn't feel like you're running away from your problems.

Maybe it's the fact that other people are coming with you. The two new girls from the other universe, Rose, Argo... Your PA of all people.

You hope that whatever world the other you wakes up to, it's one where she can settle down and not have to worry about the future.

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DIASPORA DATE: 11/29/0001.

Senator Robert Kinsey stared at a video file stolen from the SGC's security cameras.

The children enter the room with the allegedly "Possessed" NID agent who's tied to a chair. They
start to remove the "Crystal Fragments" when suddenly the woman screams and the children are all thrown against the walls by some unseen force as the woman suddenly seems to go silent.

Then, the Bracelet starts to be pulled off of the Alternate Joey's wrist.

There's some weird moment where the footage seems to speed up, fitting more into the frames recorded than should be possible. Something moves too fast to be seen and hits a window, cracking it.

And then the girl with the wings dives through a window, trying to attack something- which causes the Joey of this world to fall to the floor, allowing her to pick up the Staff weapon and destroy the Bracelet.

The speed of recording returns to normal soon after that.

"...On the one hand," he muses, "I suppose that's what I get for insisting they do this off the book and not tied to me in any way." He frowns. "On the other... what a pointless showing. They could have at least gone to the trouble of hiring a woman to actually play the 'ghost' to make it more believable."

Oh well, the Senator decided, in the long term it doesn't matter. Not when Colonel Simmons has apparently gone off the reservation and is playing his own agenda opposite the NID's. Even the Board of Trustees is displeased with this turn of events. It's a setback that's going to take a while to rectify.

A very. VERY. Long while indeed.

Chapter End Notes

HOOOF.

Good grief this chapter was a nightmare to work out. It's becoming sort of a running arc at this point that Joey just keeps running into alternate versions of herself who hold a mirror up and show her all the traits of herself that she doesn't like.

Argo finally demonstrates some of her hidden potential- thrown into an extreme overdrive by the presence of the Handmaid's cursed ghost like existence.

Is she finally dead? ...Well, Damara is a tough witch to put down. It's possible she's double dead... or she's gonna survive by way of having merged with Reaper's ghost preserving powers? Who can say.

This mini arc is done. Next chapter we focus on something LIGHTER and FLUFFIER! Featuring MUSIC! And some Troll Call Trolls I couldn't work into this chapter!
Chapter Summary

Guest Starring VENTUS SKYLAR. (OC by Castor_Raiden)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 12/14/0001.

Hidden away on the outskirts of a town called SENTINEL, wedged between a certain volcanic mountain range and a desert resided a certain bar-like, late-day type of establishment called THE ASHLANDERS VEIL. At this place, commonly called "The Veil" to most of the common goers there were many things that could be said to be happening at any given time. Food? Definitely. Drinks? A certainty. Drugs? Not on your life. Music? Oh HELL YES was there music.

The Music Scene on Alternia was TIGHT as anything. And in this particular bar setting that Trolls of all Blood Castes came to visit (Well, all save the Royal Bitch herself, Trizza Tethis. Nobody had seen HER outside of few select incidents after her EXILE from Alternia, and she'd NEVER show her face at this establishment period!), the music scene was even TIGHTER.

Most nights, as how it usually went before the Rebellion kicked into gear, a certain Gold Blooded DISK JOCKEY ran the usual gamut of nightly entertainment. Due to the location and the amount of travel time involved, most of the artists who came here usually scheduled weeks in advance and only when they could arrange for time in their own busy schedules in real life. However, let it not be said that the troll known as VENTUS SKYLAR was the kind of guy who'd hog the spotlight.

Since the Rebellion had kicked up into full swing not so long ago (Well, it seemed like it was that recent despite actually happening quite a while ago), the local scene had picked up. People were suddenly more free than ever, it seemed, to break loose from the strict confines of the Empress' and Heiress' strict structures for life. And then even MORE artists and the like started squirming out of the woodwork once news of Empress Meenah's death reached the galaxy. (Exiled through time onto an exploding space ship? Brutal and harsh and oh so karmic.)

Ventus Skylar was happy to see up and coming musicians of all walks of life would come in and get their feet wet in the relatively tiny pond that was this CLUB SCENE before diving in deeper into the vast ocean that was THE INTERNET AT WIDE.

Long ago this place was one of the few on Alternia that an up and coming Bronze Blood singer like CHIXIE ROIXMR could sing to Trolls of all castes without first getting started on sites like GRUBTUBE or VID.GRUB. Oh, sure, more and more places like this were poping up by the week, but hell- The Ashlander's Veil was one of the FIRST.

And so sitting there, listening to the Bronze Blood sing a cover of an opening song from the TROLL.
VENTUS couldn't help but think that this was how the world should be.

Trolls hanging out, drinking and eating, and having fun and singing and making merry music. Not worrying about war or death or the empire culling you at a moment's notice and the drop of a dime.

The world was changing, in a mostly positive way.

"A~ah! On Give For My Way!" Chixie finishes up the last verse of the song and lets the pre-made background track run out to the last few moments, timing her bow to the audience right as it ends.

"Give it up for Chixie Roixmr, Ladies, Gentle-trolls, and all those cool cats in between!" the Bar's Teal blooded manager says, stepping up onto stage and clapping their hands. "Next up we've got a few sets from..."

VENTUS tunes them out, peering around at the audience as Chixie heads back stage.

It doesn't seem like anyone's going to cause trouble, but one never knows in these tumultuous times.

ZEBRUH CODAKK catches his eye, though, staring after Chixie while talking into a GRUBPHONE. Normal enough, sure, but... this guy. He's given a lot of people trouble lately—namely the Olive Blooded girls among the Veil's Security Staff.

Oh, sure, he promised to play nice, but sometimes... people just get this vibe like he's biding his time.

VENTUS keeps an eye on the Indigo Blood as he finishes his call, and starts making his way towards... the restrooms? Possibly innocent enough except... there's a back room exit to each restroom from the back stage hallways, for ease of the performers.

Some kind of warning bell rings in Ventus Skylar's mind, and he stalks after Zebruh Codakk. Best not to leave this to chance.

Sure enough, the guy stalls, waiting outside the girl's restroom door, ostensibly so he can talk on the phone more, but there's no conversation going on, he's just mumbling nonsense that vaguely sounds like one half of a conversation. Plus, the Phone is CLEARLY held upside down and the screen shows it's set to the lock screen.

Who does this guy think he's fooling?

Sure enough, Chixie Roixmr exits the girl's restroom- changed out of her fancy stage clothes into her more ordinary style of dress- a large sweater that's definitely oversized on her and makes her look smaller than she already is- and having her hair ruffled up a lot more. A perfect disguise, really, if you didn't know who you were looking for.

And it seems Zebruh does know who he's looking for.

"Miss Roixmr!" He begins, palming away the phone into a vest pocket. "I'm Zebruh Codakk, from the-

"I think you've got me confused with someone else," Chixie says, trying to push past him.

"Oh!" He grabs her by the arm as she goes. "I'm definitely not confused at all, Miss Roixmr."
"Hey!" Ventus yells, deciding this is the moment to strike. He draws out his tuning fork, and holds it like it's a shock baton, trying to fool the idiot. "What do you think you're doing, Codakk!!"

The Indigo blood snarls, "Shit!"

And then things get crazy.

Zebruh throws Chixie to the floor and then grabs his phone out of his pocket and throws it straight at Ventus' face. Ventus deflects it with the tuning fork, and then finds himself struggling against Zebruh in a sudden wrestling match.

As they fight, Chixie scrambles to her feet and starts running.

"Just had to play hero, didn't you, Skylar!?" Zebruh yells, and then- WHAM! -Headbutts his opponent, dazing the Gold Blood for a few crucial moments, letting him scramble back to his feet to run after the Bronze Blooded singer.

As Ventus gets his senses back to him, there's a scream from the girl, and the sound of gun fire. The gold blooded D.J. gets to his feet and runs after them.

The Club's security team seem to have been shot by a team of masked raiders in CLOWN STYLED CLOTHING- and one of them has grabbed Chixie, thrown her over their shoulder, and is carrying her out that way even while she struggles to get free.

Zebruh has donned a mask of his own and has joined them as they exit the building.

"Shit!" Ventus chases after them and exits out into the front yard, presently being used as a parking lot for some kind of CARGO VESSEL that Ventus has never seen before.

The crew of Raiders have already taken Chixie onto the ship, and the doors sealed behind them as the ship begins to take off.

Ventus, thinking fast, grabs hold of his own grubphone and snaps a clear picture of the ship before it ZOOMS OFF and suddenly shimmers and disappears as if cloaked.

"Damn it!" Ventus swears, then immediately starts dialing one of his emergency contacts.

"...Dammek? It's me, Ventus. ...No, this isn't a social call. Shit just went down. ...That singer you pushed our way just got kidnapped by a bunch of masked raiders in clown costumes with guns. They escaped in a ship I'm sending you a picture of now." He does so, and a few moments later, he winces upon hearing cursing over the line. "I take it by the way you're cursing you recognize that ship?"

On the other side of the planet, Dammek stares angrily at the picture of a GOA'ULD CARGO SHIP. "Yeah, Ventus. I recognize it." He scowls. "And I promise you I'm going to do everything I can to get that girl back."
Your name is Okurii Leijon and you're staring at a grainy grub-phone photograph of a Goa'uld Cargo Ship.

"Do I have your attention now?" Dammek asks.

"You certainly have, Dammek," you say. "Where did you get this picture?"

You look around at the people Dammek requested join you for this briefing- Joey, Xefros, Callie, Mierfa, and Salazl. The old team back together. Everyone looks grim.

"First, some backstory," Dammek says. "About a month ago, I got a personal message from an up-and-coming singer, Chixie Roixmr." He brings up two photos, one a STUDENT ID PHOTO, and one of the girl on stage. "She wanted advice on how to get started on a music career. I pointed her towards a place called The Ashlander's Veil. I know a guy who works there, a Disk Jockey by the name of Ventus, who handles stuff like this better than I can. Chixie's been doing music there off and on since. She's nobody special, as far as I could tell." He shakes his head. "Someone decided she was worth the effort to kidnap, though. They sent in a guy to covertly grab her, and when Ventus intervened, they fought, and a bunch of masked goons barged in and took Chixie for themselves. They left in this Cargo Ship, complete with cloaking capabilities."

"Which would explain why we haven't had any sensor alarms go off about incoming ships," Callie muses.

"Your friend got this picture?" You ask.

"He did," Dammek nods.

"I remember Ventus," Xefros says. "He's got a keen eye for faces. Does he know who the guy who they sent in is?"

"Yeah," Dammek brings up a security camera photograph. "An Indigo blood, name of Zebruh Codakk. He's caused them some troubles before. Shit like flirting with the Security guards."

"What do we know about him?" Joey asks.

"Sal?" Dammek asks.

"So that's why you had me digging into this guy," Salazl shakes his head, and brings up a report. "Yeah, not much to go on, I'm afraid. His online profile presence is a basically a bunch of profile pages self-proclaiming he's a "gutterblood ally" which, let's be honest here, a lot of his posts don't really support that statement."

"Anything about employment, or hobbies?" Joey asks.

"...Beyond him being sweet on Super Strong Olive Blood Girls?" Salazl grimaces. "Yeah, no,
"I guess the question now, then," Mierfa says, "is how do we find this girl? They could be anywhere in the Galaxy by now."

There's murmuring for a moment between everyone, before Joey speaks up.

"Jake," she says. "He found Dr. Jackson and Martin Lloyd when they were kidnapped. He can find this Chixie girl, and if he can't, I'm sure Terezi can."

"Just to be on the safe side," you say, "I'll put in a request to see if Cassandra is available to come over and help. If this kidnapping is in any way shape or form related to Shadre's plans, we need to do something about it."

"Good idea. I'll track down Baizli," Xefros adds, "see if she's heard any rumors about kidnapping operations."

You notice he mentioned the Clown girl by name specifically, and seems to have ignored Trizza's presence in that information gathering operation.

"Let's get on this," you say. "The faster we save this girl the better."

---

Your name is Jake Harley, and you're trying this whole "Locate a Person" thing again. You're sitting on the Bridge of the All Your Base, with that girl, CALLIE OHPHEE, working at a console, ready for the moment you say anything.

At least you're not the only point of failure in this kind of search thing- Terezi, a local seer, has been conscripted into trying to predict where the girl you're looking for is, and it sounds like other avenues of search are being opened up elsewhere.

Normally, the base commander OKURII LEIJON told you, kidnappings aren't the Rebellion's domain, however, given the extraordinary circumstances regarding the use of a GOA'ULD CARGO SHIP, this might just well fall under their jurisdiction regarding the ongoing fight against CLOWNS in this galaxy.

Clowns. Freaking Clowns. Why did CLOWNS have to be a thing to be feared? It just makes no sense.

Bluh- at any rate. You have three avenues to SEARCH here, and hopefully by combining them you can sort of TRIANGULATE A LOCATION?

You're not really sure how this process is going to work, but what the hell, it's worth a shot, right?

You start with the CARGO SHIP, because that's the means of transport, and it likely hasn't LEFT wherever it went to yet.

[WHERE IS THE CARGO SHIP?]

Your mental perspective seems to bounce around somewhere above Alternia- between the moons
somewhere. Damn, it actually seems to be moving- either that, or it's still cloaked and THAT is somehow interfering with your scrying powers?

Still. Handy.

Keeping that in mind, you look for the KIDNAPPER.

[ZEBRUH CODAKK. WHERE IS HE?]

Your perspective almost immediately narrows down to a vision of the guy leaning back in a chair behind a Cargo Ship's control console.

Oh, lovely, you get a fix on the Cargo Ship with that. It's definitely cloaked and definitely ferrying around between Alternia's Moons. Right now it's leaving the GREEN one and heading to the SMALL PINK MOONLET.

Before you go any further, you make note of that discovery out loud, and you hear the sound of Callie furiously typing away.

Putting a pin on the ship and this Codakk guy, you focus now on the girl.

You've avoided looking at her picture too much until now, but you do it. You open your eyes, and take in the image of this girl, Chixie Roixmr.

She looks so much like Anna did when she was younger, except Alternian. YOUR ANNA, not that Jayni woman who pretended to be her. If you squint and even let your mind wander through the connections a bit, you could even maybe see a little bit of Joey and Jude in her face.

You didn't want to think about it, but you're really going to have to now.

You just hope this doesn't throw off your search any.

[WHERE IS CHIXIE?]

And then your perspective sort of... stretches back and away from the Cargo Ship, stretching, stretching, pulling and tugging until it settles somewhere on the Green Moon. Then it dives in close to a mountain range, to a cave system hidden underneath, and then...

You see her, sitting in a cage, suspended over a stage, trying to keep herself from crying.

"Found her," you say.

Your name is DAMMEK, and you can't believe your LUCK.

SYLEN, the Cla'dian who invented the Dragonflies, had literally just finished a PROTOTYPE MODEL of his version of the Earth Fighter "X-302" the the day before yesterday, and had literally just sent it through the Stargate to Alternia for some PRELIMINARY FLIGHT TESTS.

At first it doesn't look like much- just the central body without the wings.
But then Sylen shows off its hidden talent— a Captchalogue function built in to store the wings so that it could transport through a Stargate. Pop- then the wings emerge as if they were never gone to begin with.

It's shorter in length, nose to rear, than a Dragonfly with its Hyperdrive equipped, but only because a Dragonfly has that front-screen containing neck on the front adding to its length. Otherwise, it'd be about the same length, and is definitely as big around as a Hyperdrive addon in terms of its maximum height. Its wingspan, though, is where the thing REALLY gets big. A single wing, from the tip to where it meets the body, is almost nearly as long as the body of the thing, and then add another one opposite it and it's just slightly wider tip to tip than two Dragonflies put together. It's a beauty of a sight to behold, even when including the fact that its all so very clearly prototypical. It's not a production model yet, and it's in desperate need of PAINT, but... damn.

"You outdid yourself, Sylen," you say, staring up at it. "How close is it to the original 302 design?"

"Eh... I'd say it's a Biiiiit smaller?" the Cl'a'dian shrugs. "Because let's be honest, they clearly ripped off a Death Glider and I've SEEN those blueprints from what Callie and Mallek ripped from that fuel refinery a few weeks ago. So much wasted material just making the thing the same size as its source design?" Annnnd now he's rambling. "Seriously, just compress it to the base components and trim a little bit of the excess metal to reuse elsewhere and BAM! It's so much more efficient!"

"...So what are you going to call it?" You ask.

"I was thinking, the S-302!" He answers, cheekily.

X-302 to S-302...

"S as in 'Smaller'?" You ask.

"Yup!"

"...You know what, I'm not even going to complain," you say. "Hyperdrive work?"

"Yup."

"And it's not going to explode if we use it?"

"Well, it's the same basic hyperdrive as the non explody Dragonfly drives, so it shouldn't!" Sylen pauses. "Of course, we haven't tested it yet. That's what this whole trip was for!"

"Fair enough," you say.

It takes but only a few short minutes to figure out who your co-pilot is going to be.

"Me!" Jake English stares at you. "Why!?"

"Because we haven't had any chances to work together before, and I'd like the opportunity?" You shrug. "And also, let's be honest here. You did the psychic 'find the girl' trick, and I'm hedging my
bets on you being able to find her if they move her while we're there."

"...Okay, that's pretty sound logic," he says. "...What about everyone else?"

"Let's just say that this Zebruh guy is going to be in for a rude surprise any minute now," you say, smirking.

"And we've got a lock!" Your name is Callie Ohphee and you can't help but smirk.

A Cloaking System does nothing when you can tune your sensors to look at an already discovered flight path and find a section of nothingness that is somehow more nothingness than is nothing.

"Alright," Joey says, "Let's go make sure Codakk regrets siding with the wrong people."

You set the Ring Transport to fire off in a few seconds, and head over to stand on the platform.

SKREEEEE! The Platform announces its imminent activation, and you prime your stun rifle.

"Shit," Mierfa grins, "let's be pirates!"

BVRRM MMMM-VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM-VAWROOOOOOOSH!!!

The light of transport overcomes you, Joey, and Mierfa, and a moment later, you're standing in the cargo bay of a Goa'uld Cargo Ship.

VRRM VRRM VRRM-

As the Rings descend, you all take aim at the rather stunned Clowns messing around with some cargo cates.

--VRRM VRRM VRRM! RRRRMM...

And you three girls fire as the platform shuts down with its SHNKT.

The clowns fall to the floor, and the three of you march out through the open doors and onto the bridge of the ship, where one Zebruh Codakk stares on in horror.
"Wha- How!? HOW DID YOU GET ON THIS SHIP!?" He yells, panicking so bad you'd just assume he's near a mental break down.

Joey looks to you, and you look to Mierfa, and then the three of you say as one, "That's for us to know and you to never find out!"

And then Mierfa shoots him with her stun rifle, and down the idiot goes. At least he won't be getting off on the idea of being put down by any Olive girls when he wakes up.
Your name is Jake Harley and you're feeling a bit nervous. Sure, you've FLOWN these kinds of death trap Glider things before, but those were sensible GOA'ULD CONTROLS that you had the INFORMATION HOW TO USE implanted into your head. And what's more, those GLIDERS were NOT PROTOTYPES!!!

This "S-302" as Dammek keeps calling it is nothing more than a shrunken down, prototypical rehash made out of unfamiliar technology.

At least Dammek's flying it and not you, but still... That doesn't make your unease any less offputting.

Not as you hurtle up and up and up and up and UP AND UP AND UP AND UP SOME MORE!!!!

Alternia's desert surface is but a smear of brown beneath you, and the GREEN MOON just gets LARGER AND LARGER AND LARGER. Ominous and overbearing, yet WELCOMING in some weird sense of being ominous and over baring.

You don't like it.

"Ever ridden in the back seat before?" Dammek asks.

"No, I usually fly these things up front," you remark. "Of course, that was when I was brainwashed into thinking my dead wife was a cat girl Goa'uld wannabe, but still. Point stands. I'm usually flying these things directly."

"Fair 'nough," Dammek answers.

You continue on in silence for a moment, two, three, and then...

"So, what's this Chixie girl mean to you?" Your damned curiosity gets the better of you.

"Beyond the fact that I told her to go work at the place she got kidnapped from?" Dammek grunts. "I saw a spark in her that grew naturally. A spark that I basically ended up forcing to ignite for Xefros. I told him he was going to be the singer of our band. And then I told him we were starting a band. In that order."

"Oooh," you frown.

"So yeah. Kinda feel bad about it," Dammek says. "Besides that, I wanna kick these clowns in between the legs for what ever it is they're planning. You don't just kidnap a girl in broad moonlight like that."

"Yeah. Alright." You nod. "Fair enough."

And so you continue to ASCEND.

"Replicators in Boxes, Wonderful." Your name is JOEY CLAIRE and you're being QUITE SARCASTIC right now.
To be honest, you should have seen this coming after SG-1's unexpected visit to your galaxy. When they raided that Clown Ship and found Replicators ready to unfold at a moment's notice? Yeah, you should have seen this coming.

Really. Really. Should have seen this coming.

"Callie? What've we got?" You ask, turning to face Callie, who's searching through the Cargo Ship's database.

"Lots of plans involving moon bases and multiple attack vectors," Callie sighs. "Seriously, why the hell did they kidnap this girl for? We'd have no way of knowing they were planning this. It's an unnecessary risk to otherwise tight operational security!!"

"Hrm," you frown. "Mierfa? How's our course looking?"

"We're on course to a camp on the smaller moon," Mierfa says. "Looks like it's just a Goa'uld Bomber ship and some tents. We should get there in about two hours at current speed."

"Two hours at sublight speeds, should be enough time to get some explosives to ring down along with the Replicator boxes," You decide. "Also, should be more than enough time to wake Codakk up and ask him why the hell he kidnapped Chixie for."

Somehow, though, you get the feeling you're not going to like the answer.

"Alright," Dammek says after a few long minutes of silence. "We're high enough up now that if the hyperdrive explodes, it won't affect the planet."

"Oh, that's good for them," you say. "But what about us?"

Dammek says nothing, instead, just flipping switches and powering up the Hyperdrive.

"Dammek?" You press. "Dammek!?"

There's nothing but the silence filled by the sound of the Hyperdrive charging up for a few moments.

"So, uh, actually," he says, "There was something else I didn't mention."

"Eh?" You ask. "What's that?"

"...It's probably not important," Dammek says, "but when Chixie first contacted me she mentioned some shit about her Ancestor, and I honestly didn't believe it, but she sent me this photograph of this Ancestor chick and wouldn't you know it, there was a guy there with her who looked like me and I did some digging..." He laughs. "I still don't believe it, but hell, I'd been thinking the same thing about Joey's Grandmother being the Empress and her being dead, so I've been reconsidering it. Apparently those two hatched from the same Egg, long long ago."

"So, she's like your long lost cousin?" you ask.

"Hell if I know, I didn't say anything to her about it," Dammek says, "but if it turns out they
kidnapped her just to get to me because of THAT rather than because of anything else? I'm gonna rip some body's arm off and use it hit some other people upside the head!!"

And then the Hyperdrive activated, and with a brilliant WOOOSH of light, you feel massive acceleration and then WOOOSH, it's gone, and the MOON is a WHOLE HELL OF A LOT CLOSER!

"URgh," you groan. You feel like you're going to be sick. There's some alarm beeping.

"Well! Good news!" Dammek sounds like he's grinning. "The Hyperdrive ISN'T going to explode!" Well, that is GRIN WORTHY news!

"What's the badnews?" You ask.

"...The Deceleration Drive fried on exit," Dammek answers. "We're on course and hurtling straight for the mountain ridge behind the camp we were going to straife run at!"

That is decidedly LESS GRIN WORTHY!!!

"What now!?" You ask, trying to keep the panic from your voice. Is it just you, or is this whole death trap shaking a lot more than it did before you made the hyperspace jump??

"We wait for us to get as close as we can to the thing, and then we eject the canopy and bail out," Dammek decides. "Then, the 302 crashes into the mountain and makes a brilliant explosion and hopefully distracts everyone from realizing we survived and sneaked inside!"

"What if we don't survive!?" You ask.

"We'll make it!" Dammek says.

"What if we don't make it!?" You press.

"We'll make it, geeze!!" Dammek shoots back. "Stop worrying would ya!?"

"Sorry if I'd like to not die for a second time!" You tell him.

"...Okay, that's fine. Fair enough." He says and... hey, wait a minute!

"Isn't that my line!?" You ask.

"Truth be told, I think we've all be sort of stealing it from each other lately, so who cares?!" Dammek asks in return.

"...Okay, fair enough," you relent, intentionally using the exact same phrase.

"WAKEY WAKEY!" Your name is Mierfa Durgas, and you slap the stunned Zebruh Codakk awake.

"Buh-WHAT!?" He jumps as little as physically possible in his restraints, snorts even as he then realizes that he's tied up. "Oh, geeze... this again? Man, what the hell did I do to deserve the Royal
"You kidnapped a girl," you tell him, drawing out your set of Troll-horn nun-chucks. "We want her back."

"Wait what?" Codakk stares at you, horror starting to dawn in his eyes. "That singer chick was somebody important to someone else? Crap- whose Quadrant Mate did we grab exactly?"

"That's not my business to disclose," you tell him flat out, and start casually twirling around your nun-chucks, revving them up for some high speeds. "Least of all to you. Why did you kidnap the girl?"

"Shit- Look! Don't hit me okay!?" He protests. "The Boss just wanted entertainment! Someone mousey! Someone malleable! Someone who wouldn't be missed!"

"Who hired you?" You press. "And WHY is this ship carrying Replicators?"

"Wha- shit- Crap you shouldn't know that!" He swears. "Who are yOUUAAAOWWW!"

You hit him in the lower left leg. It makes a loud cracking sound.

"I ask the questions here!" You growl, revving up for another high speed hit. "WHO HIRED YOU. WHY ARE YOU CARRYING REPLICATORS?"

Codakk whimpers, "Alright alright! Fuck! Just don't hit me again!"

And then he tells you something really, really interesting. A lot of 'something interesting's, as a matter of fact. More than you'd ever expected or wanted to know.

...Geeze. It seems that Zebruh Codakk just could not keep his mouth shut once the implied threat of bodily harm was confirmed by way of a broken leg.

You keep your nun-chucks spinning for show until he finishes talking, and then you go report to Joey.

Your name is Okurii Leijon, and you muffle a groan. "Seriously?"

"Seriously," Joey nods over the video transmission.

Maikyi Kuudoh, a Purple Blooded Troll who'd been hired out of Academy and worked alongside Shadre Amanno before the Empress disbanded the DARK CARNIVAL, and had subsequently gone into hiding. After Shadre made her GALACTIC WIDE ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO, he'd come back to work for her as one of her TRUSTED GENERALs.

And now it seemed her operational security had been foiled by Kuudoh's inability to keep his bulge in his pants.

Shadre's plan seems to involve taking over control of Alternia and establishing a NEW EMPIRE, with her fixated as its REGENT until LORD ENGLISH returns and is fixated as its GOD BORN
EMPEROR.

To that end, Maikyi Kuudoh was sent to lead the PRELIMINARY EXPEDITION FORCE, devoted mainly to BUILDING UP A FOOTHOLD CAMP on each moon and would soon begin recruiting foot soldiers from among the civilian population.

The idiot had only been here for all of A WEEK, it seems, before the aforementioned inability to keep a bulge in a pair of pants reared its head and Kuudoh ordered one of his only planet-side recruits to kidnap Chixie to 'entertain' him.

Thankfully, it seems that the Perverted General has decided to have her held in his private quarters on the GREEN MOON while he works to oversee something on the SMALLER PINK MOON.

If Joey's group times it right, he'll never get to see her in person.

Urgh. You are once again DAMMEK and dammit, you, you totally just misjudged how FAST you'd be ejecting from that 302 from. You're a bit dizzy from the touchdown after ejecting, but that's nothing compared to how fast that 302 hit the mountain side with.

Green hued Rubble rained down upon a Goa'uld Bomber ship, and oh, yeah, those Clowns are RIGHT MAD.

Still, they're angry enough to be focused on REMOVING THAT RUBBLE from atop the centerpiece to their little CAMP, and so ignored you and Jake sneaking in through the front door. Well, side door, technically, but that'd be arguing semantics.

It's not too much hassle to sneak through the ship since everyone else is OUTSIDE ontop of the damned Bomber trying to clean it up. You quickly find the HIGH GENERAL'S PERSONAL CHAMBERS and hooboy.

"Yeah... this clown is High alright," you mutter. "High on delusions of grandeur."

SHOW SIGNS and ROAD POSTERS line the walls, all of which have been defaced to have this MAIKYI KUUĐOH's face and name plastered over the CENTER FOCUS of each poster and sign.

"Wh-What?!" A whimper comes from behind a curtain. "Wh-Who's there?"

Chixie!

You and Jake hurry over to the curtain and pull it back, revealing the stage and the cage with Chixie in it that Jake saw in his search-o-vision-omni-fold, which is a term you just made up on the spot because fuck being consistent with naming weird powers.

"D-Dammek!" The girl's eyes widen, and the horror and fear on her face wash away with relief. "You're here?! How?!"

"Long story, but we crashed a ship to cause one hell of a distraction," you say, then turn to Jake. "Go stand guard while I try and open this thing."

"Other way around, Dammek" Jake shakes his head. "Who do you think taught Joey how to
lockpick?"

"Uh... That Roxy Lady?" You ask, rhetorically.

"And who do you think taught HER?"

...Shit.

"You?" He nods. "Well, fine, okay, I'll go stand guard, you unlock the cage."

"Don't worry, ma'am, I'll get this door open fast as a jiffy," Jake says as he then pulls out a set of small metal... Oh! Lockpicks! They're an older design than what you've seen Joey practicing with on the few rare occasions when being off world requires you to sit and stare at a target for a few hours on end, but they're still lockpicks.

"Thanks, um...?" Chixie asks.

"Jake, Jake Harley, miss Roixmrs!" Jake says, amid the sound of metal clacking in a lock.

"Thank you, Jake," She giggles.

Giggles! Well, at least she's stopped sounding so nervous.

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and you scowl as best as you can considering that Baizli has you pinned against a tree with a weird, metal sheen to its bark, with her hand covering your mouth, and a panicked look in her eyes.

You both remain still for a moment, as you hear some search teams running around elsewhere in the forest. Then slowly, once it seems you weren't detected, she removes her hand from your mouth, and whispers, "What are you doing here, Tritoh?"

"Came to see if you'd gotten any intel' on Shadre's movements lately," you whisper to her. "Trizza pointed me to this world, said you were doing recon?"

"Urgh," She scowls, "of course she did." She shakes her head, and starts moving for the Gate. You follow her. "Yeah, I WAS doing recon," she says. "Then I got spotted. I've been heading to the gate as quietly and quickly as I could until I ran into you. Why didn't you stay with Trizza?"

"Please," you scoff, "I hate your romantically, but her? It's completely platonic. I'd sooner cut her head off than spend any longer than I have to with her."

"Well that's perfectly fair and all but let's go back to that first part again?" Bazili asks in a hissed whisper, eyes widening in what you kinda hope is a good sign? "Hate me romantically? Did you seriously just say that?"

You hear a tree branch snap behind you and you quickly pull Baizli to the ground, putting a hand over her mouth just the same as she just did to you.

"Damn it-" you hear someone say, "I could've sworn I heard someone talking just now..."
"Are you kidding? This Bitch is a Ninja. No way she'd be running her mouth in a situation like this."
Someone scoffs. "Come on, let's keep searching. She can't have gotten to the Gate yet."

You remove your hand from Baizli's mouth, and before she can say anything, you kiss her. It's a quick, chaste thing, but yeah. It's there and done.

"Let's talk more on the other side of the Gate?" you offer.

"Fuck yeah," she nods, and with that, the two of you sneak your way through the forest towards the Stargate, which, naturally, ends up being guarded. Three of 'em, clowns, looking bored out of their minds.

"Hey," you whisper, "watch this." You reach out for the DHD and start pressing glyphs at range.

"What the fuck!?!" one of them cries out as the Stargate begins dialing. "How's it doing that!?"

You then put on pressure on the tree branches around the Gate clearing, and make them rattle and creak.

"Shit! It's a fucking Ghost, man!" And then another one of them takes off at a run in a different direction.

"Wait- Where are you-!" the third clown makes a tragic misstep of standing in front of the Stargate stairs as the Gate finishes dialing and goes WAA WAA KAWOOOSH!

The first clown just watches the remains of his fellow guard who hadn't been completely disintegrated by the Kawoosh fall to the ground, and then he, too, turns and runs after the other runner.

The Gate thus cleared, you and Baizli break cover and run through the gate to the other side.

"I'm telling you!" Some naked-save-for-his-underwear-and-sopor-drenched clown complains, "The Handmaid came to warn me in my dreams that we're about to be blown up by someone! But she ran off scared, screaming about them being horrible monsters who freed birds from their cages before she could tell me when or where!!"

"Hah- fucker! Maybe she was frightened off by your naked body! I know I certainly am!" Some other clown scoffed at him, placing her hands on her hips. "Put some pants on, you sot!"

General Maikyi Kuudoh glanced up at this conversation, frowning.

While predictive dreams weren't all that common of a thing, sometimes they happened... But, 'Birds from cages?'

The Clown frowned. Perhaps... Perhaps he should go check in on the other base and-

"The Cargo ship has returned!" Someone reported. Ahead of schedule. How interesting.
The Bomber ship’s nearby Ring Platform activated suddenly.

The General made his way over to the platform.

The beam of light dispersed, and as the rings descended with another eight fold repetition of the sound "VRRM," General Kuudoh saw a bunch of clowns standing up around a stacked pile of boxes...

Except as the rings fell away, the clowns all fell to their knees, clearly unconscious, and the boxes were beeping rather loudly.

General Kuudoh ripped off the side of one of the boxes, and saw that a timer was counting down from Three.

"Oh that's just not fuckin' fair!" He laments.

From up on high, the sight of a bright red fireball transitioning to a burning blue explosion on the Moon’s surface as the Naquadah in the Bombership catastrophically failed is a welcome one.

"Well, I think we should be glad they didn't have as much Naquadah on that ship as the last clown ship we blew up," Callie remarks.

Your name is Joey Claire, and you nod in agreement, "Definitely." Then, you turn to Mierfa, "Set course for the Green moon and kick the hyperdrive into full gear. Let's go pick up the others."

"Aye aye, Cap'n!" Mierfa grins at you.

"Annnd! Pop goes the Lock!" Jake finishes and with a creak of rusty hinges, he opens the cage.

You glance back, and see Chixie stepping out from the cage, smiling at Jake as she says, "Thank you!" Oh, and then she hugs him. "Thank you thank you!"

"Not a problem, Miss Roixmr!" Jake says.

"Please, Miss Roixmr was my ancestor! Call me Chixie!" Oi oi, what's with that cliche'd line!?

Your radio buzzes, thankfully distracting you from "Muse to Tetrarch," you hear Callie's voice over the radio.

"This is Tetrarch, reading you Muse," you say, keeping your voice level.

"What's your status?" Callie asks.
"Crashed the 302 into a mountain and could use a pickup," you say. "We've got Chixie out of her cage, though."

"Are you on an Al'kesh?" Callie asks.

"The Goa'uld Bomber Ship?" You ask back. "Yes. Why?"

"Make your way to a ring platform, we're on our way," Callie says, and then the line goes dead.

You look to Jake, and then ask, "Where was that Ring Platform again?"

"I think we passed it on the way in," Jake says, closing his eyes. "Yeah, okay, I know the way."

"Lead on, Harley," you say. And so he does, you fall back next to Chixie. "So, how's your day been? Mine's been full of trying to panic, figuring out how to get you out of here, AND how best to troll some clowns."

"Oh, you know," Chixie then giggles a little embarrassed, "just been hanging out. I'm definitely not taking this kind of gig again, though. These Clowns just don't know how to appreciate my new song, 'Please, Let me Go!'"

"Damn shame, that," you say. "It's a cult classic among the rebellious repressed demographic, I hear."

Jake successfully leads you to the Ring Platform, and so you stand on the center and wait.

"We're in position," You radio to Callie... and get no immediate response.

Not from Joey, at any rate, because a Clown spots you being where you shouldn't be, yells, and then dives out of the line of sight in case either of you are armed. Naturally, alarms go off and you quickly rush over and punch the door locks- shutting the door to the room and locking it shut.

"Callie! We could really use that pick up!" You say, rushing back to the Ring Platform and taking aim at the door with your actual guns. Not stun guns or anything like that. These shoot plenty of very real and deadly bullets!

"Just a second!" She radios back- and, oh, good, she's still there.

"You got any spares?" Chixie asks.

"Sure," you decpatchalogue a ZAT GUN and toss it to her. "One shot stuns, two shots kill! Don't hit us!"

"Got it!" She nods, and takes aim at the door with it.

A moment later- the thing jerks, as if being pulled open from the outside.

"Just in case we die here," Jake remarks, "I'd like to say that, outside of nearly dying to a deadly hyperdrive explosion and a subsequent crashing into the mountainside, today has been a real blast and a half!"
"Sure it has, Harley!" You say.

Then, the door gets utterly ripped open, and a rather MASSIVE LOOKING CLOWN with some rather RIPPED MUSCLES tries to squeeze in through the door.

You and Jake start firing, short, sporadic bursts to see what happens. The clown just soaks up bullets like a sponge! How cheaty!

Of course - PCH-ZYU! PCH-ZYU! - so is a Zat Gun.

The mountain of a Clown yelps- and then goes silent, slumping into place and blocking the door for the other clowns behind him.

"AAA! HEY! WHAT GIVES!?"

"FUCKERS THINK THEY'RE SO SMART THEY -"

SKREEEEEEE! The Ring Platform finally announces.

Jake mutters some form of arcane thanks to someone you don't catch as the Rings ascend to cover you, and VAROOOOOOSH! You find yourselves in a Cargo Ship's ring room instead, with your Moirail waiting there as the rings descend, looking for all the part of the Angel of EPIC TIMING that she is.

"We've got them! Book it!" Callie yells.

"Booking it!" Mierfa yells back from the front bow, which you, Jake, and Chixie make your way over to find her and Joey sitting in the pilot and co-pilot's chairs.

A moment later, you feel, more than see, the shock wave of an explosion barely catching the edge of the Cargo ship's rear.

"...Why in god's name were we so close?" Jake asks.

"There was a bunch of rubble ontop of it," Joey answers. "The long range Ring antenna was down, so we had to get in close to use the short range antenna instead."

Jake looks a certain, knowing look at you and all you can say is...

"...Whoops."

---

You're once again Xefros Tritoh, and it's about an hour later that you return to Alternia with information in hand, and a Spades Quadrant filled, not that you'll be talking about that to anyone but Joey, later.

"Welcome back, Xefros," Okurii says, smiling as you return. "What'd you learn?"

"Well, beyond the fact that Shadre's harvesting metal trees from a planet that the Empress once had people experimenting on," you say, "nothing about the girl that got kidnapped."
"That's fine, Xefros," she says, "Joey just radioed in to report that Chixie Roixmr has been rescued and the clown camps on the moon have been destroyed."

"Well, that sounds like an adventure," you say. "What'd I miss?"

"I'm sure Joey will fill you in later," Okurii dismisses that. "Right now I'm more curious as to why Shadre is harvesting Metal Trees? How is that even possible?"

"That's... a long story," you say. "How much free time you got?"

Back at the Ashlander's Veil, where repairs to the front doors are being made, one Ventus Skylar's grubphone rings, and he answers after seeing the CALLER ID belongs to Dammek. "Please tell me you found her."

"Yeah, we found her," Dammek says. "She's safe and sound right now, bit shaken up, but good."

"And Codakk?" Ventus asks.

"We've got him locked up in a cell somewhere if you want to come pay him a visit," Dammek says. "He's not going anywhere for a long time, though." He laughs.

"What did you guys do to him?" Ventus asks, frowning slightly.

"Oh, a friend of mine broke his leg with her troll horn nun-chucks during interrogations," Dammek answers, sounding so very, VERY amused.

"Well, that sounds like karmic vengeance," Ventus muses. "Say, all of this wouldn't happen to have anything to do with the bright blue lights we saw on the moons earlier today, would it?"

"I'm not at liberty to say," Dammek answers, "but if I were? Oh. Yeah. I'd so be confirming or denying it right now."

"Good to know," Ventus muses. "Is Chixie coming back to work any time soon?"

"Haven't talked with her about it yet," Dammek says.

"Well, when you do, tell her to take all the time she needs, from me," Ventus says. "We'll be busy with repairs for a while, and reviewing our security protocols, so... it might be a while before we even have a job slot open."

"I'll let her know," Dammek says.

"Good," Ventus nods. "So... did you hear about that new mix-single that's coming out next week?"

"Hah, yeah!" Dammek answers, and so the conversation derails into something much more pleasant than the subject of kidnappings.
Whooo! This was a fun chapter to write! It just kept going on and on and on! :D :D

Earlier during one of the previous acts, Castor_Raiden offered the use of an OC, and I said I'd use it if I could find a suitable role for it in a story arc.

Well, Chixie Roixmr seemingly being a Musician, and Dammek being a Musician, and this Ventus Skylar also being a Musician... Well, the plot just sort of wrote itself. I hope I wrote him well!

And hey! Xef and Baizli got some minor development slipped in too! Salazl made an appearance too!
Chapter Summary

In which Anubis begins his first Power Grab.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.


DIASPORA DATE: 12/22/0001.

"I think we all know whose lives you prioritized, Colonel," says the Russian Government Lackey named Colonel Chekov as he gets up from his chair.

Your name is Colonel Jack O'neill and you're about to do something incredibly stupid.

"Permission to Speak Freely, Sirs?" You ask.

Hammond glances at you, but nods, and Colonel Chekov scoffs, "Fine, Colonel. It's not like it changes anything."

You take a moment to steel your breath, and then say, "Sir, I think it's pretty freaking obvious that I don't like what you're doing. Russia as a whole with their Stargate Program, I mean." You take a moment for that to sink in. "You guys got handed a broken Stargate by some people who VERY MUCH want to do bad thing out in the Galaxy. Stealing Technology? Using it for unknown ends?" You shake your head. "That's not even going into the fact that one of their own guys literally shouted in our face that he was working for a Goa'uld moments before evacuating to who knows where."

"Is there a point to this, Colonel?" Chekov asks, eyes narrowing at you.

"My point being, Sir," you say, a bit more firmly, "Colonel Zukhov's standing orders were to collect the Eye of Tiamat, and while I personally dislike that he HAD those orders for the above stated reasons, I didn't want him to DIE because of them. I want to make this ABUNDANTLY clear to you, and To WHOMEVER in Russia gets this message, I did NOT want ANY of them to die. If they're on my team for whatever reason? I NEVER want anyone to die, regardless of my personal feelings towards their orders, or who they're working for, or how STUPID they're being sticking TO THOSE ORDERS despite a Life Or Death Situation Hanging Over Our Heads!!!"

Chekov takes that in for a moment, and says, "I see. Is there anything else you'd like to add, Colonel?"

...Well. "Yes, one more thing," you say.

"Go on," Chekov nods.
"If Zukhov had, or didn't have, the Eye of Tiamat, it doesn't matter." You say, "He still tricked Marduk into holding a LIVE GRENADE. His first face to face confrontation with a Goa'uld, even one wearing the face of his teammate, and he tried to blow it up. That's deserving of any medal of honor in my book."

Chekov's lips, frozen into a stiff, neutral look of displeasure, twitch upward slightly for a moment. "And despite the fact that it wound up not killing the Goa'uld?"

"It might as well have," you say. "Being Buried under the Rubble like that stalled Marduk long enough for us to ring out, and leave him standing point blank infront of the explosion that took down the complex, and finished him off."

"Duly Noted," Chekov says. "I'll pass that on to my superiors."

And with that, he leaves.

You exhale once you hear the distant ding of elevator doors.

"You know, General," you say, turning to Hammond, "International Relations might be a hobby of mine... but it's just a Hobby. I really, really don't like what's going on with Russia being fed intel from the NID."

"Especially if they're compromised by Anubis," Hammond nods in agreement. "Speaking of... this Eye of Tiamat. Do you think Zukhov actually had it?"

"If he did," you say, "he had a chance to hand it over and he went for a Grenade instead." You pause, and say, "Honestly, I might have done the same thing in his shoes, if I'd had that choice."

"Just Following Orders, or Out Of Spite?" Hammond asks.

"Spite, mostly," you answer.

"Regardless, let's hope the Eye has been destroyed under all that rubble," Hammond says.

"Something tells me it's not going to be that easy, Sir," you grimace.

Meanwhile, in orbit over the Planet P2X-338, a Goa'uld Mothership lays in a lock step, geosynchronous orbit over a crushed and crumbled structure. Once Pyramid like in shape, but now a pile of rocks and dust, this particular location was now basically broadcasting a certain signal out into the cosmos.

A signal which a black robed figure whos face was a shimmering mess of ebony colored energy had been waiting for.

This figure... ANUBIS... stood, waiting for his agents to search the complex, and to bring to him the first key of the puzzel.

He need not wait much longer- for soon a few JAFFA emerge from a hallway that lead to a Ring platform, and the leader of them kneels, "Lord Anubis!" He says, "I present to you, the Eye of
"Tiamat!" And then from his robes, he reveals a large, metal necklace piece, cracked and damaged, but still protecting the circular, orange colored crystal within.

"EXCELLENT," Anubis speaks, voice echoing across the room as he picks up the broken necklace, and then snaps the frame in two to get at the Crystal within. "WITH THIS IN OUR POSSESSION, WE CAN BEGIN PROPER PREPARATIONS." He holds the crystal up to a light. "SEND A MESSAGE TO OSIRIS, TELL HIM HE MAY NOW USE HIS OWN EYE TO POWER THE SHIELDS OF HIS SHIP, AND TO MAKE A VISIT TO THE TOLLAN HOMEWORLD."

"Yes, My Lord," The Jaffa nods, and then he and his group scurry off.

Alone with himself, Anubis then summons a console device with a wave of his hand. PVVVVM-VAROOOOSH! It appears with a burst of red sparkles and a Ring Transmat beam.

The console seems designed to hold seven crystal gems- six around the outside, and one in the center. In the center, indeed, there is a Crystal- a singular Green one, looking almost like a piece of candy next to the orange Eye of Tiamat that Anubis places next to it in one of the exterior slots.

In fact, if it weren't for the missing shards of green crystal in this centerpiece's exterior, one very well could continue to assume it WAS just a piece of Candy... but it isn't.

If one were to look at those cracks and missing shards, one could see into the interior of the Green Crystal, and could see that yes, it is indeed a Crystal as the candy textured exterior just doesn't carry through deeper into it.

"SOON," Anubis intones, waving his hand again and dismissing the console device, but this time, he teleports with it, into a sealed room within which only one other thing resides. "THE EYES WILL BE GATHERED, AND OUR PLANS WILL BE BROUGHT TO FRUITION." He strolls over to the STASIS POD with in which the frozen, terrified form of a formerly Ascended woman resides. "THOUGH THE CHILD ESCAPED FROM US BOTH, IT IS OF NO MATTER FOR NOW. OUR ASSOCIATES ELSEWHERE WILL FIND HIM, AND RETURN HIM TO US."

Anubis reaches out and ghosts a spectral hand over the stasis pod.

"SOON... ALL OF OUR DEBTS WILL BE REPAID IN FULL." And with that, he waves his hands again, and teleports away, leaving the frozen form of Oma Desala and the console device with the Eye of Tiamat on it within the small, sealed away chamber.


DIASPORA DATE: 12/23/0001.

Over the homeworld of the Tollan people, a world called Tollana, a Goa'uld mothership entered orbit.

Below, the Ion Canons took aim, and fired up at the ship, as per standard procedure.
The Ion blast shoots upwards at brazen speeds, and then... ineffectively splashes against the Mothership's shields, powered as they are by the artifact known as the EYE OF OSIRIS.

Several more blasts attempt to strike the ship, but instead strike out against the shields just the same.

On the deck of the ship, the Goa'uld OSIRIS, standing at the helm in his stolen, Tok'ra sympathizer body, smirks.

"Good," he says, "we've made our opening statement. Send the Envoy to deliver our follow up."

"Yes, My Lord, Osiris!" a Jaffa says, and then departs.

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**EARTH DATE: JUNE 28TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 12/30/0001.**

Your name is SKAARA, and damn it, you were hoping to be out of town again when Colonel O'neill dropped by again for another visit with the Jades and Jude.

However, fate, it seems, just was not on your side this time. Because O'neill's shown up a whole three days early, and he's brought Major Carter with him. No sign of the others who usually make these regular visits though, which... is weird.

"Skaara!" He waves, looking... none too pleased.

Damn it, you're likely either going to get your ear talked off for resigning suddenly... or something else is going on that's had them come to visit early.

"O'neill, Sam," you head over to join them. "What brings you over to Abydos on such short notice?"

"Omoc's dead," Sam says.

Omoc? The leader of the Tollan team you'd run into during the SGC's first official year of operations?


"Narim says it was a heart attack," O'neill says.

"I see," you sigh. "That's... so why come tell me?"

"Omoc's will requested SG-1 attend his funeral," Sam says. "Our SG-1. You, Me, Teal'c, and Colonel O'neill."

"I..." you sigh. "Okay. When is it?"
Chapter End Notes

Fun Fact. It's noted that in canon SG-1 the episode "The Tomb" took place roughly 10 months after the episode "Watergate." I completely managed by sheer accident to get that same rough 10month time frame in place between the same episodes here.

Wheeeee!
Your name is Samantha Carter and as you exit the Stargate, returning from Tollana after the funeral, you yell out, "Wait! Everyone!"

O'neill and Teal'c immediately turn around, Skaara just continues sulking off towards the exit for a moment before stalling.

"Yes?" O'neill asks.

"Narim just handed me this before I went through the Gate," you say, and hold up your hand, revealing a small, round disk device.

Immediately, it begins playing a projection of Narim.

"Sam, I'm sorry I couldn't tell you this in person, but with Security clinging so closely I wasn't sure who to trust here," the recording of Narim says once again, this time in the conference room a few minutes later, "Before he died, Omac gave me a dire warning. He believed Earth to be in Gave Danger. Please, when you come to Tollana again, proceed with extreme caution. Something is definitely wrong, but I'm not sure what."

And then it ends.

Everyone at the table is silent, and then Hammond says, "So, do you believe this has something to do with why Chancellor Travell has invited us back tomorrow to discuss their policy of non interference?"

"It's pretty likely, Sir," O'neill says.

"Given what I've read up on the Tollan," Daniel speaks up, "this is really unlike them to share their technology, or even offer to do it."
"It's really not," Skaara agrees. "Didn't they turn down Sam's request to study their Goa'uld control monitoring device?"

"They did," you nod.

"Honestly," Jolinar voices, "the way I see it is if Omoc was worried about Earth being in trouble just before he died, it's likely to have some reason to do with this trade deal they're proposing."

"Agreed," Teal'c says. "The timing seems too suspicious otherwise."

"For the moment," Hammond decides, "Colonel O'neill, proceed to negotiate at least to the next stage of things. Find out what they're offering, and what we'd have to offer in exchange. We'll worry about what to do after we get more information."

Your name is SKAARA, and as you wait for the Stargate to dial up Abydos again, an unfamiliar person steps up besides you.

"Hello again, Skaara," he says.

"Uh... hello?" You ask. "Do I know you?"

"Oh, right, sorry," he says. "I forgot you wouldn't recognize me. I'm Jake. Jake Harley."

...What.

"What?" You ask.

"Um, right," he begins. "Long story short, Jayni cloned me after I died. Then SG-1 came to attack Jayni's camp and rescued the Harcesis, and they rescued me too."

"...Okay," you blink. "When did that happen?"

"A little while after you left, apparently," Jake shrugs. "Speaking of, I wanted to ask you something..."

"I think I said as much in my Resignation letter why I left," you say.

"Sure, sure," Jake says, "but that's not what I was going to ask."

"...Alright, fine," you say. "What did you want to ask?"

"How's Retirement been treating you?" Jake asks. "Is it more peaceful than constantly adventuring and going places?"

Huh. You weren't expecting that kind of question.

"It can be," you say. "But... sometimes I wonder what fate the Galaxy is heading towards. What's going on in the background that even the SGC isn't aware of? What's going on in the other galaxies..."
and other parts of the universe that we don't know? What happens if something comes utterly out of left field and catches us all off guard? And I can't help but to worry..."

"Yeah," Jake muses. "That's... a lot to consider."

"And yet," you say, "I'm pretty sure there's not a lot else I can do to help with it even if I were here. So..." You shrug. "I stop worrying about it and focus on what I am able to deal with."

"I see," Jake says.

"I'm not... I'm not built for all the regular saving the world stuff," you admit. "A few years of it has been enough for me. I can't do it anymore."

"Fair enough," Jake says as the Stargate finally locks and activates. "Don't be a stranger, Skaara."

And with that, he leaves the room, and you leave through the Stargate.

You... suppose you could ease off on the multiple, weekly trips out into the desert.

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**EARTH DATE: JULY 15TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/16/0002.**

Your name is General Hammond, and you're quite caught off guard by all of this.

"Ion Canons?" You repeat. "They're really offering as Many Ion Cannons as we want in fair exchange for an equal and matching amount of Trinium?"

"Yes, sir," O'neill says.

"...How many would we need to properly defend Earth?" You ask Major Carter.

"Thirty Eight," she says after a moment's consideration. "Minimum."

You glance at O'neill, and he says, "They've been working on the Math since we left Travell's office."

"Ah." You nod. "...So Thirty Eight Ion Canons. And they're just... willing to give us them?"

"We haven't discussed exact numbers, but I spitballed 50 of 'em as an example, and Travell didn't seem opposed to it," O'neill says. "Exact opposite, in fact."

"That's... an extreme departure from how the Tollan acted before," you say. "And Omoc was supposedly the swing vote?"

"Jolinar and I aren't buying it either, Sir," Carter says. "Narim thinks something is up too. Since Colonel O'neill and Daniel are going back tomorrow with the Trinium sample for purity testing and to resume negotiations, Teal'c and I were thinking about investigating things with Narim. See what we can find out if there's anything odd going on behind the scenes."
"Good idea," you nod.

Soon, the meeting is over, and you excuse yourself to make some phone calls.

The responses you get are interesting. The idea of FINALLY getting alien technology to work with excites most of the people at the Pentagon, and yet the few people who you suspect are with the NID (but haven't been able to confirm as such) seem reluctant, suddenly, to trade deal weapons like that to the rest of the world.

If the NID are compromised by Anubis, it would make perfect sense that they'd be suddenly reluctant to take such a deal. Still... Hmm...

You're not quite sure what to make of this, but it does not bode well for anyone.

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**EARTH DATE: JULY 16TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/17/0002.**

The Tollan have approved a first initial trade of 42 Ion Canons for the quality of Trinium Earth can provide them in trade over the next several months.

...Why they need so much Trinium for, you're not sure, but the fact that they went so far as to offer four MORE Ion Canons than needed at minimum is concerning.

"Travell wouldn't say what they'd use the Trinium for, but we're pretty sure it's got something to do with this 'test fire' that happened last month that got the Curia in such a fuss," O'neill says.

"We can mark the Trinium in the first shipment we're sending tonight with a subtle radioactive isotope we can claim is a side effect of the purification process we haven't 100% eliminated yet if they detect it," Carter suggests. "We trace it through that marker, and see where it's going. Teal'c and Colonel O'neill can track it, while Daniel, Narim, and I sneak into Travell's office and see if we can find more about this test fire that wasn't put on public record."

"See to it," you approve the plan. "I won't approve another shipment to go through until we find out what this Trinium is being used for."

And so SG-1 executes their plan, heading back to Tollana within the hour.

SG-1 wouldn't return at the scheduled time, but you were prepared for that given the circumstances. It just means that something has either gone horribly wrong or horribly right, and you pray it's the latter.

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**EARTH DATE: JULY 17TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 1/18/0002.**
SG-1 returned late in the morning the following day, hurrying through the Stargate armed with grim expressions on their faces and a few Tollan Security-force Guns.

The Debriefing that follows is troubling on many levels.

The Tollan Ion Canons were "Fired Ineffectively" at a Goa'uld Mothership with new shields that could resist the impacts, the Goa'uld ship in question apparently belong to ATUM, now claiming the host of one of the missing TOK'RA AGENTS who had thought been killed in the explosion of Vorash's sun- the lone girl of the group.

Atum, then, had blackmailed the Tollan into designing a NEW PHASE SHIFT WEAPON that could travel through SOLID OBJECTS... such as Earth's STARGATE IRIS- which Atum had then ordered the Tollan to test their new weapon on.

Instead of letting his people follow through on that, Narim had then destroyed the warehouse storing the massive stockpile of bombs with an Ion canon, and while SG-1 had escaped, he had stayed behind in an attempt to help his people survive the ensuing orbital bombardment from the Goa'uld in orbit.

SG-1 had seen one of the last blasts hitting fairly close to the Stargate as they left, and it was to nobody's surprise that trying to dial back resulted in a failed connection.

Earth wasn't getting its Ion Canons, but it seemed that Atum or her new boss weren't getting their Phase Shift Bombs either.

At least some "good news" had come out of this disaster, Atum had teased Dr. Jackson that she now worked for someone else, someone MUCH more powerful that Jayni or Apophis, and he had promptly extrapolated that Atum now worked for Anubis. Going by how angry Atum got at that guess, it was almost certainly true.

Anubis was making his first blatant play for power, and for now, it had been stopped. But what did this mean for the future? You couldn't say.

An hour later, one final long range communication burst from Tollana came through from Narim, confirming the Stargate had been destroyed and that the Goa'uld were destroying any ships attempting to escape.

Your name is George Hammond, and it seems that this fight with Anubis has finally begun in earnest, with Anubis landing the first strike and taking out one of Earth's allies.

Chapter End Notes

Oh, yeah. Atum is alive too. The SGC doesn't know Osiris still is, though.
Hello again, Log-book, today's subject is: Romance, and it's Mental Stability Components!

I've recently been musing over the concept of TROLL MOIRAILGENCE and how different it's regarded to EARTH-BORN PSYCHOTHERAPY, a field that had always intrigued me due to how ruthlessly it seemed the Aschen had squashed it down flat in our time. I suppose there's a method to their madness there, somewhere, but I'd rather not dwell on such depressing matters.

People on Earth don't really seem to see the need for therapy en-mass, as a thing everyone needs. There's a sort of prevailing culture during this time era that just got exacerbated during the Aschen's rule; this idea that sanity is something everyone gets all the time and doesn't need WORK to keep intact. This false belief that showing emotions to other people is a sign of weakness.

Professional Therapists on Earth have this weird negative connotation about them, and most people just don't trust them. I've heard some people on earth mutter about "quacks," and somehow that strikes me as odd, equating the sound of a duck to a profession. Then there's the idea that one should only show physical closeness to one person only, and sometimes not even then?? It reeks of bone headed ignorance towards the correlation, the connection, between the physical and emotional responses a person has.

Conversely, on Alternia, there isn't a PROFESSION, and yet there IS an extreme NEED, even just as a Romantic Quadrant, for someone to fulfill that kind of role. To be there to serve as mutual venting releases for pent up emotions. In one sense, a Moirailgence seems to tend to a primal, instinctual need to get those emotions and thoughts spoken. That there's a physical response to certain motions and actions tied to the typical Moirailgence shows that this isn't just a psychological development tied the artificial construction of the Quadrant system.

I've seen all too closely what this idea of restricting physical closeness does to people first hand.

As a relic of this era I now live in, seen from the future, my Sam and Jack, despite being married and arguably being one of the closest couples I was aware of during the time of the Aschen's rule, still suffered from the Military Ranks and the Chain Of Command that had forced them to ignore their feelings for so long. I've seen oh so many moments first starting out where one of them clearly wanted to reach out to the other, and held back, seemingly unaware of what they were doing.

But they'd worked past it, and that makes seeing the two of them in the Present, the Carter and
O’neill of this timeline, having to restrain themselves so much more hurts me just as much as it undoubtedly hurts them.

I still see this concept’s strains on John and Jade, and even on myself, third wheel feeling as I am on occasion. While here on Alternia, the idea of the lot of us just sharing a room wasn’t even blinked at. Back on Earth, though... Well, yeah. I’m well and intimately familiar with their situation. At least at night they’re able to be a bit more touchy-feely in terms of keeping nightmares at bay, but still, I can see how it’s bugging them to try avoiding it at school or elsewhere. I know it annoys me when I want to try and comfort them as we were used to back in the old Cabin and its lake-born isolation, but can’t. There are so many rumors about us as it is, after all.

(Don't look at me like this, you two know it's true.)

I'll admit, though, that while the Quadrant system clearly has some biological basis to it, trying to replicate it entirely onto humans might cause more problems than its worth. Earth has this weird fascination with monogamy over polyamory, and that got even worse during the Aschen’s time. After all, I do my own role to play with John and Jade, even if it's mainly out of distracting other people from what's going on with them. Still, that makes it more of a three-person thing rather than straight out two-person thing, plus there have been times I've restrained them both and they've tried restraining me and each other from doing outrageous things...

I'm desperately not thinking about the time I stole those armbands. What? No. Who's lying? Not me. I'm definitely not freaking out over it still. (Jade, John. This means you, whenever you inevitably steal this book away from me for your own entries and read through my notes again. I am preemptively telling you NOW not to ask me about this. Seriously. I'm being sarcastic here.)

Joey and Xefros would make for an interesting case study all on their own, if I were going professional about it. My observations tend to show how they seem like a stereotypical Moirailgence from an Alternian Perspective, but at the same time, there’s a human aspect to it. They aren’t strictly always following the quote-unquote “playbook” for Moirailgence, and I’ve seen and heard mention of both of them ranting about various minor things to someone else when the other isn’t available.

Dammek and Callie seem more of a traditional Alternian Moirailgence from my observations. They generally keep to themselves when it comes to their emotional problems, and they otherwise don't seem to be in your face about their shared Quadrant. There’s really not much I can delve into unless I ask them, and that seems like such an odd social faux-pas that I’d rather not get them mad at me.

I'm particularly interested in seeing how Daraya finally confronts Tyzias about her pale feelings, but I'm not going to poke and prod lest I ruin my own experiment data. There's the interesting conflict about Barzum and Tyzias, and nobody I’ve talked to seems certain as to whether or not Tyzias is Pale or Flushed.

Conversely, there's an odd couple I recently became aware of today. Two Trolls, an Olive Blood girl and a Gold Blood boy, named KONYYL OKIMAW and AZDAJA KNELAX, respectively. Well, I say "Girl and Boy" as if it has any baring on their ages. They're not younger than me, that's for certain.

Konyyl is definitely older than me, but it's hard to tell by how much. She's WAY more developed in the ways of the muscle than I'll ever be, that's for certain. Apparently people have taken to calling her "The Duelist" after some ill-fated mission which, oddly, I get near unanimous agreement was resolved by her "passion for graphic violence."

Her broad shoulders are also apparently good for crying on, which seems to be an odd thing for
people to be aware of if she has a firm Moirail in Azdaja, thus implying their relationship is more of
the Matesprit than the Moirail. Her strong bulk of muscles, and the occasional angry glare and snarl
imply to everyone who sees her that she's a danger to be reckoned with. However, this is where their
relationship seems to diverge back to Moirailgence because Azdaja seems to act as some kind of
constant restraint on her.

Interesting of note is her fascination for shoes and gloves adorned with what I can only assume to be
(and pray are) Faux-Troll-horn claws, similar to Daraya's wrist warmers. Say what you will about
Joey's Matesprit, but I will always question how she got genuine troll horn nun-chucks.

Azdaja is... well, he's reportedly a good listener, again, an odd note for people to be aware of. But
there's something about the way he dresses that reminds me of Argo when she had Jolinar in her
head. That sort of cool air of indifference, that comes with a long trench coat and a relaxed stance
that cries "I'm nobody important, pay no attention to me" while simultaneously blaring out warning
alarms of "I'm a DANGER TO YOU! Leave me be."

He's got some kind of potent Psionic abilities, with one glowing teal eye similar to Cirava, and a
darker colored eye of a more deep blue color. He also wears some kind of device that, I'm hesitant
to say, looks like it came straight out of an anime. I'm fairly certain it's some kind of augmented
reality device, like that failed attempt of "Aschen Glass" add on eye wear that launched and fizzled
out back in the far flung future of 2008. Body posture and air of danger aside, he *seems* to be the
kind of guy who'd have his head on straight and not need emotional support, but that's ignoring
some key facts and honestly...

Honestly, I get the feeling that he might be the more dangerous of the two. "Beware the nice ones"
and all those other lovely cliches.

But that brings me back to the question at hand. Are they Matesprits or are they Moirails?
Depending on who I ask, I can get conflicting reports of them snogging in a hallway one day, and
then them 'shoosh papping' over a pile of broken chairs in the cafeteria the next. There's
SOMETHING about them that nobody can put their fingers on.

I've talked with Kanaya over this, but she's even more confused than I am! In the bizarre, alternate
universe she came from, Kanaya and Aradia's original Alternia didn't have the quadrant system,
and infact, seems to have had a completely different kind of reproductive system in place! The
marvels of the Multiverse!! (I am once again steadfastly going to be declining any questions as to
why I am aware of this fact. Honestly, it's not like you two even understand half of this purple prose I
write anyways. Why do you keep replying to my insights like this? Perhaps I should bring it up as
some form of Moirailgic Duty to ask you to stop? (Moirailgic? Is that a word? If it isn't, it is now.))

The less said about asking Aradia or Terezi, the better, and I'm definitely not going to broach the
subject with Aunt Joey. Oh no. Not again. Not after the embarrassment of me asking them about-

I'm rambling. I'm feeling hungry. I'm rambling because I'm hungry. That's the excuse and I'm
sticking to it.

I'm going to go eat a sandwich or something, and most certainly NOT going to dwell on the fact that
I'll be dragging Kanaya along with me for one final lunch date before I'm forced back to Earth to do
this horrible nightmare trap that is 'School.' Nope. Stop looking at me like that! (JADE. THIS
MEANS YOU.)

_Rose Lalonde_
8.9.98 / 2.10.02

@ROSE

...yeah, okay the rumors are PRETTY ANNOYING! i don't think i can even BEND as much as that pete guy keeps saying :/

saaarr... casssst'em? what's that? is it related to tv shows?? XP

of COURSE we understand your pretty purple prose! we've been friends-and-more since we were KIDS!!! ^u^ also, yes. MOIRAILGIC is now a word! :D

rose! come on! you gotta tell us how the lunch date went!! don't leave us hanging in suspense!! XO

ARRRGH!! right! john just reminded me that you want us to write more in these things so we're not just using this book like some stupid paper based instant messenger...

so, uh.... um... OH! marty's coming in later this week/month and he's gonna show us the first teaser look at the new show he's making! i'm so EXCITED!! :D :D

i wonder what it'll be about? alternia? earth? EARTERNIA?? :O

um... that's all for now, jade out!

-Jade <3

8/10/1998, 2/11/02

@JADE

honestly the rumors are pretty annoying but seriously who gives a shit about them? with one phone call we can be either half way across the galaxy or even IN a whole other galaxy within a matter of minutes! puts even Stinky Pete's rumors in perspective, if you ask me.

@ROSE

your sarcasm cannot delay the inevitable, Rose! if you're freaking about it, please talk to us! we don't blame you for the bracelets. how many times do we have to tell you this?

Rose, did you happen to forget that i took the freaking MENSA test back in our dead future timeline and passed it with flying colors at AGE ELEVEN? also, something something semantics. seconding MOIRAILGIC as a word.

also, yes, Rose, do tell us how the lunch date went! WE NEED DETAILS!!

re: moirail stuff
poor Jack and Sam. RIP.
they quack because all ducks are psychotherapists from the future thrown back in time to prevent the end of the world.

i have wondered how we managed to fall into something so similar to the alternian moirailgic nonsense that isn't really nonsense.

Joey<>Xefros WOULD make for an interesting case study, wouldn't it?


and now for some actual journaly thoughts!

i finally met Keiko's illusive friend 'Kazuto' today! he popped over through the mirror for like, five minutes to deliver a letter to Dr. Mckay. he got this weird look in his eyes, though, when i picked up his weird game boy console thing and turned it on. i mean, sure the thing doesn't have any buttons on it but he was able to do stuff with it just by sweeping his eyes at the screen so why couldn't i?

i mean he even told me the thing wasnt even personally locked to his dna so what's the big deal?? i swear he looked at me like id done something impossible, geeze. just to prove a point i even asked Col. O'neill to try turning it on and he could do it too. so it's not like there's anything special about me that's letting me do something Col. O'neill couldn't also do. (yes, Rose, even beyond the whole windy thing i can do.)

-John

Chapter End Notes

Hm? What could be so special about a mind controlled game console without buttons on it, I wonder?
Chapter Summary

And now for something Completely Different.
(But still important to the Main Story in ways you might not yet realize!)
[Or maybe you DO realize it but are keeping it quiet to not spoil? *shrugs*]

Chapter Notes

NOTE: This Intermission serves multiple purposes:
First: as a means of introducing some peculiar concepts that will soon start having some importance in the main universe of the story shown so far.
Second: as a means of writing a prologue of sorts for a spinoff side story that I might launch after concluding the main bulk of the Stargate Alternia universe acts. If I do launch off said side story, this and the next chapter will just be copied over to become the first chapter of that story, while also remaining here! Whee!
Third: as a means of getting a chance to properly flesh out Keiko and Silica as characters in case I decide to use them in later seasons.
Fourth: as a means to fill time while I push through the process of writing the next SG1 chapter (Wormhole X-Treme!), and simultaneously meta-ly poking fun at the concept of Back Door Pilot Episodes in television.
Fifth: as a means of fleshing out some previously referenced noodle incident backstory brought up back in Act 3, and because I've got a scene stuck in my head that just won't let me be unless I write it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

SO MANY YEARS IN THE PAST...

(AND IN ANOTHER DIMENSION)

Goa'uld Motherships entered orbit over the planet not yet called EARTH, preparing to take the people and its resources as the new foundation stone for their soon to be galactic spanning empire.

Settled at the seat of the head command ship, the one called RA smirked an alien faced smirk as he stares down at the blue Jewell of a planet. A perfect mix of sapphire blue and emerald greens. A garden planet.

And then one of his servants cries out- {"MY LORD! A SHIP APPROACHES!"}

{"What Kind of Ship?"} Ra inquires.

{"It's... it's...!"}
And then a Mothership to Ra's immediate right is blown to pieces by a string of golden fire— alas, the one who would be called Anubis had perished in the explosion.

"WHAT!?" Ra turns his head and stares, watching as the strangest space ship he'd ever seen bursts through the remains of Anubis' mother ship. It looks like someone took a city, and made it FLY.

The strange city vessel swoops forwards and takes up center position between the Goa'uld fleet and the planet they sought to conquer.

And then a transmission comes over the communications array.

"Halt there, Parasites!" a scowling, human face glares a death promising glare from behind her rounded glasses. 

"We are the owners and protectors of this planet. Leave at once or face the consequences."

Ra laughs, getting to his feet and glaring back. "And just who the hell do you think you are to challenge the full might of the Goa'uld Empire with but ONE ship?"

The woman laughs, turns to her side, and asks something in a language Ra is unfamiliar with, it sounds... oddly familiar though in a way. Like an ancient relic of a forgotten piece of the past. Then, receiving a response, the woman turns to look back at Ra, and declares, "We are Atlantis. And you have thirty seconds to retreat before we blast you out of the sky like the locust you are!"

Ra growls, and then ROARS. "YOU DARE!? ALL SHIPS!" his voice booms to every ship in his fleet. "OPEN FIRE ON THAT SHIP!!!"

The woman then remarks something that, had Ra been able to understand it, would have been a quip along the lines of "It's Your Grave, Then."

A moment later, the City Ship ATLANTIS opens fire with multiple streams of golden colored, squid shaped projectiles.

Needless to say, Ra's ship did not survive the first five seconds of bombardment.

Left suddenly in command of everything was the one called Apophis, and his revenge was instant, inspired, and wicked. He changed the order from targeted the intruding ship to target the planet below.

If the Goa'uld could not have the planet, than neither could their protectors.

A moment later, Apophis saw a burst of golden light shining into the front windscreen of his Mothership, and, for a moment, he thought it was the sun.

And then he remembered that no, it wasn't the sun.

FWASH! KABOOOOOOOOM!!!
YEARS IN THE PAST... BUT NOT MANY...

(ALSO STILL IN ANOTHER DIMENSION!)

Sunlight glints across the clouds, disturbed only as a long, round shaped flying ship bursts across its surface, heading directly up towards the massive CASTLE SHIP: AINCRAD.

The small Castle Jumper flies above the clouds, tilted in such a way that the sunlight doesn't glare into the front window. Not that it mattered too much, given the countless gleaming bursts of reflected sunlight off of the castle's shiny, metal surface.

With a tilt, and then a turn, instead of diving up towards a higher point on the Castle, the tiny Jumper went beneath Aincrad, beholding its multiple, light producing engine drives that were keeping it afloat.

Inside the Jumper, its pilot and co-pilot talked.

STARGATE
--
MIRRORS
You are now KAZUTO KIRIGAYA, aged FOURTEEN, currently learning how to fly a CASTLE JUMPER under your AUNT'S GUIDANCE so you can get your PILOT'S LICENSE when you finally turn Sixteen and be able to go between the various Castles without having to take a BUS or a RING TRANSPORT.

"Level us out a bit now that we're underneath Aincrad's Shadow, Kazuto," your Aunt advises.

"Alright," you nod, and start leveling out.

"I said level us out," your Aunt stresses. She's normally not so insistent when you're training like this, but you guess this is a special occasion.

"I am leveling us out, Aunt Midori!" you tell her. "It's just taking longer than usual for some reason."

"Hrm," your Aunt frowns. "I'll have to check the flight log later."
You're not really sure why you're out here doing this. Usually Aunt Midori just has you buzz the outside of the Castle a few times, but today she's had you go very far out to at least two other Castle Ships (Castle Firmament and Castle Hunrath) and check out their engine blocks from below before swooping back to Aincrad to check on its engines.

Your Aunt works in ENGINEERING, so you're honestly curious what's going on... and a little bit frightened. You fight just a little bit more to level out the Jumper, which is odd since you've done this twice today already without this kind of resistance.

"...Aunt Midori?" You begin tentatively. "What's going on?"

"Huh? What do you mean?" Your Aunt asks, even as she stares up at the engines of Aincrad.

"The whole trip to check other nearby Castles, for starters," you say. "Plus, there's a lot more resistance I'm getting towards leveling out than I did earlier."

Your Aunt sighs, then says, "Kazuto, you remember how we took you in after your parents died in a Jumper accident four years ago?" Of course you remember. How could you forget?? They were investigating some odd energy fluctuations in the magneto-sphere when their Jumper suddenly disappeared. Those Fluctuations they were chasing had stopped soon after, but nobody could figure out what had caused it or could find the remains of the Jumper, so...

"The fluctuations they were chasing are back?" You ask, pulling the Jumper to a halt near the central propulsion engine.

"Yes, and worse than ever before," Your Aunt frowns, opening a scanning diagnostic through the Jumper's mind interface. "It doesn't look like we've taken any damage... but the output we're reading is much less than it should be for this altitude." She closes the diagnostic. "I'll need to go down through the cloud layer and check on the Magneto-sphere beneath us."

"...What?" You ask. "But they tell us never to fly beneath the cloud layer in the training manuals and-"

"And that's why we'll head home first and I'll go out again before doing it," she smiles. "I know you're not ready for a stunt like this."

"...So home?" you ask.

"To home," she nods.

And so you fly out from under Aincrad and circle around for the entry ports for the First Floor.

Your name is KEIKO AYANO, and you are currently trying your best to ignore your BIG SISTER'S MUMBLINGS when it comes to whatever strange subject she's focusing on right now.

Your sister, SHIORI, is something of a HISTORY NUT and a SPELUNKER, and loves delving into the deep and hidden spots inside Aincrad's LESSER TRAVELED PLACES.

There's generally only two things that can reliably knock her out of one of her RESEARCH FITS-
and that's FOOD, or HER BOYFRIEND.

And since she went into her current fit after eating lunch, that's FOOD out of the equation, leaving you with staring out the window watching for a certain Castle Jumper to come into view.

In the mean time, you stroke your pet feather dragon, PINA, down her neck to her shoulders from the back of her head in that way she's always seeking during the days when there's nothing to do like today.

Sure, you could go across the field to the Kirigaya's house and check in with Suguha, but...

You just don't feel like it today.

You're restless. You're anxious. You feel like you're stuck in the prologue scene of a video game waiting for the controls to be handed to the player so the adventure can really begin. You aren't sure why, but you get the feeling that something big is going to happen today.

And then Pina perks her head up, hearing something. You look out the window and see a Jumper coming in for a landing next door.

"Siiiis!" You call out, far, far too loudly for being in the same room, "Your Boyfriend's back!"

Naturally, your sister jerks out of her Research Fit and glances up, to look over at the window. "Huh? Really?" Then, a bit of a crazy smirk breaks out on her face and oh-

Oh no.

That's not the "time to relax after a research fit" smirk, that's the "It's time to rope my swordsman boyfriend into playing body guard while we dive into a dangerous ruin" smirk!!

Needless to say, you follow your sister outside as she heads across the field towards the Kirigaya's house.

Surprisingly, your MOTHER, BISHOP AYANO, is waiting at the landing pad and seems ready to ask Kazuto's Aunt some work related questions. She's got one of THOSE looks on her face.

Everyone in your family is pretty smart, even if they have their weird quirks. Your Sister, as previously mentioned, loves her hidden secrets and the reveals of them. Your Mother works in AINCRAD ENGINEERING along with MIDORI KIRIGAYA, Kazuto's aunt, and Suguha's mother.

After the Jumper's Ramp lowers, you see your sister rush over to grab Kazuto and drag him away back to your house to talk about something related to whatever she was researching. You're more interested in hearing what your mother has to say, though, so you hang back in the background and wait and listen.

"Midori," your mother begins, "how was the trip?"

"Concerning," Midori says. "I spot checked the engines. There didn't seem to be anything wrong with them that I could see, which is even more concerning. External scans also matched what we were reading from inside- the engine outpit is so much lower than it should be."
"That doesn't sound good."

"There's something else, though," Midori says. "Kazuto ran into some interference keeping him from righting the Jumper properly beneath Aincrad's engines. We didn't have that problem over at the other Castles."

"That's... that's worrisome," your mother frowns. "What do we do about that?"

"I don't know, but I think we need to spot check the Magneto-sphere itself," Midori says. "I think there's something wrong with it, maybe."

"If that Magneto-sphere is breaking down..." your mother grimaces. "This could affect more than just Aincrad."

"Let's double check the Jumper's Flight Logs before we head out again," Midori says, and with that, the both of them walk into the Jumper, and close the door behind them.

...So much for eavesdropping.

You head back after your sister and her boyfriend. Maybe whatever adventure your sister has planned will be more fun than thinking about the possibility of your castle CRASHING in the near future.

Your sister has found what's supposedly a hidden cache of technology stored inside one of the old ACCESS STAIRWAYS inside the nearby support pillar. Wild animals and vagrants who got kicked out of the cities tend to be the only normal inhabitants of the place, the former more so than the latter on your level of the Castle though, thankfully.

There are all sorts of odd creatures that defy expectations, though. You've seen LIZARD MEN or ANIMATED SKELETONS, or even the odd WEREWOLF on occasion. Your sister thinks there's an ABANDONED LABORATORY in there somewhere. And hell, after 70,000 SOME YEARS of continued operation, there's probably QUITE A FEW of them lying around.

The stairways, as you've learned from your sister's ramblings, tended to be used for maintenance or during construction before the Ring Platforms were constructed and installed. And because Aincrad is a CASTLE CLASS SHIP, it's only fitting that these ill used stairways are called DUNGEONS by almost everyone. Nobody in their right mind would ever set foot in one...

So what does that make you, for tagging along with your sister and her boyfriend?

Armed with his family sword, the AENNIAL BLADE, and dressed in some dark, black leathers and a slightly blue hued LEATHER JACKET, Kazuto looks all the part of a bodyguard... Your sister, though... Shiori's dressed up in brown cloaks and heavy duty pants and shirts and for some reason has painted red whiskers on her face. Plus some fancy, claw-enhanced gauntlets... well... she looks the part of the crazed adventurer in need of a body guard.

You suspect there's some kind of roleplay element going on when its just Shiori and Kazuto, but thankfully they seem to have long ago agreed to put it aside when you tag along on their expeditions. You'd feel sorry for "cockblocking" them, as one of your classmates would so eloquently put it, if
not for the fact that it's one of the few petty pieces of revenge you can exact on your sister for her constant research fits rambles.

You don't wear anything fancy beyond a simple metal breast plate over whatever clothes you happen to be wearing when you tag along on trips like this. That, and a small dagger, tend to be well armed enough for you.

You know you probably should, though, but... eh... effort. So much effort for doing so little.

The nearest Dungeon/Support Tower/Stairway is a good fifteen minute's walk from either of your houses, and it's about ten minutes in that you see the Kirigaya family Castle Jumper taking flight over head and heading out for the EXTERIOR WALL for the First Floor.

Floors. There's another curious thing about the Castle Ships. They have SO. MANY. FLOORS. Aincrad, supposedly, has 100 of them, others have less, some have more. You doubt that it really has 100 floors, though. Because the Ring Transports have security locks on them that can only be over-ridden depending on your job or family ties and the most you've ever been able to visit in consecutive order are thirty floors. (Not even exactly floors 1 through 30 either! You don't get why Floor 25 is blocked off, for example, but Floor 50 is available to you.) And if you're talking about exterior views? You once tried counting during one family outing to another Castle...

You got to about 35 floors before you got out of sight, on the return trip you managed to count only 20 floors in the exact same amount of space.

You swear, there's some kind of fractal space compression thing going on. Honestly, it makes the most sense to you, really. If Aincrad really DOES have 100 floors? The weight of that alone, to be suspended in the air by ONLY ten, maybe eleven separate engines? It just seems implausible. There's got to be some kind of trick to it, and you're willing to bet that there's some kind of space-folding fractal techniques going on.

You mean, honestly, it's not that far out of the realm of possibility. After all, you've spied some looks into your mother's WORK NOTES. You know that Aincrad is powered by AN UNCOUNTABLE NUMBER of shiny, yellow crystal like devices that contain some kind of pocket dimension within them designed to draw a near infinite amount of energy for the Castle's usage...

You say near infinite, because these 'Zero Point Modules' tend to run out of juice on a fairly regular basis with as much constant strain as a Castle ship like Aincrad puts on them, even used in conjunction. (According to your mother's notes, these puppies are procured from Floor 95... somehow. "Classified Information" can only get a sneaky spy eye so far.)

But, your musings about technology aside, you soon enter the dungeon/stairway and start climbing its depths to find the place your sister is looking for.

It's about half an hour into the trek that you settle down for a quick food break. Well, you and Pina settle down for food, your sister and boyfriend settle down for a makeout session.

You remember what you said to yourself before about roleplay, and thank your lucky stars that this ain't that.
Still, ugh. Way to rub it in that you've got a date-mate, Sis!

You're doing your best to ignore them when something catches Pina's eyes, and her head darts after it.

A moment later, "Kyuuii?" Her head tilts in confusion. She ruffles her wings and seems eager to chase after whatever it was.

As domesticated as Pina is, she's still a wild Feather Drake at heart. Sometimes you just gotta hunt.

And so you let her go, and you chase after her as she chases whatever it was that got her attention. You catch glimpses of it. Tan body, black in places, a small wooden tail? What ever could it be!?

Down a few hallways and around another corner, Pina finally manages to snag her prey!!

...It's some kind of cheap looking burlap sack doll, crudely painted to look like a mouse of some sort. Whatever was animating it, though, has escaped Pina's clutches. It's so cute how she's tearing the thing apart!

You fish out a small notepad and make a note to yourself to buy her another chew toy the next time you're at the store. That done, you lean back against a wall, and watch Pina tear the thing apart. You wonder what was making it mov- "AAAAH!"

The wall suddenly slides open behind you with an enchanted HISS because of COURSE you would have the luck of leaning against a hidden door of all things.

"Ow..." You mutter as Pina releases her destroyed target and flutters over onto your chest.

"Kyuu?" She inquires, likely wondering if you were hurt.

"Nothing but my pride, Pina," you smile at her, giving her a tender pet down the neck before getting up to your feet. Pina shuffles onto your shoulders in the process so smoothly you didn't even notice, so you're surprised when she gives your right cheek a tender lick. "Aww, thanks."

"Kyuuuui!" she chirps as what's probably meant to be "you're welcome!" Either that or "Feed me fish when we get home!"

You look around the room you've discovered and... oh, huh. You guess this must be the lab your Sister was after.

There's all sorts of stuff in here. Armor, swords, a bow and arrow... some gears and a wind up key... some kind of blacked out mirror... oh! Here's something familiar!

You pick up a FLIGHT TRAINING GAME CONSOLE, and try to activate it. Unsurprisingly, it lights up with barely any effort. These little handheld game pads are tuned to respond to the specific genetic keystone marker that the ANCIENTS OF ATLANTIS carried within them that allowed them to activate all of their MIND CONTROLLED TECHNOLOGY. Everyone who lives on a Castle Ship either has that genetic marker from their ancestors, or has taken a THERAPY TREATMENT to get it grafted onto their D.N.A. Modern consoles are designed to make it EXTRA HARD to work, as a training exercise for potential pilots to hone their skills on well before they ever sit behind a Castle Jumper's controls. After all, the more focus you have, the less likely you are to crash, right?
That it was so easy to turn on says it's an older model, though. The text on it is pretty archaic though, and seconds that notion. Nobody's used this font style in... geeze, atleast a hundred years? (Hah! Take that, Suguha! Your obsessive font knowledge DOES have some handy use to it!)

Hmm... it looks like someone's CODE CRACKED this one, though. Someone's added in a JOURNAL FUNCTION and... wait, what? That can't be right. The dates on this say this first entry was written last year!

Looks like it belongs to someone names Sakamoto who... came through a Mirror under orders from PRINCESS ASTORA to keep a YOUNGER PRINCESS, an unnamed Astora's Sister, safe from their MANIPULATIVE, PERVERTED BASTARD OF A FATHER.

Yeesh, you don't like the sounds of this guy. If you ever meet this OBERON fellow, you're gonna kick him between the legs!!

...But this mention of a Mirror...?

You look at the blacked out Mirror in the room. Could it be that simple?

You look around for a control device, mentioned in the journal, and find it next to the mirror.

This thing looks like an even older model of the flight training game console, to the point it has actual BUTTONS!

You don't even need a mental command to turn it on. You just press the blinking red button.

The mirror makes a weird whining sound, and then the black colored parts burn away with fire made out of static before resolving into a flickering image of yourself... except NOT.

Sure, she has a Pina on her shoulders just like you do, and sure she has your face and eyes and hairstyle, but... Her clothes look nothing like yours, and beyond that... You're reasonably quite certain that YOU do not have CAT EARS or a CAT TAIL.

The image flickers and warps for a moment before stabilizing.

"What the hell...?" You mutter as you watch your odd, be-cated twin do the same.

You tilt your head to your right, and she does the same to her right- that is to say, your LEFT.

You raise your left hand and give a wave, and she does the same, but whole seconds later.

It's not a mirror image! It's... it's... it's like a video screen??

She turns around to face someone off screen, and you see her mouth moving, but you don't hear the words. A second later, a boy and a girl walk into view... you'd say they look like some kids you know from class, except they're different too!

Like, you're quite sure that the boy you're thinking of is wheelchair bound, and for that matter, doesn't have wolf ears or a tail. The girl, also, you're reasonably certain doesn't have green highlights in her hair, or pointy elf ears for that matter!!
They're talking about something, quite excitedly, but it's impossible to tell what with the audio muted... You really need to learn how to read lips one of these days.

You see your alternate self's cat ears flick side to side in response to something, and you wonder if they're covered in actual cat's fur, or if it's just short hair like on her/your head?

You kinda, just want to reach out and--

Your hand brushes against the glass right as the image sort of warps with static and you scream as an electrical charge runs through your arm.

You scream, and then you hit the floor.

FWAAASH!

Your name is SILICA, and you suddenly have to backstep away as the World Mirror lets out an awful burst of light and the sound of warping static as it dumps your cat-trait-less self and her pet dragon right at your feet, both of them screaming before going silent and whimpering in pain.

The World Mirror's exposed side sparks and whines, and then dies as your initial hotfix fails at the first attempt at using it. Lots of sparks. A small bit of smoke...

Ugh. That's going to take a while to fix.

"...Well, that's not good," you say.

"No it's not," Touya agrees with a frown, peering into the Mirror's insides.

"I'll check to see if she's okay," Minori says, kneeling down and whispering the enchantment for a medical diagnostic spell to use on the other you. After a moment, she gasps, "Oh, woah. What's this?? She's not Fae! Her dragon's just like Pina, though, so that's an easy fix..."

Well, of course she isn't, Minori, you refrain from quipping. "Can you help her still, even if she's not Fae?"

"Yeah, I can," she nods.

And with the following enchanting sound of the enchantment for a high tier healing spell, you look into the remains of the inside of the mirror.

"What a mess," Touya comments.

"Agreed," you sigh.

Damn it all. When Astora sabotaged this stupid mirror to keep anyone from your world from using it, she sure did a number in on it. Removed power cells, shattered relay circuits...

You were lucky to get it to turn on to begin with, but now...
"Touya, stay here with Minori," you tell the Lycan boy. "I'm gonna sneak back into town and see if I can get some replacement parts."

"Get ones at a higher gauge," Touya advises you. "I'm pretty sure the cheap shit we bought just isn't good enough quality for this thing."

"Yeah," you nod. "Atleast we know what to get to make it work, now. No more trial and error."

Trial and error... time wasted that you don't have to waste anymore.

You sneak out through the hidden, enchanted doorway and, to an outside observer, just seem to appear between one blink of the eye in front of just one of many boarded over doorways in an alleyway that leads to nowhere.

You glance around, but see that, thankfully, nobody was around to see your exit. Good. Can't be too careful these days.

You change up your hairstyle from its usual twin tails to hanging loose, and cast the Faction Disguise spell to change your appearance from Cait Syth to Salamander. You know it works when your golden brown hair in your line of sight shifts to crimson red. Even Pina gets wreathed up in the spell's magic, changing her blue colored feathers to crimson red. While you can still feel your tail swaying behind your hips, a spot check confirms that it's invisible now, and you know that the same goes for your ears as well.

After a few moments to ensure that your disguise's magic is secured and holding, you exit the alleyway and enter the bustling streets of ARUN CITY, centered at the base of the WORLD TREE, YGGDRASIL.

You peer up a the Tree itself, and remember the harrowing adventure you, Minori, and Touya went on to steal that Mirror in the first place out from King Oberon's personal vault. If Princess Astora hadn't managed to get you that key card... you're not sure you'd ever have managed any of it.

Still, best not to dawdle. You casually join the flow of people walking too and fro and make your way to a certain "Hobby" shop hidden among the back alleys of another part of the major shopping complex.

The Pack Rat's Vault is the name of the store, and ostensibly, it's a shop that sells all sorts of wide and varied, and usually disconnected items. However... for those in the know, it's also a shop where someone seeking CERTAIN BLACK MARKET GOODS can find said black market goods, even if you'd never find them at all if you tried robbing the place, or the guards tried searching it...

Which they've done.

You glance nervously at one of the ROYAL GUARDIANS- a synthetic golem of sorts that's designed to look like a Fae in full Royal Armor. They're not real people, though. They're invincible killing machines who can fly INFINITELY, unlike the time limit most fae run into through sheer exhaustion. They feel no fatigue, and care not for whether you're repentant for your perceived crime or not.

One swing of their swords, and you're DEAD.

Sure, you'll probably resurrect shortly there after, but whether or not you resurrect in a jail cell or in
the city plaza is a hit or miss roll of the dice.

Everyone's afraid of the damned things. They're not known for being able to be persuaded with, and they're well and widely known to harass just about anyone if they just so HAPPEN to look vaguely like someone who broke the law and escaped.

It's no wonder that the Faction Disguise spell is illegal in most parts of Alfheim, then. It's the only thing that can fool the Guard's eyes... Most of the time. But this one you're passing seems to be blinded to your presence, and so it stays a silent, motionless sentinel.

Still. You hurry past it and head into the Pack Rat's Vault.

"Welcome! Welcome!" A young Spriggain girl, only Eight years old, greets from behind the counter. "Papa's in the back! Should I get him?"

"Yes, please, Yui-chan," you smile.

"Papa!!" The girl runs into the back room. "Dragon Girl's here again!"

"Okay, I'll be right there," says a familiar voice. "Just stay back here while I deal with her. Alright?"

"Kaaay!"

And then out through the doorway exits a Spriggain man, who, if you didn't know any better, you'd say would be only in his late teens. You do know better, though. This is the Legendary Explorer, Kirito, once known as the BLACK SWORDSMAN. He's twenty-eight years old, and had Yui born when he was twenty, prompting his retirement. Well, that, and the permanent death of his wife, Sachi, in childbirth.

"Silica," Kirito gives you a smile. "Good to see you again. Come back for more cheap parts?"

"Actually, some higher end versions of everything on this list," you summon a piece of paper from a pocket much too small to hold it and hand it to him. "Prototyping is done. It works, but the resistances are all too low. Shorts out on use."

"Hrm..." He looks at the list. "Some of these are going to be hard to get. The power crystals especially. You know how our King has been cracking down on anyone harvesting them lately."

"Get me what you can right now and I'll get the rest on my own later," you say.

"Alright," he nods. "Let's head in back and see what I have."

Most of your list he happens to have in stock, thankfully, but, of course the power crystals would be the hard to find part. Damn it. Since he doesn't have any... Mrrrrr. You're gonna have to go into the Jotunheim tunnels and search the ice caverns for them.

Soon enough, you're back in the hidden lab that you've been repairing the mirror in, and don't quite dispel the disguise just yet. Your other self is awake, and staring at you. She looks like she's been put through a hell of a shock, but recovered. So is her pet dragon too- she's petting it rather oddly, but the Dragon doesn't seem to mind, unlike your Pina.

"Welcome back, Silica," Minori smiles, though awkwardly. "Did you get what we need to send her
"Everything but the power cells," you say, retrieving the bag of supplies from that same impossibly small pocket and putting it down on the nearest counter. "We're going to need to go into Jotunheim to find them."

"Ouch," Touya grimaces. "That's a lot of work."

"Yeah," you shake your head, "but that's not important for now." You turn to look at your other self, and say "So, you're me, huh?" while discarding the Faction Disguise. "I'd offer you my hand to shake, but I'm not sure what'll happen if we touch each other. I'm Silica, and you?"


"Is this another world?" Keiko asks.

"Yup," you nod. "We're in a hidden lab in the city of Arun, on the Continent of Alfheim."

"I don't recognize any of those names," she says. "But... Continent? We're on the planet's surface?"

"We are," you nod.

"...That's amazing," Keiko syas, eyes widening. "Our planet's surface got blasted by aliens thousands of years ago. We had to take to the skies to survive. Nobody's set foot on the actual planet's surface in... well... since before the Castles were built."

"Ouch," you grimace. You can only imagine how horrible that could be. To never have set foot on a planet's surface? "I'd imagine the gravity is a bit tighter down here than you're used to."

"A little," she nods. "It's kinda hard to breathe, actually. Like I'm drowning in the air."

"Ah, yeah, altitude differences," you nod. "That's gotta suck if you're not used to it."

"Is it always so tight down on the surface?" she asks.

"How high up altitude wise is your castle thing?" You ask.

"I don't know," she frowns. "We're above a large cloud layer most of the time."

Above the Clouds, huh?

"Yeah, you're probably really not used to it," you say. "Minori knows a spell that can help with that, though." You look at the Sylph girl, and nod. "Water Breathing should do the trick, right?"

"I think so," Minori nods, then, casts the incantation for that spell. A moment later, Keiko visibly relaxes a bit.

"That's water breathing?" she asks. "Why does it work on land?"

"How else are you supposed to cast it?" you ask, smirking. "Also, fun fact, it also lets you talk under
"That's..." she blinks. "Sorry, I'm just having a hard time processing that Magic is a real thing right now."

"I can only imagine why," you say. "Anyways, if you've got any more questions you want to ask me, ask 'em now before Minori and I head out to grab the crystals we need to finish the Mirror."

"...Is there a King Oberon here?" Keiko asks, and then flinches as the three of you grimace at the name. "I take that as a yes, then."

"How'd you know that name?" Touya asks.

"Oh, this," she pulls out a small tablet thing, and suddenly, it turns on all on its own. "I found it in the room on the other side of the mirror. Someone named Sakamoto hacked it to have a journal function." She scrolls to an entry, and holds it out for you to see...

You can't read it, but you recognize the WAY you can't read it.

"...Isn't that in the Royal Code cypher?" Touya asks.

"It is," you blink. "Which fits if the Sakamoto who wrote it was the same Sakamoto who Princess Astore wanted us going after."

"So... we found their world on the first try?" Minori asks. "We found the world Sakamoto took Princess Hakase to?"

"Once we get the Mirror working again, yeah," you nod. "And speaking of, Touya, get to work on replacing what you can. Keep Keiko here company, while you're at it. Minori, you're with me. We're going down into Jotunheim to get us some power crystals."

"Got it," Minori nods. "I'll go get our delve gear out of the chest."

"Thanks," you smile as she heads off.

"So... the person who left this journal came to my world to escape?" Keiko asks.

"Pretty much," you nod.

"Why?" she asks. "The journal doesn't say much."

"How can you even read that, anyways?" You ask. "It's in a Military grade cypher."

"It is?" She frowns. "I guess it's the mental interface translating it for me. It's just showing as an old antique font type, to me."

"As for the why," you shake your head. "That's a long, complicated story I don't have time to tell."

"Lay it on me," Keiko says, looking eager to learn. "Or the short version, for now, atleast?"

"Alright, well... I guess it dates back to when King Oberon and Queen Titania got married and ascended to the throne," you begin explaining. "Oberon wanted kids, Titania only wanted A kid, and
we got Princess Astore. After that, there was some arguing, Oberon decided he was going to get his way one way or the other, and, well... let's just say the bastard used some illegal magic to get the Queen to change her mind. We got Princess Hakase a few months later."

"Ew," Keiko grimaces. "What a jerk."

"Yeah, well, the King had his own plans," you summarize, "needless to say he wanted Princess Hakase for less than savory reasons, and when Princess Astore found out what those were, she tasked two of her most trust worthy guards to take Hakase and escape through the World Mirror. Then she destroyed it's control circuits and let herself be captured, claiming that she'd irrevocably sabotaged the device to the point of no return."

"It was a clever lie," Touya chimes in. "The King bought it hook, line, and sinker!"

"Except he bought it TOO well," you shake your head. "He's been designing a NEW gateway between worlds. One that, if he gets away with it, will let him just pluck open a rift between worlds, reach across, and grab Princess Hakase out of the world she's in. He's already started experimenting with it a bit. Fortunatley, it's not working- yet- but it's only a matter of time before it does."

"So... you're rebuilding the mirror?" Keiko asks. "To warn Sakamoto and the Princess?"

"Yeah," you nod. "Princess Astore knows that whatever her bastard of a father is up to, it's not good if he gets his hands on Hakase. Our plan was to scout through to your world, find them, and put up warding to prevent Oberon from getting through."

"...Wow, you're like a real life action hero!" Keiko says, smiling, awestruck. Huh. That's a rare expression to see on your face these days. "Well," she frowns, suddenly, "maybe more like a Fantasy hero, since, well, magic. But still! You know what I mean!"

"That I do," you nod, then, your ears twitch as you hear Minori re-entering the room, arms full of rattling armor. "I guess it's time for us to go be heroes, then. Right, Minori?"

"Yes, the epic fetch quest," Minori laughs. "Collect Ten Power Crystals for use in powering the Super Magic, Super Epic Mirror of Various Worlds!"

"Good luck!" Touya says, smiling at you. "And call if something goes wrong!"

"Will do!" you nod.

And with that said and done, you gear up. Then, you and Minori Disguise yourselves again, this time with matching Puca disguises, and then head out for the nearest hidden tunnel to Jotunheim.

Chapter End Notes

Acting Meta of the episode, if this were a real TV show:

Shiori Ayano would be played by the same actress who plays Argo Lalonde, just without all the neon cat and crow makeup.
Kazuto and Kirito, of course, would be played by the same actor.

Keiko and Silica would be played by actual twins.
Chapter Summary

In which the Lands of Swords and Magic collide.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A Castle Jumper hovered between the massive cloud layer above and the usually transparent hexagonal plates that make up the MAGNETO-SPHERE.

Normally, these plates that encircle the entire planet Earth would be lying flat and in line with each other... and also be transparent. But in this case... hidden beneath the clouds these plates have taken on a tainted, purple hue, and furthermore, they're not in the proper alignment at all.

Instead, the hexagonal plates are bubbling, bursting upwards in a formation that clearly has gaps in it and looks close to breaking entirely.

One small nudge would be enough to send the one of the pieces falling downwards, anything larger...

"This could collapse the entire system," Midori Kirigaya stares on, horrified.

"Yes, it definitely would," Bishiop Ayano, standing behind her workmate and thus her face remaining unseen, smirks as her eyes flash with a faint golden light.

"We need to warn the Administrators," Midori says, turning around in her seat.

The Goa'uld within the other woman quickly schools her facial expression to that of concern. "Yes, we definitely need to," she says. "This is a problem that needs to be fixed."

Meanwhile, in another world...

A large, ring shaped device stands, hidden within the upper most branches of the World Tree, Yggdrasil.

A man in ostentatious robes, and a pair of massive, gaudy butterfly wings stands before it, watching as the device is fed a massive amount of power from several large, yellow-orange crystal-like devices housed within a large, sideways rotating, Ferris Wheel looking device.

"Soon," The Fae King Oberon mutters to himself, "soon, you'll be mine again, my dear Hakase."

Our camera then pulls downwards, through the tree trunk, and then outwards into the city streets,
where our view settles for a few brief moments on a certain black market store, where a group of Royal Guards, lead by a single Sylph woman, enter with purposes nefarious in nature.

"Merchant Kirito," the Sylph begins, narrowing her green eyes at the man. "Earlier today you were spotted selling goods to a known criminal. Surrender what information you have of the purchase the Cait Syth known as 'Silica' purchased and you yet may go free."

"Captain.. Leefa, was it?" The Spriggan smirks, even as he motions for his Daughter to go into the back room. "You're about a thousand years too early to be trying to intimidate me."

"What?" The Sylph woman laughs. "You're only Twenty Eight, 'Black Swordsman!' I'm One hundred and SIX!"

"Really?" he asks. "I stand corrected. I thought you were older. Let me rephrase..." He coughs, then suddenly--

From the outside perspective of the streets, a burst of black smoke burst out through the doors, there was the sound of rending metal, and then a pair of gleaming, yellow eyes peered out from the darkness.

"You're at least three thousand years too young to be trying that." Then the eyes vanished, and when the smoke faded away, the Sylph woman found herself surrounded by wrecked Royal Guards and liberated of her personal sword.

Of the merchandise on the shelves, or the Spriggain she sought to arrest, there was no sign.

Our view then pulls down, descending deep through the bedrock, and then into a large, frozen cavern resting beneath the city of Arun. It continues to drift along impossible snow banks and through fields of trees and wild, varied creatures who had all been frozen solid inside massive tombs of ice.

Our view then settles down on two girls, Minori and Silica, as they work on prying some large, and even a few smaller, golden glowing crystals out of the wall they were sprouting from.

Jotunheim was not the only place these crystals grew on the continent of Alfheim, but it was the only place that even the Royal Guards dared not go, either for some semblance of artificial fear, or because they were ordered not to.

"...I think we've got more than enough to power the Mirror, and then some," the cat girl, Silica, turned to her Sylph companion, Minori. "Let's head back to the lab."

"Do we really need so many big ones?" Minori asks.

"Better safe than sorry," Silica replies. "Who knows when we'll need an extra power boost, right?"

Your name is KEIKO AYANO, and as of two and a half hours ago, you became the first girl in your admittedly limited recollection of personal history to travel to another world from your world.

That's an important distinction to make, because other people have come from THIS world and gone to your world instead.
Right now, you're sitting in a lab, waiting for your ALTERNATE SELF to return with the FINAL COMPONENT needed to send you back home- Power Crystals.

You're not alone, naturally. You've got your ever trusty companion PINA with you, as well as a wolf-eared boy named TOUYA who's working on replacing broken and burnt out components in the mirror.

You're watching him work because what else is there to do?

"You know," you begin. "The inside of this thing looks a lot like the insides of tech from Aincrad. All crystals and such. I mean, they're a lot more organically shaped, rather than manufactured to size, but... yeah."

"Really?" he asks. "...That's weird. I guess it's an example of parallel tech evolution or something... except one's organic and one's manufactured? How does that work out exactly?"

"Yeah, it's really weird," you nod, and pick up one of the burnt out power cells that he'd removed earlier. "Even these battery things look weirdly similar to something bigger that we use. It's so weird."

"What do you use on your world?" Touya asks, glancing at you.

"Well, they look like the same thing, except, umm." You hold up your hands to the size about a foot in length, "This big. They contain a pocket dimension that they drain energy from to power things. Depending on what you power with it and how much of a strain you put on it, you could get thousands of years of power from it, or burn through it in a few months."

"What kind of energy are we talking about here?" Touya asks, and you can see he's actually rather interested in it.

"The notes I read say it's 'Zero Point Energy'," you say.

"Woah," he blinks. "That's-"

Whatever he's going to say is cut off as the other you, Minori, and two other people enter the room in a hurry. One of them is a young girl, and the other... he looks like Kazuto, except with elf ears and a VERY ancient look to his eyes.

"Touya! Get connecting the new power circuits!" the other you, Silica, says as she shrugs off a bag and throws it to Touya. "We're leaving asap!"

"What's going on?" Touya asks.

"Royal Guards caught onto the shop I bought supplies at," Silica answers. "They tried to raid it, and Kirito and Yui escaped. We ran into them outside the Jotunheim door on our way out."

"We're going to go through the mirror and they'll stay behind to guard it from the Guards," Minori says- cracking a brief smile that doesn't seem like it's all there. "We're probably going to have to abandon this lab afterwards, though." She frowns. "I'm going to go pack everything we need up for travel." And with that, she heads off.
"Right, gotcha," Touya nods and then starts pulling out replacement power crystals for the mirror out of that bag. You think you see something larger in there, though. Could it be--?

"Hi," one of the two newcomers, the young girl, beams up at you. "Are you Silica's sister?"

"Um-" You blink down to look at her. She looks... she looks like the Kazuto-look-alike's daughter, or related to him in some way.

"Yui, please, don't harass the inter-dimensional traveler," says the guy who looks like Kazuto. He smiles at you- and it doesn't look like any of the ones Kazuto's ever given you. It's... it's weird. It's different. It's... it's patronizing, even!! "Hello, I'm Kirito."

He doesn't even have the same name, but hell, you weren't expecting that considering the other you has a different name.

"I'm Keiko," you say.

"Nice to meet you, Keiko," 'Kirito' says, nodding. "This is my daughter, Yui."

"So are you Silica's Sister?" the girl asks, beaming still. Like she doesn't realize she's in the middle of a tension filled room.

"Um, she sort of is, Yui," the other you says, distractedly as she helps Touya put power crystals in. "She's basically me from another world."

"Oh," she frowns. "That's cool, I guess, but it's kinda sad, too."

You'd ask what that means, but Kirito-not-Kazuto puts a hand on the girl's shoulder and says, tone warning, "Yui. Remember what we talked about?"

"Don't spill other people's personal problems to complete strangers?"

"Good girl," and then 'Kirito' gives you a side-eyed glance that makes it clear under no circumstances that you're to ask any questions.

You gulp, and try to squish down the questions you might have.

Your name is SILICA, and FINALLY, after years of work, you've got the WORLD MIRROR working again. All Powered up, turned on, and not flickering with static, you can see the same lab that Keiko was standing in before she touched the mirror. Beyond that, you can see two other people in the lab, who jump in surprise when the mirror turns on.

Funnily enough, one of them looks like Kirito, except... younger somehow? In the eyes, at any rate, he seems younger. Also, definitely not Fae.

Still, the Mirror is on, and Keiko heads back through first to explain the situation, and also as a test of the mirror to make sure it won't fizzle out again on its first use. FWASH! It doesn't break, and so Minori heads through next with a large bag full of all the personal shit you three have been storing in this lab since you started this project. FWASH!
You turn to Kirito and Yui, and say, "Good luck, you two."

Kirito just nods, while Yui echoes the statement of Good Luck.

Then, Touya heads through - FWASH!- and you take a breath, make sure the bag with the remaining Power Crystals are secured on your back, steel yourself, and then touch the mirror as well.

**FWASH!!**

And you emerge, feeling light headed to the point of everything trembling from the sudden change in altitude, into the middle of a conversation between Not-Kirito and a girl who Keiko keeps calling "Shiori Onee-chan"-- Big sister?

In this world you have a big sister?

Huh.

Oh, also, you feel very off balance. That's not due to being light headed from the altitude difference. The room seems to actually be shaking. Earthquake? No, can't be. A castle in the sky doesn't have earthquakes.

"We weren't just going to leave you here in the Dungeon like that!" Keiko's sister- Shiori, you guess- says rather loudly for the room space. "We were so worried when everything started shaking and you weren't here and-"

"When did everything start shaking?" You ask, and not-Kirito and Shiori turn and look at you, surprise in their eyes.

"Uh, about five minutes ago?" Not-Kirito says.

"Does it matter when it started shaking?" Minori asks as a bit of dust from the ceiling falls down on her head. "We should get out of here now that we're all together, right?"

"Yeah, good point," other you says, nodding. "Let's go!"

There's no argument from the others, and with that, the six of you run through a series of tunnels and down some large stair-ways and then you finally emerge out through a door and into a brightly lit, expansive field of flowers and wheat and... For a moment, you forget the world is shaking, and you take a whiff of air.

It's such a sweet, heavenly scent you never thought you'd smell again after having to leave the Freelia fields behind for Aurn's city streets.

...Your ears twitch, then, and you hear the distant sounds of screams.

"What's in that direction?" You ask, pointing off into the distance.

"Star City," Keiko says, "the main city on this floor. Everyone's probably terrified by now. It's been, what, fifteen minutes?"

"Took us ten to get out of there, and the shaking is still going on," Shiori says. "Shit. What the hell is
"Aunt Midori should be home by now," Not-Kirito says, "she and your mother should be in the engine rooms looking at things."

"Right," Shiori nods, "let's go to your place and check and see if they left a message."

And so you take off at a run, or, well, the three non-Fae do.

As for you, you can't believe it, but you can feel your wings feeling energized in a way that they have NEVER felt energized before back home.

You can see Minori and Touya are feeling the same way, and, more importantly, are just as tired of the shaking as you are.

You three spread your wings, and take flight.

"We'll carry you!" You say, swooping down, and deciding to throw caution to the wind, you grab your other self and hold her tight as you fly towards the houses in the distance.

Minori ended up grabbing Shiori, and Touya Not-Kirito-- you really need to find out his name at some point, and now seems like the time to ask.

...Kazuto Kirigaya, huh? Kirigaya, Kazuto... Kiri-to. Oh for crying out loud, really, multiverse? You put that mild annoyance aside and focus on flying instead.

In what you would alter be told was a long hike shortened down to at-most five more minutes, you land between two houses, and then everyone runs to the Kirigaya House, where a large, oblong, circular-diameter shaped ship rests in a parking spot with its ramp down and a woman trying to drag herself out of the thing.

"Aunt Midori!" Kazuto rushes over to her. "What happened!?"

"Kazuto?! GRR... I landed the Jumper, and then I got attacked from behind. I don't know why or who!" The woman groans. "They shot me with some kind of stunning device, and then when I came to, Bishop was missing, everything was shaking and I realized that someone broke my leg!"

"Let me cast a healing spell!" Minori says, running over and starting to ensure the woman's leg was set properly before saying the incantation for the spell.

Midori seems confused, and then glances over at you, and also Keiko, and then warily asks, "What else did they hit me with? I'm seeing two Keiko's."

"It's a long story!" Keiko says. "Um, short version is I found a door to another world?"

"Oh, that's nice," Midori says, then mutters, "I'm so out of it that actually sounds like a plausible answer."

"What's going on with all the shaking?" You ask. "Why would someone kidnap your friend?"

"I... I'd assume they took Bishop for her security clearance. To access the engine room directly? No, the Pilot's Chair." Midori grimaces. "They're probably trying to finish off the job. Break the
"Magneto-sphere with a high velocity impact."

"What?" Kazuto asks. "What do you mean finish off the job?"

"The Magneto-sphere is out of balance," Midori says. "It's bubbling upwards to meet Aincrad. We're accelerating upwards suddenly after days of lowered engine output. Do the math."

You do the math, imagining something large going high up above a bubble... before descending sharply and crashing into it.

"Pop goes the bubble," you and your dimensional twin remark at the same time.

"It'd shatter, and Aincrad would either be destroyed on impact with it, or when it crashes into the planet's surface below," Midori answers, grimacing as Minori finishes with her spell work.

"It's as good as healed," Minori says, "but it's going to be weak to walk on for a few hours."

"As long as I can fly the Jumper, I'll be good," Midori says, slowly getting to her feet with Kazuto and Shiori's help.

"What do you mean?" Shiori asks.

"I need to go warn the Council of Admins," Midori says. "Get the Security forces gathered to march on the engine room..."

"And then what?" You ask. "If we're accelerating as fast as I think we are, we're not going to have much time to do anything."

She looks over all of you, eyeing the sharp bladed weapons and armor that you're all wearing. Then, she sighs. "Damn it, I don't want to send you kids in there. But you're going to have to go and stop them at the engine room itself." She reaches into her pockets and removes a small keycard that she hands to Kazuto. "My PIN code for the Ring Platform is Suguha's birthday. Get into the engine room and stop this."

"We will," Kazuto nods.

And with that, he leads the charge into a storage room of sorts, while his aunt goes back into the 'Jumper' and would you look at that, the thing flies on its own. How cool!

"Everyone get centered inside the circle," Keiko orders, as you follow Kazuto into the garrage, where a large metal ring seems embedded into the floor.

"What happens if we're not inside it?" You ask.

"Then you get cut in half?" Keiko answers.

"Ah," you nod. "Good point."

Everyone but Kazuto stands inside the circle, while Kazuto goes over to a wall, slides a card through a small box, and then starts punching buttons on it.

"Did we seriously just jump from probably being murdered by Royal Guards," Touya begins to ask,
"only to land on a castle that's about to go ramming speed into a planet??"

"Probably," Minori answers.

SKREEEEE! The ring around you chimes out as Kazuto hops over it and stands in the center with you. **BRRRMM--**

"Is this going to hurt?" You ask as the ring on the floor opens and ejects MULTIPLE MORE RINGS (**VRRM X8 COMBO!**) that rush upwards and FLOAT IN PLACE somehow!

"Oh, definitely," Keiko says, tone definitely-- **VARRROOOOOOSH!!!** --serious but apparently joking as a beam of light washes over you pain free and then the Rings descend.

**VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM VRRM - RRRMMM- SHNKT!**

There are a lot of either dead or unconscious bodies on the floor surrounding the transportation rings.

You and your duplicate draw your daggers, your twin pet dragons ruffle their feathers in anticipation, Minori her staff, Touya and Kazuto their swords, and Shiori readies her claw-gloves.

"When it doubt," you mutter, "follow the dead body road."

You sneak through some RATHER WELL MAINTAINED, but still ANCIENT LOOKING hallways, following the trail of a mix of unconscious AND dead bodies (Minori insists on checking each one with a brief spell cast) until you find a room that looks like it's the CENTRAL POWER HUB.

There are a couple of GLOWING SCREENS centered around a triangle shaped thing that houses...

Are those Power Crystals???

"Sis, let's find out what's going on with the engines," Keiko says, and she and Shiori move over to a couple of glowing screens, and they start checking readouts, you guess.

Touya seems more interested in the trio of glowing crystals inside the triangle shaped thing.

"Holy shit, these are those 'Zero Point Energy' crystals you were talking about?" Touya asks.

"Yeah," Keiko glances up for a moment, then nods. "They are."

Curiously, you retrieve one of the larger crystals from your bag and compare its top to the exposed parts of these 'Zero Point Modules'.

"Holy shit," Minori breathes out, "they're exactly the same??"

"That's both concerning and not at all concerning all at the same time," Kazuto remarks as you place that crystal down next to the others.

Shiori yelps, suddenly, and then exclaims, "What the hell is Mom doing!? This is all her code! She's set some kind of program in place to automatically drop the Castle into the Magneto-sphere after we hit a certain height! We'd have to reboot the entire system in order to clean the code, but in order to
do that we cut all power to the engines! We'll fall either way!"

"NO!" Keiko cries out, and you can't help but go look over at what she's looking at.... It's a video of some kind, showing a woman single-handedly taking out people with some kind of serpentine shaped stunning gun. Two shots, you notice, get used on one of the bodies Minori confirmed as dead. "Mom's the traitor?? Why!? Why would she...?"

And then one camera angle shows the woman's eyes flashing brightly with no sign of reflection to cause it.

"...The fuck is that?" Keiko finally asks.

"I have no idea," you say, "but I get the feeling whoever is doing this isn't actually your mother- just wearing her face."

It's a small comfort, but... well.

"Doesn't matter if it's a face stealer or actually her. Where is she now?" Kazuto asks.

"One second..." Keiko scrolls through security feeds, and... "There! In the Chair Room! She's... she's doing something to a terminal in there, but she's not using the cha- What!?" The screen goes blank.

"Grr," Shiori growls. "She's just locked me out remotely from this terminal."

"Well," Touya mutters, "I guess there goes the element of surprise."

"We're going to have to do this from the chair room, then," Kazuto narrows his eyes, and for a moment, you see a spark of what makes Kirito so dangerous.

Meanwhile, back in Alfheim, the spinning up inter-world gateway suddenly fails to get a solid lock on its target destination, reasons of "solid ground accelerating at unsafe speeds" being among the primary errors surfacing.

Needless to say, King Oberon would not be happy, and would write that dimension off. After all, chances were that whatever was going on with this dimension was going on a year ago when his daughter had been stolen away from him by his other daughter, right?

And so he attempted to connect to another world instead.

It would take a few minutes to re-calibrate the Dimensional Coordinates, but it would be done.

You're once again Kazuto Kirigaya, and you're not liking this. Not one bit.

Today has not gone at all how you expected it to. Flying underneath the Castle itself? Stressful! Dungeon Running with your girlfriend and her little sister? Relaxing! Having the entire Castle suddenly start shaking with Keiko nowhere to be seen? Stressful! Having Keiko emerge from a mirror with a Cat-eared version of herself and two other people? Confusing, but oddly distracting
from the stress!

Running out of a shaking dungeon tower? Stress is back, baby! Flying through the air being carried by someone who DEFINITELY DID NOT HAVE WINGS A MOMENT AGO?! "WTF HOW IS THIS EVEN POSSIBLE?" Finding your mother with a broken leg after being assaulted? So frightening and worrying and you really don't want more people dying to whatever conspiracy this is that ended up killing your parents.

Now? The cherry on top of this spiraling tower cake of STRESS???

Your girlfriend's mother, for some reason that's either INSANITY or POSSESSION, has decided to crash Aincrad into the Magneto-sphere from on high.

You're not a happy kid, that's for sure.

Why couldn't today have just ended after the flight practice?

Your team—such as it could be called, half composed of some MAGICAL BEINGS, you, and two girls who really never learned how to fight anything other than non-humanoid monsters—slips out of the engine room into the hallway outside the Pilot's Chair Room.

The Chair itself, made of grey stone and blue glowing panels, calls out to you, begging, crying, for a pilot who wasn't insane.

...Hell no. That's not you. It's really not you.

You look to Keiko's weird other-worldly twin, and she nods, silent mouthing a spell that makes her turn into a shadow. A moment later, she sinks into the floor and vanishes.

You draw your sword, and then run into the room, "Miss Ayano! Back away from the console right now and put this Castle back right where you found it!!"

She laughs, not even looking up from her code-typing work. Her voice is... it's different. It's echoing. Well, chalk one up for DEMONIC POSSESSION, you guess. "Oh, Kazuto," she says, "you poor, naive boy."

"Stop typing!" You growl, pointing your sword at her and stepping forwards. "Stop typing and back away right now!"

"Or you'll do what?"

"Or... or I'll cut your head off!!" You bluff.

Still... Bishop Ayano, or whatever it is possessing her, hits the enter key, and then backs away from the console, turning around and putting her hands into the air.

Her eyes flash, and she smirks. "I was prepared to die when I first started this mission. I knew I'd never make it off of this Castle alive. Go ahead. Kill me. It makes no difference. Nothing you can do will stop the destruction of this Castle and the Magneto-sphere holding it and the other Castles in orbit."
"Why!?!" And then the last person you wanted barging in here does so. Oh, Shiori, you so wish she didn't have to see this. "Why would you do this, Mom!?"

"News flash, Shiori," the woman's eyes flash again, this time seemingly out of annoyance. "Your mother isn't home right now. Hasn't been for four years. You can call me... The Administrator Cardinal."

"Four years?" you ask, gritting your teeth. "You sabotaged my parent's Jumper, didn't you?"

Bishop, no, CARDINAL, smirks at you. "Yes, that's exactly the case, Kazuto."

You spy a shadow suddenly emerging through the floor behind the woman, edging closer and closer towards a serpentine shaped device resting on the arm of the Chair.

"Why?" You ask, both stalling for time and getting a honest answer out of this situation. Closure? Maybe.

"Because they stopped my last host," 'Cardinal' says. "Killed her flat. Of course, I survived long enough to jump out into the first fool who made the mistake to turn their back to the body."

"So... Revenge?" Shiori asks. "All of this for Revenge!?"

"Oh, yes. Well, yes and no," 'Cardinal' says. "My Master, Lord Seth, survived the failed incursion of your planet thousands of years ago. He's bid his time, waiting for the opportune moment to get revenge on the people of this world who destroyed the rest of the System Lords and-" She pauses. "Oh! You tricky children! You got me monologue-ing!"

"Shame, that," you say. "I was hoping you wouldn't notice."

And then the shadow that is Silica becomes physical, grabs and opens the strange weapon and fires off a single burst of stunning energy at the thing inside Bishop Ayano.

**PCH-ZYU!**

"GRAH!" She shrieks, and falls to the floor, out of it.

Silica exhales in relief. "Minori, put a containment bubble around her! Max duration!"

"On it!" The other girl rushes into the room, followed by Touya and Keiko, and immediately speaks in an alien tongue. A moment later, a small dome of energy forms over the unconscious woman.

"Okay! We've got twenty minutes before that wears off!"

"If we have twenty minutes," Shiori says, heading over to the console her 'mother' had been working with. "...And we don't, we're hitting the target altitude in three minutes! After that, we're getting chucked in reverse. Max speed! Faster than the speed we've had for ascending! The Engines would burn out within seconds doing that!"

"...Okay, so in three minutes we're being thrown at the thing we're not supposed to be thrown at," Touya summarizes. "Our other option is rebooting the entire system, which has us falling to our doom uncontrollably? Is that the difference?"
"Well, yeah, but-" Shiori pauses. "Wait, yes, rebooting everything shuts down the engines and Aincrad falls, but we're falling thanks to gravity, not the engines being thrown in reverse!"

"So we reboot the engines and then throw the engines back on after the reboot is done to control our descent!" Keiko says.

"I- I guess??" Shiori frowns. "But there's no telling how fast we'll be falling due to gravity! We might hit the Magneto-sphere anyways!"

"Quick question because I might have a stupid idea!" Minori raises her hand. "This Magneto-sphere, is it a solid thing or an intangible thing?"

"It's solid," you say. "A bunch of giant, interlocking, magnetic plates that encircle the entire planet."

"Right, so..." Minori looks at Silica, "Silica, that spell you just used to sneak in here, if we change out the self-target component for a scaled item target...?"

"Oh! Yeah!" She snaps her fingers. "We could make the entire castle and everyone on it intangible for a few seconds! If the engines haven't rebooted by the time we're about to crash into it, that is."

"Only problem I see with that," Touya says, "is Magnitude. There's no way we're going to be able to power a spell like that."

"Touya," Silica rolls her eyes. "we literally brought a bunch of extra POWER CELLS with us! Plus the Castle itself has, like, three of them already plugged in! We siphon power through those!"

Touya blinks, then he asks, "Wait, I was meaning to ask earlier, but why did you bring those again?"

"That's Not Important!" Shiori yells. "Two Minutes! Whatever we're going to do we'd better do it fast!"

"How long will a reboot take?" Silica asks.

"I don't know??" Shiori runs her hands through her hair. "I've never worked with this system directly before! There's no telling what the hell Mom's code's done to the computers."

"Let's do it then," Silica says. "Minori, Touya, and I will cast the spell to make Aincrad intangible. Shiori reboots the systems, and then someone else stops our descent before we crash into something!"

Keiko looks at you pointedly, and says, "I don't have any flight practice in at all, Kazuto. You're going to have to do it."

"...Damn it," you grimace.

"One min thirty!" Shiori calls out.

...There's no time to argue. You rush over and plop yourself down on the Pilot's Chair. "Alright," you say. "Let's do this."

And so you push back against the soft, gel-like substance making up the head rest, and focus on
connecting to the flight systems. It's just like turning on the Flight Practice Game Consoles. You focus and focus and it'd probably help if you close your eyes.

Suddenly, your mind opens up and you see all of the Castle Aincrad in its entirety. You see the land, you see all 100 Floors, you see the engines (though you're locked out of the controls, and you report as such immediately), but more importantly, you see the PEOPLE.

Everyone clustered together in their homes, or trying to get their Castle Jumpers to start up, or... or...

Just plain giving up, and begging for a swift end.

Not Today.

[Attention Citizens of Aincrad,] you start speaking to everyone in Aincrad by means of triggering the female voiced Automated Broadcast System all across the Castle. [Due to engine sabotage, we're about to crash and explode. So we're going to try something that should get us back into a safe position... but it might make us crash and explode just the same... Either way, you're going to want to hold on tight to something because this is going to be a bumpy ride.]

"Nice speech, Kazuto," Shiori smiles at a camera, knowing you can see her through it. Then, you feel, more than see, her press a certain key combination. "REBOOTING SYSTEMS!"

And then you feel everything go dead, and yet, you're still connected to the Castle Aincrad itself.

You feel all the upwards thrust cut from the engines- the STAR DRIVES, as the Castle helpfully supplies- and only forwards momentum keeps you going up and up and up.... and then it slows.

You feel it slowing as the sheer bulk of Aincrad gets pulled back down by the planet's gravity.

Soon, the shaking you'd felt omnipresent and gotten used to disperses, and everything is still.

Absolutely still.

AND THEN YOU FALL.

[0:05]

Inside your minds eye, you see the three other worldly visitors put themselves in a triangle formation around a bag full of Z.P.M. crystals, all resting on top of the power generator. Minori casts some kind of spell that seems to link the three of them with mystical bonds of energy, and then, they wait, standing impossibly still as gravity takes hold elsewhere.

You watch as Shiori holds herself tight to the console, watching a progress bar of the Castle's Operating Systems rebooting. You watch Keiko throw herself onto the back of the chair you're sitting in, using one hand to grab you by the shoulder and keep you sitting in the chair.

You see everyone who can grab onto something do such, even as gravity threatens to pull and whip them up onto the ceiling above them.

[0:12]

If this were a Jumper, this would be where the inertial dampeners kick on... and it seems, that's the
case as they too reboot for all of Aincrad.

You feel the entirety of Castle Aincrad as it hurtles down through the atmosphere, picking up speed and falling, falling, falling.

You're not so high up that you begin burning in re-entry, but you feel the heat of acceleration against the Castle's armored skin regardless.

[0:30]

You can only wonder what this looks like from the outside- a giant tear-drop shaped beast of metal hurtling down from above, breaking MACH SPEEDS and threatening doom for everything else.

The external feeds, and the acceleration sensors kick in as they become the first system to reboot, and you get a picture of how fast of an approach you're making towards the Magneto-sphere.

"ENGINES WON'T REBOOT IN TIME!" Shiori yells, "CAST IT NOW!!"

"RIGHT!" Silica yells back. "LET'S DO THIS!"

"RIGHT!" The others nod.

[1:00]

Their spell craft spills forth from their mouths then, sounding like music as you FEEL the flow of power from their foreign Power Crystals draining away into those three mages, and then redirected through out all of Aincrad through the Z.P.M. console.

You feel the magic takes hold, spreading rapidly across every available surface, and then, once it had a grip on everything, ALL of Aincrad's solid mass suddenly becomes OUT OF PHASE with the rest of reality some how.

Your world becomes shadow, and then CLOUDS as Aincrad falls through the cloud layer, and then a moment later--

[1:33]

You can only wonder how it looks from below. A massive ball of shadow piercing through the Magneto-sphere and falling like the ominous herald of doom.

Except, as you feel the three Fae collapse to the floor from exhaustion, the shadow would flickers, and suddenly a silver Castle appears, falling down so fast it seems impossible.

[1:41]

You're back to reality, and, naturally, that's when the MANEUVERING ENGINES Reboot. Not the STAR-DRIVE, though. It's not enough to slow your descent if you turned those on just yet. But...

You throw the Engines on anyways, hoping to change your descent towards a rocky demise into a WATER LANDING, because while there's nothing but crust beneath you right now... in the distance you can see the ocean.
And so you tilt Aincrad as best as you can to use your current momentum to overshoot the continent below you and land in the ocean.

You watch as whole mountain ranges, snow covered and beautiful, whirl past beneath you, giving way to plains of grass and wild fields of flowers, and then there are... there are miraculously signs of civilization. People... people have been surviving down here after the Castles were launched??

[1:55]

It doesn't matter.

You FOCUS on making it over the ocean as best as you can, and then once you do... well, you're going to have to-

"LEVEL OUT!" Shiori cries out. "WE'RE GONNA CRASH IF YOU DON'T LEVEL US OUT!!"

"...Thanks for the reminder!" you grit out, wrenching your real eyes tighter.

The continent below continues to blur past, and then- then- YES! OCEAN! OCEAN AT LAST!

And wouldn't you know it? That's when the STAR DRIVES finally Reboot and turn on and you throw everything you can into stopping while still leveling out as best as you can.

[2:25]

Fast! Too fast! You're still going too fast!

You can see a timer flashing down in your eyes, counting down to the moment you finally touch down on the ocean's surface, and if you do it wrong, the whole castle will CRASH and probably EXPLODE.

So you're going to do it right. No pressure, RIGHT????????

You can feel the waves and the sea itself misting up beneath Aincrad as you skim over its surface-slowly, surely, leveling out, but is it enough?

IS IT ENOUGH!!?

It's going to have to be! You've leveled Aincrad out as well and leveled as you're going to be able to get and--

[2:53]

You feel the ocean crash into the castle, and you feel your heart skip as all power cuts for a crucial moment- your world is nothing but blackness with only the sensation of water crashing into you from all sides.

[2:58]

But then, your awareness comes back, and you feel Aincrad is still there. Still level. Sliding to a halt on the water's surface as the displaced ocean rains down around you in your wake.
You're here.

You're all here.

Everyone is ALIVE.

Bruised and battered, but alive.

[3:19]

...And the average citizen is applauding and cheering as everything seems to stop moving so drastically.

You can't help but breathe out a sigh of relief and turn on the Broadcast system again, [Ladies and Gentlemen, please remain seated while the Castle comes to a complete, and total stop.] You can't help but laugh. [We've made an ocean landing. Please pardon the rain.]

---

Your name is Keiko Ayano, and you exhale in relief as you let your death grip on the Pilot's Chair go, and lower yourself to the floor.

You've made it.

You've survived.

Somehow you... You've made it.

You've survived. Somehow you've survived a sudden death situation.

As you laugh, your other self and Minori and Touya enter the room.

"Well!" Silica exhales. "That was a rush."

"Yeah," you chime in as you settle down your laughter.. "It really was."

You can't help but laugh as you hear Kazuto's Castle-wide announcement.

You start rolling around on the floor, laughing madly, eventually, you come to a stop against the edge of the containment shield holding your mother inside, and then you stop laughing because that's still a problem.

The Chair sits forwards, and Kazuto slumps out of it, breathing heavily. "Holy shit, that was... that was intense."

"Well," Shiori laughs as she stumbles over to lean against Kazuto. "If you're not getting your license after that landing, I'm gonna complain to the DMV."

"So..." Touya begins. "What now?"
"Well, I guess we need to find out what's inside Mom, and then-" you shriek in terror as you watch some serpent like eel thing slither out of your mom's mouth, and try to slip out through the small domed bubble of magic around her.

Naturally, somehow, the thing slips through without trouble at all, and seems angry and ready to jump at someone.

**PCH-ZYU!**

Except then Silica shoots it with the same stunner device from before, and the serpent thing shrieks as it dies... And then it sort of poofs out some smoke as it deflates like a popped balloon.

You aren't quite sure what to make of that, but as long as it means your Mom isn't possessed anymore, you'll be happy.

Meanwhile, in Alfheim, a portal in reality tears itself open, and the Fae King Oberon smiles wildly. "Send in a scouting part-EEEK!"

Suddenly, a hand reaches out through the portal, and grabs the scheming bastard by the neck.

It's an impossibly large hand. It's all muscly and green scaled- its fingers are tipped in sharp claws that threaten certain death to any who oppose its will.

And then a SKELETAL FACE peers through the swirling vortex of an inter dimensional rift. His rainbow eyes flicker brightly through various colors, and his jaw, seemingly fixed with its straight lipped, grim expression of death, breaks into a grin in an impossible, yet not bone breaking way.

"WELL. NOW. JUST WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?"

Chapter End Notes

Oh, yeah. Forgot to mention it last chapter, but might as well state it here.

Characters in this two part Intermission are borrowed from Sword Art Online (Keiko/Silica, Kirito/Kazuto, Shiori(Canonically Argo the Rat and not Keiko's sister), Yui-chan (Canonically an A.I.), Leefa, Oberon, Midori Kirigaya (Canonically Kazuto's Aunt), and Bishop (Though not Canonically Shiori or Keiko's mother) and 'Admin Cardinal' (Not Canonically a Goa'uld)) and Log Horizon (Minori and Touya).

...Huh? What? No, I'm not forgetting anyone. You know who skull-face-prime at the end is, and know damn well fine that he's not from Sword Art Online or Log Horizon!

Anyyyways! Next chapter we return you to your regularly scheduled universe and timeline! That's right! We're finally returning to the wonderful universe known by the title Wormhole X-Treme!!

...Wait, what? 'Stargate: Alternia'? Are you sure about that?
...Oh, yeah, riiight. Gotcha.
Chapter Summary


Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 2/15/0002.

Hidden somewhere behind JUPITER, an ALIEN SPACESHIP of UNKNOWN DESIGN powers on and begins to accelerate towards Earth, using a preprogrammed course.

"Prepare for an X-Treme Adventure!" The Projection screen in the SGC conference room begins playing the television advertisement, featuring your four heroes stepping forwards out of a water-like effect.

As it plays all sorts of explosive and juicy action taken from select scenes from the Pilot Episode, you turn your attention to a few specific people among the quite a few people sitting at the table.

"Four X-cellent heroes in an X-traordinary new sci-fi series!" The narrator continues. "Starring Nick Marlowe as the wry Colonel Danning!"

Said Colonel punches one person with some Altermian colored rams horns, and then headbutts someone with a set of mismatched arrow horns-one of which is definitely broken in half- before turning to the camera dramatically, stating, "As a matter of fact, it DOES say Colonel on my Uniform!"

Jack O'neill blinks, processing the fact that there was no actual "Colonel" visible anywhere on that uniform. (Ugh, what a continuity error!)

As the clip cuts to this Colonel Danning being slapped by an alien lady with long swooping horns going way off camera, he grabs her by the shoulders and stares rather dramatically up at her face as he says, "Hey! It's what I do, Heiress!" And then he kisses her.

Jake Harley nods in agreement at something he apparently put some input into.

"Yolanda Reese as the brilliant Major Stacey Monroe!" The narrator continues, moving onto another clip.

"The Positronic field emitters are offline," the woman on screen says, "but I can compensate by
generating a feedback loop!

Samantha Carter smiles at seeing a representation of her own persona replicated on screen.

"Raymond Gunne as Doctor Levant!" The narrator introduces as another clip appears on screen.

"Damn it, Colonel, just because they're aliens and they have candy corn for horns, doesn't mean they don't have rights!" The blatant hybrid character expy of Skaara and Doctor Jackson protests on screen.

Said Dr. Jackson stares, confused, at the screen, opening his mouth for a moment before closing it.

The montage continues on for a few more moments, focusing on the three introduced characters so far, before completing the bunch:

"And Introducing Douglas Anders as GRELL, the ROBOT!"

And then there's a bald man on screen with his skin painted silver, raising an eyebrow as he holds a suspiciously STAFF LIKE WEAPON.

Teal'c raises his eyebrow in response to that.

"'WORMHOLE X-TREME!'" The Narrator concludes as the title screen goes up over an overlay of a mock-up Stargate with an active wormhole effect on it. "Coming this fall, ONLY ON-!"

Your name is Martin Lloyd and you click the remote button, stopping the video and turning the lights back on.

You turn to face SG-1 and company, and say, "Well? What do you think??"

"That looked, uh," Dr. Jackson says. "Familiar?"

Well, that's sort of the point.

"I don't see it," O'neill says, clearly joking.

Good one!

"Eee!" Roxy Egbert claps her hand. "I love it!"

Yes!

"Yes!" John Sheppard grins. "Hell yes! Hell! Fucking! Yes!"

Yessssssss!!!!

"I like it!" Jade Jackson says.

YES!!

"It's certainly something different than what I was expecting," Mikari Aiikho says, smiling. "A good
"I take it that this confirms the show is set for a full season of production?" General Hammond asks.

"Yup!" You nod. "We've gotten the green light! The Studio LOVED the Pilot and we're starting filming proper starting tomorrow!"

"I think it's-" Sam goes to say something when her cell phone rings. "One second." She answers it. "This is Major Carter..." A look of confusion spawns on her face.

"What?" She gets up and leaves the table with an apologetic smile, inquiring "What KIND of Spaceship?" as she leaves the room.

"Anyways!" Jack says, sounding like he'd drifted off for a moment. "I think that's a lovely teaser commercial thing, Marty! Can't wait to see the rest of it. Whenever it airs. This Fall? Seems pretty quick turn around considering it's, what? Only August?"

"Thanks, Colonel," you say. "Yes, well, we're doing this thing where we're filming the Human Hero episodes and the Alien Hero episodes at the same time. We get twice as much production done in half the time!"

"Neat!" Jack says. "...But I don't think that math checks out."

"It's Sci-fi," you counter. "Nobody checks the math to make sure it works right. We have a hard enough time making sure the dates and times work together without conflicting! We'll be lucky if we get two episodes to take place ten months apart in universe like they're supposed to!"

"Martin?" Sam comes back into the room, hand over the speaker of her cellphone, "Out of curiosity, did you and your people happen to leave your spaceship somewhere out around Jupiter?"

"Is it sort of crescent shaped?" You ask.

"Is it Crescent Shaped?" Sam asks into the phone, then nods in confirmation.

"Yeah, that's ours."

...Your name is Martin Lloyd, and you can honestly say you forgot all about that ship being a thing that existed.

Your name is Colonel Jack O'neill, and given the fact that Marty still owns the CONTROL DEVICE to the escape pod his people escaped in (And thus, ALSO have access to the RAPIDLY INCOMING SPACE SHIP), and that TANNER and his men are still at large and likely wanting to take the spaceship for themselves...

Well, you've been assigned a "Walk on role" for a hastily written Flash Back Scene set on Earth where you're to play a GENERAL about to send the equivalent of SG-1 through their "X-Gate."
In actuality, you, and the rest of SG-1 are going to be there to serve as security in case Tanner and his Men show up.

And because Tanner and his men remember your faces, well... That's why Roxy, John, and Jade are coming along for the ride. "Extras" for a background scene set on "X-ternia."

And since it's a long flight up to Canada... You decide to ask, "So, Marty, what's with all the 'X's in everything?"

"Oh, the focus groups responded more positively to X-branding," Marty explains. "Also, research shows that shows with 'extreme cool letters' in their names are going to be BIG with the television market going forwards."

"Ah," you nod.

"Also," Marty continues, "I figured it'd be an easy way to get away with using the real names for things while ALSO censoring them plausibly."

"And here I thought it was because the bad guy was putting 'X' in everything," you joke.

"What? No, that's stupid," Marty says. "There's no way anyone would let me get away with that. Maybe in a video game though..." He snaps his fingers. "Oh! Speaking of video games, do you have any recent missions you went through that could maybe work as a video game concept?"

"Well, there WAS this weird mission Daniel took us on to this tomb here on Earth," you say, "we found this old dusty library and there was this book hidden away in a fireplace with this Goa'uld hidden inside it."


"Well, when we let him out he was just annoyed we'd disturbed his research time and then he went right back into the book all on his own free will," you say. "There were a LOT of puzzles though."

"That sounds like MYST," Marty says. "I don't think we could get away with it. People might think we're plagiarizing like they did with HAZE."

"Don't set it on an island then?" you offer.

"Ehh," Marty shrugs. "I'll pitch it to the writers." 

"Speaking of Writers, Marty," you begin, "did you ever find out who 'Citizen Joe' is?"

"Oh, yeah," Marty nods. "We're flying him in special to join the writer's circle!"

"So who is this guy?" You ask.

"Joe Spencer, a barber from Indiana," Marty explains.

"A... Barber you say?" Wait just a minute... Nah, it couldn't be, could it?

...Could it honestly be the case that your idle daydreams while crafting your after-mission reports aren't so idle after all?
Your name is SAMANTHA CARTER, and for the moment, you're half-pretending to be a SCIENCE ADVISOR to the WRITING TEAM for "Wormhole X-Treme!" (The exclamation mark is apparently included in it!) and half actually doing the job at Martin's request.

The Half-Pretending part is to scour out if the NID or anybody else had infiltrated the Writing team, but also... you're keeping an eye on the responses of one JOE SPENCER, who was flown in from Indiana to work on the team.

Colonel O'neill said to keep an eye on him, but not to spook him.

You're working under the false name of TAYLOR SNOW for the moment, and you can tell that Mister Spencer isn't buying it for a minute.

Honestly, though, you're surprised at the scripts he's provided. They're GOOD, when it comes to the science part of things. Surprisingly good. YOUR level of GOOD, and in fact, sounding like word for word echoes of things you've said in certain cases.

How the hell did he get this information? You don't put your exact phrasing down into reports, and even Colonel O'neill doesn't put that much accurate detail into his after mission reports.

Still...

"Okay, I've looked over the science portions of your scripts," you say to the room. "There's some really good science in here on some of these, and some iffy bits on others. I'm going to recommend the folks who did better on it look over the weaker scripts to tighten the math up so it's more consistent overall."

"It's Scifi, though," a woman raises her hand. "Won't people just gloss over the math anyways? Who cares if it's wrong?"

"Most people might gloss over it," and there goes Spencer, "but Miss Snow has a point that we ought to be consistent. It wouldn't be good for us to anger the people who are happy we got it right in one episode, and then got it wrong the next."

"Hrm, I guess you've got a point, Spence," the woman says. Then, she gets a mischievous glint in her eyes. "So! Whose scripts are the better at science?"

"Actually, Mister Spencer seems to have a solid grasp on that part of things," you say, looking at him. "What college did you go to?"

"Oh, um... No place special, really," he says. "Just a community college."

"Huh," you say. "I could've sworn with that kind of technical know-how you'd have gone to MIT or Harvard."
"Haha, really? You think so?" he beams for a minute in a way that seems like he rarely gets genuine praise. "Most people back home don't think I'm that smart of a guy, though."

"What did you do for a living before you submitted your script to the Studio?" You ask, then raise a finger when the woman from before opens her mouth, and you say, "And yes, I'm going to ask all of you questions like this too." If only to ease Spencer's potential paranoia. "I'm curious to see who's real life experiences match up with their skill."

"Oh, well," Spencer begins, "I was a barber."

"A barber?" You ask. "I see. There's a lot of time to imagine all sorts of inventive stuff, I'd imagine."

"Something like that," Spencer says. "For a couple years, I've been writing out stories like what I submitted for my customers to read while they waited."

"I'd imagine some of those stories could be adapted for Wormhole X-Treme's scripts in the future," you say, smiling. "In fact, I'd like you all to provide any similar stories you might have along those lines and go over them together during your next brainstorming session." Then, deciding that's enough focus on Spencer, turn towards another writer. "Hi! Mazoli, wasn't it?"

Your name is TEAL'C, and you're undercover as a FOOD CHEF, both for the CAST AND CREW between takes, as well as to prepare some OUTLANDISH ALTERNIAN STYLE MEALS for use on set if the need arises. (You will be passing these recipes along to the long term staff so they can continue to cook them when you inevitably leave.)

Right now, you stand off stage by a ways, watching as Colonel O'neill dresses up in a GENERAL'S UNIFORM for his walk-on-role scene.

Major Carter saunters over to you, looking rather exhausted, a minute later. "Hey, 'Murray'," she says, "How's it going?"

"Food has been prepared to my and others satisfaction," you reply. "How has your mission been going?"

"Well," Carter glances around to ensure nobody is listening in, "apparently our potential security breach used to be a Barber who wrote stories about us in his free time."

You raise an eyebrow at that, finding it hard to believe.

"Yeah, I know," Carter grimaces. "Anyways, Martin's got a private meeting scheduled with him after we finish with Colonel O'neill's scene. We should figure out all the important details after that."

"That is my hope as well," you say. "Afterwards, all that remains is Tanner and his men should they appear."

"Also possibly the NID," Carter adds. "Hammond called and told me we've picked up chatter that some of the NID are interested in the spaceship."

"I see," you muse. "That would be quite unfortunate if they were to intervene."
"ALRIGHT!" A director's yell interrupts your musing. "QUIET ON THE SET! WE'RE ROLLING IN FIVE!"

You glance over at Colonel O'neill, and see him talking with Martin for a moment, who nods and gives approval over something.

O'neill heads over to the stage, gets in position behind the fairly authentic replica of Hammond's office, and briefly shakes hands with the actor playing O'neill's part on the team- Colonel Danning. Daning? Daring? Something like that.

"AND PLACES!" The director yells. The actor opposite O'neill steps outside of a door, and closes it, preparing to open it.

"Wormhole X-Treme, Season 1, Episode 3, Scene X, take one," someone clips a board in front of a camera.

"AND ACTION!"

Colonel Danning enters the office, saluting. "General Macgyver, Sir! Colonel Danning reporting as ordered, Sir!"

"At ease, Colonel," The General says, standing up from his desk to move around to the front of it. "And close the door, would ya? This is classified intel we're discussing today, after all."

"Ah, right. Yes, Sir." Colonel Danning does such.

"You know, Colonel," The General begins, sitting carefully on the edge of his desk, arms crossed and hands resting against his lap. "I was in your shoes once. A young, strapping man standing before his Commanding Officer in an office just like this one." He smiles, wistfully. "I would be thinking, 'What adventure am I being sent on this week?' Do you ever wonder that, Colonel Danning?"

"All the time, Sir," the Colonel says after a moment's pause to absorb those words. "You've read my file, otherwise I wouldn't be here, right?"

"Yeah, that's right," the General smiles as he grabs at a folder, and opens it. "You've seen quite the action, Colonel." He reads off of the list, "Iraq, Turkey, and that... Insane Incident in Paris with the man calling himself 'Hawkmoth.' But, you know, Cairo stands out the most to me."

"It... does it?" Colonel Danning asks.

"You know that's where we found the Gate, right?" the General inquires. "Egypt, I mean. Giza, to be exact, 1928. I thought it was interesting that you and it would share such... interesting origins. You could almost call it fate, I suppose."

"I suppose you could, Sir," Colonel Danning agrees with a nod.

"Your team, Danning, is going to be one of the first in modern human history to step through that
Gate, and go to places most people can only imagine," The General says, pointing off in the distance to where the X-Gate is supposedly stored. "When I was standing where you're standing, my C.O.," He pauses for a moment, as if to impress upon the importance of the name he's about to say, "General Homer, he had only the vaugest idea of where he was sending me. And you? I'm about to do the same thing with you and your team."

Danning doesn't say anything, seemingly waiting for the General to continue on with his wise, and profound words.

The General smiles. "Now, this is usually the part where I'm supposed to give you some kind of secret standing orders to bring back all kinds of alien technology, but I'm not a fan of that kind of thing. I find that orders like that just get in the way of doing what's right."

"...And what's that, Sir?" Colonel Danning asks.

"I think you already know it, Danning," the General says, "but just to make myself clear... You bring your team home every time. You leave NOBODY behind in the gnarled claws of some wicked Batterwitch, or stuck in a prison cell on some god forsaken moon that might as well be hell itself. You do what you have to do to bring everyone home safe and sound. Am I clear, Colonel Danning?"

"Crystal clear, General Macgyver, Sir," Danning says, smiling as he nods firmly.

"Now go meet your team and gear up for adventure, Colonel," The General concludes, "I have a feeling it's going to be one most X-cellent adventure."

"AND CUT!" A buzzer rings out.

The Director heads over to Colonel O'neill, and asks, "Improv? None of that was in the script!"

"Went over it with Martin," O'neill says. "He agreed the words weren't the best being so quickly written, so I worked the basic info in a bit more naturally."

"Well, okay," The Director then grins. "I loved it! That was an awesome take!" He turns and then yells out, "Print it! We're moving on to the next scene!"

You turn back to Major Carter, and see her eyeing Colonel O'neill, a little awe struck, you suspect. "Are you alright, 'Miss Snow'?"

"Huh? What?" Carter shakes her head. "Yeah, I just-" She trails off for a moment. "It just hit me that some day Colonel O'neill's probably going to get promoted and BE a General. And I couldn't help but imagine for a moment, what if he replaced Hammond?"

You process that possibility and your imagination likewise wanders through the scenarios...

Oh.

OH.
"...Let us hope that such a promotion does not happen any time soon," you remark. "The loss of Colonel O’neill from the field would be profoundly felt."

"I, uh, yeah," Carter nods. "Here’s hoping."

Your name is Daniel Jackson, and you're waiting in Martin's trailer with the rest of SG-1 as Martin leads in the walking security breach that is Joe Spencer.

"Oh." He stares, eyes widening. "So I wasn't imagining it when...?" He trails off. "Oh. Oh God. It's actually Real?"

"So, I guess you know who we all are?" Jack asks.

He looks at all of you in turn, "Colonel Jack O'neill, with Two L's. Major Samantha Carter and Jolinar of the Tok'ra. Doctor Daniel Jackson, former host to Atum. And Teal'c the Jaffa, former First Prime of Apophis." Teal'c removes his hat at being properly identified. "Oh god, it's all real," Spencer moves to sit down at a chair, mumbling to himself as he sort of seems to have a minor breakdown.

"So... not an intentional security breach?" Martin asks.

"I'm gonna go with 'no,'" you say.

"So, Joe," Jack begins, moving to sit down next to the very distraught writer. "Care to walk us through how all this got started?"

Hesitantly, Joe Spencer begins his story.

At a Garage Sale, he picked up a small stone that gifted him a vision of SG-1 rushing through the Stargate in Jake Harley's basement.

And then a few hours later, the fight against the Mofang on Apophis' ship. A few weeks later, Jolinar's blending with Sam. And then again and again and again, vision after vision after vision, week after week after week.

And he wrote it all down thinking them flights of fancy.

"So, this stone," Jack finally begins...

"Oh, I always keep it with me," and then Spencer shows a small round stone with a vaguely beetle-shell like pattern on it.

"Yup, that's the one," Jack laughs.

And then Jack proceeded to tell everyone about how for the last few years while writing his after-action mission reports, he'd been 'daydreaming' about working as a barber.

And it all started AFTER he'd picked up a small, round stone with a beetle shell like pattern on it from the planet Carter had found the Quantum Mirror on. Jack, after confirming through Carter looking it over that it was just a stone, had decided to keep the thing as a paper weight.
In his office.

Where he wrote all of his after action reports.

"But what about the reporter?" Jack finally asks.

"Oh, that guy?" Spencer mulls it over. "He was just some guy who passed through town on a trip one day and stopped to get a haircut. One of my story prints went missing after he left, and I figured he'd stole it. I thought he was going to publish it under his own name or something, so later on when I had that... vision, I guess, of him being run over, I just thought I was just being a bit... petty! You know?" He pauses, going pale. "I didn't kill him, did I?"

"No, someone else did," Jack says. ".Did you ever come up with an idea who did it, out of curiosity?"

"The NID, probab-" And then Spencer realizes with a grimace, "D'oh! The NID is Real too, isn't it?"

"Yup," Jack nods.

__EARTH DATE: AUGUST 16TH, 1998. __

__DIASPORA DATE: 2/17/0002. __

Your name is JADE JACKSON and you look up at attention as a BLACK S.U.V. WITH NO PLATES pulls into one of the Studio lots.

"Well that's not suspicious at all," you remark.

"Hmm?" John looks up as well, and then says, "Ah. Yeah."

You two are already in COSTUME for your own supposed walk-on-role as background extras. Roxy, well, she's undercover as a costume director at the moment, and all it takes is a well aimed flick of wind against her nose to get her attention and have her look at the S.U.V. that just showed up.

Who could it be? NID? Tanner and his men? Someone completely differ-oh, no, it's just Tanner and his men.

"Yo, Colonel," Roxy mutters into a radio, "Tanner just showed up, and he brought friends."

"Go to intercept," Colonel O'neill says, "I'll let Marty know."

And then with a wink in your direction, Roxy suddenly lets out a high pitched squeal and then rushes over towards Tanner and his men.

"OH! MY! GAWD!" She shrieks. "Tanney?! Little Jacob Tanney!? From College!? IS THAT YOU!!?"
John laments, "This is either going to be super hilarious, or be so awkward that it wraps around into terribly embarrassing."

"Uh, I'm sorry, I think you've got me confused with someone else," Tanner says, looking like he'd suddenly rather be somewhere else.

"For her or for us?" you ask.

"Both," John answers.

"No! I know you!" Roxy grins. "You're Jacob Tanner! We shared a psych class together!"

"I- What?" Tanner asks, clearly confused.

"Come on! Come on! You have to meet the rest of the gang! They'll never believe you're here otherwise!!" Roxy says, and oh, that's your and John's cue to get moving.

You notice the wind start blowing subtly, and see by the way that just about everyone's clothes are pressing and blowing out in a certain direction that John's using his control over the wind to push Tanner's men and Tanner himself to follow Roxy.

It's the little things that help, you know?

So, you start grabbing at their shoes whenever they seem to be wanting to break free, and ever so subtly nudge them along the orbit that'll keep them walking after Roxy too.

Oh, those poor guys just have no idea what's going on, being caught up inside the whirlwind that is HURRICANE ROXY.

And like any good hurricane, she drags along all sorts of interesting things from sea up to shore- or in this case, from a car to a certain un-marked trailer.

And with a nod between you and John, you combine your powers to both lift Tanner and his men up by their everything, and then blow them into the trailer with a sudden gust of wind as Roxy steps aside and opens the door.

Then, she slams it shut behind them the moment you've gotten them all inside. "Nice job!" She grins at you and gives a thumbs up.

Your name is Colonel Jack O'neill, and you can't help but smile and wave as Tanner and his men get to their feet. "Hey, Tanner. Long time no see. Let me guess, you're here to see a guy about a spaceship?"

"Colonel O'neill," Tanner frowns at you. "I should have known you'd be involved in this. Of course Martin would call you in when our ship came on its return course."

"Well, what did you expect after you kidnapped two members of my team and left them drugged in a warehouse alone?" You ask. "One kidnapping deserves another, of sorts. Except, I'm feeling generous, Tanner. What do you want from the spaceship?"
Tanner looks at his fellow men, and one of them nods. Then, he looks you in the eyes and says, "We don't belong here on Earth. We'll find another planet somewhere else we can fit in better."

"And you'd leave, just like that, if we handed over the keys?" You ask.

"We just want to leave and go somewhere else where we won't be harassed by the men in black," Tanner says.

Men in Black?

"Let me guess, NID?" You ask.

"Yes," Tanner nods.

"They're not friends of ours either," you say, "so if helping you all get off world screws them over? Well..." You smirk. "Pack your bags, boys. You're off to space camp."

"What about Martin?" One of Tanner's men ask. "Is he going to come with us?"

"Marty's got his own adventure ahead of him," you say. "He's already cleared me to let you guys go when the ship shows up, with one request."

"And what's that?" Tanner asks.

Martin had planned ahead for a future episode he'd written, and so instead of hiring out to AN EFFECTS STUDIO, he just asked that you take a camera with you out to the desert location, pan upwards, and record as the ship comes in, hovers for a bit, and then takes off again.

You're not camera-man, but it's just like fishing, you suppose. You just cast your line, wait, and then reel it in.

Martin claps his hands upon seeing it. "I love it! We're going to get an Emmy for this shot! Visual Effects Category."

"And you're sure nobody's going to care that it's a one off sequence?" You ask.

"Nobody's going to care," Martin says, assured of that fact somehow. "It's like... you know how there's a standard shape and design for Goa'uld cargo ships? Imagine we've had that established in our TV show."

"Yeah?" You ask.

"Imagine then, that some random Goa'uld, say Osiris, has their personal Cargo Ship, but it's got this weird, stupid, long silver spike trailing out the bottom of it that makes no sense design wise for it to be there," Martin says. "And they only ever show it at the end of, like, one episode at the very end of it, and then NEVER EVER mention the design of it in any other episode again."

"...Okay?" You ask, frowning slightly.
"This is that scenario," Martin says, glancing at you, but sort of beyond you for some reason. You turn around, and see that he's looking straight into the camera you'd filmed this footage with.

...Martin Lloyd can be quite weird sometimes.

---

Your name is Samantha Carter, and as you're packing up everything that you'd brought with you for this whole Wormhole X-treme trip, there's a knock at the motel room door.

You check through the door's peephole, and see that it's the actress who's playing 'you' on the show, Yolanda Reese.

"Hello, Miss Reese, what can I do for you?" You ask.

"Hey, Miss Snow, can I ask you a few questions about some of the show's scripts before you go?" she asks.

"Sure," you say, letting her in. "What do you want to talk about?"

"Well, first and foremost I've got a problem with this scene in Episode Five, 'The Phantom Zone'," she begins.

"Right," you nod. "Where you're out of phase with the rest of the universe."

"Exactly!" She nods. "So, that's kind of my problem. I can walk through walls, but why don't I fall through the floor?"

Suddenly, you think to Narim and his personal PHASE SHIFT DEVICE that he'd used on so many occasions... No, but more relevant, is Rose's explanation of what happened to her when she wore that Atinak armband.

"I think when you're out of phase, you're actually sort of floating," you begin, "but because there's a sort of forced perspective trick going on, you think, on some level, 'I'm still solid', so you don't sink through the floor."

"So, you're saying if I was really trying, while out of phase," the Actress' eyes widen, "I could fly if I wanted to?"

"Hypothetically speaking, I think that'd be the case," You nod.

"...Awesome. I'm going to have to bring that up with the stunt crew for that episode, or with the writers in a future episode," she says, grinning. "Now, next question. Episode 8, 'The Fang Lair'..."

You proceed to spend the next hour and a half working with Yolanda Reese over the weird and wacky Stargate-verse science that you've grown accustomed to working with, now adapted for Television.

You get the feeling she's going to be improvising a lot of more accurate explanations than are in the scripts on the show going forwards.
By the time she leaves, satisfied, you've given her an email address she can use to message you in the future if she has any more questions about the show's science.

Meanwhile, in yet another NID OWNED WAREHOUSE, a gaggle of NID agents could only growl in frustration as another of their missions get foiled.

Their bosses would NOT be happy about this.

**STAY TUNED FOR A SPECIAL BEHIND THE SCENES LOOK AT WORMHOLE X-TREME!**

Chapter End Notes

And that's a WRAP On Wormhole X-Treme!

This was a longer episode to work on while trying to maintain the magic of the episode itself. I hope I did it justice. *wipes sweat from brow.*

There are TEN more episodes left in SG-1's season 5 count, canonically, and a similar amount of episodes remain to reach THE END OF ACT 4.

The plan for ACT 5, then, will have it contain SG1 seasons 6, 7, and 8, just as a heads up. ^u^;
ALT:05X11: Treading Water

Chapter Summary

In which we learn a valuable lesson about NOT BREACHING CONTAINMENT!!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

DIASPORA DATE: 3/3/0002.

Your name is Joey Claire, and while Earth is doing a sort of LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAY styled TRAINING MISSION today, with ALTERNIAN FLARP-STYLED stun weapons and a FAKE FOOTHOLD SCENARIO, you're doing something... completely unrelated to it at all, except for the fact that the only reason you're doing what you doing is because your BROTHER and his MATESPirit are visiting so they don't have to deal with the SGC being under lock down.

According to Jude, the new recruits just didn't quite have the right cohesion for a team during the exercises they knew were training operations, so they would be doing a training operation they thought was the real deal, but really wasn't.

Naturally, that meant someone on their team had to be in on it to rig events, but, meh. What do you care? It's not your problem.

What IS your problem is watching Cassandra vent some pent up frustration on some dead trees in the Diasporan forest (those mean ol' Replicators ate them to death!) by way of hurling large pieces of magnetic materials at them.

"So, lemme get this straight," you begin, "this is an unexpected result of you letting her control her bio-electricity to throw tiny little magnetic chess pieces around and telling nobody else?"

"Eyuuup," Jude nods, looking slightly pale as a particularly large ball of metal smashes into a tree's bark and shatters the thing into pieces.

"You really know how to pick 'em, Jude," you remark. Jude looks like he wants to say something more when your radio buzzes. You answer, "This is Joey."

Less than ten minutes later, you're back on the All Your Base on Alternia, and in its med-bay, watching a squirming, angry Trizza Tethis as she complains about her leg and how slowly it's taking to grow back.

Because yes, she's missing her right leg from about the hip down. Apparently it should have grown back by now. You're not quite sure what to do with that information beyond accept it as a rather gross fact of life.
"What the hell happened out there?" Xefros asks of Bazili.

"Shadre's new boy toy of a general's got himself a new toy he's passing around to all his subordinates," Bazli says, arms crossed, scowling. "Some kind of power cell for an exotic kind of sword. It..." she shakes her head. "They cut Trizza's leg with it and the part they cut off just VANISHED into thin air like it'd never even been there. Whatever the hell it is that those swords do, they're prototyping it for a massive scale, and trying to work out the kinks before up scaling it, I think."

"How much would you be willing to be they're trying to make their own Astro Megaship, Joey?" Jude asks.

"Even money," you answer. "I wouldn't even be surprised if they got some of the scraped parts from the doomed timeline Megaship to work with."

"Yeah, we shouldn't have risked them getting their hands on it," Xefros scowls. "But that's besides the point. These power cells, did you get a look at one? Any schematics?"

"Did you one better, Haunter," Baizli grins at your Moirail in a way very similar to how Polypa looks at you when she's about to unveil something that's probably very explosive. "I stole a couple!"

A minute later, you're all in Callie's lab, staring at a pair of presently not glowing, yellow and orange colored crystalline devices resting inside of a foam-insert filled briefcase.

"Well those look familiar," Jude remarks, sounding very concerned as he turns to look to Cassie and asks, "I'm not imagining it, right?"

"Nope, you're not," she agrees. "I'm seeing it too."

"Care to explain to the class?" Tyzias asks, motioning between her and Callie with a nod. "Cause we're stumped."

"So, you remember reading about the incident that had us start researching the Quantum Mirror?" Jude begins, "How during the process of waiting for SG-1 to return from the other world, some other universes connected to ours while trying to find other worlds?"

"Yeah," you nod. "I remember watching that video the other me recorded for me. What about it?"

"Well, we've had off and on contact with some other researchers on the other side of the mirror in another world," Jude says. "Two girls from mirror worlds who are working together, Silica and Keiko. There are other people that work with them, but, the point is, one time, those two girls came through the mirror and told us all about this incident that almost destroyed Keiko's world."

"They described to us a unique power source common to both of their universes," Cassie says. "Cylindrical, Crystalline, with yellow and orange coloring." She nods at the two identical items resting in the briefcase.

"Oh boy," Callie remarks. "That doesn't sound good."
"In Silica's universe, they grow like regular crystals," Jude says, "in Keiko's, though... they're artificial, and Ancient in design."

"Ancient?" You ask. "I heard you capitalizing that word there, Jude. Don't tell me you mean Gate Builder Ancient?"

"Get Ganos Lal or Orlin to confirm it, I think they'll tell you the same thing," Jude says, looking at those crystals. "Those are the same kind of power sources that the Gate Builders of Keiko's world use to power their massive flying Castle Ships."

"And if the Gate Builders of Keiko's world are the same Gate Builders of OUR world," Cassie continues, "then those are the same power crystals."

"So what are they, beyond batteries?" Tyzias asks. "We can't figure out where the energy is coming from."

"They're Z.P.M.s, or Zero Point Energy Modules," Jude says. "Basically... pocket dimensions inside of the crystals that are artificially created to draw power from for as long as the pocket dimension remains stable and has energy to spare."

"Zero Point-?" Tyzias cuts herself off, face going pale.

"Wait, so you're telling me one of these things is a container for a whole pocket dimension?" Callie asks, staring at the devices. "Wait. No..." her eyes widen. "Isn't that what Thor said the battery device Colonel O'neill designed was meant to be used as a temporary replacement for?"

"Now that you mention it," Jude's eyes widen. "The shapes are eerily similar, aren't they?"

"So..." Xefros asks, "somehow Shadre's clowns got their hands on these even though, logically speaking, they SHOULD only be available in the Milky Way Galaxy?"

"That's..." You finally say. "That's got to be dangerous. And they're putting these things on swords?"

"Not these explicitly," Baizli says. "The ones on the swords are smaller, inlaid. I almost didn't recognize them for what they were until I came across the larger ones." She holds up her hand, and uses her index finger and thumb to measure a small distance, "About yae big."

"Oh no," Cassie whispers, sounding horrified. "That sounds like the smaller versions they used to repair Silica's World's Mirror."

"Yeah," Jude nods. "The organic ones. How the hell did they get their grubby, grease stained hands on those?"

"It doesn't matter how they got them," you say, "we need to figure out how to stop them from using them." You turn to look at Baizli, and ask, "What planet did you run into these clowns on?"

"P3X-LO5," Okurii Leijon begins, "blacklisted on our dialing list 'on order by the Scratch Doctor' about a year before Joey arrived on Alternia for reasons of 'escaped experimental oxygen eating"
"Fake Reason, of course," Baizli remarks. "Or, atleast, an expired one. There was nothing wrong with that planet's atmosphere when Trizza and I were there."

"Right," Okurii nods. "So, we sent a probe through, and we got a good aerial view of a recently built factory from the probe before it got shot down." A few taps of a keyboard, and WOOSH, a visual of the factory appears. It's a big one. Way larger than needed for a sword, but would be perfect for working on a space ship or giant robot to wield it.

"So," Xefros begins, "what do we do about it?"

"The Megaships right now are busy helping the Cla'dian fleets fight off Reaver Ships encroaching on our space across the Galaxy," Okurii explains. "Dammek's leading the fight there right now, so we can't just blast the site from orbit."

"So, we do what we've been doing," Polypa says, leaning against the console. "We go in, we plant charges, and we blow the place up."

"That'd be a good idea if it weren't for the Z.P.M.s scattered all over the place," Cassie says. "If we start indiscriminately blowing stuff up, we could rupture the containment on those things, and if we break even one of them... it'll be a bigger explosion than anticipated."

"How big we talkin'bout here?" Polypa asks.

"...Enough of them go off? It could take out an entire solar system," Cassie says without hesitation.

"...Wicked," Polypa says. "I'd love to see that go off... at a respectable, safe distance away."

"So blowing it up from orbit would be a bad idea anyways," you say. "What other options do we have?"

"We could steal their reserve of the Crystals?" Callie offers. "Take everything to use for ourselves?"

"If there's a natural source of those things growing in this Galaxy, though," Jude says, "they can just harvest more of them."

"But if it's a limited supply of the things," you say, "it might just work."

"Before we do anything, we need to figure out where they got them from," Okurii decides. "How, where, when, and more importantly, Why NOW? If there's a ready source of them in this Galaxy... Why hasn't the Empire used these things before?"

"Well," Xefros says, "we can't ask Boldir to go in. That didn't work out well the last time when we pitted her against the clowns Shadre's using."

"...So... what do we do?" You ask.

...Needless to say, this conversation doesn't go anywhere fast.

Let's... go be someone who is fast, shall we?
You are now RHUBEE XAOLO, a Rustblooded speedster of a girl with a NEED FOR ACTION and a LOVE OF SWEETS!!!

...You're stuck on JANITORIAL DUTY, training under the apparent HEAD JANITOR, MARSTI HOUTEK.

You really should listen, but when you hear "Now, look, THIS bottle of chemicals should never EVER mix with THIS bottle of chemicals" for the hundreth-thousanth time (Okay, more like third) you kind of sort of space out for a bit and daydream.

You daydream about being HERO!!! A hero who USES A SCYTHE and cuts down her enemies with RELISH! AND... AND... AMBITION! The kind of girl who goes around KICKING BUTT, TAKING NAMES, CHEWING BUBBLEGUM, AND... AND...

And okay you've never really been a GUM person, but still! THE AESTHETIC!!!

THEEEEEEE. AESTHETIIIIIIIC!!!!!!!

"Oi, Xaolon," and Marsti snaps her fingers at you, and, damn it, there goes your daydreaming. "Quit spacing off and get mopping. This spilt pasta sauce isn't going to clean itself up."

And so you get to sweeping up a bunch of spilt pasta and pasta sauce from the cafeteria floor.

Uuuugggh. You're so HUNGRY. You could really go for some COOKIES RIGHT ABOUT NOW!!!

But nooo. You don't get to eat until AFTER you get off break! And COME ON! You're right here! In the cafeteria! YOU WANNA EAT!!!

Your tummy grumbles and you can't even tell if Marsti cares or not because of those weird, sort of goat-eyed lenses on her goggles. What's up even with THAT!? Right???


UGH.

SO.

BORING!!!

"Alright, stop," Marsti says. "Let me show you how to do it right."

You sigh, and hand over the mop and try to pay attention.

...
"Magnets," Cassie suddenly says, drawing the perspective shift back to you, JOEY CLAIRE.

"What about them?" You ask.

"If the sword they're working on is magnetic, I might be able to lift it remotely and destroy everything they're working on by stealing it through the Stargate," Cassie says.

"We've never tried seeing if you can move stuff that big or heavy before," Jude says. "I don't want you straining yourself and then us having to explain it to your Mom that we've been hiding that you can do this."

"Plus," you say, "that's assuming the sword is thin enough that it'll even FIT through the Stargate."

"That's true," Cassie frowns. "I guess..."

As the discussion starts to go in circles again, you lock eyes with Polypa, and she gives you THAT LOOK. The one that says, 'can we just blow something up, please??'

...You know what. Why not?

"You know what!?" You interject loudly enough to get everyone's attention. "Let's just fucking cut through all this red tape and rig one of those Z.P.M.s Baizli stole to explode, and hurl the damned thing through the Stargate??" Everyone stares at you. "What? One of these things setting off a chain reaction could blow up a solar system, right?? Let's just wipe that planet off the map!"

"I second this idea!" Polypa throws her hand into the air. "Better than arguing!"

"Well," Callie muses, "the planet IS supposed to be under quarantine. Anybody on the planet would be violating it and risking certain death anyways..."

"...Can we make it do that, though?" Okurii asks. "Can we make one explode on demand?"

"Can't be any harder than blowing up a sun, right?" Jude asks.

The room goes silent, eyes widen, and another idea comes to mind.

"...What did I say?" Jude asks.

"...What if we just..." Callie begins suddenly. "Fly up to the sun, jettison a pre-made to explode Z.P.M. into it, and see what happens when the pocket dimension suddenly comes into existence within the sun's space?"
"...Let's not try that," Cassie says. "That way leads to a really bad day."

"...Let's just stick with a chain reaction on the planets surface, for now," Okurii decides. "Make it happen."

The idea ends up being staggeringly simple.

You coat the Z.P.M. in a volatile chemical compound that, when exposed to an electrical charge, would explode, compromising the Z.P.M. casing and, well... unleashing the pocket dimension within.

You stick a timed detonation switch on it, dial up the planet in question, and hurl the ZPM through the gate with a five second delay. Naturally, as a matter of course, you shut down the Gate Immediately, and everyone waits. And waits. And waits.

Then, after a solid minute of time to let everything settle down, you try dialing in.

...No connection can be established.

So, Okurii requests a ship go by that part of the galaxy and check in on the damage.

Hours later, Dammek radios in asking, "What the hell did you guys do??"

Needless to say, it seemed to be that either ONE Z.P.M. or the chain reaction of several Z.P.M.'s being caught in the blast of the first was enough to make an entire solar system vanish into thin air.

...That's probably going to make some clowns rather mad, you think.

Meanwhile, out in the vast reaches of space lay Apophis' once might MOTHERSHIP- now being cannibalized for parts and resources by REPLICATORS and other such things.

Sitting in a ROYAL CARGO SHIP's pilot seat, watching the thing be torn apart was Shadre Amanno, swirling a small wine glass of GRAPE FAYGO in hand.

The day was going well for her... well, up until she suddenly got a call from her latest BOY TOY GENERAL: KIRIHA AONUMA.

The Indigo Blood shimmers into existence on the screen in front of her, a somber expression on his face. "Shadre," he begins, sounding angry and remorseful. "It seems the either Reavers we hired for the construction of the Caliburn failed to heed the warnings we gave them regarding not breaking the containment of the Power Crystals our Lord had so graciously gifted us, or-"

"The planet is gone?" Shadre interrupts, frowning.

"The Solar System is gone," Kiriha corrects. "There's nothing but empty void in its place."
"...Humpf, unsurprising," she scoffs. "The Reavers, though faithfully being our Lord's servants, are not the brightest lamps in the carnival square." She takes a sip of her soda. "Is there anything else to report?"

"As I was going to say, there's an Or to this," Kiriha says. "I suspect it may have been a deliberate act of sabotage. Just shortly before I lost contact with the facility, they reported an intrusion by a Royal Blooded Troll and a Clown who was unmarked and unpainted."

"...Ah, Trizza Tethis and that odd interloper of hers," Shadre frowns. "...Did they die?"

"No, they escaped through the Stargate after the former Heiress was removed one of her legs," Kiriha says. "I was on my way to secure the site when I lost contact with them, and by the time I arrived, the system was just gone. However, we were cloaked and able to observe the arrival of one of the Megaships the Rebellion uses. They seemed to scan the scene before leaving."

"So the Rebellion might very well have facilitated the destruction of the Caliburn?" Shadre scowls. "Damn them! Send, oh, what's-his-face, the short one who paints his horns white and grey? He's expendable. Send him to report to our Lord to inform him of the delay."

"As you wish, My Lady, Echidnha," Kiriha bows his head. "...What of the Rebellion?"

"Let them play their little games," Shadre scoffs. "So what if they lucked out and beat Kuudoh? He was a pervert and expendable. I don't care about Alternia or the Rebellion beyond keeping them distracted from finding the new Supergates. The one our Lord's patsy has requested is nearly finished. All that remains afterwards is to ship it to the Milky Way Galaxy. Once that is done, our Lord can freely come and go between these troublesome realms whenever he wishes." She narrows her eyes. "Just make sure that the Rebellion does NOT find out where we are, Kiriha. Am I Clear?"

"Crystal, ma'am," Kiriha bows again, and then fades away from view.

Sighing, Shadre Amanno puts her wine glass to the side, and leans forward against the Cargo Ship's controls, staring up and out the window.

Up and up above Apophis' mothership- past the first already completed Supergate that had facilitated the delivery of the Power Crystals from Alfheim their Lord had shipped to them, and towards the second Supergate, nearly finished.

"Soon, those fools will realize they're playing a game they've already lost," she smirks. "But by then, it will be far, FAR too late for them to do anything about it."

Chapter End Notes

Doc Scratch was a fool for not making TWO Supergates at once.
Chapter Summary

Short and Simple, but what else needs to be said?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 3/13/0002.

Your name is TEAL'C, and all you can think is that this mission was a SET UP.

Rumor had been that COLONEL SIMMONS had been spotted off world, and so SG-1 had gone in to investigate.

Instead, all you found were a bunch of AL’KESH, and a bunch of DEATH GLIDERS, ready to blast you to pieces, and at the head of it all was ATUM. Atum of all Goa’uld!

That meant that if you hadn't double shot Tanith back on Vorash, he might well have escaped. For some reason, the thought of him escaping justice particularly irks you to some degree.

But Tanith is not your problem, ATUM IS and you could honestly see how annoyed Daniel Jackson was by her sudden appearance.

What happened next was a long, complex, and very indescribable escape from Osiris' forces, in which you managed to commander a Death Glider's INBUILT WING CANNON to blast your way out of the prison cavern.

SG-1 re-armed with their weapons and running for the Stargate, you can't help but wonder why the escape was otherwise so easy... Not even Death Gliders were launched after you...

And then Atum started flying an Al'kesh with a personal vendetta wedged against you- and with the targeting canons locked on firmly.

In all honesty, you wish Atum would just die already so you didn't have to deal with her coming back again and again and-

Wait.

Wait just a second.

You're armed with a DEATH GLIDER CANNON, and you're pretty sure that the shields aren't functioning as thoroughly as they would in space so close to the ground...
As the Stargate activates, and the rest of SG-1 dives through the event horizon, you take aim at the Goa'uld in the driver's seat of that Al'kesh, and lock eyes with Atum, person to person, apologizing in advance to the host for what you're about to do.

*PCH-CHHYUUUUU*

You blast the Al'kesh front window and the whole interior of the bridge goes up in flames. You must have hit something vital.

And... oh.

Oh.

Now the Al'kesh is tilting down towards the ground.

You... You should get out of here.

You turn and run into the Stargate and-

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**EARTH DATE: SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 3/17/0002.**

--you Emerge not in the SGC gate room, but inside a warehouse.

Major Carter and Colonel O'neill stand behind a DHD looking like a miracle had just been performed.

You turn around to look at the Stargate and see not the usual eventhorizon, but a nearly transparent energy field tinted a slight hue of blue.

...What just happened?

And then the Stargate shuts down, and the DHD starts sparking, and- "Teal'c!"- then Major Carter is running up to you and giving you a hug and...

"...I feel as if I have missed something important," you remark.

"Yeah," Colonel O'neill says as he walks up to join in the hug. "You missed a bit. It's good to have you back, T."

Carter and O'neill break the hug, and Carter begins explaining. "We figured something must have destroyed the DHD before you could get reintegrated on our side, but because the Stargate we've been using doesn't usually have a DHD Control Crystal hooked up to it outside of dialing out to Alternia, it couldn't supply the power to the wormhole needed to finish the job, so you ended up stuck in the memory buffer."

"What Carter's trying to say is that you got stuck in the Stargate because we were idiots who aren't
"Honestly, knowing now what we know about how the DHDs work in emergencies," Carter says, "it's a miracle Joey was lucky enough to Dial Alternia AFTER Dammek and Xefros installed a Control Crystal. It's entirely possible that if she'd dialed in a minute sooner or a minute later, she'd have gotten stuck in the Stargate's memory buffer on their end and they'd never have known she was in there!"

"...How long was I trapped within the Stargate?" You ask.

"Four days," O'neill answers.

"And why are we not in Stargate Command?" you ask, frowning at the unfamiliar room.

"Oh, that," Carter laughs. "The Pentagon didn't want us shutting down Gate operations for whole weeks at a time while we tried to figure out how to get you out of the Gate Buffer, so Hammond immediately ordered the Giza and Antarctic Gates to be swapped out. We're in Area 51 right now. It let us take all the time in the world we needed to figure out how to safely get you out."

The DHD, in that moment, lets off another large spark.

"Well, safely for you," O'neill clarifies. "Not so much for the Antarctic DHD."

"I see," you muse. "That's a most fortunate turn of events that we had two Stargates to switch in case of Emergency."

"Indeed!" O'neill chimes in.

Heh.

"So, what happened out there anyways?" O'neill finally asks. "Did Atum blast the DHD while you were going through?"

"In all likelihood, it was my own attack against Atum that caused this situation in the first place," you admit. "I scored a direct hit against something very fragile and explosive inside the Al'kesh's bridge. The ship was coming down towards the ground when I entered the Stargate; The DHD was likely destroyed as the ship crashed."

"...That'll do it," Carter hums in approval, and also a bit of awe.

"So Atum is...?" O'neill trails off.

"Dead," you report with a small bit of pride. "It was her face I was aiming at when I fired that critical blow."

"Niîce," O'neill grins. "Daniel'll be happy to hear that snake finally bit it."

"Indeed," you say.

"So, Carter," O'neill turns to Carter, "what do we do with the Gate now that we've got Teal'c out?"
"We'll probably keep the Antarctic Gate running as our Primary until the next big emergency happens," Carter says. "In the mean time, I'll work up a proper connection with the Alternia DHD Control Crystal to make sure that nothing like this ever happens again."

"That is a very wise idea," you say. "It would not be good if we were to become stuck in this same situation in the future with no-one left to retrieve us."

It's a long flight back to Colorado, but at least you're able to rest easy knowing that even when you're stuck inside of a Stargate's memory buffer, that the rest of your team has your back.

Chapter End Notes

The original episode "48 Hours" got butterflied pretty heavily by everything going on before it. I wasn't sure if it was going to be eradicated entirely or just just VERY HEAVILY CHANGED.

...In the end, I settled on doing the episode this way for reasons that you MIGHT be able to piece together if you're familiar with what happens in the very early parts of SG-1 Season 6.
ALT:05X12: The Midnight Crew

Chapter Summary

In which a familiar scene plays out in reverse.

Somewhere within the Alternian Galaxy, there resided a bright blue ball of a planet with two interesting moons. One was colored GOLD from its rich, extensive, seemingly replenishing gold deposits. The other was PURPLE, colored that way from all the nightmarish oils bubbling from beneath the surface and tentacle-ly creatures that swummed in it.

Skaia, Prospit, and Derse, the locals called them respectively.

To the Sorian Empire? The single solitary planet with the two moons was simply, unimaginatively called "Avoid This World."

To the Alternian Empire? This planet sans a Stargate was called FOOL'S ERRAND, because for, as rich as the gold supply of the one moon was, and how strangely efficient at burning the oil from the other moon could be, the natives of the blue ball of a planet below were fiercely protective of their resources.

They had space travel, yes, and while their ships were powerful enough to drive off Alternian forces time and time again, they never ventured beyond their solar system due to the conflicting presences of two fighting empires outside their doors. Isolationist, they'd been called by the fools for which the planet had earned its misnomer, by way of their seeking to take resources they could never get.

But really, for anyone who had half a brain and cared to actually look into the planet's geo-political situation, they would see that the planet was essentially divided in twain by a massive civil war perpetuated by CLONING TECHNOLOGY and an implausible ability to create fully formed pieces of technology out of thin air.

The people of this planet were humanoid in shape, and had thick, carapace like shells covering their bodies. It was like chess, in a sense in that one side was born with white shells, and the other black shells. However, it was not so black and white when it came to what side of the war one was on, as some of those aforementioned Alternian Fools would have believed.

Oh, yes, once upon a time before the planet's advanced technologies had formed, sure, it might have been like that. But these days? Oh, no. You had Carapacians of both colors on both sides just about evenly.

How, then, would one tell the sides apart, those idiotic fools would continue to fail to ask. The answer, as obvious as it might seem, lay in the uniform colors. One side wore bright gold and bloody crimson uniforms. The other wore pitch ebony black and rich, oily purples.

Well, now the Sorian Empire was gone, and the Alternian Empire was essentially collapsed into to infighting factions. And without them to distract and occasionally intervene in their warfare and even the odds again? As it so turned out, that the side of Gold and Crimson were finally winning.
And thus, so desperate for a means of beating their enemies once and for all, the side of the Black and Purple sent out a secret distress call, asking for the aid of a friend who would be willing to enter a trade agreement for GOLD AND OIL should they win the war.

Needless to say, it is with great sorrow that I inform you, dear reader, that it was one SHADRE AMANNO who replied to the distress call first... and replied to it PERSONALLY.

If there was one thing the ARCHAGENT named JACK NOIR knew and knew well, it was that DAMES who showed up to a meeting with the QUEEN OF DERSE wearing what might as well be a curtain draped across their body to flaunt the rather ODDLY DETAILED grease based body paint designs usually had a few screws loose.

And that was before one even considered the fact that this particular gal, calling herself ECHIDNHA was one of those PURPLE BLOODED CLOWNS who were known to so frequently go mad in the blackest, most unfavorable, least star touched sections of space. And even factoring THAT into account? Well, there was the fact that BLOOD COLORS of the RAINBOW VARIETY flowed through her hair like some magic reversed waterfall. It was a brag, a boast, and all kinds of MESSED UP all in one pretty little package. So, yes, there was no doubt she had a few screws loose in her head. That much was obvious. In fact, it was so obvious that before seeing her U shaped horns in person, Jack Noir had suspected that her horns had a CURLED, ENGRAVED SCREW TREAD PATTERN on them, because where-else were the screws going to be?

Surprisingly, though, as it turned out it was the Dame's EYECANDY BOYTOY who had the screw-shaped horns. This AONUMA guy. Now there's someone who's danger incarnate hidden beneath a facade of COOL AND COMPOSED! Like the DIGNITARY, Jack thought. Oh, yes, definitely like the DIGNITATRY. There's a sort of cold-blooded calculating glint of 'I'm gonna wreck your shit if you start something' behind those indigo irised eyes.

The QUEEN OF DERSE meets with this ECHIDNHA chick, and they seem to hit it off well enough.

Talk of ASSASSINATION of the QUEEN OF PROSPIT is talked about- and while you'd LOVE to do that mission yourself, it seems that your Queen has decided to make it a task of PROVED WORTH. If this NEW CLOWN EMPIRE that Echidnha is talkin' about is as strong as she says it is, it should be CHILD'S PLAY to take out the armies of Prospit.

Their moon is going to be YOURS, this dame promises.

If you were Jack Noir, which you're not, you would be firmly of the opinion that she's biting off way more than she could actually chew with her promises here.

But if she could pull it off? ...The things she'd asking for in exchange are way too much. There's no way the Queen would really cave her knees to some SNAKE GOD!!

...And if she did, Jack Noir was going to be sharpening some knives.
The Draconian Dignitary didn't like this one bit. Just because Derse's armies were all on the verge of defeat for the first proper time in years didn't mean they had to go selling their collective souls to these Reavers pretending to be Sane.

Clowns were never to be trusted- oh, no. Definitely never- but damn it all if this Shadre Amanno (Never Echidnha. Such a fake, clearly pretentious title that was given to her by herself) wasn't pretty and knew how to flaunt it all ever so properly to the right people.

Namely, him, the Dignitary, and his fascination with GREY COLORED SKIN AND CARAPCACE.

And so he said nothing when the Queen asked for objections even though he had quite a few. After all, his eyes were full discretely taking in all the... INTRICATE DETAILS of her body paint.

What a pervert. Aren't we glad we're not him right now, dear reader?

The HISTORY BRUTE was assigned as an 'escort' (really, SPY) to observe this ECHIDNHA CHICK and her LOVER as they began their promised ONE BATTLE TOTAL VICTORY over the armies of Prospit.

Shit was going down, and THE ARCHAGENT had ordered him to make sure everyone knew going forwards just what happened today.

Nobody really cared to know that the Brute was a lover of History. Nobody cared to know that he spent so many years of his life before joining Derse's Armies learning everything about history that he could. Nobody cared that when he DID finally join Derse's Armies, he did so to record history from the perspective of the soldiers who were so elite they couldn't be risked to be cloned again and again.

That way lead to GENETIC DEGREDATION, after all, and nobody wanted THAT. Not after the clear failure on Prospit's side to regulate it and the staggering decline of their abilities to reproduce normally among their shock troops.

Prospit might have the current numerical advantage, but their heavy reliance on cloning was not going to get them anywhere good in the long term.

Thus, it was with a certain, begrudging amount of respect and no unending amount of proper fear that the History Brute turned his eyes towards the ROYAL PALACE of the PROSPITAN QUEEN, and watched as Echidnha's hair suddenly became separated from its bloody enchantments. Because as the blood remained connected to that golden ring when it ascended from the Troll's hair, it suddenly became clear to anyone with half a mind towards the ebb and flow of history that there was something ELSE here.

When all that blood encircled that glowing golden ring and transformed into some kind of BARBELL MONSTER made out of blood, and it gave out this warbling, echoing cry that sounded like one of the HORRORWHALES on the Moon of Derse, the History Brute realized that history had been completely rewritten in a single moment.

That moment completed itself as this strange, psychic creature stabbed the Queen of Prospit deep
within her chest, and she screamed as something... VITAL was drained from her body. She fell to the floor, dead, but a charred husk of burnt carapace, and all her cloned soldiers bowed their knees to Echidnha.

The terrifying Alternian girl smirked, snapped her fingers, and all of those damned clones were slaughtered in a heartbeat by the blood monster.

Several years later, when all was said and done, the History Brute's ceaseless recording of the events that transpired then and would follow soon after would all be hailed as the hail marry pass that lead to legislation that would keep another tyrant from taking power again.

The QUEEN of DERSE quickly ordered a MAYOR be installed to rule over the now conquered armies of Prospit, and so the WASTELANDIC VINDICATOR was installed to power. For a certain former Courtyard Droll, though, the best part came in being assigned as this FORMER FARMER'S PUBLICITY STYLIST.

Oh, how much fun it was! So many hats and so many FANCY SCARVES AND COATS AND OH MY GOD SO MANY SHINY SHOES!!!

The new CLOTHING DESIGNER was having a blast, and who cared if the now united planet was installing a new religion under the request of the very fancy lady Echidnha? If her GOD was the one who made all of this possible than what did he care??

He'd take a knee and respect that guy any day!

The former Courtyard Droll never did notice when the man he was dressing suddenly became replaced with someone else- well, beyond the fact that his waistline grew five inches and his shoulders shrunk by two.

Jack Noir was not a happy man.

The DIGNITARY had been assigned as the UNITED KINGDOM OF SKAIA'S REPRESENTATIVE to the CLOWN ARMIES belonging to this Echidnha Chick, and the whole planet was now gleefully worshiping this MAD GOD the Clowns Worshiped too! What fools! What idiots!

How blind could they really be?!!

...The vast majority of people, though, were just happy that the INFIGHTING was over with. And now, with the Galaxy ripe for conquest? Now that they had an ally who WANTED THE SAME THING?

Ugh. It was so stupid.

They were blinding themselves to the fact that in their desperation they'd willingly sold themselves into servitude.
Idiots! The Lot of them!!!

And so it was that when this ECHIDNHA CHICK installed a Stargate on their planet, and they were officially now connected to the GALAXY WIDE NETWORK?

Well, Jack Noir wasn't even just a LITTLE surprised he wasn't the only one who broke into the facility that first night of its operation. A small group of rebels. How quaint! A former PARCEL MISTRESS, an AIMLESS RENEGADE, not to mention the original MAYOR who'd been ousted from his position because he ASKED TOO MANY QUESTIONS.

What DID surprise him, though, was that their random-ass punching of buttons on the DIALING DEVICE got them a planet that they seemed to be expected on.

Two Alternian kids, no sign of CLOWN MAKEUP ANYWHERE ON THEM, stood at the ready. One of them was a grumpy looking sort of kid who briefly made a cut on his plam to show his CHERRY RED BLOOD. The other wore red glasses over her eyes, and had a grin like a TERRORSHARK from Derse's moon.

"Jack Noir?" The boy who'd cut his hand offered it to Jack in greeting, "We're with the Alternian Rebellion. We'd like to ask if you and your friends here would like a chance at kicking Shadre Amanno between the legs and off a cliff into deep space?"

And just how did they know his name, Jack asked of the kid. "Terezi Saw It" was a weird answer, but hell, with all the crazy shit going on in the Galaxy these days, some blind girl being able to see the future wasn't too far out of the realm of possibility.

Jack considered his options, then, too, cut open his palm and shook the boy's hand, saying they had a deal with him.

The others quickly signed on as well, saying that was their plan anyways, and that it was nice to have backup and support.

Several weeks later, Jack Noir would find out that the Ship Yards of Cla'dia were building a new transforming Megaship, and were running a REQUEST POLL to see what name it should have after it was completed.

Needless to say, Jack Noir's submission of "The Sovereign Slayer" grew very popular among poll voters for reasons not even Jack Noir could have predicted.
The best laid plans of Snakes and Men...


DIASPORA DATE: 3/31/0002.

Your name is COLONEL JACK O'NEILL, and if there was one long reaching outcome that nobody had expected to come from the Protected Planets Treaty, it was that both the Tok'ra and a Goa'uld System Lord had the exact same idea for two completely different reasons.

Through the 'safe planet' system, Lord Yu had sent a diplomat to the SGC to inform them that a certain troublesome Goa'uld claiming to be OSIRIS had filed an announcement that they would be attending the next SYSTEM LORD SUMMIT.

Yu wanted an SG-Team that no System Lords were familiar with to pose as his Servants when he went to the Summit, because he feared that even if Osiris was genuinely returning, that it was not to take his former place as a System Lord.

Yu's logic was that the type of announcement filed was not the standard one for a returning System Lord, but rather, a type one would file to announce oneself as a servant to SOMEONE ELSE ENTIRELY. A supposedly UNKNOWN GOA'ULD, but Yu had his concerns that it was, infact, ANUBIS, and was the one who was suspected to be taking out Goa'uld System Lord Flagships with an alarming rate.

For the same reasons, the Tok'ra had literally just requested the SGC consider sending just one person in under-cover, using some shady new drug to pretend to be a random System Lord's personal servant so that they could SPY ON THE PROCEEDINGS and figure out which Goa'uld was the one this "possible" Osiris was working for. 'Possible' in massive sarcasm quotes because if Atum could survive Vorash exploding? So could Osiris, if they were together. And if Atum was working with Anubis...?

So... yeah.

The Tok'ra had an idea of possibly using some OTHER shady new drug to wipe out the Goa'uld present at the summit, but that idea was quickly being shelved given Yu's personal request for an SG-team to be present, and the idea that Anubis was behind a lot of the problems going on right now in the galaxy.

Now Hammond has you trying to figure out which SG-team to send on their first mission straight into Goa'uld territory.
Of course, you and Teal'c will be going in as backup in case something really, REALLY goes wrong, but still, that's going to be a whole planet away, waiting for news on how things go according to plan, or fail spectacularly.

Ideally, you'd pick those kids you recently graduated up to SG-Team member status after the training exercise. But Lieutenant Grogan is already on active duty with SG-9 on the planet Latona for a TRADE NEGOTIATION. Lieutenants Satterfield and Hailey are working off world with Daniel and Carter in the Alternian Galaxy doing who knows what regarding some POWERFUL ARTIFACT that shouldn't belong in that Galaxy... That would leave Lieutenant Kevin Elliot, but he's going along with SG-17 already to the Tok'ra Research base nearest the Space Station that this SUMMIT is happening on for some kind of TRUST BUILDING ORIENTATION EXERCISE, and you're going with them for this Mission, so...

So...

Not them.

You can't use them...

You can't use anyone else from any of the existing SG-teams either. The chances of one of the other Goa'uld recognizing them is too high.

...So who do you send in?

"Ah! Colonel!" Major Vantas suddenly slides into your office, grinning. "I believe you've got yourself a conundrum to deal with? Namely... who to send in?"

"Major," you glance at him, "if you're about to suggest a person who you know went through because of Stable Time Loop..."

"Oh, no, no loops here!" he holds out both hands to show none of his fingers are crossed. "Not even any crossed fingers! Look! I promise! No time travel is involved in this mission."

"...Alright," you say. "I'm willing to hear out a suggestion, then."

"Send me in," Major Vantas says.

"...No offense, Major, but you're Alternian," you point out. "There's no way you'd look like Yu's servant to the Goa'uld. They'd sooner think you're Khepri's long lost son than believe that."

Major Vantas then volunteers, "Have Rose practice her giftable shape shifting on me. Make me Human for the Mission."

"..." You consider him for a moment, then say, "I thought you said there wasn't any Stable Time Loop business involved with this mission, Major?"

"There isn't!" he says, looking a bit indignant. "She needs the practice anyways, doesn't she?"

...Well, that's some sound logic, but...

"There's a catch, isn't there?"
"Well, if I'm going to be playing the part of the dutiful servant, then someone needs to be able to sneak around and do other things. And if Rose is the one applying the disguise to me, it'd only make sense that she be the one to do it since she can turn herself invisible too, right?"

That was one long winded explanation. Still...

"Fine," you say. "But you get to be the one to ask Roxy."

 Needless to say, Major Vantas got his ear yelled off.


DIASPORA DATE: 4/1/0002.

You are now JOLINAR of the FUTURE TIMELINE, and you've managed to score a visit to the TOK'RA RESEARCH BASE on REVANNA for this current investigative exercise against the Goa'uld System Lords.

While SG-17 is off getting the TOUR, and Colonel O'neill and Teal'c are off being busy waiting for word from Major Vantas's mission, you, and your host Mikari, have gone on something more of a personal visit given some recent events.

"As we recently discussed, while we've managed to save the minds of the afflicted SG-team," Ren'al begins talking, leading you into a lab, "the Za'tarc deprogramming attempts have not gone as well with Martouf, unfortunately. He sadly managed to break free and kill himself during our last attempt. Still, we've learned a lot from what went wrong and we should be good to deal with the next Za'tarc attempt should it surface."

"And what about Lantash?" You ask.

"Here," Ren'al taps a few buttons on a large container's console, and up rises a small symbiote tank.

You reach up your hand to touch the outside wall of the glass jar. "Hello, Lantash," you say. "I hope we'll get a proper chance to talk soon."

Ren'al smiles, and says, "His recovery has come along well. We think that within a short while, he will be ready to take another host. We've already begun searching for one."

"I see," you turn to face her, and smile. "Thank you, Ren'al."

And then the alarms sounded.

Your name is Rose Lalonde, and you're INVISIBLE, not only that, but OUT OF PHASE, of a sort.

And right now? Hoo boy. That's a doozy of a situation. You're currently riding in the back of a
The Goa'uld YU sits at the pilot's seat, going over some BASIC INFORMATION and ACTING HABITS that his USUAL SERVANT abides by.

Distantly, trailing quite a ways behind you, is yet another Cargo Ship, piloted by JACOB CARTER/SELMAK, and carries onboard Major Strider, Jade, John, Argo, and Cassandra. That's your BACKUP PLAN for escape incase Yu tries to pull a fast one.

The ship approaches the SPACE STATION and gets scanned. You hold your breath unnecessarily for a moment, but your OUT-OF-PHASE type of INVISIBILITY works to fool the Station's sensors just the same.

This is going to be a tricky little mission to pull off, but you think...

You think you're going to have FUN.

You're now MAJOR KARKAT VANTAS, and ugh, does it feel weird to not have horns.

Oh, you've done shit like this before, sure. But that was chronologically AFTER this mission. After Rose got better at her giftable shapeshifting powers.

You know she'll perfect it eventually- you have distinct memories of Kanaya in human form, after all- but as of right now, you're her only voluntary test subject.

Still, for now, it's going to hold. You're secure. You're undercover. You're pretending to be a Goa'uld's personal slave and the smug snake knows it, but he doesn't know HOW undercover you really are.

You were never told about any of this happening when you were growing up through this time loop the first two times, so you're completely in the dark about what's going to happen today except for a few key facts.

Fact the first: Anubis is going to pull something shady.

Fact the second: you know a Cargo Ship is going to crash at some point over the next two days.

Fact the third: you're obviously going to come out of this in one piece to complete the stable time loops... unless, of course, you don't. In which case that means you're probably stuck in a doomed timeline and HELL, who knows what the hell is going to happen after that.

Honestly, the idea of things going sideways is sort of exciting, as long as it doesn't go TOO sideways.

"Presenting Yu-huang Shang Ti!" one of the Goa'uld's Lo'tar's announces. If you HAD to take a guess as to who this one belonged to? It'd be BA'AL.

The tall, sort of well composed looking fellow sitting, smirking, at his throne, as he talks to another Goa'uld, the one dressed like an African Prince.
Yu begins circling the room, like a shark, preparing to strike. You follow 'dutifully.'

"Remember, Jerren," Yu speaks, using your COVER IDENTITY NAME instead of your real one, "Do not accept Gifts from Ba'al."

"For they have a habit of exploding," you echo back.

And also have a nasty tendency to explode in some UNIQUE WAYS, exploiting Gravity.

"The one he is talking to Olokun. He is still seething over a recent loss to my forces, no doubt. He may try to kill you out of spite." Yu glances at you, and says, no doubt entirely seriously, "Do not make me look foolish by allowing yourself to be murdered."

"Yes, my Lord," you spit out the line like the well trained actor you are.

You take stock of the rest of the room. There's a rather busty woman with red hair reclining in a throne- she looks like a witch.

"Morrigan, the Phantom Queen," you guess based off of the Tok'ra's inteligence reports. "She recently regained much of her territory after Apophis killed Heru'ur."

"Indeed she has," Yu muses. "Be wary of calling her 'queen' directly, however. There are rumors, after all."

Meaning a Goa'uld Queen. Interesting that Yu would share that kind of information to you. What's his game here?

"Savarog," Yu continues, drawing your attention to the man with a blue strike across his cheeks, bridging his nose. "They say to Beware the Quiet ones. This is true, as for him to be here stresses the importance of this meeting."

The Goa'uld in question glares at Ba'al as he makes some kind of remark at his expense.

Finally, you look at the remaining two Goa'uld, and muse over them. You deduce Kali as the one with the net veil over her mouth, and Bastet as the one with fake- wait, no, are those real cat ears on her head? And- you squint at the way her dress seems to shift in a nonexistent breeze- A hidden tail?

You guess SOMEONE commissioned a custom host from Nirrti at some point.

"Kali and Bastet," you begin, "where one goes, so goes the other. They've had an alliance since the days the Goa'uld left Earth."

"Even Sobek and Shak'ran have underestimated them," Yu muses. "You would be wise not to trust them, or their slaves specifically."

"Of course, it goes without saying to not trust the slaves of any of the others, My Lord?" You offer.

Yu hums in agreement, and with that, makes his way into the center of the room after circling.

"Well!" Ba'al begins with a jovial tone as he stands from his throne, "The Jade Emperor finally
graces us with his presence. And with another new Lo'tar, too? What's this one's name? Jared? No, wait, Jacen?"

"Ba'al," Yu greets, coldly.

"Really?" Ba'al's eyes literally light up with a flash of light. "You named him after me? I'm honored!"

"I will not dignify your joke with a response," Yu then moves to take his seat. You take up position behind him, and watch as Ba'al smirks.

"And yet, by telling me you wouldn't dignify me with a response you did so anyways," Ba'al remarks. "I still remain honored regardless!"

Yu grimaces, and you see Kali roll her eyes in annoyance.

Wow, and here you thought this guy only turned into a smart alec after countless run ins with O'neill. Turns out the guy was like that from the beginning.

"Where is Osiris?" Morrigan asks. "He was supposed to be here by now."

"I relieved word that there was a freak meteor shower blocking his path by hyperspace," Ba'al remarks, sounding cordial for a moment, but the way he eyes Morrigan's chest spoils the moment. "I suppose anyone would be distracted staring at such... massive, giant rocks, given the circumstances."

Wow. Did he really just-?

"Pig," Bastet casually remarks, her ears flattening in distaste as she and Kali take their seats.

"Cat," Ba'al counters, causally sitting down in his chair and crossing his legs oh so daintily.

...WOOOOOW. He SO DID.

Olokun coughs, clearing his throat before taking his seat, and saying, "That awkwardness aside... perhaps we should take the opportunity to discuss the possibility of Osiris representing the one who dares to attack us in such a cowardly manner?"

"Yes," Yu says, "let us discuss it. I suspect Anubis to be the perpetrator."

"That old dog?" Ba'al asks, raising an eyebrow. "Didn't you all kill him once, ages ago?"

"We believed so," Yu says, "however, in recent years he has been spotted in and about several of our territories, whether you've known it or not. A black shadow wreathed in a cloak?"

The room grows uncomfortable.

"That shadow is not rumor?" Svarog asks, preferring to stand at his servant's side.

"No," Yu says. "I believe him to ultimately be responsible for the demise of Cronus, Nirrti,
and Apophis."

...Woah. Okay. You're not going to correct him on the Nirrti or Cronus assumptions, but Apophis?

"What makes you say that?" Kali asks. "I'd heard Apophis was last seen engaging the Tok'ra and the Tau'ri."

"Recently, my men managed to severely damage one of the ships that has been attacking us indiscriminately, and uncovered a recording among the data files, seemingly prepared to be broadcast had the crew not abandoned ship," Yu says, bringing out a small round device that he pressed a button on it. CLICK- four little plates flipped open and it began projecting a video message.

A very. VERY. Familiar video message of Shadre beheading Apophis.

"...Well," Ba'al remarks, voice sounding just ever so slightly shocked. "I was going to make a remark about us not loosing our heads over paranoia, but... It seems in bad taste."

...You're not going to touch that one with a ten mile pole.

Osiris' Cargo Shuttle came on approach, and as it did such, the Goa'uld radioed to a certain other Goa'uld.

"Zipacna, I have arrived," Osiris pauses, then says, "begin the Attack on the Tok'ra. Bring Lord Anubis the Symbiote Poison, and your position will be secured."

Your name is Davis Strider...

"Well, there goes Osiris," Jacob Carter remarks as you all watch the other Cargo Ship fly towards the Station.

"What now," you ask.

"Now? we wait," Jacob answers.

...And you REALLY HATE WAITING.

"Sooo..." Argo muses. "Anyone got any threes?"

So does your alternate-timeline daughter and her friends, because they're playing GO FISH. (There were talks about playing some variation of Poker, but you thoroughly squashed that plan before it, or anything else for that matter, took off.)

"Nope," John says.

"Not me," Jade says.
"Damn it," Cassandra sighs.

"Let's hope this doesn't go sideways," you grumble. "We're in way over our heads here."

"Is it wrong that Semlak and I are both hoping something DOES go sideways for different reasons?" Jacob asks.

"...Maybe," you say. "Depends on the reasons."

"I think we have the best chance we have here to wipe out the Goa'uld System Lords," Jacob says. "They've been showing ZERO population growth for some reason lately, and this might be the chance we need to wipe them out."

"But...?" You press.

"Semlak thinks that, ironically, a united Goa'uld front might be what we need to disrupt Anubis' plans, whatever they are," Jacob says. "Even if, long term, it's bad news for the rest of us."

"Pragmatic," you say. "But honestly, I just want everyone to get out of this shit alive."

The alert came suddenly. Long Range Sensors picking up the sudden emergence of several Goa'uld Motherships emerging from Hyperspace at the edge of the solar system that the planet Revanna, home to the Tok'ra staging base, resided in.

The Stargate was held up by an incoming wormhole, and so the Tok'ra had a plan- grow new tunnels deeper underground, move the life support system beneath to those tunnels, and then seal off the exits, shut down all power systems in the old base, and and let it be found abandoned.

It was a simple strategy, and it might have worked if not for the sudden appearance of several AL'KESH BOMBERS emerging from hyperspace much closer to the planet, and beginning their bombing run so much sooner.

Needless to say, a lot of tunnels and ceilings were collapsed, and a lot of people got hurt in the cave ins.

A good 90% of the small number of Tok'ra on the base and all of SG-17 save for Kevin Elliot would die; and even then, Elliot would only survive due to the freak luck of being in the same room as the stasis chamber holding Lantash's symbiote when it broke by falling debris.

And so it was that Colonel O'neill, Teal'c, Mikari/Jolinar, and Kevin/Lantash would soon find themselves trapped, kept away from the Ring Room by its only access tunnel being buried in rubble and debris.

Chapter End Notes

Ba'al. STAHP. WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?!?!
Your name is Mikari Aiikho, and honestly, things could have gone better.

You're not entirely sure what happened after Colonel O'neill and Teal'c dragged in Lieutenant Kevin Elliot and then headed off to the surface with... with.... damn it all, you can't remember his name and Jolinar's drawing a blank too for the moment.

One of the Tok'ra! They went with one of the Tok'ra to the surface to find out what was going on with the bombing, and then...

Then you woke up, covered in dirt, to find Ren'al dead, and Kevin barely alive thanks to Lantash possessing him when the stasis container broke. It's taking all Lantash has to heal the Lieutenant, but since Jolinar is with you, you don't feel like you need to force either of them to be awake through this shit.

You vaguely remember just before the collapse that Ren'al said something about the only things of import being stored here at this base were the research facilities on the ZA'TARC TECHNOLOGY and...

And the Symbiote Poison formula! She'd wiped the computers after copying the intelligence onto a crystal and then she'd... she'd...

OH! She'd taken the only physical sample they had produced in its safety containment box and put it with the crystal in-

You search her body and find the crystal and the box hidden in a pouch.

Once those were secured, you picked up Kevin and began carrying him to the RING ROOM. You run into O'neill and Teal'c along the way, and learn that apparently the Tok'ra who had gone with them had gotten killed by Glider Fire on their way back into the base.

That's when another bombing run hits, and collapses the tunnel leading to the Ring Room, leaving you four trapped. Well, only trapped for as long as it took for you to send O'neill and Teal'c back to the lab to fetch some TUNNELING CRYSTALS.
And so, you wait with Kevin until they return.

"...He's sorry," Kevin mutters at one point while you wait. "That this is how things have gone."

"Who? Lantash?" you ask.

Kevin grunts an affirmative, and you feel Jolinar retreat onto herself just a little, before saying, "I'm sorry too. I should have come to speak with you sooner after we returned from the future."

"He says it's fine," Kevin says. "He understands why..."

_He does, huh?_ You muse, mentally nudging Jolinar a bit. _That's a good sign, isn't it?_

Jolinar doesn't reply to you, instead, she says aloud, "If it's any consolation, Lantash, I understand your position a lot better now than the other me did so long ago."

"He figured you might say that," Kevin laughs a little, before coughing.

"Hey," you say, "take it easy and just rest. We'll get you out of here soon."

And hey, speak of the heroes of the hour, O'neill and Teal'c arrive with the crystals AND a liberated Staff Weapon that Teal'c definitely did not have before.

"The enemy has infiltrated the base," Teal'c informs when you eye it. "They are searching for something."

"Either the Za'tarc or Poison research," Jolinar muses. "Let me see what Crystals you've got..."

You take a step back from your body's controls, and let Jolinar search through the bunch that Teal'c had collected to find a Crystal that will generate a long, wide corridor leading to another section of the base.

"Here we go," and with that, she/you slams the long rectangular crystal into a wall, and watch it grow.

"Nice," O'neill grins as you and he move to pick up Kevin off the floor.

"We should collapse the tunnel once we're through," you say.

"Yes," Jolinar echoes, "definitely a smart idea to do that."

O'neill eyes you oddly, then shakes his head and says, "Let's move out."

You head down the tunnel, and once safely about half way through, Teal'c shoots the archway at the entrance with his staff weapon, collapsing it.

There's no going back now.

You are ROSE LALONDE, and you watch from the shadows as the door to some personal room opens, and Osiris strolls out, heading down the hallways towards the main conference room.
You slip through the door before it closes, and look around.

It's as spartan as a room can get. Besides a small luggage case full of clothing next to a bed, it doesn't seem as if Osiris brought anything with him.

You begin looting through their stuff like the cat-burglar you are.

There's not much here, to be honest. What a let down! Nothing but clothes, clothes, more clothes, and-

Oh. Woah. What's this now?

It's a bottle of some kind, containing what looks like two separated liquids with a miniaturized Goa'uld forceshield being projected from the technological lid.

You get BAD VIBES from opening this thing, and you have a suspicion someone else does too.

"Hey, Cassie?" You grab at your radio. "What bad things happen if I don't steal this bottle I'm looking at and throw it out the nearest air-lock?"

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and you feel a sudden ripple of fate through your body as you hear that transmission come over the Radio.

"Bottle?" Jacob asks. "What bottle?"

You get up and head over to the pilot's chairs, your game of Go Fish abandoned.

"It's something Osiris smuggled in through their clothing," Rose reports over the radio. "It's... I don't know, two chemicals separated by a force field the lid is generating."

"What colors are they?" Jacob asks.

"One's red the other blue," Rose reports.

"Not Symbiote Poison, then," Selmak interjects, then swaps back to Jacob.

"More importantly," Jacob asks, "is there a timer counting down on it?"

A pause, and then, "Yeah," Rose reports. "It's counting down in Goa'uld. I'm guessing a time release on the force field?"

"Rose," you interject, "You definitely need to get rid of that thing. It's an explosive, and if that goes off the entire station is going up in flames."

"So..." You're once again Rose, and you figured that'd be the case. "Nearest air lock?"
"I'd try throwing it in a Cargo ship escape pod and launch that out past the shields," Cassie replies. "And soon. That thing is going off soon. I can feel it."

"At least it's not that symbiote poison the Tok'ra were planning on using," you say. "Is it weird that I'd be more concerned if Osiris had a vial of that rather than something explosive?"

"Yeah," Uncle Davis says. "Explosive when mixed chemicals are a whole lot more mundane than a poison gas. We caught a lucky break here."

"I'll go find the nearest cargo ship, then," you say, and then captchaologue the volatile bottle of explosives. Then you head towards the door... but of course, it doesn't open automatically because it can't sense you.

You look around for a button and... Ah- there it is. You press the button and the door opens automatically.

You brace yourself in case an alarm goes off, but thankfully, it seems none were rigged to that room's doors.

Meanwhile, you're now once again Karkat Vantas, watching as in strolls Osiris, looking like he owns the place.

None of the other Goa'uld look pleased.

"Welcome, Osiris. Take a seat," Kali orders.

Osiris does. "You all look less than pleased to see me," he observes.

"We have several questions of you, Osiris, before we can begin any pleasantries," Ba'al says, leaning forwards. "After all, you have been... absent, for quite some time."

"Ask away," Osiris says, smiling confidently.

"You came here after filing a request to be the representative of another," Kali says. "We must know who."

"I was prepared to tell you, that name is Anubis," Osiris says, frowning as the tension in the room ratchets upwards. "Although, judging by how you react, I assume you knew that already."

"Why does Anubis send you?" Bastet asks.

"He petitions to rejoin the council of the System Lords," Osiris answers.

"Is Anubis the one behind the random, cowardly attacks on us," Olokun asks, "and if so, why, if he seeks to rejoin our ranks?"

"A mere showing tease of Anubis' regained power," Osiris says. "Nothing more, nothing less."
He holds no grudge, and simply wishes to demonstrate the might he has, as a means of showing his true strength, so that you might more seriously consider his offer."

What bullshit. Nobody buys it, not after the discussion of the LOSSES FELT that just happened. So many lost Motherships, and such fiercely, cowardly ways of destroying or otherwise capturing resources. It's clear Anubis is playing for keeps.

"Did Anubis have anything to do with the death of Apophis?" Yu asks.

Osiris pauses- and you see, for a moment, his eyes widening in shock. "I... I have no idea what you mean," he says, clearly not expecting that question. "After all, did not that strange Tau'ri girl with the clown makeup end up being the one who beheaded him?"

You could hear a pin drop on the floor with how quiet it got.

Literally, you heard someone drop something small and metal on the floor. You glance around and see Ba'al's Lo'tar is picking up a writing implement from the floor.

"...We said nothing of how Apophis died," Yu observes. "However, the fact that you were so specific in details..." And then he reveals the hologram projector and replays that brutal moment again. "Tells me you've seen this video before."

Osiris stares at the video, and then blinks, clearly not expecting this turn of events. "...That bastard set me up."

He finally tries to play it off, getting from his throne, hands raising in a defensive way.

"No," Yu says, rising to his feet. "I think not."

Osiris opens his mouth to say something more when there's a sudden beeping from a device in Osiris' pocket. "Excuse me for just one moment! I need to check that," He says, to which nobody complains as he removes a small monitoring device that continues to beep. "...My room's security has been breached." He then glares at the rest of the Goa'uld. "You sent a spy into my room!"

"So what if we did?" Ba'al asks. "If you were honestly here with no ulterior motives, we would find nothing."

Osiris continues to seem enraged, and goes to say- "But-!"

"But the fact of the matter is, we did not, and I find the timing of this 'interruption' to be suspicious," Ba'al continues. "So serendipitous for it to happen after we start questioning you. Why, it seems to me like you pre-arranged for some kind of emergency alarm to go off. But if you insist on accusing us of searching your room, perhaps we should do so?"

"No! You shouldn't! I mean- Can't! WON'T! You! WHY YOU INSOLENT WHELPS!"

Osiris yells. "Why, I should- Should--!"

"All in favor of searching Osiris' room for contraband?" Kali asks.

"...Damn it all!" Osiris then jabs their thumb onto the small device he'd pulled out of his pocket. It beeps loudly, and then-
Away the bastard vanishes in a flurry of red particles and a bastardized Ring Transport.

"The coward flees!" Morgiann yells. "But how!?"

"How indeed," Yu growls, "but I am more concerned with the other reasons behind Osiris's sudden desire to depart."

"What?" Olokun asks, "Do you think Osiris smuggled in a weapon somehow?"

"I-" Whatever Yu was going to say is cut off as a loud KABOOM echoes in from far outside. The entire station shakes and trembles, ever so slightly.

"I do believe we've received the answer to our question!" Bastet yells, enraged. "An attack! But is it a bomb or an enemy ship??"

You're kind of curious and concerned yourself as to what that could have been.

With a sudden perspective flip and a jump a few moments into the past, you're suddenly back to being Rose Lalonde as you sneak onto the Cargo Ship Osiris came in on.

You're just about ready to pry open an Escape Pod when a loud PVVVVMMMM-VARROOOOOSH~ heralds the arrival of someone teleporting in inside the ring room.

Thankfully, you're still invisible, and so you get a front row seat to see Osiris storming out and heading towards the controls in a mighty hurry.

"Damn those fools! I'll have to destroy them the moment I'm out of range!" he yells.

...Well, that doesn't bode well for the explosive thing in your hands.

You quickly run into the Ring Room, drop the damned bomb on the floor and Radio, "Argo! Get in the ring room and stand still!"

Before you get a reply, you drop your invisible phase shifted mode, shift to cat form, and prepare to leap across space by tugging at the line connecting you to Argo.

Your radio buzzes, and as Argo starts to reply "I'm ready!" you JUMP at "I'm," zipping across the distances between Cargo Ships and watching a force field, and then the stars blur past you in a wooosh of motion.

A second later, you're crashing into Argo as she yells out a "Reaagh!!" and tumbling to the floor as a tangle of cat tails and human limbs.
You are now DAVIS STRIDER, and upon hearing a loud thwump from the Ring Room, you assume Rose has arrived safely.

"A Cargo Ship just departed the station and is heading out of the shields!" Jacob begins.

"Don't do anything," Cassie warns.

"What? Why?" Jacob asks. "Osiris is probably leaving right now and-!"

And then the fucking Cargo Ship explodes, transforming into a burning fireball that crashes against the force shields of the Space Station, making the shields flicker and flare as the thing tilts backwards from the force of the explosion ever so slightly.

"...Was Osiris on that ship?" You ask.

"Hell Nyah he was!" Rose laughs as she and Argo stumble in from the Ring Room. "Bastard showed up just before I could leave the bomb in an escape pod, sounding like he was gonna blow it up the moment he got clear of the shields, so I dumped it an' ran!"

"Nice April Fools' day prank, Rose," John grins, "that's a huge burst to your pranksters gambit, I'd say!"

"Yeah!" Jade nods. "Nice timing all around, I'd say!"

"So now what?" Argo asks.

"Now... I guess we wait for the Summit to end, and Yu to rendezvous with us so we can get Major Vantas back," Jacob says.

"And then we head back home and tell everyone about how the idiot blew himself up," you add.

"There's that too," Jacob nods.

Your name is TEAL'C and just as you're wondering what to do next, Colonel O'neill says, "Okay, so, we're not being followed right now, and I guess this is as good of a time as any to talk strategy."

"Indeed," you say.

"So, I figure we're about three miles from the Gate," Colonel O'neill says. "How are we getting off planet if they've got the area around it locked down with landing ships?"

"Ideally, I'd say we wait for Selmak and the others to return and get off world with the Cargo Ship, but I know that unless we get to the surface first they're not going to risk landing," Jolinar, through Mikari, says. "In cases of emergency like this, transponder beacons around the planet's surface will signal to any ships that we're all probably dead."

"They've got Cassie, though," Colonel O'neill says. "She'd figure we're alive, right?"

"Maybe," Jolinar says, "but if they don't show up, we might have to use the Symbiote Poison."
"We have some of that?" O'neill asks.

"Yes," Jolinar nods. "But for obvious reasons of three fourths of us here having symbiotes, there's a slim chance of us using it properly against the enemies without being killed first."

"She is correct," you say. "Unless we encounter a stroke of luck, there is little chance for us to deliver the weapon without getting ourselves killed either by the enemy Jaffa, or by succumbing to the weapon's effects."

Which would not be pleasant for you, let alone for Mikari/Jolinar and Lieutenant Elliot/Lantash.

"So, that's plan Z?" Colonel O'neill offers.

"Yeah," Jolinar, no, Mikari, you'd guess, nods. "Unless we get some other means of using it... but yeah. Plan Z."

"Lovely." Colonel O'neill says. "So, transponder beacons? Where's the nearest one?"

"...About five miles from the Gate on the surface in that direction," Jolinar nods in a vague direction.

"Can you reprogram it?" Colonel O'neill asks.

"Hell yes we can," Mikari answers, grinning, and then says, "Teal'c, grab the diamond crystal. We're surfacing, I guess."

You say nothing as you fish out a BLUE DIAMOND SHAPED CRYSTAL and jab it into a wall.

Like magic, the walls melts away and upwards, forming a ramp.

"Nice," Colonel O'neill says, shifting the weight of Lieutenant Elliot between him and Mikari a bit more. "As cliche as this is, let's head to the light at the end of the tunnel."

It took a bit of time, but shortly, Yu and you (Karkat Vantas, that is) depart from the hastily ended Summit with an agreement of "Fuck Anubis (Platonically)" and rendezvous with the Cargo Ship that your friends are in.

"While I have no idea how you managed it," Yu says as he slows the Cargo Ship to a halt, "tell your General Hammond that at least one System Lord appreciated your team's efforts to prevent calamity from happening. In time, I will contact you again."

"I'll make sure that message gets through," you say, preparing to stand and head to the Ring Room.

Yu's gaze turns upon you, and you don't do that, though.

"I have my suspicions about Nirrti," he says. "That it was really the Tau'ri who were involved with her disappearance... and of the fact that the Nirrti who championed your acceptance into this bizarre treaty might not have really been the real Nirrti."
"However," Yu says, "fake or not, and for whatever reasons you may have had for... removing her presence... that woman had a point about the promise of Alliance in the proper situations. I will continue to uphold the treaty, for now, for as long as it benefits me to do so. Do let your Tok'ra friend in the other shuttle know that I will be... lenient against any of their operatives I find within my ranks for the time being as well. Anubis is a threat to all of us, after all."

"...Alright then," you say.

"Now go," Yu dismisses you. "Your presence is tolerable, but your tea pouring skills leave much to be desired."

And with that, you hurry over to the Ring Platform, and transport over.

As soon as you're able, you settle down into a chair, and say, "Let's get back to Revanna. I've got such a headache you would not BELIEVE."

"Setting course for Revanna," Jacob says, "estimated time to arrival, six hours."

"Better strap in for another rousing game of go fish, everyone," Strider remarks.

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**EARTH DATE: SEPTEMBER 28TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/2/0002.**

You are now Jolinar of the future, and as your wrist watch ticks over to a new day on Earth, it's still the same one on Revanna, and you (Well, Mikari is in control at the moment) are fetching water from a stream to give to Lantash/Elliot.

Mikari looks up at the sky and see no signs of gliders or bombers, which you think is a good-ish sign. It should mean you'll all be undetected as you march towards the relay to reprogram it.

Mikari heads back up the hill and kneels down to give the canteen of water to the injured SG-Team member. While Mikari talks to him, you glance through her eyes over at O'neill and Teal'c, who are building a stretcher out of fallen branches to carry Lieutenant Elliot on.

You wonder... will it be enough? You take direct control of the mouth, and ask, "Lantash, how are you faring with the repairs?"

Elliot closes his eyes for a moment, likely asking the Symbiote within for answers to his own health. Lantash has been so very, very silent all this time, conserving his strength by otherwise dedicating all of it towards healing the boy. Finally, he speaks, "We're not going to muh... make it unless we get off world in the next duh... day. We need pruh... proper medical attention, Lantash isn't enough."
"Damn it, I was afraid of that," you grumble. "I wish I'd thought to bring a healing device."

"Yuh..." Elliot mutters, likely quoting Lantash as directly as he could. "You cuh... couldn't have known, Ju-Jolinar." He looks like he's going to say more, but,

"Ssh," Mikari takes over, "I'll make sure she gets the sentiment, okay?"

Elliot nods, and you feel so bad for asking that of him.

"How far until we get to the beacon?" O'neill asks.

"Another two miles," you say. "It shouldn't take us too long if we can make a faster pace with that stretcher."

"Right," O'neill says, nodding. "Speaking of, let's see if we can get him moving."

The stretcher holds up to weight, and so Colonel O'neill and Teal'c carry Lantash/Elliot while you lead the way to the transmitter.

It's a hike through the forest, but what did you expect. You look at Lantash/Elliot, and can't help but think about how this whole situation turned out. It's horrible timing, all around, really.

You've longed for this reunion, and dreamed and hoped and...

And it's all gone so very wrong. The best laid plans, and all that.

You'd hoped that... that when you'd settled in a new host in the past that wasn't Argo, that you and Lantash would be able to reunite. Selfishly, yes, but... You'd hoped to get a chance that you'd passed up so many times in the past.

You know now what Lantash went through when you went on that mission that he thought you died on. The not knowing, the worrying... How stubborn were you back then? So stubborn, not to see it. The hurt you'd caused.

It is definitely selfish of you to want to hope and pray that if Lieutenant Elliot survives and makes it as Lantash's long term host, he and Mikari find some kind of relationship with each other. You know the Alternians aren't opposed to sharing people in different quadrants, but there's the whole weirdness factor that is the triple inter-species thing that would be going on.

Urgh, honestly, you're sort of glad you've decided to not be as open with your thoughts with Mikari as you once were with Sam. You're all sorts of embarrassed just admitting these things to yourself and you'll probably just... keep things bottled up inside for now and hope that things change regarding your host situations.

Soon enough, you reach the transmitter, and begin reprogramming it to send out a different signal. A simple Earth Military SOS, "There are survivors!"

That job finishes way too quickly for your liking, however, and so you're all stuck waiting to see if Selmak's team or the Goa'uld find you first.

"Now we wait," O'neill says.
Damn it all. You don't want to be alone with your thoughts.

'What's that about not being alone?' Mikari asks.

Nothing, you tell her, trying desperately not to think about-

'It's Lantash, right? You're worried about him,' and she picks up on it anyways.

You sigh, with Mikari letting you do it physically for the sheer stress relief the action brings.

Yes, you admit, you are worried. Very worried. You're worried that any chances at righting the wrongs you've done to Lantash will just evaporate or worse given the way today has been progressing.

'Don't worry,' she says to you. 'We've survived worse than this. I was dying when we met, remember?'

Yes, you do remember that rather vividly. But... a cheap poison is nothing compared to devastating internal injuries caused by a cave in.

Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and at some point during your return trip, you got a VERY BAD FEELING, and told Jacob to push the Hyperdrives faster.

And so he did, even making sure to cloak the Cargo ship after exiting hyperspace just to be on the safe side... which was fortunate, given the large GOA'ULD FLEET in orbit over Revanna.

"I don't think they detected us..." Jacob frowns, checking an instrument. "Most of the alert beacons on the surface are broadcasting the 'go away, no survivors' message."

"Most?" Strider asks.

"The others are either offline or..." Jacob pauses, then laughs. "Earth Military SOS. That'll be Jack."

"And others," Vantas says.

"John," you say, looking towards him, "when we enter the atmosphere, can you do some windy thing to try and obscure our heat signature??"

"Sure," John says. "I'll do my best, not sure it'll work at obscuring us, though. They might just notice the irregularities in the air flow and go investigate anyways."

"It's a chance we'll have to take. Jade," you continue, moving to look at her, "if we do get detected, could you do some trajectory changing on anybody following us?"

"Yeah," Jade nods. "I can manage that."

"What about the rest of us?" Rose asks.

"Strap in tight and pray for a soft landing?" You offer her a smile.
"Ye of little faith," Jacob scoffs. "I'm a great pilot."

"Well, just in case," you glance back at Jade and John, "think you two can smooth out the landing if we get hit and start crashing?"

...And yet, despite your precautions, they still detect your ship entering the atmosphere, and one of the two pursuing Death Gliders still manage to get a lucky hit in on one of the back engines before Jade can smash them into pieces.

And so you crash, taking out a lot of trees as you go.

It's smoother than it would have been if you didn't have Jade and John's powers to try and make things work better... but it's still rougher than you'd have hoped, and almost everyone not sitting down gets thrown around.

"We really need to work on our re-entries and crash landings," John grumbles, picking himself off the floor before helping Jade to her feet.

"Yeah... definitely," Jade nods. "That was not fun."

"I really need to install seat belts on the next one of these I fly," Jacob remarks, getting up from the floor after he'd been knocked out of his chair in the final stop.

"Yeah," Strider gripes, "who designed these things without seat belts anyways?"

"I guess the kind of people who prefer not to crash in the first place?" You ask.

"They have 'em on Alternia," Vantas points out. "...Usually, anyways."

You're now Colonel Jack O'neill, and you just watched a Cargo Ship crash into the nearby forest.

You and Teal'c head to investigate, and soon run into Jacob's team as they head out of the thing.

"Well, that was a flashy entrance!" you quipp. "I take it our ride got a flat tire?"

"Yeah," Strider gripes. "Something like that."

The lot of you then head back to Mikari and Lt. Elliot to discuss plans.

"This area is going to be swarmed with Jaffa soon," Selmak warns. "Whatever we need to do, we need to do it fast."

"If the ship is out of commission, that leaves us with the Symbiote Poison," Mikari and/or Jolinar says. "How do we deliver it to the Stargate so we can get the Jaffa clear of it?"

"I could warp the poison thingy, whatever it is, to the Gate?" Rose volunteers. "But, wait, no, I don't even know where the Gate is."
"That way a few miles," you point in the direction of the Gate.

"...I don't have any strings going that way," Rose shakes her head.

"Hey," Jade speaks up, "what if I just... throw it at the Gate? Rev it up to speed and launch it?"

"That's an idea," Cassie says, "but I don't think from ground level would work that well. If you get the ballistic arc wrong, it could crash into a tree too close and we'd all get caught up in the backwind."

"I can carry Jade, if John can give me an undercurrent to get us into the air?" Argo suggests, flaring her wings up.

"That might work the best," Cassie nods. "Let's give it a try."

And so that's what's done as quickly as possible.

Mikari gives Jade the vial of poison, releasing it from its case, and Jade lets Argo wrap her arms around her. Then, Argo spreads her wings, and John summons a massive burst of wind that launches the two girls high up into the air.

You swear, you hear Jade shriek in surprise, and Argo in glee, even as a few stray neon orange feathers drift down to the ground.

Up- Up- Up! They go high enough to get over the tree tops for just long enough for Jade to rev up the poison bottle to speed, trigger its containment breach, and launch it straight at the Stargate.

And then John gives a slower gust of breeze to slow the two girls' descent back towards the ground.

"I'll keep a bubble of fresh air around us while that goes off," John says. "We should get moving to the Gate in the mean time."

"Smart idea," Jacob says. "Keep the poison away from us while we head straight into the heart of it. The Goa'uld won't know what hit them if they try chasing us."

"How long will it take for that poison to take effect?" Strider asks.

"It's already doing its work," Cassie says. "It feels like our odds of survival are already rising by the second."

"Good," you say. "Let's get packed up and moving towards the Gate."

And with that, everyone gets moving.

It's a long hike back to the Gate, but with John providing a handy dandy oxygen filter, it's one that that is otherwise uneventful beyond the occasional Death Glider falling out of the sky.

You can only wonder what the Goa'uld in charge of all of this must be thinking.
Meanwhile, in orbit high above the planet, the Goa'uld Zipacna could only watch in dismay as his first official mission seemed to belly flop into dissaray as all communication from the surface stops.

"...They dared to use the poison to clear access to the Gate," he muses, frowning. "Damn it all. I am definitely not going to get this job."

And then a Jaffa at the helm of the ship announces, "Lord Zipacna! A message from Lord Anubis!"

...Damn it all!! He was so dead!

"Very well," Zipacna says. "Put him through."

And then a hologram appears before the man, appearing in the form of the encloaked shadow, ANUBIS.

"ZIPACNA, HOW GOES THE OPERATION TO SECURE THE TOK'RA POISON?" He asks.

"Ongoing, my lord," Zipacna replies with all the professional courtesy of a job interviewee who's about to start bullshitting a disaster into a potential victory. "It seems the Tok'ra may have just attempted to use it on my forces. If that is the case, atmospheric sensors and life support on the various ships landed on the surface may have gotten a read on the poison's chemical makeup. Even if we cannot find the original formula composition on the Tok'ra base, we may yet still win the day by reverse engineering it."

Oh, oh by what ever real gods may exist out there, Zipacna prayed, may that actually be the case that they could do it, because otherwise he was SO DEAD.

"I SEE," Anubis muses. "VERY WELL. EVEN IF YOU FAIL AT RETRIEVING THE POISON THROUGH SUCH A MANNER, IT DOES NOT MATTER."

Wait what?

"...Excuse me, my Lord?" Zipacna asks.

"OSIRIS FAILED IN HIS MISSION TO ELIMINATE THE SYSTEM LORD COUNCIL," Anubis reports. "THE IDIOT SOMEHOW MANAGED TO BLOW HIMSELF UP WITH HIS OWN WEAPON. HOW, I DO NOT KNOW, BUT IT IS A FAILURE I WOULD NOT TOLERATE EVEN IF IT DID NOT RESULT IN HIS DEMISE." There is a pause, and then Anubis says, "THE POTENTIAL JOB OPENING YOU WERE APPLYING FOR HAS THUS BECOME A SECURED JOB BY WAY OF YOUR RECRUITER PERISHING IN ACTION AND I, CONSEQUENTLY, NOW REQUIRING AN AGENT TO ACT IN HIS STEAD."

That's...

"That's... good news for me, I suppose," Zipacna says. "I am sorry to hear about Osiris, though. I heard he was a fierce negotiator. His loss in the field of the battle of words will be keenly felt."
"THAT IS EXACTLY WHY YOU SHOULD NOT FEEL 'SORRY.'" Anubis says. "I SENT A SILVER TONGUED DIPLOMAT TO EXECUTE AN ASSASSINATION, AND THIS WAS AN OUTCOME THAT, WHILE UNFORTUNATELY TIMED, WAS NOT ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED."

"I... I see," Zipacna nods, fearing for his own survivability if he were to say anything against that... or not at all considering that it seems Osiris was sent on a mission he was ill-suited for.

"CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR... PROMOTION, GENERAL ZIPACNA," Anubis says, and then vanishes from view.

Zipacna settles down into his throne and exhales in relief.

Somehow, beyond all reason...

He still got the job.

He could only hope that his next mission didn't end up involving poisons of any kind.

Chapter End Notes

Osiris excels at being a diplomat in canon, supposedly... but that wasn't his job here, and he made a stupid move in a panic.

In other news: Lantash Lives!!!
ALT:05X13: Shedding Skin

Chapter Summary

In which everyone takes a couple nights off from saving the world/galaxy/universe.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes


DIASPORA DATE: 4/15/0002.

Your name is Joey Claire, and somehow, your hive's front room has become home to a game of poker, or rather, the Alternian equivalent of poker. As expected it's basically poker except featuring dares with an alternative for stripping as an option if you don't want to do the dare you pulled, making it something more like some more quirky versions of strip poker from Earth that you're DEFINITELY NOT AWARE OF because you were BASICALLY FOURTEEN when you came to Alternian and thus should never even be aware of the concept of Strip Poker at that age.

(Also, let's be honest here for a second, you were totally just being super sarcastic to yourself for the fun of it just now because A: The Internet is a THING. And B: Your recurring baby sitter was ROXY LALONDE arguably the best baby sitter in the world given some of the things she let you watch on TV. Also, any future denials of this knowledge are you just poking fun at the concept because you turned EIGHTEEN this year! All bets are off!!)

As for the reason why? 'Team Building' Okurii had officially demanded, but unofficially had said "We all need a solid night off to blow off some steam after the last few months!" Also, as a bit of SENSIBLE PRECAUTION since the GRUBS are going to be MOLTING soon, and she wants the two best teams in her roster on Diaspora in case shit goes wrong.

And really, you're not going to complain. You insisted on making the dares pretty tame by Alternian standards, which instead are pretty risky by Earth Standards... you'd assume. Because you're not sure what actually goes on in a normal dare version of Earth Strip Poker.

So who all's here, and who's teamed up with whom?

Well, starting with who's in the lead here, that'd be YOU and MIERFA, who have somehow managed to get all the REALLY REALLY TAME DARES (Even by Earth Standards!) and haven't had any reason to decline them in favor of loosing clothes.

After you is Okurii and Salazl. Okurii looks like she's finally been able to let go of the mantle of leadership for the first time in... well, a long time. You kind of mean that sort of literally. She started relaxing the moment she had to take her jacket off or else answer an embarrassing dare card's question. Salazl... well, he just keeps remarking on everyone's luck when they get bad cards, and otherwise seems to eye you and Mierfa when you happen to keep getting winning hands.
Following them you've got Damnek and Mallek, who are currently arguing over whether Damneks Glasses count as a removable item or not given Tyzias' earlier refusal to forfeit hers, and if Mallek's decorative horn piercings should similarly count as removable or not.

Speaking of Tyzias, her and Callie are next in the rankings. Oh so very recently Tyzias had passionately argued against her glasses as a removable item due to the very reasonable fact that she NEEDS THEM TO SEE. You also saw Callie furiously scribbling down a transcript of it for some reason. No doubt she's planning on incorporating it into some kind of FANFIC-IFICATION of tonight's events.

Oh, and wasn't that a turn of events thanks to the dare cards- way earlier in the night Callie drew the one that forced her to admit some terrible punishingly embarrassing secret that gnawed at her the most.

...Really, the fact that Callie's the one who's been writing most of the only decent "FANFIC" of the Rebellion was a relief. You've read quite a bit of it (Mostly out of a dread curiosity to see what was gotten right or not) and was worried about the potential security breach if it were written by some psychics who weren't even on base! You honestly told Callie that you hoped some day once all of this fighting is over that she'll just repurpose it into actual HISTORICAL NOVELIZATIONS because really, it's that good compared to some of the other stuff written by, say, someone like that notorious FIC PIRATE "REMELE NAMAAQ"- which you sincerely doubt is her real name because who would be stupid enough to steal other people's fics and then post it under their real name?

...Of course, it's entirely plausible that's what the hell she's doing- refuge in audacity and what not.

Ah, but you're getting off track here. Next up is Xefros and, unsurprisingly, Baizli. She's been hanging around a lot anymore after Trizza lost her leg, which is still mysteriously refusing to grow back at a proper rate even despite the fact that her regeneration powers are still working at full power with any other injuries she might try to self inflict in an attempt to get her leg to fully form again. You really wonder what's going on with that. That they've lost as much clothing as they have tells you they're mostly aiming to lose intentionally, and actually failing at that JUST A BIT.

Because, in last place, but not out just yet, is Daraya and Polypa. Polypa's rolled with it and is basically flaunting the flame tattoos you'd given her, while Daraya's curled up just a bit into a ball and is trying her best not to be noticed.

They've had some really shitty hands tonight, and a LOT MORE really shitty dare cards.

"Alright! Fine!" Damnek relents, and takes one for his team. "I'll lose the shades!"

As he removes the danged shades spectacles, through one of your ARAI SENTRIES you notice someone approaching your hive at a run down the road from Diaspora.

...Huh, it's SKYLLA and- oh, she's not alone. Just a bit behind her is KANAYA. They seem in a hurry.

"Hey, guys," you begin, "we might have to cut tonight's festivities short."

"Oh thank you," Daraya heaves a sigh of relief.

"Huh?" Mallek asks, "Why's that?"
"Kanaya and Skylla are running up the road pretty quickly," you answer. "I think we're about to get conscripted in Grub Watch Duty."

Quickly, everyone starts gathering up their discarded clothes, where applicable. Naturally, Dammek just slams his shades back down on his face first and foremost as the most important item to replace.

Your name is Daraya Jonjet, and sure enough, that's exactly what's happening, as Skylla tells you that the Grubs have started cocooning themselves for transformation.

And so while the rest of your teammates are conscripted to provide GUARD DUTY incase things go to hell in some unforeseeable way, you're conscripted by Lynera Skalbi along with your fellow JADE BLOODS who went to work with the Rebellion's Stargate Division to tend to them incase something goes wrong INSIDE the gestation cavern.

And so as you ditch your clothes once more tonight, this time to replace them with the formal outfit of the GRUB TENDERS, you reflect on the role you and your friends have mostly abandoned until now.

Normally, by this point in traditional Alternian grub raising, a Lusus would have taken these Grubs in to raise. Since your clan all came from the Desert, and its less than average raising habbits, something different happens here.

The Jade Blooded Matrons would raise the grubs up until a day like today- pupation, molting of the grub form- occurred. Sure, over time, some Trolls might adopt a grub early and become their caretaker before that time, but generally, up until a day like today, most Grubs stayed with the Jade Matrons in the cavern.

After today, though, they would be properly be introduced to the clan as a whole, given their signs, and then adopted out to the families.

"Wanshi, what's the status?" You hear Bronya asking as you head into the main cocooning chamber.

"Looks like the sea-swellers got a head start already," Wanshi answers, "cheeky little buggers! They're taking up all the real-estate next to the water pools!"

"The Royals?" Bronya asks, pressing further, trying to pry a silly gold blood off of a branched rafter before he starts spinning his cocoon in a place that wouldn't be conductive to his growth.

"Feferi's already starting to spin her cocoon," Wanshi answers, "Serana and Lyddya are fighting over who gets to be on her right side."

"Seriously?" you her Lynera sigh. "Put Serana on the Left, Lyddya on the right."

You notice that Sumara Minami, your one other Jade Blooded friend who joined you, Bronya, and Wanshi in joining the Alternian Rebellion, is absent. You wonder what's up with that? You didn't think she'd be absent given the expected nature of today's activities. Infact, she'd been positively excited for it the last time you talked with her.
Oh well, doesn't matter right now.

"Welcome to the party, Daraya," and then a familiar face greets you, but not usually from this line of work.

Male Jade Bloods, rare as they tend to be traditionally on Alternia, are a bit more common among your clan. Usually, they're the ones who guard the caverns like your team mates are, but there are some who do take to the nurturing role full time. Other times, such as when dealing with the first major molt on a new, alien world, they're conscripted to work this same tireless job when it seems there aren't enough hands on deck. Not always, mind you. Some boys and girls of the Jade walk of life don't find either job appealing. But if you're under-staffed even with the Guard's help, and if Sumara is missing...

Well, that honestly explains the presence of the likes of LANQUE BOMBYX, a troll whose passion for fashion is only surpassed by his constant researching into the nature of RAINBOW DRINKER-ISM. He's the guy who greeted you just now. He's not much of a fighter, more of a lover, for as long as you've known him.

"Lanque," you smile at him. "How's the Immortality thing working for you?"

"Oh, you know," he laughs, "the usual. Lack of solid understanding of WHAT exactly triggers the Glow in Jades. Lots of theory crafting from idiots who don't know what they're talking about. Honestly, I could use the break! My eyes were starting to strain from staring at all those ancient textbooks."

And then Wanshi yelps from over at the water bins- "Serana bit me!!"

"Oh for-" Lynera groans. "Daraya! Go help Wanshi settle that royal brat, would you?"

"On it!" And with that, you give an appologetic smile to Lanque, and hurry over to help Wanshi pry a bitey fushia blooded grub off of her arm.

Sometimes, you used to wonder if the Alternian Lusus System had its perks and merits...

And honestly? Foistering the Grubs off onto Lusus before they molt? GREAT IDEA. You wanna punch whoever decided it was a great idea to make you all raise the grubs through this molting all at the same time. UGH.

You swear, if the other options weren't people sulking over getting a lack of proper affection growing up, or killing the grubs for not passing a trial, you'd be pushing for Diaspora to take on more of that 'adopt while they're grubs before molting' style of raising...

But then again, you don't usually have to put up with this shit anymore either, now do you, little miss runaway?

"So.... Diaspora?" Wanshi asked. "We're calling it Diaspora?"

"Mmmh!" Sumara nods. "That's the name and we're sticking to it!"
"What a weird name..." Wanshi remarks, squinting out at the horizon. "It doesn't look like it's disappearing to me."

Your name is Daraya Jonjet, and you and your friends are sitting out in a small field near the cavern that all the grubs had been moved to.

Diaspora is such a huge, pretty place, that you can't help but stare at all the green. And there's a lot of it.

"Heh," Bronya laughs, "I'd never thought I'd ever see so much green outside of our blood color in my entire life."

"Living in a desert'll do that, I guess," You remark.

"Yeah," Bronya agrees, and for a few moments, you all continue to sit there in silence.

"Hey, gals," Sumara begins after about half a minute. "What do you think about if we... joined the Rebellion?"

"Why?" Bronya asks. "Don't we have a job to do tending to the grubs?"

"Well, sure, if they absolutely need us," Sumara says, "but... outside of moving the grubs through the Gate? When's the last time any of us were really Needed in the Cavern to take care of anybody?"

"The Last Molting cycle?" Wanshi offers, shuddering. "Ugh. So many bitey grubs! I really hope this batch doesn't have any in them."

"Exactly," Sumara says, nodding. "I mean, I'm up for helping grubs if we're needed! But... other than that what are we going to be doing for the rest of our lives?" She gets to her feet and starts walking towards the direction the sun is... Rising? Setting? You can't tell. This planet is just so NEW to you!

"Well, I guess..." Bronya frowns. "I dunno. I could be a teaaaaachhherr...." She trails off mid word. "Or maybe I could... uh... chapperone??" Her face goes comically pale, and she laments, "I have no idea what the hell I'd do with my life outside of the Caverns. I'm mostly just sitting around idling and waiting for someone to need me to do something."

"It is pretty boring, isn't it?" Wanshi asks. "Even the Male Jades have it pretty boring too. I mean, outside of Lanque, I can't think of any of them who do anything but guard the caverns from desert walkers."

"Yeah," you agree, thinking for a moment. What do you want to do with your life? "Even changing from a desert to a paradise... it's still going to be really boring here, isn't it?"

"That's why I say we go join the Rebellion!" Sumara turns around and grins at the three of you. "Let's go chase down some distant horizons and make our mark on history! Maybe we'll beat up some bad guys! Maybe we'll save some lives! Maybe..." she laughs. "Maybe we'll even meet people we can fall in love with who aren't from the Caverns?"

"Yeah!" Wanshi cheers, throwing her hands into the air. "Let's do it!"

"I suppose..." Bronya muses, "I wonder what it'd be like to lead a team? I've never lead anyone
before. It might be really fun!"

"Yeah, Then, you say, "I wanna blow something up. I wanna sing about it. I wanna--" You pause as you take in the wide eyed grins and promising smiles of your friends, and then say, "I want to Do Something."

And you did. Oh hell did you go out there and DO SOMETHING.

One of your first missions out was to a planet with Mallek and Polypa and... And Teal Commander. The Replicators, good grief, how many Sweeps was that now? Just one? It's definitely been two Earth years... maybe slightly more?

With everything you've done, it doesn't feel real somehow, because, here you are, back in the Caverns again, helping with the Grubs.

Wanshi and Bronya are here, Lynera is here, Lanque is here, and hell, even Kanaya is here helping out where she can (Mostly by ferrying around drinks to the trolls who need them).

But Sumara's not.

Where the hell is she?

**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 12TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/16/0002.**

Your name is Okurii Leijon, and despite a hectic night of standing by to do whatever's needed, be it helping guard the room where the grubs are pupating, or fetching drinks or food for those helping with the grubs...

You are at peace.

It's a different kind of busy than you've somehow gotten used to. Instead of being the person bossing everyone around, you've just basically... done as your told today. It brings you back to the days when you first joined Trizza's crew of treasure hunters, and then crashed, and went out into a desert and found a hidden tribe of Trolls.

It takes you back to when it was just a bunch of you in a crashed ship making decisions as a group and not as a strict military organization. Fate of the Galaxy in your hands? Hah, sure, maybe in your wildest dreams. But... somehow...

Somehow it's happened.

You're not sure you were ever really made for this kind of stress, but you've adapted somehow.

Like the grub you once were, and these grubs now changing their own bodies within their tightly wrapped cocoons, you've changed under the pressure and emerged as someone different- still Okurii
Leijon, but still different from the Okurii you once were.

For the moment, you're resting and relaxing at a small cafe, sipping at a cup of coffee. You managed to get a few hours of sleep after things calmed down, but your habit of RISING EARLY to deal with all sorts of INTER GALACTIC BUSINESS got you up on time even though your VACATION TIME is still scheduled for another two days.

You've needed a break, and right now, only a disaster of APOCALYPTIC PROPORTIONS can get you to go back to Alternia a MINUTE early.

"Sooo..." And then Xefros sits down across from you. "You seem relaxed?"

You smile at him. "I could say the same for you, given last night's festivities."

"Party's not over 'til those wrigglers stop wriggling," Xefros wisely counters.

"Fair enough," you concede as he signals for a waiter so he can order his own drink. Once he's done so, you ask, "So, to what do I owe the pleasure of an early morning visit?"

"Last night's card game aside," he says, "when do we ever get a chance to hang out in a way that isn't related to saving the galaxy?"

"A general's job is never done," you remark. "Especially not with a Galaxy constantly at war."

"You know there's talk of you being asked to become the President of the whole planet once this is all over, right?" Xefros offers, and you groan.

"Damn it, I'm sure I'm a fine and dandy general, but a leader of a peacetime planet? No way, I'm never going to last if they spring that on me," you say.

"It's just talk," Xefros shrugs. "I've also heard rumors about people wanting to ask Joey to become a Crowned Princess of Rock and Roll, or some weird shit like that."

"Amusing as that is, I can't imagine she'd like it," you say.

"Mmh," he nods. "Definitely not, that's for sure."

A waiter brings Xefros his drink a moment later.

"So..." you begin, "How are things with Baizli? Nothing requiring intervention, I hope?"

"Haha," Xefros laughs. "No, we're good. Well, as good as a Kismesisitude can be, I guess."

"Right," you nod. "And you and Dammek haven't been having too many problems, have you?"

"Nah," Xefros shakes his head. "Things haven't been that desperate in a while. Callie's been good for him, and he's been good for her."

"That's good to hear," You smile. "For a while there, I've been feeling like I've failed you both for being so busy."

"Well, it was an emergency auspitization anyways," he says. "Emergency that caused it's over, so..."
Don't feel bad about that." He smiles. "Dammek probably won't ever come out and admit it, but you kept us both from doing things we'd regret, Okurii. So I'll say it for him, and I'll say it for me, too. Thank you."

"You're both very much welcome," you accept the thanks. "I'm just glad that things worked out in the end."

"Yeah," Xefros nods. "I think we all are."

"Speaking of things that might be working themselves out," you begin. "Did you see how Tyzias was eyeing Daraya last night?"

"Hah, even when Baizli was dragging my attention elsewhere, I was noticing it," Xefros laughs. "Oh, man, what a mess those two are in. Daraya's pale for her, and Tyzias might be flushed!"

"Honestly, I think Daraya's been misjudging her feelings," you say. "I think a properly balanced Quadrant, any quadrant, has to have some Pale compassion to it otherwise it falls apart and you either break amicably, or you require an Auspitice."

"Yeah," Xefros agrees. "Speaking of care... how long do you think before we're called back in to guard while the grubs break out?"

"Hmm, I'd give it another hour or two," you guess. "Or, more probably, when it's most dramatically inconvenient for it to happen."

That earns a laugh, at least.

"Excuse me." Your name is Kanaya Maryam, and you hope you don't weird this Troll out.

"Yes, miss?" the troll turns to face you, a smile on his face. His Face. Not hers. Now that you're this close you can see the differences.

They're not the same person.

"Sorry," you say, "It's just... you reminded me of someone, is all."

"Really, now?" he asks. "Who?"

"Um, my guardian. Lannik was her name," you say. "You, um have a bit of a passing resemblance to her, is all. I thought..." you shake your head. "Sorry, I should just go."

"Ah, wait, just a second," the troll says, and you stop. "I'm Lanque Bombyx." He extends his hand, offering it.

"Kanaya, Kanaya Maryam," you say, shaking his hand.

"Kanaya, hmm?" He smiles faintly. "I see. You're one of the girls from that other dimension, right?"

"I am, yes," you nod. "Why?"
"Come with me for a moment?" He offers, and you follow him over to a section of Jade colored Cocoons. Grubs in this universe seem to molt with colored cocoons, which... wasn't at all how it went in your world. "This little one here," Lanque begins, motioning at one of the Grubs who... who has a rather shockingly familiar face. "Does she look familiar to you?"

"I, yes," You nod. "She... she has my face, from when I was a Grub."

"And hair, too," Lanque muses, reaching out with one hand and tussling your hair just a bit. "Yes, it naturally wants to sit the same way, too, doesn't it?"

"Is..." You pause, staring at the upside down cocooned, slumbering grub. "Is she me?"

"I believe so, yes," Lanque smiles, "especially considering we've already named her Kanaya as well?"

"That is-" You stop, blink, and then look up to stare at him. "My alternate universe self is just a grub in this world?"

"Mmh, it seems so," Lanque nods. "Just as it seems in another world, some other version of me may have been your guardian, if you've seen such a similar resemblance between us." He pauses, then says, "If I might be so bold, can I ask how she died?"

"How could you tell?" You ask.

"Constant use of the past tense," Lanque admits. "Also, I could see the disappointment in your eyes when you saw I wasn't an exact match for the person you were hoping for. This...Lannik? Such a similar name to mine, too. Lanque, Lannik. The same first syllable, even."

You look this troll over, and see that, despite the amusement glinting in his eyes at the name similarity, you can see something else lurking in there. Regret, perhaps? Or maybe a morbid curiosity as to the death of an alternate version of himself?

So you explain it as... well, as cleanly as you can given the current environment. In broad terms so as to not disturb the other Matrons working to supervise the grubs. (Even so, you get some annoyed looks from this world's version of Bronya.) You... you even put a bit of a positive spin on it even though you're not entirely sure there IS a positive spin to how that day ended.

"I see," He finally says once you finish. "She sounds like she did something quite heroic, that woman."

"I just wish it had not resulted in her dying, or me and Aradia being stuck traveling through dimensions for so long with so many people who were broken over her death," you admit.

"A shame to leave behind the people she loves, indeed," Lanque muses. Then, he says, "Though I might not be that woman who raised you, I'd like to offer my ear if ever you feel the need to ramble on about those days."

"I really would not want to be a bother," you say to him.

"It's no trouble at all," Lanque says, giving a smile that, for just a moment, makes you forget who you're really talking to. "If anything, I might be the selfish one, bothering you by wanting to learn
something about someone who might be an alternate version of myself." He pauses, then says, "And honestly, even if it turns out that we were two separate people unrelated by the causality of universes repeating characters and themes, would having an ear to talk to be so wrong from time to time?"

You suppose...

"Ah, but again, this is only if you should want to," he says, dismissing the idea. "I know that opening up about such subjects to an otherwise complete stranger may not be something you find comforting."

"I will consider your offer, Mister Bombyx," you say, making him smile.

"That is fine," he says. "Ah, but if I may be a selfish bother for one more moment, did your world, or any world you visit, happen to include the phenomenon of Rainbow Drinker-ism?"

You blink. "I... uh... Yes, actually. My guardian was a Drinker."

"I see, how curious," he says. "Perhaps some other time we should meet on a more professional basis to discuss this. You see, I'm currently researching the phenomenon and-"

And then there's a cracking sound from the cocoon you're standing next to.

The cocoon containing this world's version of you is CRACKING OPEN.

"Oh drat," you lament, before the sound of CRACKING SHELLS echoes throughout the chamber.

You are once again Joey Claire, and you're... well...

You're presently distracting a bunch of now human formed formerly grub-shaped trolls with a swarm of Arai Beetles doing tricks.

This is only just the first bunch of tykes who emerged so far.

THERE ARE SEVERAL MORE BATCHES that are either presently still breaking open or have yet to even get started yet.

It's not that bad of a job, really. The glowing wings and the soothing sound of the Arai buzzing around seems to be keeping them all pretty well entertained...

And of those who *aren't* distracted? Well, that's where the rest of your team is picking up the slack and distracting them on more personable levels.

You're reminded a LOT of the super adorable fun-sized versions of John, Jade, Rose, and Argo...

Who's real name was Nepeta, as you remind yourself, who happens to have an ALTERNIAN DOPPLEGANGER with the SAME ADORABLE FACE and some cute, CAT EAR SHAPED HORNS, and, most importantly of all...

THE EXACT SAME NAME.
Okurii has her right now, and she's quite the scamp, that's for sure, clambering all around and generally trying to strip out of the towel-robe she'd been forced to wear to dry off after emerging from her cocoon. You wonder if Argo!Nepeta was/is that rambunctious?

You wonder, some day, if you could arrange a meeting of the VARIOUS NEPETAS in your life. How crazy would that be??

"Wooow," says someone as they approach, "this is a lot of kids."

You split your focus ever so slightly more to keep the Arai running as a background operation, and turn to face a pair of trolls infamous on base for their indescribable relationship- Azdaja Knelax and Konyyl Okimaw. You've seen them around, but you've never really met them before.

"Yeah, Konyyl," Azdaja says, nodding, "that's a lot of kids. And some quite impressive distractions going on too." He looks to you. "Your work, I assume?"

"Yup," you nod. "I'm Joey Claire," you extend your hand for a proper greeting.

"Konyyl Okimaw," the Olive Blooded girl says, taking your hand and shaking it. "This is Azdaja Knelax. We're... well, we're considering adoption."

"I'd say go on and talk with Lynera or one of the matrons," you say. "But they're probably a bit busy right now with the rest of the cocoons breaking open."

"Well, yeah, we kind of figured..." Azdaja says, "but that's part of why we're only considering right now. We're off world so often it seems kind of unfair to take a kid in just to leave them alone for a long period of time."

"If we do adopt, we're thinking of leaving the field, on a most of the time basis, anyways," Konyyl says. "Diaspora seems like a really nice place to live."

"It has been," you nod. "It's so nice to have fresh air and a sun that doesn't make the air burn like it does in the deserts. And living in a cabin is a lot nicer than living on a ship."

"Yeah," Konyyl nods. "There's a lot we're considering."

"Well, whatever you two decide," you say, smiling, "good luck with it."

"Thanks!/Thank you," they say, and then move off to a more secluded corner to talk to themselves.

You turn your attention back to the grubs, and find that one of the lot has torn free and is sitting at your feet. It takes you no less than one heartbeat to identify him by his horns alone.

It's Karkat. Except as a kid. Like, even younger than the teenaged boy you've come to know.

You mean, sure, you knew he had to be around here somewhere, but it's... it's bizzare to come face to face with him like this suddenly.

"Um... hi?" You ask. "Can I help you?"

Karkat the youngest opens his mouth...
And then closes it and shakes his head before scampering back over to the rest of his cherry blooded friends.

...What the heck was that about?

You shake your head and get back to distracting the tykes with a fully focused attention.

"WWEEEH!" A violet blooded sea dweller cried out as you and Wanshi pry him out of his cocoon.

"Come ON, Eridan! Stop fighting it! You can't stay in there any longer or you'll fall and hit your head!" Wanshi lamented, even as the boy fought being removed. Stubborn little-

"Daraya!"

You look up, reminding yourself that yes, you are indeed once again Daraya Jonjet and yes, you do have a life outside of all of this Grub Tending duty.

"What?" You look over at Lynera.

"When you're done helping Wanshi, could you get over here to help me with Equius? He's managed to grab on pretty strong to a support beam and is clinging to it like a Koala-lusus!" Lynera waves at you, and then points at a young indigo blooded boy who somehow has already managed to break off one of his horns. "I could use your special brand of convincing, or else he might tear the support beam out."

"Alright," You nod, and then finish help Wanshi get this Violet blood out of his cocoon.

There's always a few stubborn ones in a clutch who don't want to leave their cocoons even after they've started deteriorating to the point of basically doing nothing at all to keep the young troll suspended in the air. They're usually the ones who didn't get much sleep the night before they started cocooning. Honestly, you're surprised there haven't been more of them this round.

"Stubborn little fishy face, isn't he?" Wanshi gripes as Eridan kicks and screams as you both pull him free.

"Yeah," you nod. "He definitely is!"

Soon, you've got the boy settled and calmed down by way of offering him a candy sucker. Supposedly there's some kind of chocolate chewy treat at the center of it. You inspired him with the challenge to count how many licks it took. And then? Then you go help get this stubborn Indigo Blood down from a support beam.

Lynera wasn't kidding when she said he had a strong grip. Boy's managed to dig grooves into the metal with his fingers. You hope he grows into it, or learns how to control it.

"Hello," you begin. "You scared up there?" Equius nods, his grip tightening and the metal straining from it. "What's so scary?"
He opens his mouth and spews out a jumble of sounds that don't make any sense to either him or you, going by the way he suddenly stops and frowns.

That's going to be the case a lot of the time. The Molting/Pupation/Cocooning phase always leaves a Troll with an innate sense of how their new limbs work, but their mouths are something a bit different. As Grubs they don't simply have the right jaw shapes to speak properly, and so what comes out is its own sort of form of grub-speak as they try to communicate with people. Jade Bloods end up learning it as a sort of second language so that they're able to help communicate with the grubs up until this point.

It's only after the change that they're able to start learning properly because their jaws have changed. Of course, naturally, that also means that their changed jaw shapes don't work the same as what they'd learned so far, and so when they try to speak grub speak... It just flat out doesn't work.

Still, you smile, and say, "That's alright. Just nod or shake your head. Was it just too loud?"

Equius shakes his head, no.

"Was it a nightmare?"

He nods, yes. Not too uncommon, on Alternia. But they've been relatively rare here on Diaspora.

"Was iiiii... about a monster?" A yes. "Was he attacking people?" No? Hmm. "Was he hurting people?" Yes. Not attacking directly but still hurting...? "Did he have a face?" No. Possibly the Scratch Doctor, he's a recurring figure in nightmares for young ones, probably a genetic memory surfacing during the transformation. "Was his head a big white circle?" ...No? Perhaps the mystery of Lord English, then? He is a similar case of genetic memories, after all. "...Was he a green snake?" No. What? Who then...? Well, there's maybe one other person you can think of in the universe who doesn't have a face so you might as well ask just in case. "...Was he made out of black shadows?" A very vigorous YES.

Anubis? How the hell did this kid have a nightmare about Anubis of all Goa'uld? Could this boy be a Seer?

"Was he in our galaxy?" You ask. The boy just seems confused. "You don't know?" Yes. "Was-

You were going to ask more questions, but that's when Okurii comes into the room, chatting with Matron Porrim about Adoption, it sounds like. A personal adoption at that, as it sounds like Okurii is talking about the young girl who she's holding. That's... the Olive Blood Nepeta, you think?

At any rate, the moment Equius lays eyes on her, he shrieks and lets go of the support beam and falls straight into your arms- which you raise up on instinct to grab the boy as soon as he shrieks like that. Once he's safely there, he's gibbering and reaching out for the girl, who's taken notice and is likewise reaching out for him.

"Hey, Lynera?" You ask, glancing over at her. "Were these two friends?"

"Yes, actually!" she nods.

"Equius?" You say, getting the boy's attention for one last question, "Was the Shadow hurting that girl?"
Equius nods again.

"I think I figured out why he was so scared," you say, turning to Lynera.

Okurii just gives you the oddest look, and you mouth to her, "I'll explain later."

Later comes in the form of dinner back at Joey and Mierfa's place late that very same night, with everyone from last night's party present save for the addition of the newly adopted NEPETA LEIJON, who got lucky and adopted a whole day before the signing ceremony was even scheduled to begin by Okurii herself.

"So... Equius saw Anubis in his dreams?" Joey asks, laying down a plate of what she calls "Earth Lasagna" infront of you.

"Pretty much," you say, even as Joey moves on to dish out another plate for the person immediately to your left- that being Mallek. "My Yes/No Questions ended up matching his description. Faceless, Black Shadow who hurts people even when not directly attacking."

"Did you get to ask any other questions about his nightmare?" Tyzias asks.

"Just to draw what he saw," you say. "He broke quite a few crayons, but in the end I managed to get a scribble of a shadowy cloaked figure dragging a big rock through space towards a planet. No idea why it frightened Equius so much, though. What's so terrifying about a giant rock?"

"Maybe what he plans on doing with it?" Baizli offers. "I mean, it could be full of Electro Quartz or whatever they call it in the other galaxy. That could go to a lot of weapons."

"Or it could be used to blow people up," Polypa guesses. "Harvest it all, send it through some Gates with explosives. Boom!"

"Like we did with the Highblood's fleet," Dammek says.

"Yeah," Joey muses, as she sits down after finishing placing plates of food. "That's a concern. Or, more simply. He could just be hurling it to throw at a planet."

With that, you all start eating, continuing to talk whenever someone doesn't have a mouth full of food.

"He'd have to get to our Galaxy first to throw it at Diaspora, though, wouldn't he?" Xefros asks.

"I'd bet Alternia sooner than Diaspora, though," Dammek muses. "Nobody really knows Diaspora is a place that exists beyond a few key people."

"So, of what planets in Milky Way would an angry Goa'uld like to throw a meteor at?" Callie asks.

"Earth, definitely," Tyzias begins listing off planets. "Any place that's home to ANOTHER Goa'uld System Lord, probably. Any planets that aren't towing the company line, like Tollana."
"So, basically, anybody fighting against Anubis, right?" You summarize.

"Pretty much," Tyizas nods.

"Honestly, if you ask me," Polypa says, "if something is happening out there in Milky Way, it's not really our problem unless they're targeting Earth."

"We should probably send a warning along with the next scheduled dial out, just in case," Okurii muses. "What day is today's Earth date again?"

"Ocotober Twelfth," Joey answers.

"Dial out isn't til the Thirteenth..." Okurii muses. "Think it can wait that long?"

"Probably," Callie guesses. "I mean... what are the chances that a giant rock is being hurled towards Earth right this minute? It's not like we have any proof it's really happening outside of post-grub troll having a nightmare. An extra few hours warning won't do much extra good, if it is, anyways. Right?"

"We could always ask Terezi," Mierfa suggests. "She might have had some kind of vision about it?"

"Wish we could," Salazl chimes in, "didn't she and Karkat go off chasing some other wild vision of hers a couple days ago?"

"Yeah," Okurii nods. "They did. Terezi said they might be a while waiting for it to come true, though."

"Well, if she comes back before the dial out, we'll ask, and push the dial out ahead to 'immediately', I guess," Joey says, "and if not, I'm sure that whatever warning we give will come soon enough to help if it IS targeting them."

After that, dinner's discussion topic shifts to the idea of restarting last night's poker game...

But you've got a slight nagging feeling in your stomach. It won't hurt to wait a couple of hours, will it?

Chapter End Notes

NEXT SG-1 EPISODE: Fail Safe.

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Whoo! Couple things in this chapter to touch on.

1) Canonically, I'm stating now that, Kanaya's guardian "Lannik" and the hiveswap troll "Lanque" are NOT interdimensional soul twins of each other. Think more, 'Interdimensional Cousins' than twins. There's enough of a relation to confuse Kanaya, but not much else.

2) I have no intention of writing an actual strip poker game, as I do not know how to play poker at all and would likely screw it up heavily. The idea of it was inspired by a
certain few well written fanfics on this site, though.

3) Grubs find a nice, suspended place to grab onto, at which point their soft, squishy exterior starts expanding, and hardening, forming the cocoon as their insides do the shifty thing. It's less "spinning" a cocoon and more "My skin becomes a sleeping bag and when it pops I have different limbs!" Wasn't sure how to work in this detail without squicking people out with the text, so, uh... here's how it works in this universe/dimension.
Chapter Summary

In which a meteor based apocalypse looms over earth.

Chapter Notes

Hey! Hey! If you haven't seen it yet, @catchsacks posted some awesome fanart of Joey and some Arai!

LINK: https://archiveofourown.org/works/14022225


DIASPORA DATE: 4/17/0002.

Major Samanatha Carter barges into the meeting room, meeting currently in progress, with Colonel O'neill at her side, "Sorry to interrupt, General Hammond, but this is important."

"Go ahead," Hammond says, nodding.

"There's a Meteor heading towards Earth," Carter says, and there's a rather prolonged moment of silence after the news breaks, during which you take the opportunity to stand at attention and open your big damn mouth.

"But, like, how big is it?" Carter opens her mouth, and you interject with, "Like, the size of Texas? They're always throwing around these geographical comparisons to give us a sense of scale like it really means anything to us, but its like it doesn't matter it's always just like: WOW THAT'S PRETTY FUCKING BIG!"

There's a moment of silence again, during which you continue on:

"Like, 'Mister President, there's a meteor coming, Sir!'" you speak with a squeaky, stereotypical sciency nerd voice.

"'Oh yeah, how big is it?" Full deep stereotypical presidential sounding voice.

"It's the size of Texas, sir," you go back to the squeak voice, and see Hammond raise an eyebrow.

"OH SHIT!" You then go on with your normal voice, "Or, like, 'How big is it?' 'It's the size of New York City, Sir.' OH SHIT!"

You then put on a voice as clear of a mockery of Senator Kinsey as you can muster, "'Sir, I'm afraid
the comet is the size of your mom's dick.' OH SNAP!"

After a moment to let that sink in, as O'neill opens his mouth, you finally chime in with:

"'Sir, are you familiar with the planet Jupiter?'' You say in your most STATELY, SECRET SERVICE VOICE imaginable.

Back to the President: "'You mean, like, the planet?''

Back to the Secret Service: "'Yeah. Well. It's that big sir.'"

The President then says, "Hmm, well, that sounds pretty big." A pause. "I Have a question." A pause. "Is it Jupiter?"

And then to punch line it, back to the nerd voice, "Yes, Sir, Earth is literally under siege by Planet. Fucking. Jupiter!"

And so, you, one Major Davis Strider, conclude, with an "OH SHIT!" before sitting back down in your chair.

There's a bit of silence after that, in which you awkwardly let be filled by silence.

"Well," Colonel Ferretti says after a few more moments of silence. "I think Major Strider summed up all of our emotions regarding the matter just now."

"All I have to say is," O'neill begins, "that was a terrifyingly accurate Kinsey impression, Strider. Don't quit your day job."

"Thank you, Sir," you say. "I won't."

"Anyways," Carter coughs. "As I was saying, the Meteor is heading towards Earth on a rogue arc that, as of..." She checks he watch, "Now, will be arriving in eleven days and sixteen hours."

"Has anyone else detected this yet?" General Hammond asks.

"Just the civilian scientist who first discovered it, but he's been convinced to keep quiet for the moment," O'neill says.

"As for how big it is," Carter continues, glancing at you pointedly, "it's in an irregular shape and as far as satellite can tell, from end to end, it's about 137 Kilometers in length. But it's mass is harder to pin down."

"I've seen this movie," Ferretti chimes in, "doesn't it hit in Paris?"

"More likely it's trajectory will land it somewhere in the arctic circle," Carter corrects.

"So... are we gonna Armageddon the hell out of this thing or what?" You ask.

The answer, is 'no, not yet.' Colonel O'neill and Dr. Jackson head off world to an Asgard
communication device, and Major Carter tries to contact the Tok'ra...
In the mean time, you sit and poke at your lunch in the cafeteria.

The world might be ending by meteorite.

Giant fucking space rock size of... well, if you did your math right, roughly about the average size of Rhode Island, doubled. Two Rhode Islands, put together like some kind of meteoric sandwich of doom.

Sure, it's got all sorts of tasty nickel and iron. Yum. All sandwiched in between a crustless shell of random other rocks. Whee.

And it's heading your way.

You'll admit you're panicking just a little bit.

Damned thing is heading straight for Earth on a course that most meteors never come along. Right down the middle of your freaking blindspot. How does something like that even happen?

Your brother sits down next to you, clearly having just gotten off his shift. "Well, you look like someone just kicked your favorite puppy," he dryly remarks.

"You would too if you'd had the briefing I just had," you tell Dirk. "Mission canceled because of the probable end of the world."

"What? Seriously?" Dirk frowns. "How the hell does that happen?"

"One big ass rock falls, everyone dies," you answer.

"...Seriously?" Dirk asks. "When??"

"Elevenish days," you shrug, and poke at your lunch a bit more. "SG-1's working on stoppin' it, but who knows what'll happen."

"...That's..." Dirk blinks. "You've got to be pulling my leg, right?"

"Wish I were, bro, wish I were," you answer.

"...Well, SG-1's on the case," Dirk says, "I'm confident."

"Yeah, I guess you're right," You agree.

That's when the gate alarms sound for the "SCHEDULED ALTERNIA DIAL IN."

A few minutes later, word gets out that, yesterday, some random ass kid on Diaspora had a nightmare of Anubis hurling a giant rock at a planet.

"This definitely did not happen the first time."
Your name is Cassandra Fraiser, and as you and your Mother exit the elevator into the SGC, you happen to pass by Carter and Mikari pacing back and forth in front of the elevator, letting their instances of Jolinar talk.

"Not even with Aschen interference?" C-Jolinar asks.

"No, it just flat out never happened," M-Jolinar answers.

"So not a natural event then?" C-Jolinar asks.

"No, definitely not," M-Jolinar pauses, and smiles, "Oh, hi, Cassie, Janet. Just in time!"

"Hello, Sam, Mikari, Jolinars," Mom says to them, sounding a but uncertain about the plural name.

"What's going on?" You ask.

"Let's go talk in my lab," Carter takes over. "You might want to sit down after hearing this."

So you go to Carter's lab, the two Jolinars continuing to talk in the meantime.

"So the chances of the object containing Naquadah-?" C-Jolinar asks.

"Almost certainly higher than I'm comfortable with," M-Jolinar answers.

"And using a bomb to either destroy it or move it would be-?" C-Jolinar's words set off a warning bell inside your head.

"Catastrophic," M-Jolinar says at the same time you emphatically say, "A Very Bad Idea!"

"Cassie?" Mom asks, looking at you with concern.

Thankfully, you arrive at Carter's lab, and she takes over to explain, "There's a large meteor heading towards earth at an impossible angle and never happened in the other timeline."

"So, a Goa'uld attack?" Mom asks.

"We're thinking Anubis," Carter says. "For starters, Major Vantas overheard Ba'al make a remark that Osiris was delayed due to a 'freak meteor shower' back during the Summit. And also, some kid on Diaspora had a vision of this happening and Anubis was behind it. So considering that we're now actually facing death by a giant space rock...?"

"Yeah, that's probably Anubis doing it alright," you nod in agreement. "I guess that explains the building sense of unease I've been feeling the last few days."

"The Asgard can't help us because of the Protected Planets Treaty unless we get them a reading of the meteor's core and can confirm it's got Naquadah in it," Carter continues, "Also... Colonel O'neill may have lost his temper and mentioned Freyr's mother?"

"Damn it, Jack," Janet mutters.

"Also, the Tok'ra have been on lock down since Revanna," M-Jolinar says, "They're still trying to
find out how their security was breached, considering it was a new site that the host Osiris stole wasn't aware of. So any help they might be able to lend us is going to be slow coming."

"So, you want me to bounce ideas off of?" You ask.

"Basically, yeah," Carter nods. "We've got a few ideas, but we're not sure what would work if there's Naquadah present on the meteor."

"Well, I'm confident we can figure something out," you say.

"Me too," Janet says.

"As am I," M-Jolinar says.

"Let's get to planning, then," Carter claps her hands together.

Your name is General George Hammond, and you look over the plan the Jolinar's, Major Carter, and Cassandra Fraiser worked up.

"...Is the Cargo Ship on Revanna even flight worthy?" You ask.

"Jolinar is confident we can repair it," Major Carter says, "the only problem is flight time. Revanna isn't exactly next door. Even if the engines were in prime condition and we pushed them to their limit, it'll still take us about eight or so days to get back to Earth."

"That's cutting it close," you muse. "And if you can't stretch the Hyperdrive window out to a large enough size to cover the meteor?"

"Then we go with Plan B and blow it off course," Carter answers. "But, uh... Cassandra doesn't think Earth's chances for survival are really high if we go through with it."

"Still, take a warhead with you on the Cargoship," You advise.

"I'm confident we won't need it, Sir," Carter says.

Jolinar chimes in with a "**Me too, for what it's worth.**"

"As am I, but better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it," you say.

"...Fair enough," Carter agrees.

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**EARTH DATE: OCTOBER 14TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 4/18/0002.**

After several long hours of working and working and working around the clock on Revanna to repair the damaged Cargo Ship, Carter and the science team seem to have finished the repair job.
You are now COLONEL JACK O'NEILL, however, the fact that the two scientists, WEBBER AND SPELLMAN, are talking about something they can't find makes you nervous.

"Okay," Carter says, "I guess we'll have to assume there isn't one onboard."

"One what?" You ask.

"We're about ready to attempt an engine start, Sir," she says, ignoring your question.

"Yeah, fine. 'Assume there isn't one' what?" You press.

Carter visibly pauses, then says, "Recall Device."

"The X-301?" You glance at Webber and Spellman. "That was YOU guys?!"

"You have to admit it performed beautifully," Webber says, "well, right up to the point two girls stole it and tripped the recall device and were hurtled into deep space."

"Yeah!" You feel a bit exasperated by these two, and you've only had the displeasure of working with them for the first time today.

"Nice work," Daniel remarks, rather slowly.

"Anyways," Carter coughs. "Let's start the engines and get this thing working."

"Alright," you say, "Punch it."

Carter punches in the code, and...

The engines don't start.

"I'm sure it's just a flooded line or something," Spellman remarks- but your withering gaze tells him you don't want to hear it.

Carter tries to start the engines again and... this time, all the lights turn on in the ship, and power hums everywhere.

"Alright," you say. "Spellman, Webber, pack your stuff up and head to the Gate. Dial to the Alpha Site, they'll be expecting you."

"And what about you, sir?" Webber asks. "Didn't Hammond tell you to take command?"

"Only if we couldn't get the ship started and, well..." You motion around at the powered ship. "Tell Feretti I told him to take command. It's his boat incase things go wrong."

"Alright," and with that, they turn to leave.

Spellman pauses, though, and offers a wry, "May the Force be with you!" Teal'c, as a matter of course, bows his head in acceptance of the wise words of Star Wars.

You just wave the guy off, and once the Airlock doors are closed, turn to Carter. "So, take off?"
"Yeah," she nods. "Teal'c, make sure to go slow on the engines as we exit the atmosphere."

"Why?" You ask.

"Well, if we strain the engines and they burn out before we hit escape velocity..." Carter trails off for a moment. "We could explode and crash to our deaths?"

"Slow and steady it is, then," you say.

"I'm sure it won't happen," Carter says.

"Well that just fills me with confidence," you say. "I'm convinced."

"Me too," Daniel chimes in.

"As am I," Teal'c nods, and then takes the pilot's seat.

As the engines rev up and you feel the Cargo Ship pry itself out of the dirt, you can't help but ask, "Did anyone think to bring any playing cards?"

The answer to which is 'no.'

...Well, damn it, now you're going to get fidgety.

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DIASPORA DATE: 4/24/0002.

"Carter!"

Your name is SAMANTHA CARTER, and you're jolted awake by Colonel O'neill's annoyed yelling of your name.

You hastily slip out of the cot and head over to the Ring room where the MALP containing the BOMB resides.

"Yes? What is it?" You ask, slowing to a halt as you see Colonel O'neill looking at the interior wiring for the DETONATION CIRCUIT.

"You can see this, right?" He says, pointing at the wires. "Tell me what's wrong with this picture?"

You move over to inspect the wiring and... "They're all yellow."

"Five little wires and they're all yellow," O'neill says, and then picks up the SAFETY MANUAL on how to MANUALLY DISARM THE BOMB. "This thing says I'm supposed to cut the RED wire. There is no red wire. They're. All. Yellow."

"We'd have to randomly cut them if we had to disarm it manually," you say, staring at this thing with
"I'd like to take this opportunity to say that this is a very poorly designed bomb and that we should say something to somebody when we get back," O'neill remarks.

"I agree, Sir," you say, staring at it. "I wonder if part of this is why Cassandra said a bomb was a bad idea?"

"Who knows," O'neill shakes his head. "But I'm not arming this thing. I've had enough of bombs that won't shut off when you tell them to for a lifetime as it is."


DIASPORA DATE: 4/25/0002.

"So... meteors?" Your name is John Sheppard, and you feel... oddly off put by the idea of a METEORIC DOOM.

"Meteors," Cassandra nods.

"This sucks," Jude gripes. "How can they just expect us to sit back and wait for SG-1 to pull off a plan that might not even work? Shouldn't we have a backup plan?"

"There is one," Jade grimaces, crossing her arms over her chest. "It's evacuating to another planet."

"Alternia or the Alpha Site," Rose muses. "I think I know which one I'm choosing, if it comes down to it."

"Alternia, sure," Argo nods, "but I'm with Jude on this. We didn't have this problem in the future-hell- we already CHANGED the future! Why can't we atleast try to help change it again?"

"Because the plan I helped Carter come up with is the best shot we have at survival," Cassandra says. "Any other plans just... they don't have as high of a success rate."

"What if I tried shrinking it?" Jade asks. "Like I did with the power core we shunted through the Gate at the Aschen?"

"Have you even been able to do that without those Armbands?" you ask. "I know you've been practicing when we're visiting Abydos, but..."

"I haven't managed to shrink anything that's larger than my fist yet," Jade shakes her head. "And even then, they've popped back again after a minute."

"And we thought of that," Cassandra says. "And we even thought about having you shrink it AND Captchaloguing it. But... the chance of it not working or working on the shrinking, and then breaking out of the captcha card at the wrong moment..." She sighs. "The Hyperdrive plan is our best bet. It has the least margin of error. It's literally our Fail Safe plan."
Finally, after ten days on this rust bucket of a Cargo Ship, you exit hyperspace in earth's solar system, and begin your approach of the meteor, which has thankfully yet to hit Earth.

Your name is Daniel Jackson, and you feel a mixed sense of relief and also... well...

What the hell are you doing out here? You're an archaeologist! This might very well be a SUICIDE MISSION! What good are you doing here except for Moral Support?? You should have gone to the Alpha Site with Spellman and Webber- or whatever their names were.

"SG-1 to Stargate Command, please respond," Sam radios.

A pause, then, "KRRR-ate Command, readin-sss-G-1, Please Respon-SRRRRRK-" out comes General Hammond's radio static filtered voice.

Sam tunes the radio a bit, and then says, "We're reading you, sir."

"We haven't heard from you in ten days, Major," Hammond begins, "what happ-srk- to slow you down?"

"This ship took a bit more damage than we thought it had," Sam answers. "We've barley been holding together along the way."

"Can you comple-VRRRK-mission?" Hammond asks.

"We're going to attempt to activate the Hyperspace window," Jack says. "The Bomb is not an option, General."

"KRRR-eat that, Colonel? Bomb is what?" Hammond asks.

"It's got five! Yellow! Wires!" Jack stresses. "Manual Disarming Unwise!"

That's when the entire ship starts shaking as you near the meteor's gravity well.

"Oh, that's not good," you say.

"I am having difficulty with the sublight engines," Teal'c reports.

"KReeeeEEEE-SNRKT!" goes the Radio before dying.

"Annnd we just lost long range radio," Sam sighs, and gets up to go check the back. Jack goes with her.

"So... uh..." you begin. "Landing? Would that work better than trying to fly in front of it?"

"It may work," Teal'c says, "however, if we do not land before sublight dies, we-" the ship shakes again. "...May be in trouble."
Then, there's a spark from the back room, Sam yelping in shock, and then the lights flicker and the ship shakes and the view out the window starts to SPIN.

"Oh, that's really, really not good," you say, suddenly wishing your future-daughter were here to steady the thing out and give another smooth-ish landing.

"We've lost sublight engines," Teal'c reports.

"You can land this thing, still, right?" You ask.

"I am confident I can do such if we have enough distance to slow down," Teal'c says, engaging maneuvering thrusters.

"Oh, that's good," you say, not really feeling confident about your success.

"What is?" Jack asks, carrying a dazed Sam in from the back of the ship.

"Teal'c's Confident he can land us if we have enough distance to slow down," you say.

"Oh, good," Jack says, after a moment to consider your words. "Me too."

Sam mumbles something that might've been an "As am I" but you don't really care at the moment to any completion of meta jokes when you're probably about to crash land on a meteor and die a horrible, painfully quick death.

You're once again George Hammond, and you feel a little bit nervous considering that SG-1's radio just went out.

"Sir," Walter says as he approaches you, "according to last known telemetry from NASA, the cargo ship was crashing into the surface of the meteor at over sixty kilometers an hour."

You breathe out your held breath. "Go ahead and evacuate with the last Alpha Group, Walter. I'll stay here to man the fort just incase they manage to survive and pull off a miracle. If you don't hear from me in..." You look at the IMPACT TIMER, and add an extra hour to its run time. "Three hours, assume we're all dead and Earth is gone."

"...Good luck, Sir," Walter nods, and then heads off to the Gate Room.

You really, really hope SG-1 managed to land.

"How lucky did we get to be headed towards a crater that was JUST barely deep enough to let us slow down completely with enough room to spare for the rings to drop down?"

Your name is Teal'c, and to Major Carter's question, you answer, "Very." You check out the systems, and report, "Sublight engines are down. Long range communications are down. Hyperspace Drive is online. Shields are online."
"We should be good with shields when we pass through the La... grange...?" Major Carter shakes her head, and says, "The meteor shower ring thing. Doesn't matter. Shields should protect the ship."

"So... can we do the Hyperspace window thing?" Colonel O'neill asks.

"We've got about... er, two hours until we reach the fail-safe distance. Give me some time to run the scans on the Meteor's core first so I can make some accurate calculations," Major Carter says, settling into her seat, grimacing as she does so. "In the mean time, maybe get that bomb off our ship? It's kind of making me nervous having it sitting back there."

"That we can do," Colonel O'neill says. "Teal'c, let's suit up and get that thing into the nearest canyon where it can rot for all I care."

Another Space walk? "Fun" with the MASSIVE SARCASM QUOTES. You really hoped never to do this again after the last one, but... oh well.

As you suit up, you inquire, "Fail Safe Distance?"

"It's the point after which, if we had to use the bomb to shove the meteor off course, we can't do it any more," Colonel O'neill explains.

"I see," you say. "What happened to Major Carter? She seems not quite herself."

"She had the sublight crystal tray open when it overloaded and shocked her," Colonel O'neill answers. "Jolinar said she was working on the damage. Slightly worse than a Zat's first shot, apparently."

"Hopefully it will not interfere with her calculation abilities," you really, really hope that's the case.

You've finished suiting up and have ringed down to the meteor's surface with the probably-not-going-to-be-used bomb, and begin taking it away from the Cargo Ship with no destination in mind.

Once you're out from under the Cargo Ship, Dr. Jackson lowers it to the ground. Best not to use up extraneous power just floating there, after all.

As you and Colonel O'neill move the MALP with the Bomb on it away from the Cargo Ship, Dr. Jackson suddenly radios.

"Uh, guys?" He asks. "Not to alarm you or anything but I might be hallucinating."

"...What?" Colonel O'neill asks.

"Well, Sam and Jolinar can't see it, but, uh... quick question," Dr. Jackson then asks, "if you both stop and look to your left, do you see Doctor Lam standing in front of the nose of the Cargo Ship?"

You and O'neill both look, but see nobody there.

"I see nobody," you reply.

"Yeah, nobody there. Not even- wait, Lam? As in Carolyn Lam?" Colonel O'neill asks.

"Uh, yeah." Dr. Jackson answers, "Except instead of a doctors outfit she's wearing... monks robes?"
Also, her hair seems shorter too."

"...Daniel," Colonel O'Neill begins. "There's nobody there. And even if there were- Monk's robes? She'd be dead without a space suit!"

"Yeah, I figured that after Sam said she couldn't see anything either," Dr. Jackson pauses. "But, hey, could be an Ascended Being trying to check in for all we know, right?"

"Or it could be a trick by Anubis," you suggest. "Some device left on this meteor to project a mental image inside of our heads to trick us into leaving the shuttle without a space suit."

"Yeah, let's... get back to the ship," Colonel O'Neill says.

And so you leave the bomb where it is and head back to the ship.

By the time you've gotten back in and out of your space suits, Major Carter has an initial report on the Meteor's composition.

"At minimum, the core is 40% Naquadah, maximum 50%," she says, not sounding sure of herself.

"So, somewhere in between?" Colonel O'Neill asks.

"I'd rate it closer to maximum than minimum," Major Carter says. "I need to run a few more calculations and scans to be sure, but I've got a rough idea of what we need to do for the Hyperspace window. I think."

"How much longer will we have to wait?" You ask.

"We should be good to go after we pass through the... the veil of asteroids and meteors and other space rocks and," her voice raises rather considerably in level, "Damn It!! I should know what that's called!!"

"Hey, it's fine," Colonel O'Neill says. "You took a shock, Carter. It'll come back to you."

Then, you hear a thud of something hitting the cargo ship's shields hard enough to make everything rattle inside the ship itself.

"...Speaking of the veil of space rocks," Colonel O'Neill remarks, dryly, as more thuds occur.

"I might not remember what it is called, but this is way too soon for us to be passing through it," Major Carter says, frowning. "Teal'c, humor me and check the ship's acceleration monitors?"

You do so and...

Huh. That is very peculiar. "It seems that in the time between when we landed and first activated the rings, the asteroid began accelerating towards the planet."

"...Damn, that was what I was afraid of," Major Carter grimaces, and starts typing at a keyboard. "...They put something on the meteor that's pushing it faster towards the planet now that we're in striking range."

"Did we prepare for that?" Colonel O'Neill asks.
"No," Major Carter groans, running a hand through her hair. "Of all that... It could even explode like a bomb. It could negate our ability to jump into hyperspace. It- I don't know! There's too much it could possibly do to throw us off!"

"Okay, so how does this affect our hyperspace window plan?" Dr. Jackson asks.

"That..." Major Carter pauses. "...This might help, actually. If the Asteroid is being propelled by some other external device, then the amount of time we have to keep the window open on both ends is drastically shortened. If we time it right, we might end up coming out well past Earth itself. Far enough to be out of it's gravity well, at any rate."

"Figure out what calculations you need to do," Colonel O'neill says. "Teal'c, let's see if we can figure out where this sublight engine thing might be."
Why would you want to do that fo- OH.

"You intend to harvest control crystals and other machine parts from this external engine to repair the cargo ship's sublight engines," you realize.

"Something like that," Colonel O'neill says, getting a certain mischievous look in his eyes.

"So, you're not evacuating?"

Your name is JAKE HARLEY, and you sit, awaiting either the end of the world, or the announcement that SG-1 has succeeded.

"Nah, Jane," you smile up at your physically much older sister as she sits down next to you at the rather empty EGBERT HOUSE. Good grief, with Roxy and Alec and the kids all off world pending the potential apocalypse... Well, It's just you and Jane. "You're not evacuating, and I've left you behind one too many times. I'm not going to do it again just to save my own hide."

"You know that last one wasn't intentional, Jake," she remarks rather too casually for your liking. "You died."

"I got better," you counter. "And brainwashed. Then got better again. Still! It's the principle of the matter!"

"I won't begrudge you that," she says. "So... Jack and the others are all up on that rock hurtling towards us right now?"

"Yup," you nod.

"And you decided to stay here?" Jane frowns. "Why not go up there and show that meteor who's boss?"

"...Because my way of doing that would be blowing the thing up and that's no good for any of us if it's really made of the Stargate mineral and it just goes BOOM?" You offer.

Jane considers that, and then says, "Yes, that would be quite a problem, wouldn't it?"
"Uh oh."

Your name is Samantha Carter, and you were feeling VERY LIGHTHEADED earlier. You took quite a nasty shock from the control systems, but Jolinar's patched you up rather nicely since. She's taking a nap right now herself after such strenuous work, and basically gave you the mental equivalent of a thumbs up before conking out.

She's doing the mental equivalent of snoring, which is sort of adorably cute in its own way. You'll tease her about it later once she wakes up and you're not panicking over the fact that you MISREAD SOMETHING RATHER IMPORTANT earlier and almost plugged the wrong data into your equation for the enlarged hyperspace window.

"That's not a good sounding 'uh oh,' Carter," O'neill says, and you're really inclined to agree.

"I misread a metric earlier," you say, "the core of the asteroid is actually almost entirely Naquadah, and it's actually comprising about 45% of the meteor's total mass, rather than only being roughly being 45% of the core like I said it was. Sorry, that one's on me."

"Not your fault, Carter," O'neill says. "Just be glad you caught it before we opened the hyperspace window."

"Naquadah does not occur naturally in this solar system, nor sufficiently enough in any near by systems," Teal'c remarks.

"So definitely Anubis throwing this thing at us?" Daniel asks.

You nod. "Almost certainly, now."

"So... how bad would it be if we blew it up?" O'neill asks.

"Uh..." You pause. "I think I said at some point it might set the atmosphere on fire? Um, at this distance it'd not only do that, it would boil the oceans."

"Ah?" He raises an eyebrow.

"And it'd also turn every piece of solid rock on the planet into molten magma, lava, and probably even plasma," you add.

"Ah." O'neill looks a bit frightened.

"Also, it'd probably melt the moon too," you conclude for good measure.

"...Fondue, anyone?" O'neill jokes, but you can tell his heart's not in it.

"So, we're good for the hyperspace jump now, right?" Daniel asks.

"Yeah, I've got enough solid numbers to generate a proper sized hyperspace window," you nod.

"Good," O'neil says.
"The only problem is I think the strain might burn out the ship's power reserves," you add. "We might only have two hours worth of life support after we jump, if we're lucky."

"Not so good!" O'neill corrects. Then, he continues, asking, "But, if we're going to harvest anything from that other engine, we should be suited up for a nice little jaunt out into space right after the jump?"

"We only brought two suits, though," you remind him.

"Well why did we do **THAT** for?" O'neill asks.

"Probably for the same reasons we brought a bomb with all yellow wires?" You offer an explanation.

"I am SO saying something to someone when we get back."

"Escape pods?" Daniel suggests. "They have their own life support, right? So those of us who don't go out to collect parts from that other engine can just stay in the escape pods until we can repair the ship, right?"

"That might work," you agree.

"Alright then. Jump the giant naquadah rock past earth, go collect the repair parts from the engine the Goa'uld shoved on this thing, and go home. Sounds like a plan," O'neill claps his hands.

"I'm confident," Daniel says.

"Me too," you nod.

"As am I," Teal'c agrees.

"That settles it then," O'neill smirks. "Let's knock this oversized golf ball out of the park."

It takes you about a solid minute to plot in all the relevant AND CORRECT data and... you've programmed the Hyperdrive to open the right sized window.

"Now we wait for us to get close enough so we don't accidentally materialize inside the planet," You say.

"How long is that?" O'neill asks, heading over to the cargo ship's front window and peering out and up at Earth.

"Just another minute," you say.

"Carter?" O'neill begins, sounding just a bit worried. "Not to nag, but- **I can see my house!!!**"

From the outside perspective of the observatories on earth peering upwards at the giant rock heading to champion earth's doom, one minute it was there, taking up all of their visual real-estate.

Then, there was a flash of brilliant purple light, and the rock was gone.
About thirty seconds later, it reappeared on tracking radar well out of earth’s gravity well, and heading out of the solar system at an ever increasing speed.

Naturally, it was about five minutes later that a Tok'ra owned cargo ship entered the solar system and immediately began accelerating towards earth, and after radioing Stargate Command, then changed course to go after the meteor after learning that SG-1 were likely still on it.

Thankfully for Teal'c, the Tok'ra arrived, and he wouldn't need to suit up for any more space walks today.

Five hours after SG-1 were brought back to Earth and a message was sent out to the Asgard, one of their ships showed up and took the asteroid into EVIDENCE CUSTODY, external sublight engine included and all, to build a case about Goa'uld violation of the PROTECTED PLANETS TREATY.

Nobody had any way of knowing that by the time the year was out, though, that the Protected Planets Treaty might as well be fuel for a fireplace.

Chapter End Notes

Wheeee! Fail Safe. FAIL SAFE.

What an episode!

Also, it amuses me greatly that SG-1's plan was basically... a Skaian Defense Portal.
XD

DIASPORA DATE: 5/10/0002.

Alternia Liberation Team 7, or ALT-7 for short, had encountered a mission gone wrong. Everyone on the team except for a poor Olive Blood Boy had been captured by clowns. That poor boy, named OLIVER OSCPIN, had been the only real survivor of an ambush and sneak attack and had escaped back to Alternia. Considering that the last he saw of his team was them vanishing into thin air the moment they were struck by a strange weapon, his team was presumed dead, and their existing IDC set to "Unlock Iris only in case of team escape and confirmation of identity" and otherwise set to "do not open."

And so it was when ALT-7's IDC came in on that fine, November/May morning that the technician on duty, Zebede Tongva, respectfully and skeptically radioed back for an additional confirmation of identity before he could open the Gate for travel.

...No radio transmission came through in return, and nothing stepped through the gate to crash against the shield. And so it was that you and yours were sent through to the planet in question, which had ended up being NOT AT ALL the same one the team had originally been sent to and captured on and then escaped from.

Your name? Joey Claire. Your team? Xefros, Tyzias, and Mierfa, with Oliver as a tag along, to see if any specific hints were left behind at the gate. Your mission? Figure out what the hell happened to Sumara Rhozee and her team.

You dial through to a planet the database called PC0-09Z, emerging into a forest of METAL TREES.

It's oddly quiet.

"Geeze, another one of these forests?" Xefros gripes. "That's not ominous in the least, now is it?"

"So what exactly's the history behind these experiment forests?" Mierfa asks.

No, beyond your team's talking, it's very quiet. Too quiet, even.

"I think at some point there was a drive by the Empress to make books made out of metal that couldn't burn?" Tyzias muses. "But I'm not sure if that's more revisionism, or if they were actually
trying for it."

You spread some Arai beetles out from your sylladex and begin searching the forest for signs of life.

"So... metal trees?" Mierfa glares at one nearby, shiny specimen of metallic plant life. "Why abandon it then?"

"If what I read was right?" Tyzias shrugs, "They just flat out couldn't cut the trees, or melt them down to reforge into pages."

No birds. You wouldn't be surprised if normal animal life couldn't survive here because of the whole METAL TREE thing but...

"There are nests, but no birds," you realize.

"Huh?" Xefros looks to you. "What?"

"There are bird nests in the trees, but no birds in them," you explain. "There aren't any insects either. I'm finding animal dens too, but no animals."

"Well, that can't be good," Tyzias says. "I wonder what-"

"Hey!" Oliver yells suddenly. "I found a carving of a rose on the back of the DHD!"

"A rose?" you ask.

"Yeah, it's Sumara's field signature," Oliver explains. "We each had one we used incase we got lost. It's got an arrow built into it, pointing... that way!" He stands up and points towards the north west.

Sumara Minami, the Jade Blooded leader of ALT-7 who went missing with the rest of her team. It'd make sense that if she survived, she was the one who sent the IDC code earlier... but why not stay at the DHD?

Mierfa heads over towards a tree in the direction Oliver pointed in, and finds another rose+arrow carved into its surface, somehow. "It's pointing due north," she reports.

And thus, you begin following the trail of arrows it seems Sumara left behind for you.

North, North, East around a large fissure in the ground that was shaped like a giant dragon's foot, North, West, North West, North, North, East around yet another large fissure in the ground, this one filled with an active pit of bubbling magma and/or lava, North, West, North East, North, West, West, South past an impossibly frozen in time waterfall, West, North, North, West, West...

And then you clear the forest of metal trees and find a rather large temple that once was made out of stone, but clearly had been metalized in the same process that had affected the trees. You assume this, at any rate, because of the small crater in front of it with some METALIZED STATUES of adult sized ALTERNIAN RESEARCHERS surrounding it, shielding themselves as if trying to avoid looking at an explosion.

"That was not a pleasant way to go," Mierfa grimly remarks.

"Yeah," Xefros gulps. "But if this happened to them, what happened to the animals? Surely we'd
have found metal frozen animals too, right?"

"But we haven't," you agree. "I didn't see a single animal, corpse, metal, or live. No birds, no insects. If they got metalized like this...?"

"Yeah, we should've seen this with the animals," Tyzias agrees, carefully stepping over towards the crater with a handheld scanner in hand. "...Woah!"

"What is it?" You ask.

"I'm picking up some dimensional disturbance readings similar to what Dammek picked up with the Megaship after we detonated that Z.P.M.!'" Tyzias answers.

"How similar?" Xefros asks, sounding a bit nervous, and you can't blame him.

"Well, I think there's two conflicting readings I'm picking up," Tyzias answers, "because one of them is really faint and centered around this crater, and it's got the most divergence too? It's probably a lot older."

"So, whatever they did to make the trees metal involved an explosion involved another dimension bleeding over?" You ask.

"Probably," Tyzias nods.

"What about the other reading?" Mierfa asks.

"Well, that's the concerning one because it's a nearly identical dimensional signature? I'd say it's definitely the after shock of a Z.P.M.'s rift containment, but the amount of energy behind it is different," Tyzias frowns, waving her scanner around at the statues.

"Different because of how recent it is or...?" You trail off.

"Maybe, but I don't think it's because it's recent," Tyzias pauses, then says, "and yes, it IS RECENT. I mean relatively speaking, if space were time, then the first signal is a store on the other side of the city, then this signal is practically right next door to us. But-"

"But there's something else behind it?" You finish.

"Basically," Tyzias nods. "I... honestly, if I had to guess, I'd say that the first rift weakened a dimensional barrier here on this planet, and we're reading bleed through from another dimension?"

"So, wait, what about Sumara?" Oliver asks. "She left her personal identifying mark here, leading us to THIS, and we got the team's IDC to begin with bringing us here... but I know what I saw and she completely disappeared into thin air when she got hit by that weapon."

"Maybe it's like Trizza's leg?" Mierfa offers. "She got hit by a weapon with a miniaturized Z.P.M. on it and her leg vanished and hasn't grown back right yet- so... what if this is that, but refined?"

"Wait," Tyzias turns to face her, "are you saying what I think you're saying?"

"Maybe?" Mierfa frowns. "What do you think I'm saying?"
"That these Z.P.M. enhanced swords are somehow serving as portals into the pocket dimensions within the Z.P.M. themselves?" Tyzias asks.

"Uh, no," Mierfa shakes her head. "I was thinking maybe the weapons are tearing open rifts between dimensions and are shunting whatever mass the weapon hits through to that other dimension?"

"Wait," Oliver interjects, "I think I get it. You mean you think the weapon that cut off Trizza's leg sent her leg into another dimension?"

"Sort of out of phase with the rest of her body, yeah," Mierfa nods. "It'd explain why it's not growing back right, right?"

"It would," Tyzias nods. "After all, her leg WOULD still be connected, just... not really there from our perspective? The fragment of Rejuvination might be struggling to slowly bring it back into phase with the rest of reality rather than just growing it back."

"So... whatever's happened with Sumara and the rest of ALT-7...?" Oliver begins.

"It's likely they got shunted into another dimension entirely," you conclude. "And they've been trying to find a way to contact us through a world where the walls are thin enough for bleed over to happen."

"The frozen waterfall we passed," Tyzias snaps her fingers. "It wasn't made out of metal, or actually frozen in time. It might be a bleed through effect from another dimension."

"The dinosaur footprint we passed too," you add.

"And the lava fissure," Xefros agrees.

"So... what if the animals aren't gone?" You say. "What if they're just... out of phase with the rest of the planet?"

"I think we need backup," Tyzias says. "Someone should go back to the Gate and radio for Callie. She'll have a better idea of what's going on here, I think."

"Good idea," you agree. Then, you order: "Xefros, Mierfa, go to the Gate and radio for backup. The rest of us will examine this temple and see what we can find."


"Will do," you nod in return.

"We'll be back asap," Mierfa adds, and with that, the two of them head back the way you came.

And so you head into the temple's main entrance. Using some Arai beetles and their wings as light, you're able to see clear up the ceilings to see what's carved and painted on the walls.

"Giant Lions and Giant Bats, oh my," Tyzias remarks.

"Lots of other giant creatures too," Oliver says, glancing at some depictions of other, giant sized creatures. Like giant rabbits, and chickens, and-
"Is that a freaking Giant Robot?" You ask as you enter a large circular room at the end of the entrance hallway. There, situated in the center of it, is a massive depiction of a giant robot with two planets hovering over each shoulder. A large hole in the ceiling casts a large shadow of sunlight down upon it from above, causing its metallic surface to glint and gleam.

Critical details seem to have been broken loose over time- like the face design and some kind of ornaments on the chest and shoulders- and did so some time before whatever process caused this entire planet to turn into metal, but the overall shape is definitely there. Boxy in places, streamlined shapes in others. It's a giant robot in statue form, and its sword...

Well, its sword is clearly present, even if its blade is broken into pieces and resting on the floor, making the rest of it held firmly in the robot's hand look something like a microphone stand.

"Something something, history repeating itself," Tyzias says.

"I'll say," you agree.

There seems to be a lot of fragments lying on the floor around the statue on any side of it. You wonder what these could have been? The intact parts seem to have been shaped into band like arcs, with some minor carvings depicting smaller, varied creatures on it, but... there's not enough detail left now to tell what it was.

"What is this place?" You ask.

"No idea," Tyzias says, checking her scanner. "But I'm picking up an increased level of the first type of dimensional rift signatures here, same for the second type, but it's not- Wait, it's spiking!"

You see a brief surge of light from one of the doors in the room. UH OH. You grab your radio, and warn, "Everyone brace yourselves!"

...But beyond a brief sensation of static flaring over your eyes and your ears ringing briefly from no discernable cause, nothing seems to happen.

"...Everyone okay?" You ask.

"Yeah," Tyzias says.

"Mmh," Oliver nods. "I'm good."

"Xefros, Mierfa?" You radio. "Everything okay?"

...Disconcertingly, Xefros' reply that comes back is garbled with static. "JRRR-eah just-VRSSSH-oriented for a-KAAARRRRREEEEE-tingue to Gate."

"Energy levels are back to background levels," Tyzias reports. "Should we keep going forwards?"

"Yeah, probably," you nod, and look around the room.

You see... one, two... FOUR DOORS, counting the one you entered the room with. There are three others, one directly opposite, and two off to the sides, forming an X shape of sorts.

The one you entered from has an "r" shape over it, sequestered within a box. Following that are
shapes of "I" and "<" which are all also within boxes. The "I" one looks a bit like the roman numeral for 3 inside of its box like that, but... you'd be willing to bet it's a numbering system. But what numbers are they?

There's something familiar about it, though. You think the "I" is the symbol for "1" but you don't know why you think that. Did you see this in one of Jude's Games or something?

"Let's try that one first," you decide, and head towards it.

Oliver and Tyzias follow you into the room you're labeling as "1" and you look around. You see...

On the left side of the room: there's a lot of miniature statuettes in here, depicting various monsters and warriors and even some robots. There are some odd carved decorations on the wall depicting some heroes taking small, rectangular shaped objects and inserting them into some of the figures- and then they grow into full size.

You check one of the statuettes, but find it firmly stuck to the shelf due to whatever process turned it all into metal to begin with.

On the right side of the room: there's a large relief of a-

"What the hell??" you ask, incredulously. "Why did someone go to the trouble of making a giant record player?"

It seems like the depiction here is of some giant ass record player that some tiny figures are standing on. Is it capturing some important moment of history? You're not sure. If it is, it's depicting a moment where a group of heroes seem to be trying to destroy something with the Record Player?

Attached in place of the needle is a very large diamond shaped object. It... it reminds you a little of crystals from the Bracelet- and you place your hand over your heart to feel the pieces of Administrator pulse at the thought of it. Whatever it was that these heroes- maybe the wall of statuettes is of these heroes?- were trying to do, it ends up with that giant crystal shattering.

You turn to face the far side of the room, and see a depiction of a planet shattering into pieces, each marked with a tiny diamond shape.

You decapchalogue your tablet and take a picture of everything in here, just incase its important.

"Any energy readings?" You ask.

"Mrrh, nothing in here I think," Tyzias says.

"I'm not seeing anything Sumara might have left," Oliver says.

"Let's check out the next chamber, then" you decide, heading out into the large room again, before heading across the way to the chamber with the "")" Mark- your mind wants to say its "2." You pause to take a picture of each carved sign for Jude to look at later.

You've definitely seen these symbols before, but where? You're sure it has something to do with Jude, but where would you have seen these signs IN COMBINATION with him before? Maybe... was he showing you something in his notebook once? Hmm...
The "2" room seems to be centered around a giant orrery type recreation of a solar system. One giant star in the center, with two orbiting planets. One of them seems to have two moons, and the other only has one- but it ALSO has a ring around it like Saturn does.

There seems to be a lot of breaks and cuts along the walls to depict... something, but whatever turned the stone to metal failed to conserve the paint, in this case.

You take a closer look at the planet with the rings and... is it just you or does it have carvings that look like earth's continents? Sort of, at any rate. The shapes aren't exact matches. Like, maybe it could be Earth if the seas rose, but...

"Hey, outa curiosity," you say, "someone check the other planet, see if its continents match Alternia, or are vaguely similar?"

Tyzias does... and says, "Nope. Nothing familiar here."

"Hmm, probably just a coincidence, then," you wave it off. After all, earth doesn't HAVE rings.

And so you head to the room with "<" or "3" as you want to read it by.

You think... yes. You think you have it now. At some point Jude was showing you his NOTE JOURNAL for a game that... you think was a sequel to a game you'd seen him playing before you ever came to Alternia. What was it exactly? Raven? Driven? Something like that. You recall him explaining the number system as... Base Five? Right. So, the "r" shape would end up being "4," and then a "5" would be a "1" turned sideways.

But why the hell is a number system from an earth-made video game on a planet in a whole other galaxy??

And then you enter the third room and find something you never expected to see in your entire life.

"Is that a freaking Quantum Mirror?" Tyzias asks.

"Oh, good, I'm not imagining it, then," you say.

And indeed, it very much is. The only thing in this entire temple that isn't made out of metal is a shiny, silver surface reflecting a non-metalic version of the temple back at you.

The glass, though, is very obviously CRACKED, and through those cracks emerges some VERY WARM GLOWING LIGHT.

"Well, I think we just found out where the dimensional energy leakage is coming from," Tyzias says, checking her scanner device. "This thing is pouring it out like crazy."

"More Furling tech ripped off of the Ancients' tech, you think?" You ask, cautiously sending an Arai beetle near the mirror as a distance safety test.

"Maybe," Tyzias frowns, "Hold, on I'm getting another spike of energy that's-"

FWAAAAASH! The mirror's light pulses and you lose your connection to the Arai beetle as it's swept up within it. A moment after it subsides, you get another brush of static over your vision and a ringing in your ears.
"Well... that's probably what we ran into earlier," Oliver muses.

"Bigger than the last spike, too," Tyzias says. "A lot bigger, actually. By about fifty percent."

"It's growing larger?" You ask.

"I'd guess every time it builds up a charge, it gives off a burst of dimensional energy to drain it. Then it builds bigger and bigger each time it discharges," Tyzias frowns. "The range would expand, transferring anything living across dimensions until it finally got wide enough to easily reach the Stargate."

"So it obviously peaked at some point, right?" You say. "It grabbed every animal on the planet and dropped them somewhere else, and then shrunk down to a smaller area?"

"Probably," Tyzias frowns, then says, "I'll bet you that's what happened to Sumara. She found the Mirror, escaped the dimension she came from, dialed Alternia, and then--- woosh! Vanished as the pulse wave came over her before she could get through the Gate."

"Yeah, I guess..." you trail off as something clicks. "Wait. Wait a second."

"What?" Tyzias asks.

"The trees were impossible to cut into, right?" you ask. "That's why the Empress gave up on the planet?"

"Well, if it wasn't revisionism," Tyzias muses. "Why do you ask?"

"How did Sumara carve her arrows into the trees, then, if they're impossible to cut into?" You ask.

"Well, that's..." She pauses. "Well, either the trees aren't as hard to cut into as the reports said-revisionism- or... or Sumara was never properly in our dimension at all."

"Like Trizza's out of phase leg," Oliver says.

"Right," you say. "What if this leaking dimensional energy isn't the same transfer to other worlds? I CAN'T sense that Arai beetle any more, and I'm not seeing it on the other side of that mirror."

"I..." Tyzias stares at her scanning device. "We need to do another test. I've got a sensor we can put on an Arai beetle and you can send it through the energy rift and we'll see what results we get."

You nod, summoning up another Arai, and letting Tyzias afix her sensor device onto it like a cute little doggy collar. Then, you head it over to the mirror, tell it let it wait, but remember EVERYTHING that it sees until your next order. That done, you three clear out of the room, just in case.

It doesn't take too much longer for the thing you're waiting for to happen.

"Energy Spike," Tyzias reports, and as the light levels through the doorway brighten-- Pop! You lose another Arai, but, at the same time, the first one returns to your senses. A moment later, the static and ringing return.
"What'd we get?" You ask, flying the first Arai back to you. From its perspective, it lost contact with you and idled, waiting for you to return to its senses. Then, you did.

"Not sure yet, we gotta wait for it to come back," Tyzias says, eyeing your returned beetle. "Looks like that little one made it back alright, though."

"Yeah, just a little confused, but otherwise fine," you say.

"So, what're the chances Sumara and the others are still at the Stargate and they got warped away before they could radio and confirm it was them?" Oliver asks.

"I'd give it high odds," Tyzias says. "If the readings come back as something I'd think is safe, I think the best idea is to send someone through and radio on the other side to see if they're still there, and to work out a plan from there."

"Fair enough." You then ask, "So, what do you think is going on with the Mirror?"

"Keeping in mind that I'm not an expert in these things, if I had to guess?" Tyzias shakes her head. "I think this is what happens when you shove two Quantum Mirrors into eachother. Probably the dimensional experiment that caused everything to turn metal was caused by laying over another dimension, where everything WAS made of metal, onto this dimension, where everything wasn't made of metal, and it stuck."

"So why only the people statues outside, and not the animals everywhere else?" Oliver asks.

"Probably the effect was strongest closest to the epicenter?" Tyzias muses. "Either that or there's something else we're missing, unrelated to the metalization effect."

Another Flare, another returned Arai Beetle, and you have had enough information to deem the other side safe for someone to go through.

Your name is Tyzias Entykk, and you can't help but worry as you watch Oliver Oscpin vanish into thin air.

"So... This whole temple..." Joey begins. "Who do you think built it?"

"Hell if I know," you reply. "The style doesn't match Alternian or Mofang style of construction, so I'd guess Furlings did it? But... Then again, there's something about this place that just seems... OTHER. It's entirely possible someone migrated from another dimension, and built this place as some sort of inter-dimension hubworld."

"Subway of the Multiverse?" Joey jokes.

"Something like that," you frown. "I'd love to have seen this place before it got turned to metal, though."

"Could always go through?" Joey offers. "The last Arai I sent through got some decent looks at the walls, even if the colors were all weird."
"Not worth it," you shake your head. "Whatever this place was supposed to be? It stopped being it a long time ago. Besides, we've already GOT a Quantum Mirror back on Earth. What would we do with a second, broken one?"

"Fair enough," Joey accepts. "Still, we should probably leave some probes and other kinds of observation stuff after we leave. This place could be really interesting to study, long term."

"Yeah, I agree on leaving some monitoring stuff behind, but not for that," you frown. "Remember how Baizli and Trizza were investigating a Different Metal Tree Planet that the Clowns were interested in? We thought they were after the metal trees, but... what if they were after this temple and the mirror in it?"

"Why the hell would the clowns, and by extension that English guy, want a broken down dimensional mirrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
And then you emerge into the Gate clearing, and Joey yells, "Dial it up!"

"Right!" and with a nod of confirmation, Mierfa starts slamming down the symbols for Alternia.

Joey prepares the GDO device and waits for the **WAA WAA, KAWOOOSH** to punch in the IDC. At the same time, Xefros radios, "Alternia this is ALT-1, we have Sumara and she needs immediate medical attention! We're on our way through!"

And with that done, you all head for the Gate and stumble through it in one big group.

Right as you personally go through, though, your scanner device buzzes with the alarm sound of another incoming energy surge.

...

...

...

The trip seems oddly longer as you all stumble through the Gate on the other side-- not onto the solid metal ramps of the All Your Base, but onto the dirt canyon floor of the former Nesting Cavern.

"...The hell?" Mierfa blinks. "I didn't dial this Gate."

The thing shuts down behind you, plunging the room into darkness.

"Hello?" Joey calls out... No reply. She tries again with the Radio. "Hello? Is anyone there? This is Joey Claire of ALT-1."

The only reply is static.

"Shit," you mutter. "We crossed the eventhorizon right as another energy surge happened."

"What would that even do?" Joey asks.

"I don't know," you answer, running a hand through your hair. "But I'm willing to bet it's not good."

Chapter End Notes

Cliffhanger?

Cliffhanger.
Chapter Summary

Stuck on another world, the Team tries to figure out a way to get home.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Your name is XEFROS TRITOH, and things have gone... REALLY PEAR SHAPED.

It's night time, and hanging above you in an alien sky that should be familiar is a GIANT FUCKING SUPERGATE- active, of course. Because why wouldn't it be active? The GREEN MOON is missing, and the larger of the two Pink Moons seems to have had a CHUNK bitten out of it at some point by the unstable vortex of the Supergate.

The active Supergate's eventhorizon is so bright, that even though it's clearly night time, you can't see any stars.

"So... future time jump or alternate world?" You ask.

"Probably an alternate world," Tyzias answers. "Maybe with a smidge of time travel? I don't know. I'm not with the ones who went to check on the Base."

The ones being Mierfa and Joey, who in particular took one look at the sky, then at the conspicuous absense of the Base's outline just next to the former Brooding Caverns, and decided to go check if it were there, and just invisible, or if it was ALL THE WAY back at the original crash site.

As much as you'd want to protest against it, though, you let it happen anyways because Sumara needs medical attention, and the ship, if it's there, would have had the best chance of still having supplies.

Oliver is working to keep her stable with what you've got on hand right now, but... none of you are really medics. Sure, Joey has her old EARTH VETERINARY SKILLS that have been enhanced by frequent use of SHAPER, but... there's only so much she can do without the crystal.

"Still," you say, "how do we fix this?"

"I'm not sure we can," Tyzias answers. "Beyond gating back to the planet we just left? But who knows what dimension we even landed in. Probably there isn't even a Gate on the planet like there wasn't in the world Sumara found herself in."

"Gotta be a way, though, right?" You ask. "Like... maybe we could use Earth's Quantum Mirror?"

"We'd need the power to dial out first," Tyzias says. "If the Base is gone, then it was either destroyed or they took the power core with them to wherever they went."

"Haven?" You offer. "We solar flare time travel back into the past and then hitch a ride back to the
"How far back would we have to go, though?" Tyzias asks. "We have no idea where this world diverges from ours, or what caused that!" She points up at the Supergate.

Your radio buzzes, interrupting anything you could have said.

"Xef!!" Joey begins. "You'll never believe what we just found."

And you'll be honest. You didn't believe it. Not until you saw it with your own eyes.

Not until you saw Joey and Mierfa towing what looks like an S-302 fighter behind them on while riding on what you think is an SGC issue MALP. Except, you know better. The 302 is much too large and on the back of one of its tail wings is a spray-painted number of "X-302" instead of "S-302."

This thing is one of Earth's prototype gliders.

They pull to a halt near the lip of the cavern, and you and Tyzias head over to them.

"I never thought I'd be so glad to see either of these things in my entire life," Tyzias exclaims. "Where did you find them??"

"Both were in the old cargo bay of the Base," Joey answers, a bit grimly. "It looks like this world's Dammek was a bit paranoid and hid it behind something only I could unlock."

"Dare I ask?" You ask anyways.

"We think the Joey of this world hung onto her Bracelet," Mierfa explains. "Joey felt her Admin fragments pulsing, and then the space we just walked by suddenly became filled with the glider and probe."

"It was probably stuck in a time dilation bubble," Joey says.

"Dang," Tyzias stares up at it. "So what else did you find?"

"We found some decent medical supplies on the MALP," Joey says, "so I'm gonna go get those to Sumara."

"What else?" You ask.


"How long?" You ask.

"Going by decay?" Mierfa shakes her head. "Way too long."

"Any signs of if this is a future world?" Tyzias asks.

"No, actually," Mierfa answers. "We found a journal in Joey's old room. From what wasn't faded or ruined by the weather, it looks like it's a huge divergent timeline that went pretty similarly, and yet
nothing at all like what we experienced."

"Can I see that?" Tyzias asks.

"Sure," Mierfa decaptchaalogues the book and hands it over. "Fair warning, though, it's GRIM. Even by Ancient Alternia's standards."

As Tyzias starts paging through it, you ask, "So what happened?"

"To Too Long Don't Read it?" Mierfa scowls, "Among other things, we- They missed General Kuudoh on the moons, and he launched a surprise attack. At the same time Goa'uld Motherships show up, dragging the Supergate with them through Hyperspace. One massive Kawoosh later, and suddenly more Goa'uld ships come hurtling through the Supergate."

"Goa'uld ships?" You ask. "Not Lord English?"

"That's what everyone was expecting, but no," Mierfa shakes her head. "It sounds like Anubis was the one who came through instead."

"Anubis?" You feel faint. "...How the hell did he get his hands on a Supergate to dial in from?"

"No idea," Mierfa answers. "The journal says they lost contact with Earth at the same time and were planning an evacuation to Diaspora... and Callie was preparing a surprise."

"A surprise?" You don't like the sound of that.

"Ahha!" Tyzias exclaims. "A Reversed Time Dilation Bubble based on Asgard technology AND the time machine we used to exile the Empress!"

"Do you think...?" You glance at the MALP.

"The probe's probably got some kind of time device on it, yeah," Mierfa nods. "Either that, or the glider does. Still not sure where it came from. There's no mention of it in the journal."

"So... all the skeletons...?" you begin.

"Super accelerated aging due to the bubble, probably," Tyzias says, closing the book and handing it back to Mierfa, who recapcaptchaalogues it.

"Probably," Mierfa agrees. "Anyways, we weren't able to boot up the glider in the Base, so we brought it back out here. Maybe if we can get it working one of us can fly up to the Supergate and see how it's connected."

"Incoming or outgoing, right?" You ask.

"Yeah," Mierfa nods. "If it's outgoing... maybe we can find out what's on the other side of all of this."

"Reconning the Alternate World that might hold answers to all our questions," Tyzias muses. "Sounds like a plan to me."
You're once again Tyzias Entykk and you're trying your best to figure out what the PASSCODE is to access the X-302's computers. If you can figure out where this glider came from, then maybe... maybe you can figure out what's going on with the Supergate.

**BZZT! [ERROR: IF YOU DON'T KNOW TH3 PASSWORD THEN YOU SHOULDN'T B3 HERE.]** It reads back at you in some Troll's typing quirk. This Glider's been CUSTOMIZED. It's as out of place as you and your team are.

"GAH!" You yell. "FINE! YOU STUPID FUCKING COMPUTER! I GIVE UP! BLUH BLUH! HUGE PAIN IN MY ASS!!"

The computer does not designate that with a response, and so you haul ass out of the cockpit and climb back down to the ground.

"Hey," Joey waves in greeting. "...Computer problems?"

"Yeah, someone's passcoded the damned thing," you say. "Somehow I want to say Terezi's behind it, but she's no coder, or atleast not in our world, anyways." You shake your head. "Anyways, what's up?"

"I was bandaging her up when I noticed... Well, something about Sumara's injuries don't add up," Joey says. "It looks more like she got into a fight with someone instead of being mauled by a wild animal. Plus she's got some injuries that are days old at least, maybe even weeks..."

"...Clowns?" You ask.

"Maybe," Joey shakes her head. "I dunno, I get the feeling there's something wrong. I can't tell what, though. I wish I had Shaper still. Maybe then I could figure it out..."

"Well, I can get her lying to Oliver to spare his feelings," you say. "But conversely, she didn't seem to be able to do much talking anyways when Oliver brought her over. How could she tell him that?"

"You think he lied to us?" Joey asks.

"Maybe," you say.

"Why, though?" She asks.

"I don't know," you say, "I'm a science gal, not whatever you call 'em on earth."

Joey frowns, and stares up at the Supergate looming overhead. "I'm gonna go for a walk," she decides. "Be back in a bit."

You stand there next to the X-302 for a bit longer, watching as Joey stomps off into the desert. With a sigh, you turn around and climb back into the cockpit to try and get past the computer password.

Your name is JOEY CLAIRE, and you are just, so, UGH. Frustrated by all of this. What should
have been a simple rescue mission has gone sideways and... and... UGH.
Now you're all in a deserted version of Alternia with a stupid SUPERGATE looming overhead and having to deal with the possibility that Anubis is somehow involved in Lord English's movements to return to this galaxy.

You kick at a small rock out of frustration and watch it fly and smack into a fallen piece of frog temple wall. Not much happens other than the fact that dirt and debris falls off of the top of it.

However, it seems that something that was leaning against a side you couldn't see DOES fall forwards far enough to cause some sand to fly upwards. You swear you caught a glimpse of clothing in there, somewhere, though. Another body? It wouldn't be the first one you've seen today.

You head over towards the piece of fallen wall and look around the side of it. What you find is...

Well, it's yourself.

You mean, sure, it could be ANY Alternian Skeleton, but- that horn shape? That jacket, skirt, and shoes? The BRACELET hanging limply from the left wrist?
It's pretty obviously the you of this world.

"Why does this keep happening?" You ask yourself, and receive no response because she's dead.

You kneel down and, gingerly, roll your corpse over onto its back.

Ah, yup, this is definitely A you, alright. That's the shirt Roxy had custom printed for you with the green star on it from your bedroom back in Hauntswitch... and it has a rather large burn hole on the stomach- a staff blast? Probably.

You start searching her pockets and find her SYLLADEX- lots of empty cards that you figure would have at one point contained Arai Beetles, and a few filled ones. There's her Laser Cutter- you leave it be- and a...

Oh.

You decaptchalogue a small necklace, similar to the one Xefros made you for the Bracelet Crystals, except different. This one has three shaped pendants on it that you can click open. Inside the Diamond, front and center, is a picture of this worlds' Xefros, inside the Heart is Mierfa, and inside the Spade is-

"Huh," You blink. "Trizza??"

Well, you can honestly say you didn't see that one coming. Looks like she was olive blooded in this world, though- maybe she and Polypa switched places? How weird of a difference is THAT? If the journal this world's you wrote mentioned that, it was on pages that got ruined. (You try not to think about any other possibilities.)

What else is there? Oh, a small sheet of paper with some rather sloppy hand writing on it.

"Jude, if you ever read this, I'm sorry. I'm long dead. Shit got bad here. Anubis showed up out of nowhere and we got bombed to hell. Dammek and Callie rigged up a reverse time bubble, hoping to trap the bastard inside. I'm not sure if it worked or not. I'm kinda bleeding out in the desert
right now. Hahaha... why is that funny? I love you, little bro," and that's where it ends.

You re-captchalogue the letter, and place it back with her body. If this world's Jude ever comes to find her, he'll find this letter.

What else is there? Looks like... Oh! A set of keys for either the X-302 or the MALP, and you'll be willing to bet it's the 302's. That should help Tyzias, a bit, maybe...

And... hrum, there's a small silver knife in her sylladex that seems to have been molded in the shape of... a guitar sword?? "How silly!" you'd say if the thing weren't coated in blood stains, and contained within a plastic evidence bag.

You're not sure why, but you take it with you. You have a feeling it might be useful.

Finally... the elephant in the room.

You carefully pry off the Bracelet from her wrist and examine it.

It seems that it broke open at some point and the other you had taped it together with duct tape. It looks like it went through hell. The Admin crystal is completely shattered and lifeless, Rejuvination is missing entirely, Hyperbeam is split clean down the middle... Poor thing. Communion is blackened as if it was put through a fire, and Regent is- well- it looks like all the life was just sucked out of it and it shriveled up into a tiny sliver of an echo of its former self.

You unravel the duct tape and see that Reaper is... mostly intact, and pulsing softly. And as for Shaper...

It's intact.

Holy shit SHAPER IS INTACT!!!

You decaptchalogue your own necklace for the crystals, and gingerly replace Reaper and Shaper back onto it, then you wear it again.

After a moment's pause, you feel all of Shaper's databases come back to you, and Reaper's--

OH.

Oh wow.

The other you sealed herself into Reaper to preserve herself. She's still, well, not entirely alive, but... her soul is still there, possessing the crystal like that Lich once did.

You don't dare nudge her awake just yet. If you could clone her a body, like you did with Thor...

Shaper, though. You can work with Shaper. Maybe now you can figure out what's been bugging you with Sumara.

You're once again Tyzias Entykk and you're snapped out of your musings over the passcode when a
set of keys are flung over the wall of the Glider and onto your head. Somehow, the keychain's ring loops around the top of one of your horns and spins around until it lands on your skull.

"What the?" You grab at the keys, gingerly lifting them off your horn.

"See if those help!" Joey calls out from outside. "I'm heading back to check on Sumara."

"I... Okay!" You call back, and then look at the keys.

...Keys?? Where did Joey find KEYS??

Still... hmm.. You look them over and see an etching carved into the back of one, "There's no place like..."

The other side has the concluding word, which you type into the computer on a hunch.

[HOME.]

The computer boots up with a DING and a buzzing hum and then some fancy jingle.

"Hah!" You laugh. "Take that stupid computer!" Then, you sigh, and say, "I should've thought of that a lot earlier."

You're back to being Joey Claire, and you give Xefros and Mierfa a smile as you head past them and their enthralling conversation about JUST WHAT could be powering that Supergate for so long if nothing's going through it and then into the small room you set aside for Sumara to recover in.

You reach out one hand and touch her shoulder- feeling with Shaper everything that's wrong with her body.

A lot of internal injuries consistent with being beaten up by some large blunt object. A lot of fractured and healed over bones... And what do we have here??

There's some fresh cuts in the back of her throat and along her spinal column near her brain that indicate...

"That can't be right," you mutter. Moving your hand to check the back of Sumara's neck from the outside- old, scar tissue in the shape of an X. It's entirely possible that she DID get body jacked at some point because there WERE JAFFA on Apophis' Mothership that were probably near needing new Symbiotes. But the question then remains, where is it NOW? Because it's certainly NOT inside Sumara's body at all at the moment.

You're about to start trying to heal her up when an arm suddenly wraps around your neck and another one grabs your arm and drags it away from Sumara.

With such a firm grip, you're yanked backwards away from the girl, by several steps, and fucking OLIVER whispers into your ear- "Sssh! Now don't go ruining the surprise now!" He giggles- no, not Oliver.
With Shaper pulsing through your mind once again, you get a glimpse at Oliver's body and see there's a fucking Symbiote wrapped around his neck. You're not sure what you can do to it that won't hurt Oliver, though. You're finding it hard to breathe, though, right now. That probably isn't helping any.

"You just had to get curious, didn't you?" The Goa'uld giggles again. "Couldn't let it go? Hehehe... Well. Unfortunately for poor Oliver, the insanity inside him just couldn't be contained and you had to kill him with your sword when you caught him killing poor Sumara."

As you're processing that statement, you feel him pressing his mouth to the back of your neck- OH. HELL. NO.

The Symbiote vanishes from your vision of Oliver's body, and his arm loosens from around your neck just enough to let you scream as you feel a lot of PAIN.

...

You black out for a few seconds, but when you come too again, you can FEEL that damned snake inside your head, but it's... it's not in control?

You're still you.

What the hell??

You stumble to your feet, and run a check over everything. Admin, as intact as it has been since you lost the Bracelet, and feeling smug about something. Shaper, also intact, and reporting that when you screamed you lashed out at the symbiote with it and-

And with Reaper at the same time?? It's empty?

No, it's empty of an alternate Joey Claire. Right now it's got the soul of the Symbiote inside it right now, lashing out angrily against its new prison, and finding nowhere to go because Admin is sitting firmly on it. But then where's...?

[Uh... Hello?] your own voice echoes from within your skull... originating from the Symbiote.
[What's going on?]

"...Oh fuck me," you groan.

[I... What? What the hell?? What's going on!?!??]

"Joey!" Mierfa and Xefros come running in.

[They're- What!?! How are they alive!??]

"What's wrong?" Xefros asks, glancing at an unconscious Oliver on the floor, then back to you.

'Sssh!' You tell yourself. *I'll explain everything in a minute, just- calm your jets, me!*

[I- okay.]
"A Goa'uld was in Sumara," you say. "Then it jumped to Oliver, and then tried jumping into me when I caught on..."

"Does that mean...?" Mierfa glances at Oliver.

"I lucked out," you say, grabbing at your necklace, and pulling it out to show them. "I found the me of this world and her Bracelet. Reaper and Shaper were on it. Other me was dead, shoved herself into Reaper to save herself... and when the snake tried jumping into me I lashed out at it."

"So... uh..." Xefros looks at you, very concerned. "Is the Goa'uld dead?"

"It's mind and soul? Hell yes," You say, grinning. "Now IT'S trapped in Reaper and the me that was in there is inside the symbiote... that's in my head."

"Ew," Mierfa laughs. "That's... that's really, really weird. But really, REALLY lucky too."

"Tell me about it," you groan. "If I hadn't found the other me out there... who knows what would've happened."

[You're from another world?] other you asks.

'Yeah, we are.' You then turn back to check on Sumara and are about to start healing her when Shaper suddenly detects a surge of self regeneration starting within Sumara's body. "Oh what now?!"

And then Sumara Minami's skin started to glow like a light bulb.

"Sorry, guys," Oliver appologizes. "I wasn't expecting her to suddenly kiss me when I'm checking on her. I didn't mean to get jacked."

"It's fine," Your name is Mierfa Durgas, and you feel a little weird about this situation. "I don't think any of us were expecting a Symbiote jacking to happen in another dimension."

"Oww..." Ah, and speaking of Sumara, Joey's helping her onto her feet. "Anyone get the number of that Clown Car? I feel like I got hit by a fleet of 'em."

So a Goa'uld jumped into Sumara, then into Oliver, and then into Joey, but Joey had lucked out and found this world's Reaper and Shaper crystals, and the soul of this world's her. When the snake tried taking Joey over, she shoved its mind into Reaper, and the other her into the snake. That's the story she's told, and you honestly believe it. Then, ontop of ALL OF THAT, Sumara suddenly turns Rainbow Drinker.

But what the hell? How lucky did you all end up being for this to work out that way??

"So," Xefros begins. "Now that we've gotten everyone back on their feet, how the hell are we getting home?"

"I've got the answer to that!" And just like as if it were scripted, down the stairs comes Tyzias, a grin on her face. "We use the X-302 glider."
"...Excuse me?" you ask. "How do we do that?"

"It's got a Dimension Drive built into it," Tyzias explains. "Its pilots were a John Sheppard and Argo Lalonde whose Earth was under attack by Anubis, who wanted the technology. They jumped from their reality to another, and found THAT one under attack by Lord English who just so happened to have parked a Supergate in orbit over the planet. They went through it, and, well..."

"We don't have to guess what happened next," Joey picks up from there. "The other me remembers it. They came through the Supergate while it was active from Earth to Alternia, and wound up in the middle of the fight here. They managed to land, met up with this world's me, and she tried to send them through the gate to Diaspora before the whole place got bombed." She shakes her head. "I don't think they made it, from what the other me remembers."

"But because they left the glider to be inside a time dilation field INSIDE a time acceleration field, the glider was left intact while the rest of the planet aged rapidly,"

Tyzias adds. "Right now, we have an intact dimension drive, a lot of fuel to burn, and a physical space we can use as a tether to jump across worlds."

"Still don't see how that can get us back," you say. "We don't know what 'way' to go with the jump. We could wind up in a worse situation rather than a better one."

"Oh, no, I agree," Tyzias says. "We can't use the Glider directly to jump- mostly because we have way too many people to fit inside it. What I'm suggesting is we connect the drive to the Stargate, activate both, and dial from THIS Alternia back to the Alternia we tried to dial originally- ours."

"You think that will work?" Xefros asks.

"It's the only shot we have at getting home," Tyzias answers. "If our luck holds out, this stargate is still connected to our universe in some way, and if we use the drive to power that connection, it should just send us back along the same road."

"If this works," Joey says, "I'm getting Callie to blacklist that planet from the network. It's way too dangerous for anybody to stumble into."

"Agreed," you say.

"Same," Xefros nods.

"What planet are we blacklisting again?" Sumara asks, clearly not having understood a single thing you were just talking about.

---

You're once again Xefros Tritoh, and you're waiting expectantly while Tyzias hooks up the X-302 to the Stargate. It was a LOT of work to wheel the thing down in here, but in the end, it was done, and it's in position.

"The one concern I have about all of this," you voice, "is what about the Supergate? Won't that interfere?"
"If this were a normal wormhole, it might," Tyzias muses, "but since we're going to be going between dimensions... it probably won't." She then waves you off, adding, "Go find Joey and let her know we'll be ready in a few minutes."

"Well, okay then," and with that, you head out of the cavern and walk up the road a short ways to find your Moirail, sitting back against a rock, and talking to herself.

Literally, because now there's another version of herself in her head.

"Really? Polypa's not the heiress?" the other version asks.

"Nope, that's Trizza in my world," your Joey answers a few moments later.

"Seriously? Wow... I don't know what to think about that," the other her says.

A lesser person might suspect it was one person acting, but you know your Moirail. There's really two versions of her talking to each other right here and now.

"So... aren't you going to turn back now that you've got Shaper again?" the other Joey asks.

There's a bit of a pause, a longer one than the switching between speakers. Then, your Joey speaks, "Even if I wanted to, not with you inside my head. There's no telling what'll happen if you're still connected and feeling all of that at the same time I'm shifting from one way to another."

"Yeah... okay, that's fair enough, but... 'even if you wanted to?'" The other Joey asks. "You're saying you don't want to?"

"Did you have people on your Earth who wanted to stop you from going back to Alternia just so they could get their hands on the Bracelet?" Your Joey asks. "They might've tried saying it was because we were 'too young' or whatever, but, they were pretty insistent to the point it was obviously about the bracelet."

"I don't really remember running into any trouble like that," the other Joey says. "But... maybe I blocked it out. I dunno."

You decide this is a good enough chance as any to interject with a cough. "Uh, Joey?"

"Yeah, Xef?" Joey turns and smiles at you, it's a sad smile, one that says she's trying to keep from yelling out in frustration. "What is it?"

"Tyzias says we're almost ready?" You say.

"Right, thanks," and with that, Joey gets to her feet.

"Are you okay?" You ask.

"Yeah, I'm... alright," Joey says. "I'll be better once I can clone a new body for my other self and get her out of my head, though. Ah, no offense other me. It's just so weird, having another voice in my head, especially knowing it's another version of me... I just don't think either of us can keep that up for long."
You put your arm around her and pull her in tight for a hug. "At least it's the equivalent of a Tok'ra you ended up with, right?"

"Heh, yeah," Joey nods. "That Goa'uld is not happy inside Reaper, but they can just damn well sit still and wait for us to get back to our reality. Then we find out what it knows, and exorcise it into the void."

"Sounds like a plan," you say.

And thus, you arrive in the Gate room just as Tyzias climbs into the 302 and announces, "Starting Drive start up and Dialing Sequence!"

The engines start to make the most unnatural whining sound you've ever had the displeasure of hearing.

And then the Stargate starts to spin.

"All good so far!" Tyzias says.

"Should we wait somewhere in case it explodes?" Mierfa asks, and the question causes Oliver and Sumara to seek a hiding place.

"Nowhere would be safe enough," Tyzias answers. KA-THWUNK! "Ah! Chevron one Locked!"

"Oh, well, that's comforting, I guess," Mierfa frowns, and then meanders over towards you and Joey, then grabbing Joey's left hand with her right. "Sup?"

"A Supergate in the sky?" Joey answers.

"Salad," you reply.

"Both good ones," Mierfa appraises.

KA-THWUNK! "Chevron two Locked!"

The 302's engines speed up in pitch, annoyingly enough.

"So... uh," you glance at Sumara and Oliver. "What are we going to tell Okurii about the whole Rainbow Drinker thing?"

"That it's a thing that happened?" Joey offers.

"I think Lanque will want to talk with her," Mierfa says.

KA-THWUNK! "Chevron three Locked!" Tyzias laughs. "So far so good! We're not approaching burn out or overload levels!"

Well, that is good, you guess. You just hope it holds out.
You are now OKURII LEIJON, and you're heading back to the All Your Base's Gate Room as the incoming wormhole alarm goes off.

Chances are, this is ALT-1 returning from PXR-816 after searching for ALT-7's missing team members. How the hell they GOT onto that planet though, is a question you're going to ask.

Right as you arrive at the stairs to the bridge, the Gate goes WAA WAA! KAWOOOOSH against the shield, and you ascend.

"What do we got, Zebede?" you ask.

"IDC and incoming radio transmission," Zebede answers, putting it onto the speakers.

Xefros' voice comes out, reporting, "Alternia this is ALT-1, we have Sumara and she needs immediate medical attention! We're on our way through!"

"IDC confirmed," Zebede says, "lowering shield." And so he does.

The Gate sits there for a few moments, before the wormhole flickers, as if unstable.

"What the hell?" You ask. "What was that?"

"Some kind of energy surge from the other side of the wormhole," Zebede answers. "It's- wait, what? We're receiving an IDC again."

"What?" You ask.

"It's Joey's team's code again," Zebede says. "I wonder why it repeated?"

"That's-" You can't say anything else because in that moment, because a moment later, Joey's team comes stumbling through the Stargate, including Sumara, who looks rather oddly not in need of medical attention.

The group of them look around, looking mightily relieved, even as the Stargate shuts down.

"THANK YOU, TYZIAS!" and then Oliver pulls the girl into a hug.

"Er- you're welcome?" Tyzias blinks, looking unsure of the sudden gesture of affection.

"We made it!" Joey laughs. "I never thought I'd be so glad to see this Gate room again!"

"Hey!" you wave at them to get their attention. "What the hell just happened?"

"That's a long story, Ma'am," Mierfa answers, smiling.

Xefros laughs, "But the long story cut short is that we didn't explode!"

...Huh. "I get the feeling this is going to be one hell of a debriefing."
"Yeah," Joey nods. "But first we need to get Callie to utterly blacklist that planet we just came from with a new security program."

"Why?" You ask.

"It'd be best just not to risk any chances," Joey says. "I'll explain later. Just radio Callie and tell her to get to work on it."

Well, you can't argue with that.

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**EARTH DATE: NOVEMBER 6TH, 1998.**

**DIASPORA DATE: 5/11/0002.**

"So- beyond the wormhole flickering, there wasn't any significant time delay between our first wormhole getting redirected to another world, and our return wormhole intercepting back to this Gate," Tyzias shakes her head as you and she sit down in the cafeteria. "Madness, I tell you. Pure and utter madness. I can't believe it."

Your name is Mierfa Durgas, and you can't believe it either.

"We lucked out is what we did," you say. "At least we got something good out of it. Boldir and Ashler are ripping apart that Goa'uld's mind apart for everything it knows about Shadre's plans."

"Plus, we got a functioning Shaper Crystal back," Tyzias says. "Things were starting to get a bit rough around here."

"I'm not sure that's a good thing," you say. "I asked Joey last night and she said after she finished cloning her other self a new body she wasn't sure what she was going to do with it. I think she said something about giving it to someone else for safe keeping."

"Really?" Tyzias blinks. "Why? If she keeps it, then she can shapeshift at will again."

"That's just it," you say. "Joey's cloning her otherself a human body. For sending back to Earth on a full time basis. I don't think she ever plans on going back to being human again unless it's absolutely necessary."

"Hmm," Tyzias frowns. "While I can see the added benefit in perpetuating the misconception that Joey Claire the Troll is a different person from Joey Harley the Human, I don't see why we're not keeping that power on hand for medical reasons."

"I think we got too reliant on it, personally," you say. "We got used to having the magic bandage that could solve every problem. That's not to say we can't call back whoever Joey gives it to for really bad emergencies, but..." You frown. "I think I can see where my Matesprit is coming from with all of this."

"Mmh," Tyzias nods, then changes the subject, "So what about Sumara? I haven't heard anything."
"Oh, she's retiring from the field," you say. "She said after nearly dying and being reborn as a Drinker, it'll be safer if she stays around to help tend to the Caverns, at least for a while, at any rate, while she gets used to her new powers."

"And Oliver?" Tyzias asks.

"Reassigned as leader to the new team that Okurii's been putting together for new recruits," you say. "Apparently someone Xefros knew from before all this Stargate stuff started is joining it too."

"Really, who?" Tyzias asks.

"Um... Xaolon, I think her name is?" You shrug. "I didn't really ask for too much info."

"Xaolon?" Tyzias frowns, mulling over the name. "Wasn't she the girl working under Marsti a few weeks ago?"

"Probably," you shrug.

"Hope she's better at fighting than mopping," Tyzias mutters.

Your name is Joey Claire, and you sigh in relief as you finish your work of peeling away all of the Arai Barnacle podding, leaving just a body ready and waiting. You look upon your own human body from the outside again for the first time in... Well. Since before Giza.

It looks so calm right now, slumbering without anything inside that brain of hers.

There's no personality in this body, just like with Thor. But you're not going to just transplant the personality straight into her like you did with Thor. You've got to get this snake out of your head, after all.

'Any objections?' you ask your other self. *This is the point you voice 'em, otherwise.*

[...No, I'm not seeing anything wrong. I just... was it really necessary to make the scar on the shoulder that big?] the other you asks, referring, of course, to the decorative fake scar you've added to the other you's left shoulder- most of it centered over the heart. There's some smaller fake scarring over the left wrist where the Bracelet should have been.

Would have been, you mean.

It's all a cover story to properly convince the NID that there's no longer any Bracelet for them to hunt after. A mission gone wrong- the bracelet exploding and causing damage to the body. This Joey will go back to Earth perfectly normal. So normal, in fact, that you'd managed to suppress any powers related to the SCRATCH DOCTOR D.N.A. in her system.

Nobody will be the wiser. (Except for maybe the people without eyes.)

'Don't worry. It's going to fade over time,' you console your other self. *Should be gone completely in about a year.*

*I know, I just...* a sigh. *Okay. I'm ready.*
And with that, you kneel down and bring your face close to your other self's face, and slowly, gently, pry her mouth open with your hand. A moment to steel yourself for the quick burst of pain to come, and you open your mouth and bring it as close to hers as you're comfortable with.

'See you on the other side,' you say and then-

There's the cut and the burst of pain from your throat as the Symbiote containing your other self jumps out through your mouth and into hers, and once it's gone through and the body of the other you gasps sharply for breath, you finally back away and quickly start using Shaper to undo the damage to your body. You won't have any scars from your brief possession, though you'll keep the Naquadah in your blood just in case it'll come in handy down the line.

You're blessedly alone inside your skull again.

"Grrk-" the other you mumbles, and then heaves over onto her side to spit out some blood. "BLUH! Urgh..." She wipes away at her mouth, then looks up at you with green eyes that flash for but a moment. "Thank you," She finally says with raspy, unused vocal chords.

"You're welcome," you say in return, and then run a quick check up on her body with Shaper. "...Everything looks like it's in order..." You pause as you realize something rather startling that you somehow glossed over earlier because you really didn't want to look too closely at that Symbiote inside your head. "Although, I just noticed something that I didn't have the chance before."

"What's that?" the other you asks.

"The Symbiote you've got isn't completely physically mature yet- completely enough to take over a body entirely, sure- but you're not quite done growing yet..." You blink, and then inform her of the probably not-so-great news, "Congratulations, you're a Queen."

"I'm a what?" the other you asks, staring in confusion, and then, slowly, some dawning horror. "I'm a Queen!?!" Oh, she's so shocked to the point that she actually managed to do the voice changing thing, and that just shocks her even more to the point of putting her hands against her throat.

...Oh, the poor thing. You feel a little bad about telling her that now.

"Now," you begin. "I could just use Shaper and have the Symbiote start merging with your body, eventually being absorbed entirely once you've imprinted on the brain. But, I figure you'd want to know, at least, in case you ever decided to work with the Tok'ra or something."

The other you seems completely un-amused by your tone of voice, but still, manages to say, without going all loud and boomy with her voice, "I'll think about it."

And with that, you smile, and say, "Then I'll just leave you to get cleaned up and dressed."

Then, you leave the room as fast as you can because you really do NOT want to be around another version of yourself again after having her so intimately close to your own head.

Besides, you've got a crystal to deliver for safekeeping.

Chapter End Notes
Well, wasn't THAT a fun little jaunt down a side story?

:33

DIASPORA DATE: 5/21/0002.

Your name is Jade Jackson, and you really weren't expecting your daily checkin at the SGC to see if your Bio-dad was busy or not to, well... To get to the point where an army of shiny metal bugs would be unleashed on the base and forcing anyone with any profcency at mass destruction to clear them out.

You weren't armed with a shot gun or any other kind of rapid fire ammunition device, but you've got your MARBLES, and WOW do they still pack a punch against Replicators. Maybe even MORE SO given that these ones are made of local earth metals and not fancy alien metals from another galaxy!

But that's skipping ahead a bit, isn't it?

How did all of THIS get started?

Well....

Your name is JADE JACKSON, and you're staring at the Metal Bug in a Glass Box.

"Are you SURE this is safe?" You ask, regarding the immobile REPLICATOR.

"No," everyone in the room chimes in. Everyone in this case being Colonel O'neill, Major Carter, and Teal'c.

Your Bio-Dad, DANIEL JACKSON, is talking with the "nice" robot girl who MADE THIS REPLICATOR as a "TOY."

You say "Nice" and "Toy" with MASSIVE SARCASAM QUOTES because A: She threw your Bio-dad into a bookshelf when he tried to tell her she was a robot, and B: made him the replicator "toy" as an apology for throwing him into a bookshelf.

"The glass is bullet and impact resistant," Carter says, "but we've never tested it against replicator acid."

You readied your bag of marbles, and Teal'c primed a shotgun.
Colonel O'Neill made his excuse to go check in on Daniel's progress with the robot- "Reese."

"So... what do we know about these things?" You ask.

"She took a pair of scissors and made a single block out of it," Carter says, "so she's able to take matter and re-arrange it on a molecular scale thanks to her inbuilt nanites." She brings up some images on a monitor showing the various Replicators encountered over the years. "The ones Reese make seem to be a lot more compact, and are smaller despite using more pieces comparatively to their larger, more streamlined forms."

You look at the smallest known instance of Replicator from Thor's galaxy from before the Mofang Replicators influenced their design ideology. Similar shape, yes, but a lot less pieces. Thinner, streamlined.

"So this robot's making first gen Replicators?" You ask.

"With very basic materials too," Carter nods. "I'd imagine the Replicators Thor's galaxy encountered were around... probably five generations removed by that time? And by the time the Mofang Replicators were introduced to them, I'd wadger... probably atleast ten, maybe twenty major generations removed from the first generation."

"So... one major question," you then ask, "if Replicators originated in OUR Galaxy, why did nobody run into them before Thor's people did in their galaxy?"

"Who knows," Carter shakes her head. "It's-"

Skreeeee....

You all freeze, and turn to look at the Replicator in the box. It's cowering, like it's afraid, all sort of crunching in on itself.

"I think Daniel upset her," Carter says, worried.

"Agreed," Teal'c grunts, taking aim with his shotgun.

The Replicator then Chitters, taking up an angry, defensive pose.

You grab some marbles and start orbiting them.

"And now she's probably mad..." Carter checks a live feed and oh- yeah. That robot girl is yelling mad at Bio-dad. "It looks like her emotional state is being broadcast onto the Replicator. I wonder if what happened on her planet was her losing control over her emotions?"

REEEEEEEE! The Replicator then throws itself at the glass box- CRACK!

"Does it really matter?" You ask, watching as the Replicator seems to consider its cage a bit more, and then throws itself at another wall. CRACK!

An idea strikes you, and you reach out and grab the Replicator with your orbiting powers as it tries to jump again, only to find it can't move.
You can feel it struggling against your grip, though. It makes an angry, definitely annoyed chittering sound.

"How long can you hold it?" Carter asks.

"Not sure-"

The answer comes in the form of the bug breaking apart in your grip- shattering into pieces and reforming into a newer configuration outside of your grasp. It then sprays out its acid at the glass, which starts melting.

"That long?" You say just before the Replicator launches itself through one of the damaged walls-

**BANG!**

Teal'c shotgun goes off, breaking the bug in half. Before it can even try to reform, you throw your marbles at it and BLAM! It scatters into pieces.

You glance back at the live feed of the room with the robot girl, and see her looking like she herself had been shot.

"She felt us kill it," You realize.

"That's concerning," Carter says, "but not as concerning as the fact that the Replicator just made an escape attempt." She goes for a phone, and dials Hammond's number.

Annnnd after that it turned out the Robot Girl had made TWO of the bugs to begin with and hid one away when she presented the first to bio-dad.

The second one started replicating inside the walls and then "Reese" made her escape attempt not too long after.

Now everyone in the SGC is shooting at the bugs and blasting them to pieces while the robot girl's sealed herself inside the Gate room and is trying to hack into the mainframe to dial out.

Bio-dad's in there trying to talk to her and get her to stop, or better, shut her down somehow... but you get the feeling it's not going to help much.

And then, barely seven minutes into this whole fight, the Replicators just all up and fall to pieces.

...You hear Colonel O'neill radio that the Android was neutralized, and you guess he got a kill shot in.

You just hope that kill shot didn't ruin any future chances at stopping all of the Replicators once and for all.

**11.17.98 / 5.22.02**
hey journal!!

rose is off world right now because kanaya asked her to show up and john is busy with his own art project so...

right school assigned an ART PROJECT to make some kind of MONSTER today, to be turned in before the winter break. i've had replicators on the brain so i decided to build one of the dastardly bugs that took centerstage in yesterday's living, and later dreaming, nightmare. why? because, to be honest, for as destructive as the things are, the one that was caged within that small glass box yesterday was kind of cute. i could see how some people might consider it a TOY, once upon a time.

first, i asked jude to lend me a bunch of popsicle sticks to build a frame with. and while he's hunting those up, i requested roxy get me some SILICONE MOLDING MATERIAL and some MODELING CLAY! WHOO! exciting stuff, yea?

since we also had the silicone stuff on hand for some reason (alec seems to have bought a suspicious amount of resin AND silicone recently, i think he's planning on making something for christmas hehe), i carved up a bunch of fake replicator blocks, and then made a frame to set them in. then, i made the silicone mixture and made myself a MASS TEMPLATE for the blocks i'm going to use. from there, all i need is some RESIN and that's easy enough to get because, again alec's bought a bunch of the stuff.

so yeah. now i'm just waiting for that stuff to cool down and jude to get me the popsicle sticks to start building with. in the mean time, im gonna see if i can find some silver paint to spray this stuff with.

-Jade<3

11/18/1998, 5/23/02

@JADE

you nearly gave me a heartattack today when i came home from the sgc and saw that pile of silver bricks sitting on the table! kudos on the excellent replication of the replicator bricks, but still... give a guy a little warning next time?

anyways! i got news from the sgc! Rose is coming back with Kanaya tomorrow. no idea why, but apparently Rose has gotten her disguise technique working sort-of flawlessly and Kanaya wants to stay on earth for a while.

NOT sure why they're being so cagey about who else is coming back with them, though. feels like i'm out of the loop on something here.

-John
@JOHN

XP i told you why i was going home early instead of going with you to the sgc, you silly!
and thank you for telling me RIGHT NOW while you were writing it into this journal. i've got a
wonderful idea to show rose my art project! ^owo^

-Jade<3

uh oh.
-John

Today's Earth Date: November 19th, 1998.

Today's Diaspora Date: 5/24/02.


John, I blame you for Jade's little 'prankster tendencies' as of late, and especially considering what
Kanaya and I saw in the kitchen this afternoon. A Replicator? Seriously? At least Cassandra was
there to tell us that it wasn't real.

Jade, it's a very convincing replica and I'm sure you're going to get an A+ on that Art Project. But...
could you please not leave the damned thing hiding in the bread box next time? I'm with John in
how that nearly gave me a heart attack. Just be glad all I did was phase it out of reality for a few
minutes instead of teleporting it into the sun!

As for what you're missing, I'll tell you in private all the juicy, personal details personally, in person,
phased out of existence in another reality.
In the mean time, here's the cliff notes version, dear Log-book.

Joey Harley has returned to Earth after a Mission Gone Wrong resulted in her bracelet exploding
and nearly killing her, and, as we've ALL BEEN AWARE for some time now, not that the
governments of Earth seem to care to understand this finer point, she is not the same person as Joey
Claire, the friendly Alternian girl who could pass as her twin.

As previously noted in my previous entries, after some practice, I managed to get a rather flawless
human transformation going. I think it was a bit easier with Kanaya being so close to Human to
begin with, being from another world that wasn't even Alternia. I barely had to do anything beyond
cosmetics. At Kanaya's request and direction, I've essentially brough one of her long thought of
'Human-Personas' to life. This Is All My Work And No, Any Creepy Government Agents Spying On
A 15/16 Year Old Girl's Journal, Not The After Effects Of Any Alien Bracelets.

The only one in existence in this reality has been destroyed, after all.
As previously written, I have often pondered how Alternia could eventually connect to Earth through Quantum Mirrors in the past, but honestly, this is a subject that's best left to people like Callie or Tyzias to work on in the privacy of their own labs, rather than for me to speculate in an often stolen Log-book.

In news that I fear I must muse upon privately, lest we fear the prying eyes of a jackal demon or a giant metal snake, there are other events at play that seem to be building up to something of grave importance. John, Jade, I'll be including this in our private meeting, and Will Be Informing Argo When I Get The Chance To Speak To Her Again Tomorrow.

_Rose Lalonde._

"What's with capitalizing every word?" You're once again Jade Jackson, and you look up from a rather oddly written sentence.

"I'm insistently telling anyone who isn't supposed to read the book that's reading it what the truth of the matter is," Rose shrugs.

"Like telling them that I'm not here and'll be filled in tomorrow?" Argo asks, sitting on her perch on the headboard of your bed, which, like everything else in your room, is currently 'out of phase' with the rest of the outside world, courtesy of Rose's slowly growing proficiency with drawing in larger and larger spaces into her bubble of altered reality.

"Exactly," Rose nods, then glances at Kanaya. "Do you want to tell them or should I?"

Kanaya, who currently looks like she's stepped right off of some BOLLYWOOD MOVIE SET, smiles. "It's not really either of our stories to tell, though, is it?"

"Let's start with the obvious omission, then," Rose says. "I only superficially had minimal involvement with Kanaya's current appearance."

The glimmering, twinkling light of a purple gemstone on Kanaya's forehead heralds a brief shift in appearance, returning Kanaya to a full Alternian form.

"Joey entrusted me with Shaper for safe keeping," Kanaya says.

"I thought it was destroyed with the rest of the bracelet," Argo says. "Twice over at that!"

"Joey's team wound up briefly stranded in a parallel universe," Rose explains. "This version of Shaper came from there. Our cover story is that I'm the one doing this trick, instead of Kanaya abusing the blatant cheating inherent in owning the full crystal."

And with another twinkle of light, Kanaya's grey skin shifts to the previous human skin tone, and her horns vanish entirely. Her eyes remain a vivid shade of JADE GREEN, however. "Hopefully, with Rose observing while I perform this trick, she'll be able to pick up the power to grant a shifted form to someone else much quicker."

"So, this other world," John begins. "There was something else they learned there, right?"

"It was an alternate series of events where, somehow, Anubis simultaneously attacks Alternia while
Lord English attacks Earth," Kanaya answers. "Both worlds had Supergates that were connected to each other in orbit."

"Oof," Argo grunts. "That's a bitter pill to swallow."

"It's of everyone's opinion back on Alternia that Anubis and Lord English are working together, somehow," Rose explains.

"That's not entirely unsurprising," John remarks. "Things haven't quite been adding up, after all. Apophis and SG-1 just so coincidentally winding up in a Clown's trap? A video of his execution SOMEHOW winding up in our galaxy?"

"Yeah," you agree, grimly nodding. "There's a lot of tiny details that just haven't added up if they were working alone."

"Yeah," Argo agrees, "like Doctor Jackson complaining that Colonel Simmons had the smell of grape soda on his breath!"

"Yes," Kanaya says, "one would not think much of it, considering he soon announced he was working for Anubis, but the Alternian Clowns of several realities drink it like it's going off of production."

"I think the questions we need to be asking," Rose says, "is why they're working together, for how long, and what are their end goals?"

"Those are all really good questions," you say. "I just don't think we have enough information to figure out any of it."

Chapter End Notes

So... how many people have been able to start piecing it together? That Anubis and Lord English are working together, I mean.

In CAHOOTS, as it were.

Anybody?

---

Anyways, Reese. Boy is SHE a can of mechanical worms to deal with. If she didn't kickstart a bunch of plot points that lead towards the eventual downfall of the Replicators in canon, I'd be half tempted to get rid of her entirely.

DIASPORA DATE: 6/7/0002.

Your name is JONAS QUINN. You are a scientist working at the KELOWNAN RESEARCH FACILITY on NAQUADRIA and are an ADVISER to FIRST MINISTER VALIS, leader of your people, who approved the development and testing of the NAQUADRIA BOMB- a weapon with potential of great mass destruction.

You're fairly smart for your age, you'd like to think, given your MULTIPLE DEGREES from Kelowna's most prestigious universities- included among them ANCIENT KELOWNAN HISTORY and SOCIAL STUDIES. As such... you'd like to believe that the unsteady feeling you've had in your stomach all morning is nothing more than a minor bit of indigestion.

However...

There's something nagging at you.

It's this test today. This demonstration that's going to be happening while the visitors from ANOTHER WORLD are here. They showed up yesterday and have been touring the place, their world eager for an alliance with your world, but mostly because of the Naquadria involved in the test. Most of them are going to be out while today's test is going on.

You've had your reservations about all of this bomb construction- you ARE the ethical supervisor, after all. There's a lot of implications and rumors that First Minister Valis plans on using the bomb as a frist strike weapon against the two other countries on your planet. And while on one hand you can see the potential in it as a saving grace for your people...

Some small part of you fears the devastation it could cause for the entire planet, if in no small part due to Daniel Jackson's concerned retellings of his own world's experiments with weapons of mass destruction.

(Of course, you tried to push it aside in favor of consuming the knowledge within that translation book, but somewhere in the back of your mind it's settled and taken root.)

You just... you really hope nothing is going to go wrong.

...
But it does.

The energy readings spike and the scientists in the room collapse and then everyone else but you and Doctor Jackson flee the observation room because this test has made the Naquadria so unstable it'll likely explode.

"Damn it," Jackson sounds resigned to something. "Jade's going to kill me for this-" And then he draws his firearm and aims it at the glass window.

"DOCTOR JACKSON!" You yell out, and then cover your face as he fires.


You look up just in time to see the scientist take a stabilizing breath and then he leaps through the window.

You hear more than see the CRASH, and turn to look, mindful of your own potentially irradiated state.

And thus, you watch him pull the energy core out of the Naquadria core with his own bare hands.

The 'imminent death' alarms stop going off in your ears, but Jackson... you can see them still going off in Jackson's eyes.

He, and the other scientists in the room, are all dead men, and he knows it.

Over nine hundred units of Naquadria exposure to his hands, seven hundred units directly to his full body. The numbers and terms that Major Carter repeats as you tell her this are different, but they're the same in weight and impact.

It's a lethal dose, and you did nothing but take cover.

This fact weighs heavy on your mind as "SG-1" leaves through the Stargate, and it's no doubt weighing just as heavily on theirs knowing that your fellow scientists are pinning the blame on Doctor Jackson as Sabotage, and you... you're not sure what to make of it.

It continues to weigh even more heavily as you watch your friends, your fellow scientists, die an accelerated death because they were exposed for so much longer...

And when you tell the First Minister about the amount of energy that was put out by this test... the look in his eyes about the potential of mass destruction. The sheer amount of glee as he orders a 'demonstration'...

And when Colonel O'neill of SG-1 returns to deliver a letter, angry that his own people are willing to pin the blame on Doctor Jackson just to get access to Naquadria...

You feel sick to your stomach, and this time it's not from any indescribable feeling of unease. Not as O'neill pushes home the fact that they want the Naquadria for SHIELDS and for TRAVEL, not for BOMBS.

You know what this feeling is.
And when O'neill mentions how upset Jackson's daughter is over everything...

You know what you have to do, but you're not sure you have the strength.

And when you tell the First Minister that it wasn't Jackson's fault- that he saved lives rather than caused irreparable harm... And you see the look of total indifference?

Even when knowing that a daughter is soon to lose a loved one?

You find that you really, actually, rather do have the strength to commit treason after all.

You wear a smile that feels fake as you slip past guards who don't know any better. After all, why would Jonas Quinn be STEALING the Naquadria when the Naquadria case he's carrying is one clearly marked "For Immediate Return" and carrying it like it's full?

You shove as many samples as you can into the box, remove the label, and then carry it out as if it's empty.

Nobody's the wiser, not even as you get to the Stargate, and dial the coordinates for Earth. Not even as you use your own world's radios and request sanctuary.

Your name is Jonas Quinn, and you...

You hope you've done the right thing.

Your name is Daniel Jackson, and you are DYING.

Last you were conscious, you'd heard that Doctor Fraiser was hurrying back from Alternia, Doctor Lam had given you 15 hours to live, and Ka'turnal...

Well, she's said that, given she was unfamiliar with this type of radiation, best case it was possible she or Jolinar and Sam could heal you with the hand device, but that you might never be in full health ever again... and worst case, the hand device might just outright kill you.

So, you had Sam try, because... you couldn't stand to see Jade crying in the observation room like that.

So Sam turned it on, and the next thing you know, you weren't in the isolation room but in the Gate Room, and there was that woman who wasn't Doctor Lam, but looked just like her standing there on the ramp. She's the same woman from the meteor- with her hair cropped short. But this time, instead of monks robes, she's wearing a sort of body suit.

She presents a very professional looking sort of image, standing on the ramp with her hands held behind her back, and a neutral, yet confident look on her face.

"Hello, Daniel Jackson," she greets you. "Welcome to the greatest decision in your entire life."

"You're not a hallucination from some device Anubis left on the meteor," you state the obvious.
"Yes, Doctor Obvious," she says, sarcasm dripping off of her words. "I am not a hologram, or a hallucination, or any kind of projection of your subconscious psyche as you face death. Despite this room being inside your head, you and I are both Very. Very. Real."

"Well, you're clearly not Doctor Lam," you say, "so if you're real, but inside my head... you're what? Ascended? Ancient? One of the Others we've heard so little about?? And why take on Doctor Lam's face?"

"The one you know as 'Carolyn Lam' is my descendant," the woman says. "She's the one who took my face, not the other way around."

"So I guess you were chosen because of your familiar face and not your, ah, charming bedside manner?" You ask.

"Something like that, yes," Not-Carolyn says. "As for who I represent? While I am an Ascended Being, I do not represent the collective interests of the Ancients and Furlings, nor do I represent the Others in their obstrusive ways of non-interference. I am a representative of a Third Party, whom you may call the Andromeda Ascendants for the time being."

"So..." You pause, "What now?"

"Now, I offer you a job, Doctor Obvious," Not-Carolyn smirks, ever so subtly.

"A... A job offer?" You ask, incredulously. "You come to me on my death bed and offer me a Job?"

"As I said before, welcome to the greatest decision of your life," Not-Carolyn reiterates.

"What is this job, exactly, anyways?" You ask.

"I am not at liberty to discuss that under the current circumstances," she answers. "However, know that you have four options. Option one is to reject even hearing the offer entirely- and to die of this radiation poisoning. This would be the worst option for the both of us."

"Obviously," you say, sarcastically.

"Yes. Obviously," Not-Carolyn agrees. "Your other options are to Ascend, and listen to my employer's offer. Should you reject the offer, you can choose to stay Ascended or return to human form. Should you choose the later, you will be cured of the sickness that is killing you. These are your second and third options."

"And the fourth?" You ask.

"You like what you hear and accept the Job offer," Not-Carolyn says. "As simple as that."

"Well, if you're offering me a way to survive dying a horrible death," you say, "I'm not opposed to doing any of the last three options."

"That's what I wanted to hear," Not-Carolyn says, smiling. "Now... we must work to get you able to Ascend with the short time we have remaining."

"Right," you pause... "How do we do that?"
"First, you must release your burdens,” Not-Carolyn says.

...Uh...

"Metaphorically, Figuratively, or Literally speaking?" You ask.

"I am not Oma Desala, nor any of those who disguise the technique behind 'The Spiritual Path to Enlightenment,'” Not-Carolyn says, her tone of voice dripping with derision for a moment. "I am going to be quite frank and straightforward with you. You have to let go of your emotional baggage to be able to Ascend."

Oh boy.

"That might be a bit harder than you think."

"We have fifteen hours," she counters. "Shall we begin?"

_____________________________________________________

Your name is SKAARA, and you hurried back to the SGC the moment the news came through the Gate and you could dial out back to Earth.

"How is he?" You ask of O'neill as he meets you at the ramp.

"Not good," O'neill answers. "Thanks for coming so quickly."

"I had a feeling something bad was going to happen today," you shake your head. "I hung around the Pyramid just in case someone came through."

Soon enough, you've arrived in the isolation room, and are sitting down next to the unconscious Daniel.

You're not sure what to say though, or even whether or not he'll hear you... but they say that coma patients can understand when people talk to them so...

_____________________________________________________

You're suddenly Daniel Jackson again and-

"It's all my fault," Skaara says suddenly.

-you look up from the recreation of your office that you've been metaphorically packing as a means of 'trying to sort out emotional baggage.' "What?"

"It should have been me," he says, looking sad. "In that original time line, the... the other Jolinar said I'd died disarming a radioactive device on another planet. It should be me lying here and you sitting here, not... not this." He shakes his head. "I didn't even think that it was going to happen to anyone who might have replaced me since everything had changed, so I didn't... I didn't ask for details."

"Oh, come on," you say. "Really? You had some idea this was coming for you and didn't think to ask for anything specific?"
"And I'd have thought... if this was a thing that was going to happen again... Jolinar would have told you too... So..." Skaara shakes his head. "I guess we both screwed up."

And with that, he vanishes.

"Well, that's helpful," you grumble, glancing at a photograph of Sha're. "He ran away when Sha're needed him to take care of Jade by foisting her off on Jake. Then when I'm suddenly not a Goa'uld host he decides to run away again and hide and hide leaving me to try and fill in the void he's made."

"If it's any consolation," Not-Carolyn says, "that boy is not a fighter at heart. He's ill suited for the constant adventure. One or two adventures, perhaps, but constant excitement over several years? No."

"Doesn't matter," you say. "He's probably just going to run away again, but I hope he doesn't. Not this time."

Your name is JOEY... HARLEY. Harley, not Claire. You're Harley. Joey Harley. Damn it all, you just... You wish you were still the PRIME YOU, but... no. She gets to have all the adventures, and you, who aren't from this universe, gets to live the boring human life that the other her doesn't get to live.

You're here at the SGC while this universe's version of your brother visits a dying man, idly wandering the hallways. You never knew Doctor Jackson in your world. He died a long time ago... a shame that it's repeating again right now, though, years later. You didn't get a chance to speak with him once since your miraculous 'survival' of an explosion to the stomach.

"I didn't think this would happen by leaving! I swear!"

"OF COURSE YOU DIDN'T!" A sob. "YOU DIDN'T THINK AT ALL!! YOU JUST-" A sharp intake for breath. "YOU JUST GAVE UP!!"

You round a corner in a hallway at the SGC and find someone looking arguing in the hallway with a sobbing, incoherent Jade.

Jade Jackson, an alternate timeline (even to this world!), future aged version of the girl that your Pa and Jude took in. You'd personally swore that, if you ever met that bastard uncle who abandoned her after her parents died...

Well, now, isn't today interesting? You shouldn't jump to conclusions first, though. Best to ask first.

"HEY!" You exclaim, loudly. "You Skaara, Punk!?"

Skaara turns, and his eyes widen as he realizes he's done fucked up. Probably for the second time today, maybe third. If you're lucky this'll be the fourth time- that's a nice poetic number.

Aaaand while you were waxing poetic about how many fuck-ups he's realized he's done today, he's turned tail and ran.
That's all the confirmation you need. It seems you're going to make good on your promise to give 'Uncle Skaara' a bloody nose!

"GET BACK HERE!" You yell, and tear down the hallway after him.

"NO!" He yells back at you. "DON'T GIVE ME RAINBOW HAIR!"

Eh? Did this universe's you make a different threat? Well... it doesn't matter because then Skaara makes the idiotic move of glancing back over his shoulder for just a second too long and not seeing that someone was opening a door right into his- WHACK!

...Path.

You slow to a halt as your targeted dummy-head tumbles to the floor, clutching at his nose.

...Well. Haha. That was... easy?

"Oh, I'm sorry! I didn't see you there!" Some doofus you never learned the name of says. "Damn it, why does this keep happening? First Teal'c, now this...?"

"I need to stop running," Skaara grumbles. "Literally... in this case..."

...Well, that was really easy to get the lesson knocked into him. You barely did anything but chase him!

On the one hand, you feel KINDA CHEATED out of delivering karmic vengeance...

On the other, you gave him that bloody nose, even if not directly.

...So... Mission accomplished?

You sigh- flush out the surge of anger that had appeared- and then stroll over to him, and extend your hand, with the wise words of, "Payback delivered. Now let's talk, shall we?"

Your name is Jolinar of the future, and... you have an apology to make.

"I'm sorry, Doctor Jackson," you say. "It never even occurred to me that this might be something that would repeat for someone else. I thought... it was all an Aschen ploy the first time. It was a different world, a different day, a different set of circumstances and yet... here it is happening again."

You pause, waiting to see if Doctor Jackson might say anything... but he doesn't.

"I wish this was one fate I could have prevented, and I thought, with Skaara leaving, perhaps it had been..." You sigh. "I'm truly, truly sorry, Doctor Jackson."

And with that, you curl up into yourself while Mikari walks you out of the isolation room.

"I'm an idiot," your name is Skaara, and yes, you might as well be named "the idiot." Or perhaps
"The Fool" based on Earth's Tarot cards? Either way... "I was a coward who couldn't face the idea of raising his sister's daughter alone."

"There's no denying that," Joey Harley says flatly.

"And I thought I could leave when we got Daniel back, when Kairi was safe," you continue. "But... I've seen how Jack and Sam were hurt by my leaving. Even Teal'c seems tense around me anymore."

"They did take you leaving pretty hard, I think," Joey Harley says, and you're sure she doesn't know exactly everything they went through considering she was in another galaxy most of the time. Still.

"I don't know what to do," You sigh. "It'd be hypocritical of me to ask to rejoin SG-1 just because Daniel's dying."

"So don't," she says. "If you can't be their teammate, then don't rejoin SG-1." A pause, and then, "Just don't keep running away from being their friend, because, I think that's what hurt them more than you quitting."

That's...

Honestly, you never thought of that.

"Hey, Doctor Jackson," says one Jude Harley as he appears in your office next. "Um... yeah, Doctor Lam is saying I can't be in here long but... yeah. Hi."

"Hello, Jude," You sigh. "Come to tell me Jade's going to be in good hands and looked after?"

"Listen, Doctor Jackson," Jude says, "I know we never really talked much, but I guess... I've always been a fan of your work? Did I ever mention that?"

"...No, actually," you look at the boy. "I don't think you ever did."

"Like, I was reading all your books and I was a real believer in the Pyramids-by-aliens theory, even before Pa brought us to the SGC and... well..." He laughs, a bit nervously. "I think I was a bit awestruck by everything at that point. I didn't even realize you were THE Doctor Jackson until after Joey..." he shakes his head. "After that, I think I was all too wrapped up in my own head. Then we were taking care of Jade, and you were missing, and... Everything was just so CRAZY."

He takes a deep breath and sighs.

"And by the time we got you back, I think I was kind'f over the whole hero worship thing?" Jude shrugs. "I dunno. But... yeah. Big huge fan of your work. Sorry I never said anything sooner."

And then he's gone.

"Is there a point to this?" You eye Not-Carolyn, and she simply smiles, smugly.
You'd swear she's doing this intentionally, somehow. Arranging visitors whenever you've just come across some memory or what not. Who's next? Jake Harley?

"Doctor Jackson?"

...Damn it.

You look, and there's Jake Harley- the Elder Jake Harley, not the young teenaged boy you're sure is sitting next to your real body.

"I'll be brief. Jade's hanging around outside after Joey chased Skaara around the hallways for a bit, so..." He shakes his head. "I'm sorry it's come to this," he says. "That my and Catherine's involving you in the Stargate Program has lead to so much trouble for you. Being possessed by a Goa'uld. Now this?" He pauses, then says, "She wishes she could be here, but sadly she seems to have caught a quite serious cold and she's not fit for travel right now."

"Well, that's just bad timing all around," You frown.

"I spoke with her briefly on the phone," he continues. "She asked me to relay this to you." A pause, and then he brings up a sheet of paper. "Daniel, if I could send you a good luck charm in the blink of an eye, you'd have my necklace."

At that, there's a thud on your desk. You look down, and then pick up a small metal amulet off the table- Catherine's Eye of Ra necklace.

"I am sad that your death is so near, so soon before my time. But if my feelings have any weight in the afterlife, may they take the form of that necklace," Jake continues quoting. "May you carry it with you through whatever you do in your next stage of life. With love, Catherine."

"Thanks," You nod, and place the necklace around your neck. "Tell her I say thanks."

Jake pauses, as if he heard something, then he smiles at you, and says, "I'll make sure to tell her you said that, Daniel."

"...Did I just speak?" You ask Not-Carolyn.

"For a moment, yes," she replies. "But your body is deteriorating, and fast. It's not a feat you're likely to repeat."

Hrmf. "Can I ask you a question?"

"Of course," Not-Carolyn says.

"Why me?" You ask.

"What do you mean?" She asks.

"What is so special about me that you're going to all this trouble?" You ask. "All I did was open a Stargate that would have been opened eventually by other people. A year later I get possessed by a Goa'uld, who in turn got possessed by some weird brain ghost program stuck in my head. And then when I get freed, it's barely a year, even, before I get myself killed. I've barely done anything important! It might as well be nothing."
"I would not call opening the Stargate and being the driving force behind killing the intruder in our Galaxy, Khepri-as-Ra, unimportant to the point of being nothing," she continues.

"Jake and Jack could have taken care of that," you say.

"Yes, surely," Not-Carolyn says, "but in the middle of all of that you saved your wife from death, and in turn, you both delivered a wound to the woman that did not heal again."

"...You mean cutting her hand off?" You ask. "So what? We blew her up a minute later. Of course it didn't grow back."

"That is not what I mean," she clarifies. "Her wound refused to even begin healing again. The powers behind that ability and her numerous other talents fled from her body in that moment. Even had you not blown her up, she would never have regained that limb."

"And you think I had something to do with it?" You ask, incredulous. "Honestly that sounds more like Sha're did something when she stole the necklace back, or maybe it's the after-effects of the timeloop finally catching up to her for all I know!"

"You sell yourself short," Not-Carolyn says.

"And you seem to be of the opinion that what happened on Abydos is something worth rewarding," you say.

"I also would not call overwhelming a Goa'uld Symbiote in full domination mode to the point of being able to murder Hathor 'nothing' either" Not-Carolyn says.

"I- what?" You blink. "It can't be all that rare."

"Your strength of spirit and sense of self is remarkable, most hosts take years to recover from such a dominating Goa'uld spirit," Not-Carolyn says. "Being able to maintain such strength while possessed? Rebounding to full sanity but days after having the Symbiote removed? Not even your friend Sarah bounced back that quickly. Isn't she still regularly attending therapy relating to all of Osiris' memories that she absorbed from her brief blending?"

"...So?" You ask. "Is this really all there is to this Job Offer of yours? You're asking me to do something because I'm resilient to having my own free will overridden??"

"With what we have in mind for you, a solid sense of your own self-identity is necessary," Not-Carolyn says. "I cannot share other details of that presently."

"And why not?" You ask. "We're both inside my head here! So why not?? Aren't we alone?"

"Because now we're here," says an unfamiliar voice, at least, unfamiliar with an English accent to his voice.

"Now how did you two get in here?" Not-Carolyn scowls at something over your shoulder, so you turn and look.

It's Orlin, and Janet Fraiser- fresh back from Alternia's Galaxy, if you had to guess.
"Daniel," she greets you. "How are you holding up?"

"Oh, just fine, Janet," you greet back. "Just having a walk down memory lane before signing some energy NDA to take a job interview, that's all."

"Seriously, how are you here?" Not-Carolyn asks. "You shouldn't be able to intrude into this space unless-" she pauses. "Wait a second. I know you! You're the exile Orlin! How did you get off your planet?"

"I'd answer that question if I even had the faintest idea of who you are other than that you were once like me," Orlin says. "What do you want from Doctor Jackson?"

"As I've told Doctor Jackson, my superiors have a Job offer for him," Not-Carolyn says, trying to regain her composure after the sudden shock of being interrupted. "They request his presence in the Ascended Planes to personally tell him the details. Details I am not at liberty to discuss. Should he turn the job offer down, Doctor Jackson is to be allowed to descend again and retake mortal form, perfectly healed."

"That goes against everything the Others would allow," Orlin says.

"The Others have been outvoted," Not-Carolyn reports. "My group presented the best plan, and it gained the most traction."

"I don't trust you," Orlin says. "And considering I came here at Doctor Fraiser's request to offer Doctor Jackson the same work around..."

"A conflict of interests, then," Not-Carolyn observes.

"Why is it that I feel like I just got dragged into a sort of inter-stellar form of tug of war?" You ask of Janet.

"I don't know, but let's let them work this out in private for a moment, shall we?" she answers, and then reaches out with her hand and-

WOOOSH!

Your office is gone as the room's perspective suddenly switches back to the isolation room. You are standing over your own body, and...

Well, that's weird. There's two Doctor Fraisers here right now, the one with her hand on your shoulder, and the one who's standing over your body with her eyes closed.

"Well, this is awkward," you say.

"Very," Janet agrees. Then, she looks you in the eyes, and says, "Daniel, are you seriously considering her offer to ascend?"

"They went to all the trouble to offer me a freebie resurrection even if I turned it down," you say. "I might as well hear them out, especially if they're breaking all of their rules to do this." You pause, "Besides, I've been curious about what it's like up there from what Orlin and Ganos have talked about. Even if I don't like it up there, I'd at least like the chance to talk with some of them- find out if there's anything they know that we need to know."
"Like if Lord English and Anubis are really working together, or if it's just one big coincidence,"
Janet frowns.

"The thought had crossed my mind," you say.

"What about Jade?" Janet asks. "You know she's already pretty upset with you. I had to tell her to
wait outside while I checked on you."

You look out into the hallway, and see a sniffling Jade. "Yeah, I think that's part of what's making
this so hard for me. Not-Carolyn back there says I need to leave my burdens behind in order to
Ascend, but..."

"It's not so easy when you have someone you care about that you'd be leaving behind," Janet nods.

"Yeah," you sigh. Then, an idea comes to you. "I wonder if I could bring her into this, just for a
minute."

"No idea," Janet shrugs. "Honestly, I'm not even sure how we shifted perspectives like this. This
whole 'energy plane' business is completely new to me."

"Well, can't hurt to try and talk with her, I guess," you say, and head over to talk to Jade.

You kneel down in front of her, as best as you can to get eye to eye, and... what now? Janet just
reached out and touched you, right? So...

You pull Jade into a hug.

Your view shifts again suddenly, and you're now nowhere at all that you recognize at first.

Except... wait, no. This is Jack's Cabin, isn't it? There's that pond he's always trying to get you to
come fish at, and...

No, that skyline is much too futuristic. This has to be the future timeline Jade's from- or her memory
of it at any rate?

"Da-Daniel?"

You pull out of the hug and look Jade in her tear-filled eyes.

"Yeah, it's me," You smile for a moment.

"How...?" She asks.

"Um, Orlin, I guess, is doing something," you answer, moving to sit down on the grass "He's off
talking with someone else at the moment, though."

"Doctor Fraiser said something about him maybe trying to get you to Ascend to survive?" Jade asks.

"Yeah, something like that," you say. "Thing is, I got approached by another Ascended being a
while ago. She, uh, offered me a job."
"A job?" Jade looks at you incredulously. "Really? What kind of job would an Ascended being even have to do? Don't they have everything they need up wherever it is?"

"I don't know," you say. "They wouldn't tell me what the job is, exactly, unless I ascend and meet with them personally."

"Sounds like a shitty job, to me," Jade says.

"They're saying I don't have to stay up there if I choose not to take the job," you say. "I get to come back and be all healed, which, I guess is the same thing Orlin came here to attempt."

"Yeah, I guess so," Jade nods. "That's... nice I guess?"

"I think I should at least hear them out," you say. "See what kind of job it is they're even offering. And even if I don't like it... it's a good chance to learn some information about what's going on up there."

"How long would you be gone?" Jade asks you.

"I don't know," you say. "I don't even know if time moves the same up there for them. I could be gone minutes for me, and be years down here."

"That'd be really sad," Jade says.

"Yeah," You agree.

So you both sit for a minute, nothing but the sound of the lake water lapping at the shore breaking the silence.

"I think you should go too," Jade says. "Even if you don't take the job. It sounds like it's a good idea to see what things are like up there right now." She looks you in the eyes, and says, "Even if it takes you years to come back, I think... It's a good idea. Even if I'll be sad that you're not here anymore."

"Thanks," you smile, and then pull your daughter into a hug. "I'm sorry that we even have to go through this again."

"Someday," Jade says, "we'll be done with all of this and can just be a family again."

"Yeah," You nod.

"Daniel?" Janet's voice calls out to you, and then, you find yourself back in the Gate Room, with her, Not-Carolyn, and Orlin.

"If you decide to Ascend with her to take this... interview," Orlin says, "I will be going with you to ensure they don't try to pull anything suspicion, like trapping you there. Also, I will be allowed to be free to act as a messenger should you require one."

"That's a reasonable idea," you say. "Can't say I've got any objections to it."

"I had to speak with my superiors," Not-Carolyn adds, "but they agreed to this condition... And I sense a change within you, Doctor Jackson. I believe you're ready to Ascend."
"I guess I am, but... first can I say goodbye to my team?" You ask.

"...Yes," she nods. "I believe we have enough time to allow for that."

"I'll go get them," Janet says, and then vanishes from sight.

Your name is Jack O'Neill, and you feel like you've been sucker punched in the gut one too many times.

"So let me get this straight," you say to the somehow ethereal projection of Daniel Jackson in your mind. "You're going to actually consider some kind of Job offer you don't have any real idea about what it's about?"

"I didn't when I joined the Stargate Program," Daniel says. "I don't see how this could be any different. Besides... If I don't like what I'm hearing, I can always leave and come back to Earth."

...That's...

"Okay, first of all that's like comparing apples to oranges," you then flinch, remembering a previous comparison of apples to oranges involving a sun about to explode because the Gate Wormhole went through it. "But if you do take this job. I want you to promise me that you're not going to take any unnecessary risks. Just because you're going to be 'Ascended' or whatever doesn't mean you're immortal."

"Ascended beings are as functionally close to immortal as anyone can get," that look-alike 'ancestor' to Doctor Lam says, and you raise a finger.

"Did I ask you?"

"No," she says, then- "Ah. I see your point."

"And 'functionally'?' You ask. "That's just as good as saying 'conditionally.' Under normal circumstances ANYONE is immortal, up until they run into the conditions that make it possible to kill them."

To that, she has no response.

So you look at Daniel, and say, "Promise me."

"I promise I won't take any unnecessary risks," Daniel promises.

"Good," You say. "And if you don't like the job offer they're giving you, make sure to punch whoever's giving it to you in the face? From me."

"I'll keep that in mind," Daniel smiles.

Your name is Samantha Carter, and you give Daniel a tight hug. "Even if it's just saying that you're alright, PLEASE, just have Orlin bring us a message once a week, alright?"
"As often as I can," Daniel says, hugging back. "Take care of yourself, Sam."

"You too," You say, breaking off of the hug. "Don't do anything stupid and get yourself killed-again."

"I'll do my best not to get myself killed while already dead," Daniel promises.

"We're going to miss you, you know," you tell him. "So hurry back as soon as you can once you've done whatever it is they need you to do."

Daniel nods. "Definitely."

You look to Orlin with a look that says, "Look after him." Orlin just nods in acceptance, and that's all you need to know.

You stand back, and let Jolinar step forwards. In this weird mindscape, she takes on your same physical appearance, just wearing a different colored set of clothes to you. (Desert brown over your Blue.)

"Daniel," she says, "I know Anubis likely left a bad taste in their mouths, but do ask to see if the Ascendants are willing to allow Tok'ra and their hosts near death to Ascend. I know there are a few who believe in this afterlife just as much as the Jaffa do."

"I'll see what I can do," Daniel nods.

"I don't think I have anything else to say," Jolinar says. "I think it'd be selfish of me to ask of you anything that the others haven't yet. So... Good Luck."

"Thanks, Jolinar," Daniel nods. "Good luck out there with everything else you've got to deal with."

Your name is Teal'c, and you consider your emotions carefully, before speaking.

"All I have to say, Daniel Jackson, is that while you are gone, the fight against the Goa'uld will have lost one of its finest warriors on our level of existence," you say. "However, if your new assignment is as important as I believe it may be, perhaps you will continue to take up the fight against them from another direction. If that is to be the case, may we meet again on the field of battle, my friend."

"May we meet again on the field of battle," Daniel says, "but, let's hope that we can meet up sometimes when our lives aren't at stake, right?"

"Indeed," you nod. "That would be most preferable."

"Until we meet again?" Daniel offers.

"Until we meet again." You agree.

Your name is Jade Jackson, and... and despite knowing that he's not really dying. That he's just
going to ascend, and that as soon as he's done what he needs to do up there that he's going to come RIGHT BACK... you can't help but feel like an important piece of your life that you'd only JUST gotten back is being ripped out.

Again.

Janet takes a step back from Bio-dad... Daniel. Dad. She takes a step away and says, "He says he's ready to move on, now." And then, with a trembling breath, she reaches out for the life support equipment, and hovers over the switch. "Goodbye, Doctor Jackson. I think I speak for all of us when I say I hope you come back as soon as you possibly can."

And with that, she flicks the switch, and the room goes deathly silent.

You feel your own heart just sort of stall for a moment, wondering if this is really going to happen. If he's really going to--

And then the room glows as bright as if the sun itself had appeared in the spot where Dad was. Energy wisps out and lifts upwards from his body, which is no longer there. His clothes and the bandages around his body deflate like a balloon with the air being taken out of it.

And so you all watch as he lifts upwards, and upwards...

And then he's gone, and you can't help but to cry.

"Well," you're once again Daniel Jackson and you...

You feel oddly light.

"This is different," you say.

"You'll get used to it," Not-Carolyn says, stepping towards the Stargate on the ramp as it generates not the familiar blue vortex you're used to, but instead a blinding wall of white light. "Follow me," she says, "and I will take you to the Ascended Plane." And with that, she steps into the Gate.

You look to Orlin, who nods. "I'm right beside you."

You take a deep breath, and exhale, just for the sheer sake of stilling your now non-existent nerves.

"Here we go," you say, and step up the ramp towards the rippling wall of pure light. "Once more into the breach."

And then you step through.

Chapter End Notes

Did I seriously bring in Carolyn Lam full, multiple seasons early JUST to set up for this moment? Why yes, yes I did.
Chapter Summary

Better work on those team poses...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.


Above a seemingly abandoned planet, several Goa'uld Motherships rested in orbit, awaiting orders, even as an Asgard ship exits hyperspace.

"My lord," A Jaffa says, "they're hailing us."

"Open channel," Zipacna orders.

"I am Supreme Commander Thor of the Agard Fleet," Thor says, appearing on the screen. "Your presence over this planet is in violation of the Protected Planets Treaty. Leave at once or I will be forced to destroy you."

Zipacna smirks, "I think not."

"Very well, then," Thor says, before the communication ends.

A moment later, the Asgard ship opens fire on each Goa'uld vessel- only for the impacts to bounce off harmlessly off of the shields.

Zipacna smirks, imagining the shock on the Asgard's face, then orders, "Return Fire."

---STARGATE SG-1---


DIASPORA DATE: 6/12/0002.

Your name is Jack O'neill, and you knock at the door to Carter's office, finding her scowling at a computer monitor. She doesn't react, so you knock again. And another lack of reaction.

You cough.
Carter just coughs as well, but continues to stare at the screen.

Hmm.

"Knock Knock," you voice.

"Who's there?" Carter seems to answer with a mumbled nonchalance that indicates she's so engrossed in her work she didn't even really realize she answered.

"Carter," you say, rolling your eyes and wondering if she'll reply with-

"Carter who?" Ah. She did. She's really out of it.

You're really tempted to say something else, but thankfully the odd question seems to snap Carter's mind back to reality and she shakes her head.

"Wait, what?" She frowns, and then turns to look at you. You wave. "Colonel!" She stands up. "Sorry, I didn't realize-"

"It's fine, Carter," you say. "I can tell you were busy... ish. What's so fascinating that you'd answer a Knock Knock joke on impulse?"

"It's, ah..." Carter scratches at the back of her head. "I was looking at the Naquadria readings from the test Daniel interrupted when I realized I'd seen them before."

"Oh?" You ask. "Where?"

"General Bauer's test," Carter answers, and then beckons you over to the computer she's been looking at for the last... who knows how long.

"Alright, what do we got?" You ask.

"So, remember how when Jonas was explaining the Naquadah/Naquadria difference wasn't JUST a translation error?" Carter says. "I'd been wondering, what if this was what happened? But after Daniel..." She shakes her head. "I didn't get a chance to look at the numbers properly until just... uh... What is today?" She frowns, after asking that apparently to Jolinar. "Oh. Last night. Right. So. Anyways..." She taps a few keys and brings up a graph of the energy readings from the over powered Bauer test.

"That's a lot of energy," you say.

"More than the expected yield for the amount of weapon's grade Naquadah in the bomb, and way more than expected for a planet with Naquadah under the surface," Carter says. "I'd thought at the time, what if there was something more volatile under the surface?"

"And?" You ask.

Carter taps another key and up comes a reading from the Naquadria test on Jonas' home world. She's marked certain wave-forms in red on both charts.

"That's ALSO a lot of energy," you say, leaning in close to look at the screen. "A lot of identical
"Exactly," Carter says. "I think that planet we detonated the bomb on had a significant amount of Naquadria on it, resulting in the MASSIVE explosion we encountered."

"And depending on how much Naquadria was on Jonas' planet beneath the surface..." You swallow. "Damn, Daniel did a lot more than stop a small nuke from going off."

"That Naquadria bomb could have destroyed the entire planet," Carter says.

You frown, and look at Carter. "Are you SURE we should be messing around with this stuff?"

"Jonas risked everything to bring it to us when he didn't need to do it at all," she says. "Daniel risked everything to stop this experiment from turning deadly. I owe it to the both of them to find some way of making this Naquadria element both Safe to use, and Defensive in nature."

"Well, sure," you say, "but not at the expense of your sanity, alright?"

"What?" Carter blinks.

"Take it slow, Carter," you say. "That's an order. Don't just stare at a screen all night before answering a knock knock joke without thinking, alright?"

"Right," Carter nods. "You're right. You're absolutely right. I need to take a break from this. Maybe I should focus on the Andr-

"Ah-ah-ah!" You say, raising a finger. "No jumping to another project- especially not the Replicator chick. We're holding onto that for the Asgard when they finally get around to answering out calls. Remember?"

"...Right," Carter nods. "Sorry, I just... I don't think I've gotten a lot of sleep lately, is all."

"I remember what happened when I was stuck on another world for a whole third of a year," you say. "Let's not repeat that, alright?"

"Right," she nods. "That's a good point. I was out of it for days after that catching up on lost sleep."

"Exactly, now why don't we just-" Anything you could say to change the direction of the day for the sake of Carter's neglected sleep schedule is cut off as the lights go off and the gate alarms sound.

"Oh for cryin' out loud," you gripe.

You and Carter meet Teal'c and General Hammond in the Gate Room as an Asgard steps through the Gate, hurring down with a slightly panicked look on their face. Rare, for an Asgard to look panicked.

"Yes, yes," the Asgard speaks- and you think you recognize them as FREYR- before anyone can say anything. "I know about the Prototypical Replicator Android. We got your message. While I am here to retrieve it, there is more to this situation that is more critically important."
"Things with the Replicators not going well?" You ask.

"No," Freyr shakes his head. "The Replicators have broken out of containment. Our fight with them presently requires most of our available ships to counter them, which was why we only sent Thor in one outdated vessel to counter a Goa'uld presence over a Protected Planet."

"Which?" Carter asks.

"An uninhabited world that the Goa'uld should have had no interest in," Freyr says. "However, the Goa'uld ships refused to leave, and their shields resisted all of Thor's ship's fire."


"Yes," Freyr grimaces. "Thor's ship was destroyed, and we suspect he was either captured, killed, or critically injured and stuck on the surface of the planet. We have not received word from him, so we must assume the worst and that he is dead, and focus on the mission at hand."

"Which is...?" You ask.

"The planet this encounter happened on is home to an Asgard Research Facility, hidden beneath the surface," Freyr explains. "Thor was to retrieve them should the Goa'uld retreated, however, with that no longer an option, the Asgard turn to you for aid."

"What are the planet's Stargate coordinates?" Carter asks.

"The planet does not have a Stargate, the surface is inhospitable to life," Freyr says. "However, you have access to a Goa'uld Cargo Ship capable of cloaking, and its hull and shields should protect you from the environment when you land until you can enter the underground facility."

"We barely got that thing working again, even with the Tok'ra's help," Carter says. "It might not be as structurally sound as it would be otherwise."

"We understand," Freyr says. "However, I would not be here if the risks were not incredibly dire for all of us."

"The Goa'uld have a means of surviving an Asgard ship's weaponry," Teal'c notes. "The Protected Planets Treaty may well be impossible to maintain if we do not find a way of disabling those shields."

"Yes," Freyr says, "and the research in that facility must NOT fall into Goa'uld hands. Rescue the scientist, Heimdall, and her research."

"What about Thor?" You ask.

"If he is alive, Heimdall may have knowledge that we do not," Freyr says. "If he is dead, rescue Heimdall and the research. If he is captured... mount a rescue only if time allows. Above all else, however, we must prioritize the research and it's safe extraction. If the Replicator Android proves useful and we can spare the ships, we will send an escort to rescue Thor, should he be alive."

"Alright then," you say, looking to Hammond. "I'm game."
"Major Carter, Teal'c?" Hammond asks.

"Me too, Sir," Carter nods.

"As am I," Teal'c agrees.

"SG-1, you have a go," Hammond says, then, as you three leave to get geared up, he turns to Freyr and says, "I'll take you to the storage room with the Android."

"Thank you," Freyr says. "As quickly as we can, we must get it back to my Galaxy."

Within a short while, the Tel'tak is in flight, with Teal'c piloting, and you and Carter in the back preparing your gear for combat, should it come down to it.

"...Colonel?" She begins suddenly.

"Yeah?" You ask.

"Can we speak unprofessionally for a moment?" She asks.

"...I guess?" You frown, pausing in the middle of re-assembling your P-90. "Yeah, alright. Off the record it is. What's bothering you?"

"Are you really okay with Daniel accepting this mysterious job offer from the Ancients?" Carter turns around, and looks at you with an expression on her face that seems a bit unreadable.

"To be honest?" You click the last parts in place with a grunt. "No. I'm not. I know why he's doing it, 'fate of the galaxy,' he says, but..." You put your P-90 down to the side, and look Carter in her eyes. "Let's be honest, Carter. I got the feeling he was going to take it the moment he left. Daniel's been looking for something to do ever since he joined the Stargate program back before Abydos even happened. Getting a Goa'uld stuck in his head didn't help matters any."

"No, I guess it didn't," she sighs. "I'm just... It bugs me. Skaara leaves the moment we get Daniel back thinking we want Daniel to take his place, and I'm pretty sure Daniel took that job opening because he thinks that's what Skaara wanted him to do, not because that's what HE wanted to do."

"Yeah," you clear your throat- it's feeling gunky all of a sudden. "And now Daniel's gone again, we're short a teammember again, and Skaara... atleast he's promising to check in more often, but he's still not coming back to work with us."

"I'm not sure what bugs me more," Carter admits. "The fact that I was just starting to get used to Daniel being around again, or the fact that he's just gone and left us again just like Skaara did." You go to say something and she interjects with, "Yes, intelectually I understand there are two completely different motivations behind them leaving, and that at least Daniel talked to us about it before going up there- but functionally? It's the same result."

"Okay, fair enough," you agree. "It is, I guess."

"The worst part is, Jack," Carter continues, "I'm not sure if I'm willing to open my heart to let
someone new onto the team, again, just to have them leave, again, at the first moment that's convenient to them."

"'Fool me once, shame on me, fool me twice,'" You quote. "Yeah. I get where you're coming from, Sam." ...Well, you're really talking unprofessionally now, that's for sure. First name usage and everything. "If we ever get someone else on SG-1 to permanently fill in that slot..." You pause. "They have to do three things for me to trust them."

"What's that?" Car- Sam. Sam asks you.

"First," You say, "they have to prove they're willing to do the right thing even if it's not logically the safest. Even if I've ordered them to do something else and keep safe."

"And the second?" Sam asks.

"...Second," you say, "they have to save my ass, at least twice, before I'll really trust them to have my back."

"Makes sense," Sam nods, seeming interested in your criteria.

"Finally, they have to think on their feet and act under pressure." You pause, then say, "Everyone's done these things, and even Jolinar's proven herself more than enough times by now. And no offense to the rest of the Tok'ra, but she's the only snake I'll ever actually trust in the heat of battle."

"High Praise," Jolinar slips through for a moment. "I promise I won't tell Jacob or Selmak. I'm sure they'll be heartbroken to know they're not your favorite."

"Ah!" You raise a finger. "Let's add one more criteria. Sarcasm. The Fourth thing, neigh, possibly even the most critical thing for me to actually like someone on my team is that they have a good sense of humor, and get sarcasm!"

Sam smiles, "I think I can live with those requirements."

You smile back. "Good, 'cause I'm not changing them."

Teal'c expertly cloaks the ship the moment you exit hyperspace and fly towards the planet.

Three Ha'tak Motherships reside in orbit, along with pieces of floating Asgard ship debris that's being pulled into the mothership's cargo bays by tractor beams. Thor's ship definitely got blasted, that's for sure.

Still, the Goa'uld don't seem to detect the Cargoship as you descend into the atmosphere, and then down to the coordinates Freyr provided.

Once you land, Sam- no, Carter. You're back on the clock now- Carter exclaims about how hot the planet's surface is, and as you, she and Teal'c stand around the center of the ship's bridge area, debating how to get down to the underground base---

PVMMMM-SHING!!!
---Heimdall seems to take care of that for you, standing at a console and smiling brightly at the three of you once you appear in her lab.

"Welcome! Welcome!" She greets, sounding very friendly for an Asgard. "It's so rare that I get visitors! You must be SG-1! I've heard so much about you. Colonel O'neill, Major Carter, and Teal'c! Wonderful! Where is- oh, who's the name of your fourth team member again?"

"It's just the three of us right now, actually," You say.

"Ah, yes, I suppose on such short notice not everyone could make it," Heimdall says, sounding slightly disappointed, but quickly pushes past it. "Yes! So! Anyways! Evacuation and Rescue!!"

"Right," Carter nods. "Let's get you and your research onto the Cargo ship and we can get out of here."

"Not immediately, I'd hope!" Heimdall says. "Thor is still onboard one of those Goa'uld ships!"

You look to Carter, then Teal'c, and there's no argument. You're going to do your best to rescue Thor while getting Heimdall and her research out of here.

The plan is simple, wait for the incoming GOA'ULD MOTHERSHIP to arrive in the system carrying ANUBIS onboard, and then when he rings over to the ship with Thor onboard, you and Teal'c will ring up via the Cargoship at the same time.

Then, you plant some C-4 on the shield generators and blow the thing, allowing Heimdall to grab you and Teal'c and Thor all in one swoop and get you to the Cargoship. Then, you rabbit the HELL out of there and pray some secondary explosions take out Anubis while he's onboard the ship.

In the meantime, you're just going to have to wait for Anubis to show up in the first place. It won't be too much longer, but it's still long enough that you and Teal'c can help Heimdall and Carter move stuff to the Cargoship.

"So, what's so important about this research you're conducting here anyways?" You ask.

"Thor mentioned you may be aware of the problem our species faces regarding our stalled out genetic lines?" Heimdall says, but with a leading tone.

"Uh..." You're not sure if you missed a memo or not, but Teal'c comes to your rescue.

"She is referring to the process by which the Asgard clone themselves to survive." He says.

"Ah..." You say, then... "Wait, what? You mean you guys can't...?" You look Heimdall over and realize- oh, yeah. You really should have noticed that a lot sooner, shouldn't you? "Oh. Wow."

"As you might imagine, it's not something we like to discuss with other species," Heimdall says, crossing her arms. "However, while in that galaxy, Thor managed to retrieve a scan of the artifact called 'Shaper,' which had brought him back to life, and while scientists at another facility elsewhere work to recreate the Furling technology, it has been a useless endeavor without a source of untainted
And with that, a few button presses later, and a pod descended from the ceiling. Inside is a rather more human looking Asgard.

"Thousands of years ago, an Asgard ship disappeared, all hands lost," Heimdall says. "About six months ago, we discovered its wreckage here on this planet. He was the only survivor, perfectly preserved from a time before our genetic depredation had begun."

"With a working copy of Shaper, and a source of original Asgard DNA," Carter stares, "you could undo the damage!"

"That is the plan, and is also why we cannot allow this facility to fall into Goa'uld hands," Heimdall says.

You got onto the ship okay. Carter used the lifesigns scanners in Heimdall's lab to guide you through the ship, and as you went, you got a real good close up look at Anubis as he and his escort waltz by on their way to see Thor.

When people said he looked like a walking shadow, you thought it was a joke, but, no. Anubis is a tall guy in a black robe with some kind of shimmering energy for a face.

The plan was working so swell at that point, but, of course, it had to fail at step "Plant C4 in the shield generators," because a knockout gas of some kind got poured into the hallways.

The next thing you and Teal'c know, you're waking up in a prison cell, with all your gear stolen away. No C-4, no guns, not even your WATCH!

"I can't believe they took my watch," you complain. "How long do you think we were out?"

"Long enough that Major Carter should have fled the system with Heimdall," Teal'c says.

"Yeah, if she's being smart about it," you say, but somehow, you doubt that she's done the smart thing this time. "So... ventilation ducts, maybe?"

"Too narrow," Teal'c says. "Also, openable only from the other side."

"Ah, right," you grimace. "...Think we can overpower the first person to open the cell doors?"

Teal'c goes to say something when a familiar voice echoes through the room.

"O'neill," Thor's voice echoes out.

"Thor?" You ask- even as the lights flicker twice ominously.

"Anubis has linked my mind with the ship's computer. I am using the internal communications array to synthesize my voice." Thor says, sounding like he rehearsed this speech. "He is attempting to download my knowledge into his ship's data banks. I am resisting it, however, I think I can overwrite a few minor subroutines to aid you in your escape. Good luck."
Or maybe he just pre-wrote it and fed it to the computer to read out to you.

And then the door to your cell opens.

"Nice!" you can't help but grin.

Carter returns to guide you through holographic projections around the Ha'tak until you find a power relay for crystals. At one point she sets up an ambush for a Jaffa patrol so you two to get armed again. (Staffs and Zats! Hell yes!)

Once you find the crystal relay for the shuelds, you think your day is about to turn around entirely... but then things go wrong when the Goa'uld finally find Heimdall's base, and you watch Carter get Zat'd right off of the hologram platform in the base.

That leaves you and Teal'c with a conundrum. Neither of you know which crystals to pull to interrupt the shields, so...

"Screw it," you take aim with your Staff weapon and blast it all.

_PCHOOO!

A split second later, the telltale light of an Asgard transport beam rises up around you and Teal'c, and BAM, you're back in the Cargo ship's ring room. Carter happens to teleport in right next to you, and you catch her before she can fall to the floor.

"You okay, Carter?" you ask.

"Stupid, fucking, Zippy," she grumbles.

"We'll be fine," Jolinar chimes in. "Just as soon as we figure out a way to pay Zipacna back for trying to use a hand device on us."

Ah, so Zipacna's the Goa'uld you gotta talk to about Zatting Carter, huh?

"And one more...!" Heimdall says, before _PVVVM-SHING!_ -Thor suddenly appears on the floor.

Teal'c immediately heads to the ship's controls immediately to prepare for take off, you feel the ship lifting up a few moments later. You and Carter head over to check on Thor.

"No..." He whispers, "You have to send me back. My mind is still linked with the ship's computer... They can track us..."

"Don't worry," Heimdall says, "we'll get that nasty device out of your head as soon as possible!"

Thor just groans, and seems to slip into unconsciousness.

Then, the ship shakes, and you take that as your cue to head to the bridge. "Teal'c? How's our escape going?"

"We are being pursued by two Death Gliders," Teal'c says. "However, their weapon's shielding is
"Cloak?" You ask.

"We were still cloaked when we took off, they found us near immediately," Teal'c says. "I have switched the cloak for shields."

"They're tracking Thor, probably," Carter says, coming onto the bridge after you.

"Great," you complain, "it's like that one movie all over again."

"This does indeed bare great similarities to Star Wars," Teal'c agrees.

"Sure, let's go with that," you shake your head. Not really the movie you were thinking of, but- whatever. Close enough.

"We're exiting the atmosphere," Teal'c reports and sure enough, the windscreen clears up, revealing...

There's only one Ha'tak? Where did the others go?

Then, plasma blasts from the gliders shoot by on either side.

"They are firing warning shots," Teal'c observes. "They deliberately missed."

"No tractor beaming?" You ask.

"No, though they are moving to intercept," Teal'c frowns. "They seem unwilling to risk any action that would destroy us."

You look to Carter, and she nods. As one, you chime in with, "Thor."

It makes too much sense. They want Thor alive so they aren't taking actions that could destroy the Cargoship.

"We are receiving a transmission from the Mothership," Teal'c says, frowning. "It appears to be from Anubis directly."

"Well, this we've got to hear," You decide. "Put it through."

And so a hologram of the cloaked bastard appears, floating in the air in front of you.

"COLONEL O'NEILL OF S. G. I." Anubis punctuates each letter of your team designation for clear emphasis. "I WAS INFORMED YOU HAD BEEN A GUEST ONBOARD MY SERVANT'S SHIP, I WAS ANTICIPATING MEETING YOU IN PERSON, AND WAS DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN YOU HAD ESCAPED."

"Yeah, well," you say, "I had a tight schedule. You know how it goes. Places to be and things to do."

"YES. WHICH IS WHY I ORDER YOU TO SURRENDER." Anubis demands. "RETURN
THOR TO ME IMMEDIATELY, AND YOU MAY YET LIVE. I DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF TIME TO WASTE."

"Nah," you say. "Can't. Got other places to be. Some other time?"

"DO YOU REALLY THINK I AM GIVING YOU A CHOICE?" Anubis asks. "SURRENDER. NOW. OR I WILL.-"

"My Lord!" Someone on the other side interrupts suddenly, and the communication transmission cuts out sharply.

"Multiple Hyperspace windows opening," Teal'c says suddenly.

"What now?" you ask.

And then three super advanced Asgard Ships appear from hyperspace- and boy do those ships look fancy and shiny and all sorts of intimidating.

Naturally, Teal'c swerves around the Ha'tak with Anubis on it and takes position underneath the central ship.

"The Asgard are sending a Broadwave communication wave," Teal'c reports. "All Goa'uld communication frequencies."

"Like what Shadre did with Apophis?" You ask.

"Indeed," Teal'c says as another holographic projection screen appears.

"This is FREYR of the ASGARD FLEET," Freyr says, sounding rather angry. "To the Goa'uld of this Galaxy, Anubis and any associates of his are hereby charged with a twofold violation of the Protected Planets Treaty."

"That's bold," Carter says. "I guess they made some progress against the Replicators with Reese."

"The first violation is the recent attempt at destroying a Protected Planet with a Naquadah Enhanced Asteroid armed with a sub-light engine designed to propel it at a planet with increased speeds," Freyr continues. "The second egregious act is the recent attack and subsequent destruction of a Sovereign Asgard Vessel."

As Freyr continues to talk - PVVVM-SHING!! - another Asgard appears on the deck of the ship. "SG-1," this unfamiliar Asgard says curtly, "we will take Thor onto our ship. Please escort Heimdall and her research to Earth. We will stall for time as long as we can."

"Tangentially, to Anubis directly," Freyr speaks in the background, "PLEASE do take note that the ship you destroyed earlier was a historical relic used primarily for diplomatic voyages and I and several others take personal offense at its destruction."

And then PVVVM-SHING! They're gone, and Heimdall exclaims from the back of the ship- "Thor's gone! Go! Go!"

And with that, Teal'c punches the Cargoship's Hyperdrive into gear and you blast out of there.
Freyr's broadwave continues in the meantime, overlaid only slightly by static because of hyperspace travel.

"Surrender now, Anubis," Freyr says, "and you may be shown the mercy of a fair trial among your peers. Fail to do so, and you. Will. Be. Destroyed."

Anubis' voice returns across the back end of the transmission, "YOUR OFFER AMUSES ME." He laughs. "DO YOU REALLY THINK I CARE ABOUT 'FAIRNESS'? OR THAT THE RESPECT OR DISRESPECT OF MY 'PEERS' IN THE GOA'ULD MATTERS TO ME EITHER?" He laughs again. "DO YOU REALLY HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT I WOULD SURRENDER? I WHO AM A GOD UNRIVALED? EVEN THE GOA'ULD SYSTEM LORDS WHO CLAIM TO BE GODS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN PARASITES, CLINGING TO THEIR WEAK AND FEEBLE HOSTS."

"That doesn't sound good," you say.

"No it does not," Carter agrees.

"YOU WILL BOW BEFORE ME, ASGARD! I HAVE YOUR SECRETS. I HAVE YOUR TECHNOLOGY. YOU THINK THOSE SHINY, FANCY SHIPS SCARE ME?" he laughs some more. Buy does Anubis like to laugh. "THEY ARE AS MUCH 'HISTORICAL RELICS' AS THE ONE MY SERVANT, ZIPACNA, DESTROYED BEFORE. AT LEAST... THEY ARE WHEN COMPARED TO THE MIGHT OF AN UNRIVALED GOD!"

"Very well," Freyr frowns. "Let it be known that you chose this fate."

"GIVE ME YOUR BEST SHOT, FOOLS," Anubis counters, and then the broadwave cuts out.


DIASPORA DATE: 6/13/0002.

By the time you've made it back to Earth, you haven't heard anything about how the fight turned out.

Heimdall refuses to return to the Asgard galaxy for reasons of "Replicators," and while Earth is almost certainly not a safe place for her or her research in the long term, for the short term, she insists on staying until the fate of the battle has been discovered.

You can't blame her. After all, there's no point going to an Asgard facility that Thor would have been aware of if his knowledge is all downloaded onto a surviving Goa'uld mothership's computer. Nowhere in Milky Way would be safe... So, somewhere else needs to be designated as a Hiding Place.

So, while you're waiting to hear something, anything, Carter suggests going to get something to eat off base, just to try and bleed off some of the tension that's been building since.

Of course, now you're stuck waiting at the elevator.
"I believe that if Anubis survived the battle, he will be attempting to launch an attack on Earth sooner or later," Teal'c says.

"I don't think we're that much of a nuisance, yet," you say.

"He did already try throwing a meteor at us," Carter reminds you.

"Ah, yes... that is true..." You frown. "Let's hope he doesn't try that again. It'd be disappointing if he repeats himself. No originality whatsoever!"

A few more moments of silence pass, then-

"Hey, wild question," Carter asks, "what do you guys think Daniel's new job is?"

"I have my suspicions," Teal'c says, "however, if there are enemy agents spying on us, it would be unwise to state them in this galaxy."

"Now there's a thing," you agree.

"Makes sense why they'd be so cagey about telling Daniel anything," Carter also agrees.

"Well," you pause as a warm breeze blows through the hallway. "...Whatever's going on, I hope it doesn't involve something stupid like fixing an Ascended version of the Air Conditioning unit."

"That was rather peculiar," Teal'c agrees.

And then the elevator arrives.

"So, I'm thinking of trying something new tonight," Carter says, no- Sam, you think, given the change of tone to her voice. You're all going to be off duty now, right? "Have either of you tried the new steakburger they've been advertising?"

"I have not," Teal'c says.

"Nope," You say. "Betcha I could grill one better than whatever they make any day of the week, though."

"Let me guess," Sam smirks, "a secret ingredient that begins with 'B' and ends with 'eer'?"

"You know me so well," you say, rolling your eyes as the elevator doors close.

Meanwhile in orbit over the planet ADARA II, two destroyed Asgard vessels lay floating among the debris in orbit, while a third rests, broken, and while intact, not victorious.

For while there is no sign of the Goa'uld Ha'tak that Anubis was on, there is also no sign of any debris from it at all.

Onboard the ship, Freyr scowls. "Anubis... just where did he get such technology?"
To destroy two Asgard vessels and disable a third with ease, then to just... turn tail and leave? The only thing that had let Freyr's ship survive was Thor's presence onboard, of that fact, the Asgard was sure. But then... why just leave him be? No, it was entirely possible it had been the mind link download.

Anubis had gotten his hands on something very, VERY powerful indeed... and that was even before he'd stolen who knows what kind of technical specifications from Thor's mind.

Regardless, it seemed now that the Protected Planets Treaty might as well be as burnt as the pieces of scrap metal remaining from the other two Asgard vessels.

"This..." Freyr closes his eyes, and grimaces. "This has not been a good day."

And indeed, it wasn't.

END OF ACT 4.

Chapter End Notes

...'Cause shit just got real.

Next story title is "Act 5 Act 1: Under Pressure"

Coming soon.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!