

Daily Business

304

by Kyle Eggleston

Jeff Killpack stood on one side of the brig force field watching the alien he called Max. Max was unconscious at the moment. His security team had taken him down quick and effective. Jeff folded his arms. Maybe his security team was too hard on Max, took him out a little too hard. He wanted the bastard awake, now. Jeff clapped his hands. "Wake up!"

Max turned over on the cot he was asleep on and fell onto the floor with a loud thud. "What?" He asked. "What happened?" Max stood up and walked over to the force field where he stared Jeff down. "You!"

Jeff smiled. "Me." He said. "Max, what the hell are you doing? Trying to blow this station up? The amount of explosives you brought with you? Incredible." He waited for a reaction. None came. "Why do you have this agenda against me? If you have a problem with me, I get it. Don't take it out on the *entire* station."

"Well, why don't you drop the force field and come in here and make me." Max said. "Or are you too ... what's the human phrase? Oh yes, chickenshit to do so." Max laughed at Jeff and watched him get angry. Max grinned.

Jeff clenched his fists. He wanted nothing more than to put Max in his place. But he knew he couldn't take the alien on, the last confrontation they had Max had lifted Jeff off the ground a good foot with his claw wrapped around Jeff's throat. Jeff couldn't take the alien on at all, he wasn't strong enough and his gun did no damage at all.

"Do you know why I call you Max?" Jeff asked.

Max shrugged. "Because you can't pronounce my real name? Stupid humans never could."

Jeff shook his head. "You remind me of a childhood friend. He was stupid as you are."

Jeff turned to leave.

"Are you afraid of me human?! I dare you face me!" Max yelled out after Jeff.

Jeff continued walking out of the brig area back to his office. He would let Max sit in the brig for a while to hopefully think about his actions and what brought him there. Jeff doubted Max would understand the gravity of the situation. But he soon would learn.

Entering the main security office, Jeff sat down at his desk. He watched the monitors, watched as Max just got angry and started throwing the cot he had been sleeping on around the brig cell. The cot bounced off the force field and shot across the room missing Max by inches. He didn't flinch.

"Cowards!" Max yelled. "You don't even have a lethal force field!" He laughed.

"Screen off." Lieutenant Killpack commanded. The vidscreen went blank. "I can't let you get in my head." Jeff said. "Not again." He recalled the last time he ran into Max. The encounter hadn't gone well for Jeff, he had grown scared of the alien. This time would be different. It had to be different.

Turning his attention to a large duffel bag, Jeff opened it. He whistled. There must have been at least sixty kilos of explosives in the bag. It was enough to destroy the matter antimatter reaction chamber and the station along with it. Taking the duffel bag in his arms, Jeff walked it over to a secure storage locker and placed it inside. Locking the safe, Jeff wondered if that was enough to keep it secure. He sure hoped so.

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Jack O'Brien was enjoying his morning cup of coffee, Columbian Blend. It was his drink of choice in the mornings. He was reading over the security reports for the past twenty-four hours. Nothing too noteworthy except for Killpack's run in with the alien known as Max. Jack shook his head, he was glad Jeff stopped the alien and his plan to destroy the station. But he wondered if that would be the last threat the station would face. Something told him it wouldn't be.

Beep Beep, Jack's door chime rang.

"Enter." Jack said. The door opened to reveal Grilka standing there. "Grilka." Jack's eyes lit up and a smile formed on his face. "Feels like I haven't seen you in ages. Come in, come in." He gestured to the coffee pot. "Want some coffee?"

Grilka shook her head. "Coffee doesn't agree with my digestive system I'm afraid. I will have to pass. But I wouldn't mind some green tea."

"Coming right up." Jack said as he walked over to the food synthesizer. "Green tea, hot." A cup of green tea materialized before him. He picked up the cup and handed it over to Grilka. "So, what brings you by?"

Grilka smiled. "Can't I just want to see my boyfriend?" She asked. "Like you said it has been a while. I wanted to see you and talk with you for a little bit."

Jack froze. She wanted to talk. Talking for a little bit in a relationship could mean one of two things. One, that it was benign and painless. Two, she was there to break up with him. He hoped it wouldn't be a breakup, Jack couldn't handle that. Not now. Not after everything he had been through. "Okay." Jack said, they walked over to the couch and sat down. "What's on your mind?"

"I've been thinking of moving in with you." Grilka said.

Jack sighed a breath of relief. It wasn't a bad thing at all but something wonderful. "I think that would be a splendid idea!" He exclaimed. "Yes, you can move into my quarters as soon as you want. I would love that." He smiled at Grilka. Grilka returned the smile.

"It's settled then." Grilka said. "I'll teleport my things over tomorrow and get settled in." She took a sip of the green tea. It warmed her throat.

"Great, it's settled then." Jack smiled.

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Doctor Matt Allen was in Med Bay processing all of the new Dubor arrivals. They each needed to have a full medical scan before being allowed to incorporate into the population of the station. It was a daunting task, but someone had to do it.

"Next." Matt said. He watched as another Dubor citizen walked into his office. "Take off your shirt please, just going to do some vitals and check your breathing." He took out a stethoscope and placed it on the man's chest. "Breathe normally please."

The man breathed in and out.

"Your lungs are clear." Matt said. "You can put your shirt back on." Pulling out an injection shot, he continued. "Now just roll up your sleeve and we'll get this immunization shot taken care of."

The Dubor paused. "You want to inject me with ... what exactly?"

Matt shook his head. "Nothing too crazy. Just a standard shot to prevent disease. We don't want you getting any of the illnesses that can be found on this station." He paused. "Especially if you go into the more ... extra places of the station."

"I see." The Dubor rolled up his sleeve. "Proceed with the shot."

Matt administered the shot. "Okay, we're done."

"Next!" Matt yelled out into the hallway.

Matt looked out into the hallway at the long line of people waiting to be seen. He sighed, it was going to be a very long day. The truth of the matter? He preferred to be busy and this was as good a time as any.

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“You need to implement this change immediately.” Admiral J.P. Duncan said in no uncertain terms.

Jack hesitated. “You want us to go dry?” he asked. “Like as in, serve no more alcohol in our restaurants and bars? That kind of dry?”

The admiral nodded his head. “That’s correct Jack.”

“J.P.” Jack began. “Alcohol consumption is one of our biggest source of income on the station. The restaurants get their slice of the pie, but so does the station. You can’t be serious about taking that away from us.”

“I’m afraid so.” The admiral sighed. “Look Jack, I get it. It’s a cash cow. It might even hit the pocket book for a bit until people and aliens figure out they can drink something else besides alcohol.”

Jack rubbed his head and sat down in his chair at his desk. “Yeah, they’ll have to. Alright, I’ll place that rule into effect immediately. Anything else?”

Admiral Duncan shook his head. “Nope, that’s it Jack. Sorry to do this to you. Duncan out.” The communications channel closed.

Jack sighed. This was not a good way to continue relations with the aliens on the station. Jack was sure command had a *reason* for going dry, but he just didn’t know what that reason was. Swiveling around in his chair, Jack stared at the ceiling.

“Remember when life was so peaceful?” Holo Ketish spoke into Jack’s ear. “I sure remember when times were simpler for you. Since I do have access to your memories, yeah those were simpler times.”

Jack closed his eyes. *Go away, just go away.* He thought.

“Nope, no can do Jack. We need to talk.” Holo Ketish said.

Jack sighed and continued swiveling around in his chair. “What now?”

“It’s not over Jack.” Holo Ketish said. “Your little quarrel with Ketish still lives on. You just don’t know it yet. Well you didn’t know it until I just told you. You’re welcome.”

Jack stood and crossed the room over to a couch and sat down. Holo Ketish followed him. “Problem Jack?” Holo Ketish hovered. Jack hated the fact that Holo Ketish was hovering over him like he was in trouble. It gave him bad feelings and thoughts.

“You could say I have a problem with that Ketish!” Jack shouted. “You can’t just say Ketish still has a plan for me and expect me to be okay with it. That man has been nothing but trouble since I met him from day one.” He paused. “He’s declared peace between our peoples, there shouldn’t be anything to worry about. I should be able to trust him now.”

Holo Ketish nodded. “I can see where the confusion can be.” He said. “You just don’t know what he’s planning.”

Jack shook his head and stood up. Pointing a finger at Holo Ketish, he continued. “You don’t know his plan either. You aren’t connected to him. You told me yourself. Could it be that you’re still going off of what you were programmed with *before* any of this unification happened?”

Holo Ketish thought about it for a moment. “You might have a point there. I hadn’t thought about that.” He shook his head. “Oh well, I’m just warning you of what *could* happen. That’s all.” He vanished.

Jack breathed in a fresh breath of air. “Thank goodness he’s gone.” He went about the rest of his day, but first he had to make an announcement to all of the restaurants on the station. Jack did not look forward to making the station dry. He was sure people would find a way around the new rules just like they did back in the 1920s.

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High above Shuka in a close orbit with Crimson Gamma was the Star Ship Fresno. Bert McDuff sat in the brig with Elise. He still hadn’t let her leave the brig, she was still his prisoner.

Sliding a tray of food through the force field, Bert smiled at Elise. “I hope you enjoy eggs. Our chef managed to round up some fresh ones from Earth not too long ago. The bacon is synthesized, unfortunately.”

Elise took the food and began eating. It would be stupid for her not to eat. The more she ate the more strength she would have to hopefully escape from this cell and get back to her own people. She eyed the one named McDuff. Elise figured she would snap his neck the first chance she had. There was no question about it.

“I assume you have more questions for me.” Elise said.

Bert nodded. “Yes I do. You said that if we don’t let you go before the end of the year, you will launch a full scale attack on Earth.” He refreshed her memory.

Elise looked at Bert between bites of egg. “That’s right.” She said.

“Hmmm.” Bert responded. “Why? What do you have against humans so much that you want us all dead?” It made no sense to him why so many alien species wanted Earthlings dead. They seemed to all want to destroy the planet he called home.

Elise thought about the question for a moment. Then she answered. “I don’t have anything against Earth personally captain.” She said. “I, unlike my people, think Earth is a great place. Look, I didn’t come up with this plan. But it is the plan set in motion. That’s all I can say.”

Bert stood from his chair. “I’ll be in touch.” He said as he exited the brig. As Bert walked the corridors of his ship, he wondered if it was time to talk to a higher up. Someone who had greater authority than him. Yeah it was time.

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Grilka was in the process of teleporting her belongings into Jack’s quarters when he arrived. He watched as she took box after box and placed them where they would fit. He was amazed at how well she was able to organize her things. Jack didn’t know she had so many possessions. He gathered most of them were her *medicine*.

Walking into his quarters, Jack kissed Grilka. “I see you’re making yourself at home. That’s good.” He smiled. “Is there anything I can help with?”

Grilka shook her head no. “I think I have it covered.” She said. “But thank you.” She continued putting boxes away.

“I’ll let you get back to it.” Jack said. He sat down on the couch.

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Commander Kate Monson was sitting in C&C, she was monitoring incoming traffic and outgoing traffic as well. Someone had to make sure there were no collisions. It was a careful dance that had to be taken seriously. There were thousands of souls on the line each and everyday that came to the station. If Kate didn’t do her job, people could die. That would look bad on the station’s record.

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“Commander” The security officer on duty called out. “Reading some ... weird readings in sector thirty-six. Right within our shield perimeter.”

Kate looked at the console in front of her. “What the hell? Red alert! Alert the major.” She ordered. Quickly people sprang into action. Kate watched as a wormhole opened up and a ship exited its orifice. “I’ll be damned.” She whispered.

Major O’Brien entered C&C from his private transport tube. “Got here as fast as I could ...” His voice trailed off at the sight of the wormhole. “What do we have here?”

Kate shook her head. “Unknown, just showed up on the scanners well within our shield perimeter.” She stared at the ship outside the main window. It was large as life. “Sending out a standard hail, let’s see if they decide to answer.”

The main viewer switched from a shot of the vessel to an alien with blue skin and two heads. Jack wasn’t sure which one of the heads to address. So he did the old trick of staring right down the middle, hoping one would speak first. If they both decided to speak, well that would be a problem.

“Attention unidentified vessel.” O’Brien said. “This is Major Jack O’Brien of the United Earth Force Alliance Station Crimson Gamma. You are way to close for comfort here. I’m asking you to back away nice and slow, at least three hundred kilometers.”

The alien looked at itself, literally with both heads, and responded. Both heads talking at the same time. It was too confusing for O’Brien to follow. He held up his hands. “Whoa, whoa, whoa, one head at a time please. Left head, you speak.” Jack said with a smile.

The left head’s mouth opened as words came out. “Okay, we didn’t mean to intrude your um business.” The head said. “We are backing up as you request.” Sure enough, the vessel engaged its forward thrusters making it move back three hundred kilometers.

“Thank you.” O’Brien said. “Now, where do you hail from?”

The right head took the time to answer the question. “We are from a planet out on The Rim. I don’t think its name can be pronounced in your language, so I won’t even try. We stumbled into an unstable wormhole and ended up ... wherever here is.”

“You’re pretty far from home, that’s for sure.” O’Brien said. “If there’s any damage to your ship, we can help you with that.” He offered. Jack waited for a response from the alien. He still wasn’t sure which head would respond to him.

The two heads looked at each other again, they appeared to be communicating telepathically, He had never met a telepathic species before. Jack couldn’t help but wonder what they were saying to each other.

“We accept.” The right head finally said. “Tell us what to do.”

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Jack smiled. "My first officer will direct you where to dock. Welcome to Crimson Gamma." He looked to Kate. "Please take care of them commander." Jack turned and exited C&C.

"Aye sir." Kate said turning her attention to the two headed alien.

The alien stared back at her, both heads looked confused. "Wait, where did your commander go?" They asked. "Yes, we must speak with him more. Where did he go? Will he be back?"

Kate sighed. Of course they wanted to continue speaking with the major. "I'll let him know you wish to speak with him further. You are cleared to dock at Docking Port Seventy-Six. Power down your engines, and we can lock onto your ship and guide you in. Our automatic system will take care of the rest."

"Understood commander." The alien said. They closed the communications channel.

Kate smiled. There were some days she enjoyed her job, and other days she just hated it. Today was a day that she enjoyed her job. Meeting new aliens, especially those from The Rim, managed to catch her attention.

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An hour later, Jack sat in his office, he watched as the blue alien walked in. "Major O'Brien." The left head said. "May we enter?"

Jack nodded his head. "Yes, please come in. Sit down."

The alien walked further into the office and sat down in a chair across from Jack's desk. "Thank you major." The right head said. "It is kind of you to meet with us." The left head chimed in.

"Well, what can I do for you?" Major O'Brien asked. He was genuinely curious at what the alien wanted from him. Why did they want to speak with him when they just spoke with him an hour ago.

"We need your help to return back home." The alien said. "We are not from your time, we come from three thousand years in your future. My chief engineer confirmed the number just moments before we came to visit you."

Jack leaned forward in his chair. "You're from the future?" He asked trying to confirm what he just heard.

"Yes." The alien said. "We do not belong here."

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Jack whistled. "I can't even pretend to know *how* to send you back to your own time." He said. "I'm sorry." Jack thought about the alien's predicament for a moment. "You came through an unstable wormhole. We do not have the technology to even generate wormholes let alone time travel."

The alien frowned, both heads frowned. "Then we are stuck here." They said in unison. "We thank you for your time. We will have to find another way to get ... back home." The alien stood up and went to leave Jack's office.

"Feel free to use the facilities on the station." Jack called out after them.

The alien turned around and bowed. "Thank you major, we will." They left the office.

Jack smirked. "Good luck finding a decent drink though." He whispered to himself. Jack got back to work, he had a long day ahead of him.

The End