

Allegiance

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by Kyle Eggleston

It had been well over a month since the Fresno had limped home under her own power after being defeated in orbit of the eighth planet in the Comeki Star System. It had been a few weeks since Captain O'Brien's open heart surgery. The few days Doctor Evans gave him was a gross misunderstanding of the situation at hand.

With O'Brien on the mend, and the Fresno's repairs finished. General Tague had orders from the President of Earth, President Cain, to get rid of the man. Not just fire him, but get rid of him. The orders were clear and there was no mistake about it. She had to terminate Captain O'Brien somehow.

General Tague believed in Earth being only for humans. No aliens allowed. O'Brien fell under the category of *part* alien. Commanding the station where aliens lived, alone was a difficult job for her, yet she managed. Now she had a job to do, a job she was struggling to commit to. If Eve could pass it onto someone else, she would. But the president expected her to carry out his order personally. That's just how the president was. He ran a tight ship and expected the officers under him to run their commands just as effectively.

Eve paced around her office. She glared at her computer monitor. On it was a document displaying the Articles of The United Earth Force Alliance. She hadn't realized what it had said about aliens before. Now it could have been a revision by President Cain or one of his staff, she couldn't be sure. But there it was in black and white. Article Twenty-Six Beta, Sub Paragraph Three:

If an alien is found within the ranks of the military, it is to be found guilty of treason and executed. There is no exception to this rule. Aliens are not allowed to serve in the Earth Military Alliance in any way shape or form, this includes so called half breeds, those of alien and human descent. This is to keep the bloodline pure of any defects.

She couldn't believe her eyes. If the articles were to be believed, then she had every right within her power to execute Captain O'Brien and give command of his ship to someone else. Someone who was human, not an alien like he was. Eve had to read the article several times over before she would accept it as gospel. She had simply thought the president was prejudice against aliens, that was all. But no, according to the articles it was deeper than that.

“General Tague to Captain O’Brien. Come in please.” Eve called into her comm unit.

O’Brien was quick to respond. “O’Brien here, what can I do for you general?”

“Come by my office around thirteen hundred, I have a matter to discuss with you.” Eve said. “Be on time please. Tague out.” The communications line closed.

Now she would wait. But she couldn’t stand waiting in her office for the dreaded time to arrive, no she had to be somewhere else. Anywhere else but there. *Command and Control sounded like a safe bet this time of day*, she thought. Exiting her office, Eve grabbed her sidearm and headed up to C&C to see all what was going on up there.

C&C was bustling with activity. An unknown alien vessel was sitting just outside the station’s shield radius and she was not budging an inch. As Eve entered C&C an ensign called out to the crew that she was present.

“General on deck!” The ensign shouted. Everyone in the room came to attention.

“As you were.” Tague said. “What have we here?” She asked looking out the main view port at the alien ship hovering there. Either they were waiting to strike or they had other things in mind, she couldn’t tell. Either way, they were alien, and they were blocking the shipping lane going to the station which was a direct violation of station code and conduct for incoming transport ships.

Tague’s first officer approached her. “Sir, we have been trying to contact this ship for the past half hour. They either refuse to acknowledge us, or they don’t understand our language. We’ve sent the necessary language files over as well as the galactic alphabet, but they don’t seem to be interested in talking.” He said. “I was just about to send out a scout party to board her. Our sensors can’t penetrate the ship’s hull, there’s no telling how many aliens are aboard her.” He reported.

“Very good Commander, carry on.” Tague said. “Send Lieutenant Bridges, I think he’s next in rotation.”

“Understood.” The first officer said as he walked to a station to make the call down to the fighter bay.

Tague liked Bridges, she knew she could trust him to follow out any order given him. Even if it was against his moral code of conduct, he would follow her orders to the letter. He was a good officer with a level head on his shoulders. She liked that about him. If there was anyone she wanted covering her back, it was Bridges.

A moment later an Atlantic Fighter could be seen heading away from the station to the ship parked just out of Crimson Gamma’s shield range. After docking with the ship, Lieutenant Brian Bridges boarded the vessel.

Brian looked around, the ship's docking bay was empty. Not even a single shuttle was aboard. He looked at his instrument panel on his flight suit, oxygen nitrogen atmosphere. The air was breathable. He removed his helmet and breathed in the stale air. Coughing, Brian cleared his throat.

"Hello?" He called out. "Is anyone there?"

Silence.

A clicking sound could be heard coming from behind him. Brian quickly turned around to see what was making the noise. An airlock door was trying to close, but there was something blocking it from fully closing all the way. As he approached the airlock, he found the remains of an alien, its arm in particular. Shoving the arm aside with his foot, the airlock closed and sealed. There was a blue smear mark where the blood had oozed out of the arm and onto the deck. Brian tried not to puke.

Pulling his sidearm from its holster, Lieutenant Bridges continued his search for someone to talk to. He found another airlock, one that wasn't sealed and entered it. The door closed behind him. As oxygen filled the chamber, he breathed it in. It wasn't as stale as the oxygen in the docking bay.

The airlock opened into a large and spacious room that branched off into different parts of the ship. One of the hallways had to lead to the bridge, Bridges thought. But which one? He would have to search the different branches to find out which hallway led where. Choosing a random hallway, Brian left the main room to explore.

After exploring several empty crew quarters, Brian came upon another large room full of stasis tubes. Full stasis tubes. Brian marveled at what he saw. Ships rarely used this method of transportation after FTL was invented. There was no need for long trips where you would sleep most of the journey. They were known as sleeper ships.

Opening a channel to Crimson Gamma, Lieutenant Bridges reported in. "Bridges to General Tague." He said. "It's a sleeper ship. No one's awake. There was an alien arm blocking a door, but no other signs of life are aboard except those in the stasis tubes." He paused. "Most of the tubes have malfunctioned. There are two tubes fully intact. Only two survivors of their crew. Requesting instructions."

In C&C General Tague froze. She was not expecting people to be frozen in stasis tubes, and only a handful of them to still be alive? It was unheard of. Ships of those nature had backups upon backups to prevent such occurrences from happening. Looking at her command console, Eve saw something that disturbed her.

"Lieutenant, you've removed your helmet. Explain." Tague ordered.

Bridges hesitated for a moment. It was against protocol for him to remove his helmet in such an unknown situation. Yet that's exactly what he had done. "Yes ma'am, the atmosphere was breathable, I took my helmet off."

"I see." Tague said. She closed the channel. "Weapons, open fire on that ship." She folded her arms fully aware of the death she was ordering. Bridges was a good officer, one of her finest. But he disobeyed regulations and had to be put to death.

Tague's first officer stepped forward. "General, please respectfully, I advise you reconsider that order. There could be technology aboard that ship we could use in the war effort."

Tague looked at her first officer and frowned. She didn't expect such a comment to come from him. She expected him to carry out her orders without question. An example had to be made. Raising her sidearm, she shot him point blank range in the heart. The man fell to the deck dead.

Eve looked to her third in command. "You are now my first officer, carry out my order."

"Aye ma'am." Her new first officer said. "Weapons, bring the main battery online. Destroy that ship." She exited C&C fully expecting her orders to be carried out. As she was leaving, she could hear her first officer ordering the destruction of the ship with Lieutenant Bridges still onboard. The ship exploded in a bright flash of light. It was over. Eve breathed a sigh of relief. Now she faced a bit of a problem, it was going to be hell of a paperwork trail to cover her ass of what just happened. She headed to her office.

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As thirteen hundred rolled around, Captain Jack O'Brien found himself in General Tague's office. Only problem was, she wasn't there. According to the station's computer, Eve was in the observation dome. Doing what exactly was only known to her. Jack paced around the office waiting for her to arrive. Eventually after thirty minutes, she did come walking through the office door.

"Captain." Eve said as she entered the office. "I'd apologize for being tardy, but I know we both don't care. I'd offer you a seat, but there aren't any. So stand."

Jack stood at attention. "Aye sir." He said.

Tague waved it off. "At ease captain, this isn't a court martial. Though heaven knows you deserve one. But not today." She said as she stood behind the desk in the center of the room. "Do you know where I just was?"

O'Brien cleared his throat. "Observation Dome, ma'am." He said. "I had the computer do a scan for your when you didn't show for our meeting."

Tague nodded her head. "That's right. Do you know what I was doing there?"

Jack shook his head no. "No ma'am. The computer wasn't that insightful. Frankly I didn't care." He paused. "But now I am, what were you doing there?"

"Looking over the wreckage of a ship I ordered destroyed with one of my officers onboard. Simply because he broke regs." She said. "I've been doing some soul searching in that half hour I was in the dome. I executed my first officer as well for disobeying a direct order." She explained. "I've never had to execute an officer before. They all had listened to orders and carried them out as given. Not this one though. He refused to fire on that ship, so I had to get someone in there who would carry out my orders." She paused waiting for O'Brien to adjust to what she just told him. It was a lot to unpack.

"I know I am within my right to execute those who I feel deemed incompetent of their duties during a time of war. We are at war captain. I had every right to do what I did." Her voice trailed off to a whisper. "But I don't think I should have. Do you see what I'm up against captain?"

O'Brien nodded. "I think I'm starting to sir. The president must have quite a hold on you for you to order the destruction of a ship with your own man aboard, and to execute your first officer."

Tague shook her head. "I don't think you understand the gravity of the situation captain. The president has ordered your execution as well." She paused. "I just don't think I can carry out that order. I've killed too many officers as it is."

O'Brien's mouth dropped open. He only had one question on his mind. "Why?" Jack asked.

Tague shrugged. "You're an alien posing as an officer in the United Earth Force Alliance. An act alone that is against the very articles you swore to uphold." She said. "I'm trying to find a loophole so I *don't* have to execute you captain. But I am coming up short. True we don't get along, there's no secret to that. But I'm done killing for one day. President Cain needs to be stopped. He's not the same man I supported during the Civil War, something has changed about him and that something is bad."

O'Brien nodded. He closed his mouth and paced around the room. A thought struck him almost as though it had been tossed to him from heaven itself. "Give my ship leave." O'Brien said. "Say it was before the order was given. That you haven't seen me in weeks. Make up some kind of lie." He explained. "I'll set a course for Earth and get Cain out of office one way or another. What do you say?"

Tague shook her head. "There are document trails already of you being here captain. Your surgery alone places you here within the last month. There's too much of a paper trail in place."

"Has it been transmitted to Earth yet, to the archives I mean?" O'Brien asked. Maybe there was a chance it hadn't been sent to the central archives for processing. There could be a window of hope for him yet.

Tague shook her head again, "No, I don't think that transmission goes out till next week."

"Good, we still have time." O'Brien said. "You're going to need to order your staff to destroy any records of my surgery, my being onboard, everything. Tell them the Fresno was still orbiting that dead planet searching for clues. I'll have my crew do the same."

"You want me to falsify logs, records." Tague said. "All for your sake to go after the president? And when you take him down? What then?" She asked.

O'Brien shook his head and folded his arms. "I don't know general. Then the war can continue with a newly appointed president. One who isn't corrupt. We can figure out things from there. All I'm asking is for you to give me a chance here. What do you say? You've already said you're done killing for one day." He paused allowing the general to think it over.

General Tague placed her hands on her desk as she leaned over it. This was highly irregular. But what was normal anymore, after the week she had been through; nothing was normal or regular.

"Captain O'Brien, I'm ordering you to take the Fresno to Earth. Take President Cain out of commission and remove him from office." She said. "This probably won't change our working relationship." Eve added. "But who knows, maybe in time we'll learn to trust each other."

Jack smiled. "Aye sir." He said. "Anything else? Or am I dismissed?"

Tague hesitated. She had to do it. She didn't want to do it, but she had to do it. "Yes, one ore thing. As a flag officer, I'm ordering you to place me under arrest for murder. Four counts. Two officers of the United Earth Alliance, and two aliens." She said. "It's all in my logs and the station's logs for a paper trail if needed." Eve put her arms forward so she could be handcuffed.

O'Brien took a step back in shock. "General, your career will be finished." He said. "Over. There's no recovering from this."

Eve nodded her head. "I know. But I must abide by the articles I swore to uphold." She said. "I obviously took things too far. No woman or man should have such power, and I abused those powers." Eve frowned. "Please, place me under arrest."

O'Brien hesitated. Reaching to the table, he grabbed a pair of iron restraints and placed them on Tague's wrists. "General Tague, under article thirty-two, section twelve of the United Earth Force Alliance Articles, I am placing you under arrest for the charge of murder. You will be confined to quarters until a hearing can take place."

As the iron restraints snapped into place, Tague winced. She had never been placed under arrest before and definitely never been put in irons before. It was a new terrifying experience, but one that was necessary. "Oh how I've fallen from grace." She said chuckling at the thought. "Who knows, after you get back they might give you your old command back with a field promotion and raise, major."

O'Brien nodded. "I wouldn't expect anything less general." He said. "If you'll please come with me." He escorted her out of the office towards her quarters.

In the transport tube, General Tague looked at O'Brien. "Where did I go wrong captain?" She asked.

O'Brien shrugged his shoulders in response. "I'm not sure general." He said. "Possibly taking orders from a man who was anti alien didn't help your cause. For a brief moment, you thought you were doing the right thing to uphold the articles we hold dear. In the end, you were actually doing the wrong thing. It's a fine line we walk general. There's no doubt about that."

Reaching a transport tube, O'Brien activated his comm unit, "O'Brien to security. I need two guards to watch the general's quarters. I've placed her under arrest."

A young unexperienced officer responded. "I'm sorry sir, you what?" Came the reply.

Tague rolled her eyes. She was working with amateurs here. "It's alright ensign." She said. "The captain is right. I'm under arrest. Do as he says. I recommend Lieutenant Barnes and Lieutenant Abraham for the assignment, but that's just me. They like me."

The ensign stammered. "Yes ma'am." He said. "I'll have the lieutenants report to your quarters immediately. Security out."

The transport tube was taking its sweet time to get to the officers section of the station. O'Brien had noticed lags in the transport system over the past couple of days. If Madison was onboard, she would have had it fixed within a day. As the transport tube slowed to a stop, O'Brien sighed. They were stuck.

“Tague to the dock, what the frack is going on with my transport tube?” Eve yelled into her comm unit.

A second later, and engineering officer replied. “Sorry ma’am. We’ve been having trouble with the transport tubes all morning and afternoon. I’m working to get you back up and running asap. We can teleport you out of the tube if you wish?”

O’Brien shook his head. “Absolutely not!” He shouted into the comm unit. “We will wait for you to fix the tube. I suggest you get on it.”

“Ma’am?” The engineer’s voice asked.

“Do it.” Tague responded as she closed the channel. Eve didn’t even wait for a response from the dock worker. She just knew they would carry out her orders without question or hesitation. Why O’Brien didn’t want to use the teleporter was a mystery to her. She had heard rumors of him being afraid of the device, but those were rumors. She never had heard the full story.

O’Brien exhaled. “Seems we’re going to be stuck in here for a bit.” He unbuttoned his duty jacket and sat down on the floor. Eve unbuttoned her duty jacket as well and slid down the wall so she too could sit on the floor cross-legged.

“So, what is it with you and teleportation. It’s been proven to be safe and cost effective. What gives?” Tague asked point blank.

O’Brien chuckled. *Safe my ass.* He thought. So he told the story of the aliens that had come to the station to warn him about how dangerous teleportation actually was, their findings and everything else that went along with it. In the end, the teleportation device was a murder machine plain and simple. It only made copies of people killing the originals.

Tague couldn’t believe her ears. If what O’Brien was saying was true, then it would change transport operations as she knew it. Forget the cost effective aspect of the device. It was a game changer, that much was for sure.

“Wow.” Tague said. “If that’s the case, none of us should be using the blasted thing. I’ve died, I don’t know how many times. Thousands at least.”

O’Brien nodded. “Yeah, that’s why I disabled them across the station a few months before you showed up.” He paused remembering the sacrifice of the two aliens who had brought him the information. That damning evidence.

“Mind if I ask you a personal question general?” O’Brien asked.

“Go for it.” Tague said.

“Why did you side with President Cain during the Civil War? Are you really against aliens like he is? Are we really that bad in your eyes?” O’Brien asked.

The question wasn't so cut and dry as the captain wished it would be. There were a lot of gray area in that question. It wasn't quite as loaded as the captain thought it was, but it was loaded enough. Depending on what the general would say back to it, well it could open up a can of worms he wasn't sure he wanted to get into. But Jack asked the question, so the can was already open.

General Tague shook her head. "I don't endorse his no aliens on Earth policy, no. I believe there to be a place in the universe for aliens. Sometimes that has to be on Earth. I get it, trade needs to happen for a civilization to flourish. That trade has to come from outside our own species. I don't condone interspecies mixing though. If you're human you get with a human, if you're Dubor you get with a Dubor. That I am firm on, as I believe the president is."

O'Brien rocked his feet back and forth as he sat on the floor. "So I am an abomination in your eyes." He said. "My ancestors are of both Dubor and Human, hence why I'm a half ling, or half breed as you like to say." He wasn't angry or upset with the general, he was just pointing out a fact.

General Tague shook her head. "I wouldn't call you an abomination. You had no choice in the matter. You are what you are and you can't change it. Your ancestors are the ones to blame for what you've become." She said. "It's probably your Dubor half that allowed you to have a Dubor heart placed within you to begin with. I doubt any human would have survived the procedure."

"I see," O'Brien sighed. For a moment he wished he could see things from her angle, her point of view, but found it difficult to do so. He couldn't change his way of thinking when it came down to the president and those who had an allegiance to him. The thought disgusted him. "What about his other points on his platform?"

Eve shrugged. "What about them? I support some of them, like lowering the crime rate by establishing a curfew. I think that was a good move by the president. It seems to have worked. Martial law is kind of a gray topic for me. I neither like it or dislike it. It has helped me run this station more efficiently than when I took over from you." She paused. "No offense captain, I just think I'm doing a better job than you are."

O'Brien chuckled. "Sure you are, that's why you had me arrest you."

She nodded. "Okay, you've got me there. I've lost sight of the big picture, of what we're trying to accomplish out here near the edge of known space. It's rather an easy thing to do if you're not constantly watching what's happening and what's going on around you. If I could go back and fix things? Two of my officers would still be alive, as well as two aliens, and there wouldn't be a destroyed vessel off our port side. But it's too late to fix things captain. I've made my bed and now I have to sleep in it. Case closed."

Tague looked at O'Brien, she couldn't help but wonder if he could take down the president. If he had the guts to go back to Earth and force a man to resign his commission as president of Earth, to arrest that man. She hoped he did have the guts to do that. Hell, he had done it once before. That's why she had chosen him for this mission. He had the experience needed to take back control over Earth the way it was meant to be. Maybe she didn't fully align herself with the president after all. "Hmmm" she said.

"Hmmm?" O'Brien asked. "What are you hmmming about?"

Eve shook her head. It wasn't worth bringing up. He knew how she felt about the president and the Civil War, and the current war. Dubor had to be stopped at all costs. There was no margin for error. "I'm just worried this war will take the better part of a year for us to even come close to stopping *your* people." Eve finally said.

"My people." O'Brien echoed. "You know I don't stand with Dubor." He tried to explain. "I just happen to be one of them, the similarities end there general. My loyalties are to Earth first. They always have been, nothing has changed that."

Eve smiled. "What about that girlfriend of yours? She's a full blood. How do you know you can trust her? How do you know she's not just using you as a plot to get something out of it?"

Jack shrugged. "I don't. She hasn't given me a reason *not* to trust her yet. So far she's been very helpful in determining how Dubor technology works. How they think, those kinds of things."

"And if she becomes useless to you as an advisor?" Tague teased at the thought of Jack simply letting Grilka go. Kicking her to the curb as it were. An old Earth phrase that still held some meaning in today's society.

"Oh general," O'Brien said snapping his fingers. "That won't likely happen. I'm not saying I'm using her for trade secrets into her home world as an advantage. But anything that comes up that might help us? You better believe I'm going to use it, and she knows that. The lines of communication between her and I are completely open. There's no second guessing going on where we are concerned."

General Tague flicked her tongue with her teeth. "I see." She said. "You do know under President Cain's regime she is to be questioned and if the answers aren't given quick enough, she is to be lined up and shot."

Jack nodded. "I know. Which is why I gave her diplomatic immunity and made her a delegate. Under that protection, Cain can't touch her. No one can from the military." It was a genius move on his part. Without that immunity in place, anyone from the military could interrogate Grilka as they pleased, there were no restrictions on the type of interrogation

which could be performed against her under the current administration. It was a serious matter, one Jack hoped to change when he eventually would force Cain to step down as Commander In Chief of Earth. He looked around the transport tube, it felt like the walls were closing in on him. A bit of claustrophobia it would seem. He breathed in and out trying to get rid of the feeling.

An hour passed, Eve and Jack had talked mostly about politics and their positions in the Civil War back on Earth. What the new war meant for them going forward, and how they were going to deal with whatever came of the future. General Tague fully expected to be placed in a maximum security prison for her crimes. Jack agreed with the thought. Eve was dangerous, she didn't deserve to be anywhere near a military post, not in his eyes at least.

As the transport tube began moving again, both Jack and Eve stood up and buttoned their duty jackets. *It was about time the dock workers got the damn tube working again.* Jack thought. No matter how much buddy buddy time he and Eve got during the downtime, she was still the enemy in his eyes, and he still had a job to perform.

Arriving at officers country, they exited the transport tube and walked towards Eve's quarters. The security guards were stationed outside her quarters as ordered. Eve looked at both of them and smiled. It was good she had her own people guarding her. She felt safer than if someone not loyal to Cain were guarding her, she might end up dead in the middle of the night.

Eve stepped inside her quarters. A force field appeared over her door. She wouldn't be allowed to leave her quarters until a hearing had been setup and processed. It was standard law of the articles.

"Well general, I guess this is it." O'Brien said. "I'm on my way to Earth to carry out your orders."

"Good hunting captain." Eve said. "Jack. Thank you for listening."

Jack nodded his head. "Anytime ma'am." He turned and left the area heading to a docking port that would take him back to his ship, the Fresno. But there was someplace he had to go to first.

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Grilka was sitting in her quarters at a computer terminal. She was trying to learn as much of the Earthlings language as possible. Who knew, someday she might be living among them if Jack decided to relocate on Earth after the war, or after he retired. She couldn't tell

which would happen first. Grilka just wanted to be prepared for whatever was to come her way next. It felt like the reasonable thing to do.

Her door chimed.

“Come in.” Grilka said not looking up from her computer terminal.

Jack entered Grilka’s quarters. “Hey you.” He said.

Looking up from her computer terminal, Grilka smiled large enough for the world to see. She ran to Jack’s side and hugged him. Kissing his lips, she continued to smile. “My darling.” She said. Grilka continued to kiss Jack on the lips.

Jack came up for air long enough to speak. “Grilka, love, I have to be going. General Tague has ordered me to take the Fresno back to Earth. We are to take Cain out of office once and for all.” He said.

Grilka shook her head. “I don’t understand.” She said. “I thought Tague conspired with the president to get this command out from under you.” Grilka was confused.

Jack nodded. “Yes that’s true, she’s had a change of heart you could say. Anyways, I don’t know how long I will be away this time. It’ll take at least a week to reach Earth, and I don’t know how long the assignment will take.” He paused. The last time he had taken Cain out of office, it had been rather cut and dry. This time, it might not be as simple. “I expect a full resistance of ships against the Fresno. Those who are loyal to Cain and are sympathizers of his style. I can only hope we get out of this alive.”

“Then I am coming with you.” Grilka said. Walking over to the synthesizer, she ordered the computer to create a case big enough to carry her things. She didn’t have much in the way of secular items, so it wasn’t that big of a case. Grilka began packing at once.

Jack tried to stop her. “Grilka, I don’t know the danger involved. I might not come back alive. You don’t want to risk going into battle with me, trust me on this.” He tried to stop her from packing but found it difficult to do so. Every item he put away, Grilka just picked back up and put it back in the case.

“I am going with you Jack O’Brien, there is nothing you can do to stop me.” Grilka said, her voice was stern. Firm even. It was the voice of a commander telling his officers to get in line or to get out of the way.

Jack nodded. “Alright, alright.” He finally gave in. “I will have quarters assigned to you for the voyage.”

An hour later the U.S.S. Fresno departed Crimson Gamma for Earth. Jack and his crew hoped they knew what they were getting themselves into. Taking out a sitting official was no easy task, not by a long shot. Jack hoped he and his crew had it in themselves to do the

unthinkable and take down Cain for good. Cain had a death sentence out on his life. If he wasn't going to come willingly, Jack would have to take him by force. Something Jack hoped he didn't have to do. But if it came down to it, Jack would take any means necessary to accomplish the end goal.

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President Cain sat in his office in the White House. He looked outside to see the European countryside. Cain had the house moved to Europe when he got back. Its old location just wasn't suitable to him. If he was president of the entire Earth, he wanted someplace more pleasing to the eye than Washington D.C.

A man walked into the Oval Office. "Sir, this just came in over the wire." He said handing the president a data crystal. "It would appear the U.S.S. Fresno is coming to Earth. She's been dispatched from Crimson Gamma."

President Cain accepted the crystal and placed it in a receiver. He looked over the information on the screen in front of him. "Who gave the order? I didn't order the Fresno to stop her patrol in Shuka space."

The man shrugged. "No idea sir. General Tague isn't answering my hails. Crimson Gamma has gone radio silent it would seem." He continued. "The last commanding officer was a Captain Jack O'Brien. I assume he's the one coming. For what reason, I don't know."

Cain crumpled up a piece of paper on his desk. "O'Brien." He said. "That bastard is on his way here to remove me from office. Mark my words. Well I won't let him do it so easily this time around. Call in the cavalry. Get every available ship within range to orbit Earth in a staggard formation. I want a welcoming party when the Fresno reaches Earth. It will be the last thing they see before I destroy them. Get out."

The man quickly exited the office.

"O'Brien, if you think you can take me down a second time, you've got something else to worry about." President Cain said.

The End