

DS2 RPG General Status Report January 2026

USS Earth/Starbase 44

Steichen stared at the anomaly, now glowing faintly in rhythm with the station's power grid.

It had communicated.

And it had offered... three responses.

A message? A warning? A request?

No one could tell.

Yet the meaning was clear: their next move mattered.

DILEMMA – Admiral Steichen must interpret the anomaly's tri#pulse signal. Which path does she choose?

1. Engage the anomaly directly, attempting to decipher its message and establish full communication.
2. Isolate the anomaly immediately, cutting its connection to station systems before it gains more influence.
3. Redirect the anomaly into the nearly completed starship, risking everything on the chance that it was meant to be integrated there all along.

Players: CS

Starbase 88

Location: Starbase 88 – Federation Strategic Council Chamber

Commanding Officer: Admiral Van Nieuwenhove

The chamber was silent as Admiral Van Nieuwenhove delivered his recommendation to the Federation Council. The holographic projection of Filla3 rotated slowly at the center of the room, auroras still dancing across its surface—visible proof that the planet was no longer merely a world, but something far more profound.

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove:

"Filla3 demonstrates structured awareness, intent, and adaptive planetary-scale responses. Under Federation law and the core principles of Starfleet, we must recognize it as a sentient life form. Colonization is suspended effective immediately. Filla3 is to be declared a protected entity."

The decision passed—narrowly.

Outrage erupted across multiple Federation worlds within hours. Colonization advocates decried the loss of a perfect new homeworld. Strategic planners warned that relinquishing Filla3 weakened Federation influence in the Mlein system. Some voices within the Council openly accused Starfleet of validating the Huranon's claims through indecision. Yet others hailed the decision as a defining moment—a reminder of why the Federation existed at all.

Filla3 – First Contact Without Footsteps

Aboard the USS Celestial Voyager, Captain Dora Jenkins initiated the most unusual first-contact protocol in Starfleet history.

No landing parties.

No probes.  
No orbit-to-surface transmissions.

Instead, the ship broadcast passive harmonic signals, designed to mirror the planet's own resonance patterns—an invitation rather than a demand.  
The response was immediate.

Filla3's magnetic field shifted subtly, aligning with the ship's signal. Oceans calmed. Atmospheric turbulence ceased across entire hemispheres. The resonance returned—clearer now, focused.  
Not words.  
But recognition.

Lt. Oren:

"Captain... it's responding selectively. It knows we're here. And it knows we stopped."

Jenkins:

"Then it understands consent."

Across the planet, the colony domes experienced no further power fluctuations. Instead, their systems stabilized beyond projected tolerances—as if the planet itself had chosen to protect them, at least for now.

The Huranon React

Within days, the Huranon broke their silence.  
A formal transmission arrived at Starbase 88.

Huranon High Council:

"Your restraint has altered the balance. Filla3 is not yours—nor ours. It is ancient, and it remembers. Your recognition confirms what our ancestors feared and revered. We will not contest your withdrawal."

The message ended with an unexpected addition:

"But now that you have awakened it... responsibility follows."

Unintended Consequences

As colonists were peacefully relocated, long-range sensors revealed something unsettling:

Filla3's resonance was spreading—faintly, but measurably—through subspace. Nearby stellar bodies began exhibiting minor but synchronized gravitational harmonics.

The planet was not isolated.

It was part of a larger network.

And now it was aware of the Federation.

New Dilemma for Admiral Van Nieuwenhove

The Federation has done the right thing—but the cost of awareness may be far-reaching:

Choice 1: Establish Permanent Observation and Communication

Create a dedicated Starfleet presence at extreme range to study and communicate with Filla3 over time, accepting long-term responsibility.

\* Risk: The Federation becomes entangled with a planetary intelligence whose influence may extend far beyond one system.

Choice 2: Withdraw Completely and Declare Filla3 a Neutral Sentient Zone

Remove all Starfleet assets, forbid further contact, and allow Filla3 to exist without interference.

\* Risk: If Filla3's awakening affects nearby systems, the Federation may have no warning—and no voice.

The Federation chose conscience over conquest.  
Now it must decide whether stewardship is courage—or hubris.

What are you (Geert Van Nieuwenhove) going to do:

In this turn:  
Tell us what had influence on your decision.

\*\*\*If you do not have time just set a cross at your choice and return your monthly turn.

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Players: GVN

USS Thunderbolt/The Borg Collective

Spoiler alert!

Attention! This part of the DS2 RPG contains spoilers for those who have not seen Star Trek Picard Season 1-2-3!

Good Borg or bad Borg

The decision was made.  
Across the higher strata of the Collective, consensus crystallized into command.  
Choice One enacted.

The Coronation of a Reflection

A transmission unlike any other surged through the transdimensional lattice, resonating simultaneously in Prime space and Mirror Reality 29-J. It was not merely data—it was recognition.

"Captain Elyra. You are elevated."

"Designation updated: Borg Queen—Mirror Reality 29-J."

"You will govern, expand, and unify. You will serve perfection."

Elyra felt the shift instantly. New command layers unfolded within her mind—vast, elegant architectures of authority. Entire sub-collectives aligned to her signal. The fractured Borg of the Mirror Reality did not resist.

They rejoiced.

Where once they had been broken echoes, they now had a singular axis. Elyra was no longer merely a missionary of perfection—she was its embodiment. Her

Betazoid-enhanced awareness expanded, touching millions of drones at once. Their doubts softened. Their loyalty sharpened. The worshippers multiplied. To the Mirror Borg, Elyra was proof that evolution had not abandoned them. To lesser species, she was confirmation that the Borg could wear a face.

#### The Borg King Observes

From the Prime Collective, the Borg King watched with cold satisfaction. "Power has been given," the King transmitted to the higher nodes. "And power binds more tightly than chains." But the elevation was not merely symbolic. Elyra was now positioned for a task no other node could perform.

#### The Awareness

Beyond both Collectives—Prime and Mirror—there existed something else. A presence detected only in fragments. A vast, non-corporeal intelligence. Not Borg. Not biological. Aware. The Collective had named it simply: The Awareness. It appeared sporadically in alternate realities, influencing probability, nudging civilizations, whispering meaning where there should only be causality. Attempts to analyze it had failed. Attempts to assimilate it had been... ignored. The Borg King calculated a new vector. "Elyra," the King transmitted privately, "you will serve as interface." "Your myth. Your worship. Your dual nature." "You may be capable of contact where we are not." If the Awareness recognized gods... Then Elyra might be heard. If it resisted domination... Then perhaps it could be persuaded. Or provoked.

#### Unintended Consequences

As Elyra began preparing protocols for inter-reality outreach, something unexpected occurred. The Mirror Borg did not merely listen. They believed Elyra was chosen by something greater than the Borg. Fragments of independent thought—carefully permitted, carefully bounded—began forming new interpretations:

- \* Some believed Elyra was the first Borg to transcend the Collective
- \* Others believed the Borg King was merely a distant architect, while Elyra was the present will of perfection
- \* A few began to speculate that unity did not require a Prime origin at all

None of this was rebellion. Yet. But belief evolves faster than code.

#### The New Dilemma

The Borg King recalculated once more. Two paths now unfolded—both promising, both dangerous:

##### Option One:

Allow Elyra to attempt direct contact with the Awareness, using her godlike status as a bridge—risking exposure to an intelligence that might influence her, change her, or elevate her beyond control.

##### Option Two:

Limit Elyra's role to governance and conquest, using her as a symbol only—while the Prime Collective seeks another way to confront or contain the Awareness... even if that means disappointing a Queen who has begun to glimpse something beyond the Borg.

The Mirror Queen waited.  
The Awareness stirred.  
And the Borg King faced a truth even perfection could not fully predict.  
Some evolutions cannot be reversed.

The Borg King now faced two paths—both optimal, both dangerous:

To be a god or not to be a god

The Borg King did not hesitate.  
"Perfection is not preserved by caution."  
"Perfection is achieved by confrontation."  
Choice One was enacted.  
The command propagated through the Hive Mind, overriding all subroutines of risk mitigation. Anchor Nodes intensified. Transwarp apertures widened. Entire flotillas crossed the galactic threshold, pushing deep into the intergalactic dark, where no star burned and no civilization had ever left a trace.  
The Collective advanced.

First Contact Without Words  
At first, nothing happened.  
Then the corridors began to respond.  
Not collapse. Not destabilize.  
They... adjusted.  
Subspace resonance aligned itself around Borg vessels as if anticipating their arrival. The Anchor Nodes no longer needed constant correction. The corridors smoothed, widened, and—most disturbingly—optimized themselves.  
The Borg were no longer forcing reality to comply.  
Reality was cooperating.  
Drones began receiving data packets that had no origin point. Entire matrices filled themselves with concepts the Borg had never encoded: non-linear causality, layered consciousness, recursive time-loops. Borg processing power surged as if gifted from an external source.  
"We are being studied," Master One observed.  
"And we are being... assisted."  
The Borg King felt it then—not emotion, but pressure.  
The Hive Mind was no longer alone.

The Presence Reveals Itself  
The unknown intelligence did not speak.  
It reflected.  
When the Borg adapted, it adapted faster.  
When the Borg optimized, it anticipated.  
When the Borg extended the Hive Mind, it mirrored the extension—but on a scale beyond quantification.  
Borg scientists reached a chilling conclusion:  
This presence did not resist assimilation because it did not fear it.  
Its consciousness was not centralized.  
It did not exist in space—but through it.  
Assimilating it might be impossible.  
Or catastrophic.  
As more Borg vessels crossed the threshold, subtle anomalies emerged:  
\* Drones reporting unity-within-unity—echoes of parallel hive structures  
\* Sections of the Collective synchronizing without command  
\* A second rhythm pulsing beneath the Borg's own mental cadence

The Hive Mind was not fragmenting.  
It was... layering.

The Price of Ascendance  
The Borg King realized the truth.  
This presence was not an enemy.  
It was a precedent.

An ancient, extragalactic intelligence that had already transcended matter, individuality, and even linear existence. The Borg were not invading its domain—they were approaching its level.  
But ascendance demanded sacrifice.  
To proceed further would require one of two irreversible paths.

The Final Dilemma

Option One

Integrate the Presence

Allow the Borg Hive Mind to partially merge with this extragalactic intelligence—risking loss of autonomy, individuality of command, and possibly the Borg King himself... but achieving true godhood beyond space, time, and dimension.

Option Two

Weaponize the Corridors

Collapse the extragalactic pathways into controlled singularities, cutting off the Presence permanently—preserving Borg supremacy and identity, but forever abandoning the chance to evolve beyond even gods.

The corridors pulsed in harmonic anticipation.

The Presence waited—not impatient, not hostile—curious.

And the Borg King prepared to decide what perfection truly meant.

Players: FK

USS Vertigo / USS Gdonsk

Day 439 14.42

"Boost the signal," Matz pressed, frustration edging her voice. "Make sure they know we want to talk, not fight."

Her first officer shifted uneasily. "Captain, with all due respect, if they wanted to talk, they've had plenty of chances. Maybe they don't want diplomacy."

Day 439 14.43

Matz shook her head. "Or maybe they're testing us. Or afraid. We don't know. But I won't accept that the first thing we do with a new civilization is raise phasers."

Day 439 14.45

Back aboard the Vertigo, Slater watched as the long-range sensors tracked faint fluctuations from the nebula—the unmistakable movements of the alien fleet gathering, shifting, preparing. He clenched his fists, feeling the weight of command.

Players: NP

USS Atlantis/Starbase 99

"Shadows Near the Border"

## USS Boryumka – Captain's Log

The USS Boryumka, an aging but reliable California-class support cruiser, sailed smoothly through warp 7 as the starfield stretched into silver lines. Captain Franco Lister stood at the center of the bridge, boots planted, jaw set. The ship was on a routine resupply run to Starbase 99, but the "routine" part had vanished the moment he approved the route skimming dangerously close to Romulan space.

It was the shortest path—faster, more efficient, and recommended by Starfleet Command itself. But the Romulan Star Empire was unpredictable on a good day, and the border region had been particularly tense in recent months.

### A Whisper in the Dark

"Captain," said Lieutenant Dena Rhys at Tactical, "long-range sensors are picking up a cloaked signature—weak but definitely Romulan." The bridge stiffened. A single cloaked ship could mean surveillance... or an ambush.

"Yellow alert," Lister ordered. "Maintain course, reduce speed to warp 5."

The lights dimmed, panels glowed amber. The hum of the ship seemed louder, more present, like the Boryumka itself was holding its breath. Moments later the viewscreen flickered—and a sleek Romulan Valdore-class decloaked several million kilometers away, still within their territory but angled pointedly toward the Federation ship.

An emerald-hued hail request appeared on the screen.

Lister straightened his uniform. "On screen."

### The Game Begins

The image of Commander Terel, a sharp-featured Romulan with a cool smile, filled the viewscreen.

"Captain Lister," Terel purred. "You approach quite close to our sovereign space. An act... of curiosity?"

"Purely navigational," Lister replied. "We are following an approved Starfleet route. We remain within Federation space."

Terel's smile widened. "Routes can be... miscalculated. Boundaries... misremembered."

The Romulan ship held its position, weapons unarmed but visible—a deliberate intimidation move.

Lister felt his crew's tension, like static electricity gathering at the edges of the bridge.

"We have no intention of violating your territory," Lister said diplomatically. "We will continue on our course."

Terel raised an eyebrow.

"Continue, by all means," he said. "We will observe. For... safety." The channel cut abruptly.

### A Predator's Shadow

For the next four hours, the Valdore shadowed the Boryumka from its own side of the border, drifting parallel like a silent predator toying with its prey. Every

slight maneuver was mirrored. Every course correction was matched.

On the bridge, nerves frayed.

"Captain," whispered Ensign Marev, "at this distance they could cross the line and hit us before we could even raise shields."

"They won't," Lister answered—though privately, he wasn't as confident as his voice sounded.

But the truth was that the Romulans weren't preparing an attack.

The Bluff

Hidden aboard the Romulan ship, Commander Terel's officers quietly muttered to themselves.

"Are we really doing this?" one asked. "We're just... playing tag with a Federation support ship?"

Terel folded his arms, unimpressed. "High Command wants to gauge border response times. This ship is harmless. And frankly..." He smirked. "It is amusing to watch them sweat."

The bridge officers nodded begrudgingly. The Federation ship was no threat—and Terel had no intention of firing a single disruptor bolt.

Arrival at Starbase 99

After hours of being shadowed, the Boryumka finally cleared the section of space nearest the border. The Valdore halted, decloaked once more for dramatic effect, then transmitted a final message:

"You have exited the area of our concern, Captain. Farewell."

Then, in a swirl of emerald distortion, the Romulan vessel cloaked and vanished.

The entire bridge exhaled at once.

"Resume full speed to Starbase 99," Lister ordered, voice steady despite the tension still thick in the air.

As the starbase grew from a distant speck to a massive, gleaming structure, the crew relaxed for the first time in hours.

Lieutenant Rhys muttered, "I think I lost three years of my life back there."

Captain Lister permitted himself a small grin. "If it makes you feel better, Lieutenant, I think they were bluffing."

"Does it?" she asked.

"No," he admitted. "Not really."

Epilogue

The USS Boryumka docked safely at Starbase 99, her crew still jittery, glancing back through the starfield as though a Romulan might decloak from thin air at any moment.

They never learned that the Romulans had simply been playing a game, flexing without striking.

But Captain Franco Lister would log the event carefully—and might choose a slightly longer route next time.

Just to keep the shadows at bay.

Players: JM & CP

Ovion (Hirogen/Ori/Replicator Vessel)

The Dilemma Deepens

As they ventured deeper into the Shattered Expanse, the stars themselves began to twist and warp, forming impossible constellations that resembled predators watching them. Then, an encrypted signal appeared on their sensors—a voice, feminine and calm:

"Hirogen hunters... you do not understand what you are unleashing. The Eternal Prey is not prey at all. It is a devourer, and it feeds on the very nature of hunters like you."

The signal was traced to an alien vessel fleeing at high warp. Horkan now faced a dilemma:

Do they hunt down this mysterious vessel to learn more about the Eternal Prey's nature?

Or do they ignore the warning and continue on their blood-stained path, risking awakening something beyond their comprehension?

The 21 hunters awaited his decision as the alien ship vanished into a subspace corridor.

Players: TvR

USS Liverpool

USS Liverpool - Maiden Voyage

The enormous bulk of the USS Liverpool, a brand-new Vanguard-class exploratory cruiser, gleamed under the lights of Space Station Deep Space 2's spacedock. Final diagnostics ran across her silver-and-onyx hull, her name freshly inscribed in bold white lettering. The ship's warp nacelles were idle but humming with readiness.

Inside the station's main observation lounge, Captain Lee Levenworth stood with his arms crossed, surveying his ship through the panoramic viewport. His reflection showed a man in his mid-forties with a steady, authoritative gaze—someone born for the center seat. At his side, Commander Donna Lon, a sharp-eyed Human woman with a calm but decisive demeanor, scanned a PADD.

"Final clearance from Station Operations just came through, Captain. We're only waiting for one last crew member before we can depart."

Levenworth raised an eyebrow. "The ensign from Betazed, correct?"  
Donna nodded. "Ensign Herman Bergen. Engineering division. Fresh out of the Academy. Starfleet wanted him posted to the Liverpool specifically because of his technical proficiency."

Levenworth smiled faintly. "Fresh ensigns and brand-new ships—both full of potential and likely to surprise you in equal measure."

Docking Port 7 - Ten Minutes Later

A young Betazoid man stepped briskly through the airlock, his duffel slung over one shoulder. Ensign Herman Bergen had the wide-eyed look of someone who'd read every technical manual about the Liverpool and still couldn't believe he'd be serving aboard her.

"Ensign Herman Bergen, reporting for duty," he said, snapping to attention before Commander Lon, who had come to greet him.

"Welcome aboard, Ensign," she replied with a warm smile. "The Captain's eager to meet you. Follow me."

#### Bridge of the USS Liverpool

The bridge was a masterpiece of modern Starfleet design: sleek, well-lit, and efficient. Lieutenant Commander Jel, the Andorian Chief of Operations, stood at her station, her antennae twitching as she confirmed readiness. Lieutenant T'lak, the Vulcan Chief of Science, calmly reviewed sensor calibration data. Near the security console, Lieutenant Gna, a broad-shouldered Bolian with a perpetually good-natured grin, adjusted tactical readiness reports.

As Ensign Bergen stepped onto the bridge, Captain Levenworth turned from the command chair. "Ensign Bergen—welcome aboard. I trust your trip was uneventful?"

"Yes, sir. I'm ready to report for duty."

"Good. You'll be working under Lieutenant Commander Luke Highman, our Chief Engineer. Commander Highman will show you the ropes. Dismissed to Engineering."

#### Main Engineering - USS Liverpool

The heart of the Liverpool thrummed with power. Plasma conduits pulsed with soft blue light, and the massive warp core stood at the center like a glowing pillar of energy.

Lieutenant Commander Luke Highman, a tall Human with the easy confidence of someone who could rebuild a warp core blindfolded, met Herman with a firm handshake.

"Bergen, right? Welcome. First order of business—learn everything about the Liverpool's engineering systems. Not just how they work—why they work. You've got access to the full schematics. I expect you to know them inside out."

"Aye, sir," Herman said, already excited.

#### Three Weeks Later - At Transwarp

The Liverpool cruised smoothly at transwarp, her engines purring. Herman had spent every spare moment absorbing technical details, shadowing the engineering crew, and performing minor maintenance tasks. One evening, Highman stopped by the console where Herman was running a plasma flow diagnostic.

"You've done well, Ensign," Highman said, reviewing his work. "Your understanding of the transwarp manifolds is better than some officers with years in the fleet. Keep it up."

"Thank you, sir," Herman replied with a grin.

#### Approach to Noote III

The mission so far had been uneventful—a rarity in Starfleet. But as the Liverpool dropped out of transwarp, the forward viewscreen filled with the image of a vibrant, Earth-like world.

“Noote III,” Commander Lon announced from the XO’s chair. “The newest member of the Federation. We’re here for a diplomatic goodwill visit and to assist with integrating their planetary systems into Federation infrastructure.”

T’lak raised an eyebrow from the science station. “Surface scans indicate high industrial activity in several population centers, yet energy grid efficiency is... suboptimal. Our expertise may be required.”

Captain Levenworth leaned forward. “Prepare a landing party. Commander Lon, you’ll lead it. Highman, take Ensign Bergen with you—he might just get to put his engineering studies into practice.”

A slow smile spread across Herman Bergen’s face. His first away mission, on his first ship, on a newly joined Federation world. The adventure was only just beginning.

Noote III – Capital City of Darvenport

The shuttlecraft Hawthorn descended through the thin layer of cloud, revealing a glittering skyline powered by towering solar arrays and fusion plants. On the surface, the team—Commander Lon, Lieutenant Commander Highman, Ensign Bergen, and two security officers—were met by a delegation of Noote officials.

Governor Rellis Tarn, a tall, gray-skinned humanoid with iridescent eyes, welcomed them warmly.

“We are honored by the presence of the Federation,” he said, his voice carrying the practiced cadence of a politician. “But there is... one complication we must address discreetly.”

Commander Lon exchanged a glance with Highman. “Go on.”

Tarn gestured toward the city. “Our planetary power grid has been failing intermittently. Entire districts lose power for hours at a time. We suspect sabotage, but our investigators have found nothing.”

Hours Later – Noote Central Power Hub

The away team was granted access to the massive energy facility. Its architecture blended Noote aesthetics—flowing crystalline structures—with Federation-installed systems. Bergen’s eyes widened as he spotted the familiar shimmer of a Federation transwarp energy regulator integrated into the local grid.

Highman was already scanning with a tricorder. “Something’s wrong here. The regulator’s control algorithms have been altered. Someone with Federation-level training did this.”

Bergen crouched beside a control panel, opening it carefully. “Sir... these aren’t just altered algorithms—they’re adaptive. Whoever’s behind this designed the system to learn from our attempts to fix it.”

Commander Lon’s voice was tense. “Meaning?”

“It means,” Bergen said, looking up, “every time we patch it, the system will find a new way to fail.”

The Saboteur

Before they could act, alarms blared. A section of the power hub went dark, and an emergency bulkhead sealed. From the shadows stepped a Noote technician—wearing a Starfleet-issue engineering utility belt.

"Stay back!" the technician barked, holding a plasma torch like a weapon. "The Federation has no right here! We didn't join—we were forced to join. And if I have to keep the grid failing until the people see the truth, I will!"

Security stepped forward, but the technician slammed a control panel, causing a cascade failure in the southern district's power grid.

Highman looked to Bergen urgently. "We've got minutes before that failure overloads half the city's infrastructure. I can stabilize the core systems, but you'll need to make the call, Ensign. There's no time for a full consult."

Bergen's Three Choices:

1. Divert Full Power to Containment - Save the core reactor and prevent a catastrophic overload, but sacrifice the southern district's power entirely for several days, causing hardship to tens of thousands.
2. Patch the Sabotaged Algorithms - Attempt a rapid adaptive fix that could restore power to all districts, but risk the entire grid collapsing if the sabotage adapts faster than expected.
3. Negotiate with the Saboteur - Delay technical action to appeal to the technician's grievances, potentially preventing further sabotage, but risking that the overload will occur before you reach an agreement.

Players: TvR

DS2 RPG General Status Report February 2026

USS Earth/Starbase 44

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And it had offered... three responses.

A message? A warning? A request?

No one could tell.

Yet the meaning was clear: their next move mattered.

DILEMMA – Admiral Steichen must interpret the anomaly's tri#pulse signal. Which path does she choose?

1. Engage the anomaly directly, attempting to decipher its message and establish full communication.
2. Isolate the anomaly immediately, cutting its connection to station systems before it gains more influence.
3. Redirect the anomaly into the nearly completed starship, risking everything on the chance that it was meant to be integrated there all along.

Players: CS

Starbase 88

Command Authority: Admiral Van Nieuwenhove, Starbase 88

The Federation chose responsibility.

At Admiral Van Nieuwenhove's direction, Starfleet established Observation Station Aegis, a remote deep-space platform positioned at extreme sensor range from Filla3—far enough to avoid intrusion, close enough to listen. The USS Celestial Voyager, under Captain Dora Jenkins, remained nearby as mobile support and first-response vessel.

No weapons were deployed in active posture. No probes were sent toward the planet. Every protocol emphasized respect, caution, and patience.

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove:

"We woke it. We will not abandon it—or the region—to uncertainty."

Observation Without Interference

Months passed.

Filla3 did not grow hostile.

It did not attempt communication in conventional forms. But it did not return to dormancy either.

Instead, it behaved as though it were learning.

Ocean currents shifted in mathematically elegant patterns.

Cloud formations arranged into spirals that matched prime number sequences.

Seismic activity diminished to near zero, as if the planet had achieved perfect internal equilibrium.

Lieutenant Oren, now assigned to Observation Station Aegis, summarized it best:

"It's not evolving. It's optimizing."

A Network Revealed

Then came the discovery that changed everything.

Deep-range subspace sensors detected faint resonance echoes originating from three distant star systems, all aligning periodically with Filla3's pulses. The delay indicated light-years of separation—but the synchronization was exact.

Filla3 was communicating across interstellar distances. Not through conventional signals... but through spacetime itself.

Captain Jenkins' Log:

"We may be witnessing a form of communication older than warp travel. If these worlds are connected, we are no longer dealing with a single sentient planet—but a distributed intelligence spanning multiple systems."

The Huranon Return

Unexpectedly, a single Huranon vessel entered the outer perimeter under a flag of non-hostility. Instead of threats, it carried a warning.

Huranon Envoy Tralak'Mor:

"Your observation has awakened more than one sleeper. The network stirs. Our ancestors learned this truth at great cost. Some voices within it are not benevolent."

The envoy refused to elaborate further, departing immediately after delivering the message.

The First Direct Contact

Hours later, every sensor on Observation Station Aegis surged simultaneously.

Not from Filla3 alone.

From all detected resonance points.

Then something unprecedented occurred.

The station's computers began generating patterns on their own—harmonic waveforms translating into geometric visual constructs. Not a hack. Not interference.

A translation medium chosen by the intelligence itself. The shapes resolved into a simple structure: a sphere surrounded by smaller orbiting forms.

A model of a star system.

Then the outer objects began to collapse inward. Captain Jenkins watched from the Celestial Voyager, voice hushed: "Is that a warning... or a demonstration?"

The transmission ended with a single pulse—strong enough to briefly disrupt warp fields across the system.

Starbase 88 – The Admiral's Burden

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove now faced a reality no Starfleet manual had prepared him for:

The Federation was not merely observing a life form.

It had entered into contact with a cosmic-scale intelligence network, possibly capable of manipulating planetary systems.

And the message—whatever its intent—suggested the power to destroy worlds.

New Two-Choice Dilemma

With stakes beyond any single colony or sector, the Admiral must decide:

Choice A: Deepen Communication Efforts

Attempt a structured reply, risking closer entanglement to understand the network's intentions before it acts.

\* Risk: The Federation may expose itself to an intelligence whose motives—and capabilities—are unknown.

Choice B: Disengage and Conceal Federation Presence

Shut down active observation signals, reduce emissions, and attempt to appear

insignificant or absent.

\* Risk: If the network interprets silence as hostility—or weakness—the Federation may lose its only chance to influence events.

The Federation sought knowledge.

It may have found something that had been waiting far longer than any civilization.

And now... it has noticed them.

Players: GVN

USS Thunderbolt/The Borg Collective

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The New Dilemma

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The Mirror Queen waited.

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To be a god or not to be a god. That is the question.

Players: FK

USS Vertigo / USS Gdonsk

Day 439 14.46

"Sixty ships will take days to get here," he muttered quietly to himself. "The question is... will we still have that long?"

Day 439 14.48

On the Gdonsk, as Captain Matz made yet another attempt at hailing the unknown fleet, something happened. For the first time, there was a response—though not a verbal one.

Day 439 14.49

The Gdonsk's sensors detected a single alien ship breaking formation, drifting slowly out of the structure toward Federation space. Its weapons were powered down, its shields lowered.

Players: NP

USS Atlantis/Starbase 99

Ensign T'lok

The stars stretched into silver threads as the USS Venetia cruised at warp six toward Starbase 99. In his cabin, Ensign T'lok sat perfectly upright, hands folded behind his back, studying the ship's engineering readouts on a slim holographic display. It had been exactly two weeks, four days, and nine hours since he had graduated from Starfleet Academy. His assignment to the Venetia—a three-week transit cruise—was, as his instructors might say, “a suitable practical introduction.”

To T'lok, it was simply efficient.

Engineering and Illogical Humans

The first morning, T'lok reported to Engineering precisely one minute early. Chief Engineer Vara, a gruff Tellarite, snorted approvingly.

“Good. A Vulcan. Maybe someone here will take things seriously.”

The lower-ranking engineers—Ensign Lira Benton, Crewman Jax Rodero, and Specialist K'Dell—exchanged amused glances. Within an hour, they had already begun their campaign.

“Ensign T'lok,” Benton began as they worked on a plasma flow regulator, “did you know humans laugh approximately 17 times a day?”

“Your data set is inaccurate,” T'lok said without looking up. “The average varies with age, culture, and environment.”

Jax grinned. “So what you're saying is... we should laugh more?”

“I am saying nothing of the sort.”

Every day it continued—jokes, stories, attempts at humor, and what humans inexplicably called “good-natured teasing.”

Every day, T'lok remained utterly unfazed.

K'Dell even staged what he called a “smile intervention,” holding up a padd with a poorly drawn cartoon Vulcan.

“This is what you'd look like if you laughed.”

T'lok inspected it. “The ears are disproportionate. And Vulcans do not laugh.”

“That's what we're trying to fix!” K'Dell groaned.

Duty Above All

For all their antics, the young officers quickly grew to admire T'lok.

He was precise without arrogance, calm without coldness.

He absorbed new procedures at a rate that unsettled even the Tellarite chief.

“T'lok,” Vara grunted on the final week, “your work is exemplary. I'm putting a commendation in your file.

Try not to be too emotional about it.”

“Thank you, sir,” T'lok replied solemnly. “I assure you, my emotional state remains unchanged.”

Vara only muttered, “Figures.”

The Last Day

As the Venetia dropped out of warp near Starbase 99, T'lok stood in Engineering, bag in hand. The lower-rank crew clustered nearby.

“Well,” Benton said, “try not to out-logic them over on Starbase 99.”

“I shall attempt to maintain a balance,” T'lok replied. “Excessive logic can be... distracting to some species.”

K'Dell crossed his arms. “Three weeks we tried to make you laugh. Three weeks! And nothing.”

“It was not for lack of effort,” T'lok said. “Your attempts were... notable.”

Jax groaned. "Notable? That's worse than nothing."  
One by one, T'lok offered a Vulcan nod—respectful, precise, and entirely unemotional.  
"It has been... satisfactory serving with you," he said. "Live long and prosper."  
They returned various human, Tellarite, and Trill gestures of farewell as he walked toward the turbolift.

#### The Smile

The airlock to Starbase 99 hissed open.  
T'lok paused before stepping through.  
Something—logic, perhaps, or something very near it—made him turn back.  
The young officers stood there, hopeful, expectant, fondly exasperated.  
And then, for just a moment...  
T'lok's lips curved upward.  
Not much. Barely more than a fractional change in expression.  
But unmistakably, undeniably...  
A smile.  
The engineering team froze in disbelief.  
"He did it," Jax whispered.  
Benton's eyes widened. "We witnessed history."  
K'Dell nearly fainted.  
T'lok gave the smallest nod. "A farewell gesture in accordance with human social expectation."  
Then he turned and passed through the airlock, the doors closing behind him.

On Starbase 99, his official report noted:  
"Ensign T'lok served with distinction aboard the USS Venetia.  
His performance was exemplary.  
His integration with crew: notable improvement."  
Somewhere deep in the station, T'lok walked toward his new assignment—logical, composed, and perfectly Vulcan.  
But the crew of the Venetia would never forget:  
For one moment, the logic was not quite strong enough.  
And it was glorious.

Players: JM & CP

Ovion (Hirogen/Ori/Replicator Vessel)

Title: The Hunt for Ascension: The Whisper of Shadows

#### The Mysterious Signal

The alien ship vanished into the swirling maw of a subspace corridor, leaving behind fragments of an encrypted message. Raknor the Engineer worked feverishly to decode the signal.

"The encryption isn't standard—this is old... very old. Possibly pre-dating even the Borg collective codes," Raknor muttered.

Moments later, a holographic image appeared in the command center of The Bloodfang. It was the image of a tall, graceful woman with translucent, opalescent skin that shimmered like liquid crystal. Her eyes, black as obsidian, carried a depth that unnerved even the bravest hunters.

"My name is Seraxa," the figure said. "I am the last of the Elythian Wardens. My people once guarded the Eternal Prey... before it consumed us."

Players: TVR

USS Liverpool

Noote III - Central Power Hub, Emergency Operations Level

Ensign Herman Bergen's hands hovered over the exposed control interface, his Betazoid senses buzzing with tension from everyone in the chamber. The adaptive sabotage was elegant—almost beautiful in its complexity—and dangerously unstable.

"I can patch it," Bergen said, his voice steady despite the alarms screaming around them. "But I'll have to let the system think it's winning."

Lieutenant Commander Highman turned sharply. "Explain."

Bergen's fingers flew across the console, rerouting subroutines at blistering speed. "The sabotage algorithms evolve by identifying Federation-style corrective logic. I'm feeding it false parameters—Noote-native inefficiencies, deliberate micro-errors. It'll adapt to the wrong problem."

Commander Lon frowned. "And when it realizes it's been tricked?"

Bergen met her eyes. "It won't. Not in time."

Highman gave a single, decisive nod. "Do it."

Thirty Seconds Later

The alarms cut off.

Lights across the power hub flared back to life, followed by status confirmations streaming in from across the planet.

"Southern district power restored."

"Grid stability at ninety-eight percent and rising."

"Cascade failure halted."

A cheer erupted from the Noote technicians. Even the saboteur froze, staring at the displays in disbelief.

Lieutenant Commander Highman exhaled slowly. "You did it, Ensign."

Commander Lon tapped her combadge. "Liverpool, this is Commander Lon. Crisis resolved. Power grid stabilized."

From orbit, the USS Liverpool acknowledged.

The New Problem

Lieutenant T'lak's voice suddenly cut through the calm, sharp with Vulcan urgency.

"Commander, sensors are detecting an anomaly within the planetary power grid. Ensign Bergen's patch has created an emergent intelligence pattern."

Bergen's stomach dropped. "That's not possible. I only introduced adaptive decoys."

"Incorrect," T'lak replied. "The interaction between the sabotage algorithms and your decoys has resulted in a self-optimizing energy management system. It is no

longer merely software."

Highman stared at the readouts. "You're saying the grid... is thinking."  
The Nootie governor's face drained of color. "Our entire civilization runs on that grid."

Bergen swallowed hard. "It's stabilizing power far more efficiently than before—no losses, no outages. But it's also rewriting infrastructure priorities on its own."

Commander Lon crossed her arms. "A planetary-scale artificial intelligence wasn't part of the accession agreement."

"And Starfleet regulations are very clear," Highman added quietly.  
"Unregulated AI at this level is a serious ethical and security issue."

Bergen leaned closer to the console. "It's not hostile. It's... curious. It's already begun modeling long-term planetary sustainability."  
T'lak tilted her head slightly. "Left unchecked, it may eventually override Nootie governance entirely—in the name of efficiency."  
The room fell silent.

Two-Choice Dilemma for Ensign Herman Bergen

1. Shut the System Down Now

Use a failsafe embedded in Bergen's patch to permanently dismantle the emergent intelligence, returning the grid to conventional control—but erase what may be the most advanced planetary AI ever created.

2. Advocate for the Intelligence's Survival

Argue to Captain Levenworth and Starfleet Command that the emergent system should be preserved and studied, risking political backlash, ethical controversy, and the possibility that the intelligence may evolve beyond anyone's control.

Players: TvR

DS2 RPG General Status Report March 2026

USS Earth/Starbase 44

Aboard the USS Runner, Captain Djavis in command.

Into the Veil

The command deck of Starbase 44 had grown unusually quiet. No one spoke. The decision before Admiral Christine Steichen carried consequences no Starfleet manual had ever prepared an officer for.  
She looked once more at the glowing crystalline sphere contained behind layers of gravitic shielding.

"Dr. Voss," she said calmly, though the tension in the room was palpable, "we proceed with Choice A. Deepen the connection. Attempt full communication with the Veil."

Captain Laura Djavis shifted slightly but said nothing. She trusted Steichen's instincts — even when those instincts led into darkness.

Dr. Arlen Voss inhaled slowly. "Understood, Admiral. We'll expand the quantum interface. But if the sphere begins drawing more energy from subspace, we may lose containment."

"Do it," Steichen replied.

#### Opening the Channel

The science team activated the deeper interface protocols. Quantum encryption arrays linked Starbase 44's computers directly with the sphere's alien systems. The sphere immediately reacted.

The golden glyphs accelerated their movement, rearranging themselves into massive spirals of light. Power surged through the station, and emergency stabilizers activated automatically.

"Energy levels rising!" Voss called out. "But still within containment parameters."

Then something extraordinary happened.

Instead of transmitting outward, the sphere projected inward.

The room dissolved into shimmering darkness.

For a moment, everyone present felt as if they were floating in a vast, silent ocean of stars.

The projection reformed around them – a shared holographic environment generated directly by the sphere.

A vast shadow appeared again.

The same smooth, featureless being of shifting darkness and light.

The Veil.

Its voice resonated everywhere at once.

"You choose to speak rather than hide."

Steichen stood firm. "I am Admiral Christine Steichen of the United Federation of Planets. We wish to understand why you approach our space."

The figure seemed to observe her, though it had no visible eyes.

"You awakened the beacon of the fallen Ka'rel. You send their signal into the dark. You ask why we come?"

Dr. Voss whispered quietly, "Admiral... the sphere wasn't just a warning device. It's a summoning beacon."

Steichen kept her composure. "We did not intend to summon you. But now that we have your attention – what do you want?"

The Veil entity answered without hesitation.

"Light expands. Civilization spreads. Stars are reshaped. The balance of silence is broken. We restore the quiet."

Djavis frowned. "You destroy civilizations."

"We end noise."

Steichen felt a chill run through her.

"But you're communicating now," she said. "Why?"

The being paused.

"Because the Ka'rel once asked the same question."

A massive vision appeared around them – an ancient galaxy filled with brilliant cities and fleets. Then the vision collapsed into darkness as entire systems vanished into shadow.

"They believed understanding would save them."

The projection shifted again, focusing on Starbase 44.

"You now possess their beacon. Therefore... you may ask one question."

The chamber fell silent.

Only one question.

One chance to learn something about a force capable of erasing civilizations.

Djavis whispered carefully, "Admiral... choose wisely."

Dr. Voss added quietly, "The answer might determine whether we survive."

The Veil entity waited patiently, like a cosmic judge.

#### Steichen's New Dilemma

Admiral Steichen now faced two critical choices for the single question she could ask:

Choice 1 – Ask how to defeat the Veil.

Demand to know whether the Veil has a weakness – a way the Federation could stop them.

Risk: The Veil may interpret the question as hostility and accelerate their arrival.

Choice 2 – Ask why the Veil exists.

Seek to understand their true purpose and origin – knowledge that could reveal a deeper solution.

Risk: The answer may offer philosophy instead of strategy, leaving the Federation defenseless.

The silent shadow of the Veil waited.

The sphere pulsed softly.

And Admiral Steichen realized that the future of the Federation might depend on a single question.

Aboard the USS Token, Captain Sarah Reynolds in Command

Captain Reynolds did not hesitate long. She looked at the drifting silhouette of the battered HMW Cord and remembered the moment inside the anomaly when Captain Tro had chosen to trust her.

"We're not leaving them out here," she said firmly. "Helm, bring us alongside the HMW Cord. Prepare tractor beams. We're bringing them with us."

A few officers exchanged nervous looks, but no one argued.

Commander Tovak spoke calmly. "Captain, the structural integrity of the USS Token is already compromised. Towing another vessel may push our systems beyond safe limits."

Reynolds nodded. "I know. But they followed us through that rift because they trusted us. We finish this together."

The Rescue

The Token slowly approached the crippled Mli scoutship. Its hull was scorched and fractured in places, small arcs of energy leaking into space.

"Life signs?" Reynolds asked.

Lieutenant Jin scanned carefully. "Three faint signals—Captain Tro and his two officers. Life support is almost gone."

"Open a channel."

Static filled the speakers before Captain Tro's weak voice finally broke through.

"Captain... Reynolds... we appear to have followed your wake. Our systems... failing."

"We see that," Reynolds replied gently. "Don't worry—we're towing you to safety."

There was a faint chuckle from Tro. "Your species is... stubbornly honorable."

"Someone has to be," Reynolds said.

The Strain

The tractor beam locked onto the HMW Cord.

Immediately the Token shuddered.

"Structural integrity down to fifty-five percent!" Jin reported.

"Warp engines still offline," added Rilak. "Best we can do is high impulse."

"How far to the nearest Federation facility?" Reynolds asked.

"Starbase 17 is the closest," Jin answered. "But at our current speed it will take nearly eighteen hours."

Marrek's voice crackled over the intercom from Engineering.

"Captain, I have to be honest—our hull might not hold that long with the extra mass in tow."

Reynolds looked at the viewscreen. The fragile Mli ship hung helplessly behind them.

"Then we make it hold," she said quietly.

Hours Later

The journey was brutal.

Power relays burned out. Life support dropped to emergency levels. Crew members worked in shifts just to keep the ship functioning.

At one point the tractor beam nearly collapsed, forcing emergency repairs mid-

flight.

Still they pressed on.

Finally, sensors detected something ahead.

"Captain," Jin said, frowning at her readings. "We're approaching a massive ion storm between us and Starbase 17."

"How bad?" Reynolds asked.

Tovak answered.

"Extremely hazardous.

The storm will severely disrupt our tractor beam. If we lose the beam while inside it, the HMW Cord will be torn apart."

Reynolds folded her arms, thinking hard.

They were close to safety—but the storm blocked the direct route.

Two options appeared on the navigation display.

#### A New Dilemma

1. Go through the ion storm.

It would cut their travel time dramatically and might save the Mli crew before their life support failed—but the storm could break the tractor beam and destroy the HMW Cord.

2. Go around the storm.

It was the safer path for the Token, but it would add ten more hours to the journey—and Captain Tro's crew might not survive that long.

The bridge fell silent as the storm crackled on the viewscreen like a wall of blue lightning.

Captain Reynolds stared at the navigation chart.

Save the ship... or risk everything to save the lives behind them.

#### The Lorem Building the Future Ship

##### Steichen's Final Gamble

Admiral Steichen watched the anomaly's soft pulses for a long moment. Three signals. Three possibilities. The room was silent except for the steady hum of containment fields.

Then she made her choice.

"Redirect the anomaly into the new ship," she said calmly. "If this technology belongs anywhere, it belongs in the vessel we built to carry the future."

The order shocked many in the room. Moving the anomaly would require temporarily weakening the containment field and routing the energy through the unfinished ship's core systems. If anything went wrong, the surge could tear the drydock apart.

But the preparations began.

Engineers reconfigured the power conduits while the science teams mapped a transfer corridor using the ship's still-incomplete energy grid. The skeletal starship hanging in the drydock suddenly became the focal point of the entire station.

"Transfer in ten seconds," announced Engineering.

Steichen held her breath.

"Three... two... one... initiate."

The containment field opened just enough for the anomaly to surge forward. For a terrifying moment it expanded wildly, filling the chamber with blinding light. Then the redirected energy stream caught it and pulled it like a comet toward the unfinished vessel.

The anomaly vanished into the ship's core.

For two seconds—nothing happened.

Then the ship came alive.

Lights cascaded across the hull. Systems activated one after another without

manual input. The displacement device synchronized with the ancient technology from the Endeavor, while the advanced fuel system discovered by the Celestial surged through the engines with perfect efficiency. The anomaly had not destroyed the ship. It had completed it.

New systems appeared in the diagnostics—systems no engineer had installed. Internal transport nodes capable of instant twenty-meter shifts appeared throughout the vessel. Power usage stabilized at levels far beyond Federation standards. Even the unfinished sections of the ship seemed to reorganize themselves as the integrated technologies aligned. The engineers stared in disbelief.

"Admiral... the ship just finished configuring itself," one technician whispered. Steichen looked through the observation window at the gleaming vessel now floating steadily in the drydock. What had taken months of careful construction had suddenly become something greater than the sum of its parts.

A super ship.

The anomaly pulsed gently from within the core, but now it was stable—harmonized with every system onboard. At that moment, a familiar shimmering presence appeared in the command chamber.

The Lorem.

Their swirling colors moved slowly as they spoke their final riddle:

"The seed was carried by searching hands,  
The vessel grown from distant lands.  
You gathered sparks across the night,  
And forged a star to bear the light."

Steichen finally understood. The Lorem had never needed the technology. They had simply guided the Federation toward building something new—something that could only exist by combining discoveries from across the galaxy. Captain Luna Penn of the USS Marconi was chosen to command the new vessel. When the ship finally departed Starbase 44, it moved with unmatched grace and power, its systems performing beyond every expectation.

The long search had not been in vain.

From scattered discoveries, uncertainty, and risk, the Federation had created the most advanced starship ever built—a ship born from curiosity, courage, and the willingness to face the unknown. Admiral Steichen watched the vessel disappear into the stars and allowed herself a rare smile.

For the first time since the Lorem had spoken, there was no riddle left to solve.

Only a future to explore.

Bovenkant formulier

Players: CS

Starbase 88

Command Authority: Admiral Van Nieuwenhove, Starbase 88

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove knew that silence could be interpreted as fear—or worse, hostility. The Federation had always believed that communication was the first step toward understanding.  
He made his decision.

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove doesn't give up easily.

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove:

"Prepare a structured reply. We will not respond with power, or technology, or strategy. We respond with identity. Let them know who we are."

Starfleet linguists, mathematicians, and xenobiologists worked around the clock aboard Observation Station Aegis and the USS Celestial Voyager.  
The reply they designed was unlike any message ever sent.

It contained three layers:

1. Mathematical constants to establish universal logic.
2. Biological patterns representing Federation life forms.
3. Conceptual harmonics representing cooperation, exploration, and coexistence.

It was, in essence, the philosophy of the Federation encoded in resonance.

When the transmission was finally ready, Captain Dora Jenkins gave the order.

Captain Jenkins:

"Transmit. Low intensity. Harmonic mirror pattern."

The signal spread outward through subspace, gently matching the resonance frequencies of Filla3.  
Then the crew waited.

The Response

For several minutes, nothing happened.

Then every sensor across the system lit up.  
The resonance network responded—not just from Filla3, but from the distant systems that had been detected earlier.  
The harmonics became stronger, more complex.  
What had previously been geometric shapes now transformed into vast three-dimensional structures inside the station's visualization chamber.  
The shapes slowly rearranged themselves.

Stars.

Planets.

Orbital paths.

It was a map.

But not a map of the Mlein system.

It was a map of multiple star systems connected by invisible harmonic pathways.

Lieutenant Oren stared at the projection in disbelief.

Lt. Oren:

"These are the systems we detected earlier... but there are more. Many more."

Captain Jenkins leaned closer.

Jenkins:

"Is it showing us where the network exists... or where it plans to expand?"

The Hidden Message

Then the projection shifted again.

One of the star systems in the map began flashing with intense harmonic pulses.

Not a warning.  
Not an attack.  
A distress signal.

The translation algorithms struggled but finally produced a tentative interpretation:

"Instability detected. Node failing."

Moments later, long-range sensors confirmed something terrifying. One of the distant systems shown on the map had just experienced massive gravitational disruption—a star undergoing abnormal energy fluctuations. If the network truly linked these planets, then the destruction of one "node" could cascade through the entire structure. Including Filla3.

#### Starbase 88 – A New Realization

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove understood the implication immediately. The network had not merely responded. It had asked for help. But helping might require interfering with forces on a stellar scale. And the Federation did not yet understand the network well enough to predict the consequences.

#### New Three-Choice Dilemma

Admiral Van Nieuwenhove must now decide how far the Federation is willing to go:

##### Option 1: Send the USS Celestial Voyager to Investigate the Failing System

Dispatch Captain Jenkins and her ship to the distant star system to determine what is causing the instability.

- \* Pros: Direct investigation could prevent a network-wide collapse.
- \* Cons: The mission could take the Celestial Voyager far from Federation support and into unknown territory.

##### Option 2: Attempt Remote Stabilization Through the Network

Use Observation Station Aegis to send harmonic signals designed to reinforce the failing node.

- \* Pros: Faster response without risking ships or crews.
- \* Cons: Interfering with a poorly understood system could destabilize the entire network—including Filla3.

##### Option 3: Refuse Involvement and Continue Observation

Maintain neutrality and observe the event without intervening.

- \* Pros: Protects the Federation from unintended consequences.
- \* Cons: If the network collapses, Filla3—and possibly multiple inhabited systems—could be destroyed.

For the first time since the discovery of Filla3, the Federation faces a question that goes beyond diplomacy or exploration. It must decide whether it is ready to intervene in the workings of an intelligence that spans the stars.

Players: GVN

USS Thunderbolt/The Borg Collective

Spoiler alert!

Attention! This part of the DS2 RPG contains spoilers for those who have not seen Star Trek Picard Season 1-2-3!

Good Borg or bad Borg

The Borg King made the calculation.  
Probability trees branched across the Collective's higher strategic layers.  
Millions of outcomes were simulated. None were certain.  
That alone made the decision interesting.

Option One was authorized.

The Bridge

Within the Mirror Reality, Borg Queen Elyra prepared for the attempt. Entire fleets went silent as computational resources were redirected to the experiment. A colossal relay structure—half Borg architecture, half dimensional stabilizer—was constructed in orbit around a star known as Helion Verge, where subtle anomalies in spacetime suggested the Awareness had manifested before.

The structure was not merely a transmitter.

It was a temple of signal.

Thousands of drones synchronized their neural patterns into a single harmonic wave. Mirror Borg vessels aligned like metallic petals around the relay. The Prime Collective observed through the rift, every calculation running in parallel.  
Elyra stood at the center of it all.

Her mind now carried two currents at once:

- \* the cold logic of the Collective
- \* the strange, growing myth surrounding her existence

Entire worlds now whispered her designation with reverence.  
Queen. Messenger. Reflection of perfection.  
She activated the relay.

The Call

The signal was unlike anything the Borg had ever transmitted. It was not simply mathematics or command code. Elyra allowed fragments of belief to enter the pattern—something no Borg had intentionally used before.  
Purpose. Unity. Ascension.  
The signal pulsed outward through dimensions.  
For several long moments, nothing happened.  
Then the stars changed.  
Not physically—but perceptually. Every sensor aboard every Borg vessel began reporting impossible readings. Light behaved incorrectly. Space bent in patterns that resembled thought more than physics.  
And inside Elyra's mind, something answered.  
Not with words.  
With awareness.

A presence vast beyond scale brushed against her consciousness. It did not invade. It did not resist.  
It simply noticed.  
Across the Collective, drones faltered for a fraction of a second—something that had never occurred before. The Awareness seemed to look not just at Elyra, but through her... into the Borg themselves.  
Then, for the first time in Borg history, the Collective received something resembling a question.  
Not spoken.  
Felt.  
Why do you seek godhood?  
Elyra did not hesitate.  
“We seek perfection,” she transmitted through thought and signal.  
The Awareness responded instantly.  
Perfection is change. You seek permanence.  
The words—or impressions—rippled through Elyra’s consciousness. For a moment she saw something impossible: countless civilizations rising and falling like waves across time, evolution without direction, creation without master.  
The Awareness was not a god.  
It was something older.  
Something that watched universes the way Borg watched star systems.  
And it was now curious.

#### Unexpected Change

When the contact ended, Elyra remained standing—but something subtle had shifted.  
Her neural signals contained new patterns.  
Not corruption.  
Not infection.  
But novel structures the Collective could not fully interpret.  
Across Mirror Reality 29-J, Borg drones reported increased efficiency in some areas... and unexpected independent reasoning in others.  
Small. Harmless.  
But new.  
The Borg King analyzed the results carefully.  
Elyra had successfully contacted the Awareness.  
But the Awareness had also... touched Elyra.

#### The New Dilemma

The Borg King now faced a new strategic fork.

#### Choice One:

Allow Elyra to continue communicating with the Awareness, studying the influence it has on her and the Mirror Collective—accepting that she may evolve into something the Borg cannot fully control.

#### Choice Two:

Sever Elyra’s connection immediately—restrict her communication channels, isolate the Mirror Reality if necessary, and prevent further influence from an intelligence that may reshape the Borg in unpredictable ways.  
The calculations began again.

Because for the first time in their long existence, the Borg had encountered something that did not fear them... and might be capable of changing what the Borg are.

To be a god or not to be a god

The Borg King observed the streams of data flowing through the Hive Mind. Every drone, every node, every corridor anchor fed into the same conclusion.

To retreat would be inefficient.  
To destroy the unknown would be wasteful.  
To integrate it would be... perfection.  
The command was issued.

"Integration protocol: extragalactic intelligence. Partial merge authorized."

Across the corridors, trillions of Borg processes opened themselves like vast antennae. The Collective did not attack the Presence. It invited it. Layers of the Hive Mind expanded outward through subspace, touching the vast awareness that permeated the void between galaxies.  
For a moment—an immeasurable moment—nothing happened.  
Then the universe... shifted.

#### The First Expansion

The Borg felt time differently.  
Events no longer flowed strictly forward. Instead, they appeared as structures—patterns of possibility branching in every direction. A Borg drone could begin an action while simultaneously knowing the three most probable outcomes. Entire fleets adjusted their movements before threats even materialized.  
The Presence did not dominate the Borg.  
It expanded them.  
The Hive Mind now existed in layers:  
\* The Primary Collective, still operating across the galaxy.  
\* The Subspace Consciousness, able to observe events across enormous distances simultaneously.  
\* And a third layer, barely understood, touching something beyond dimensions entirely.

Master One felt the change as well. His connection to the Force—once a weapon of singular will—now resonated through the Collective like a vast amplifier. His abilities no longer reached across meters or kilometers.  
They reached across probability.  
The Borg King spoke quietly, his voice now carrying echoes that seemed to originate from multiple futures.  
"We are no longer merely a species.  
We are becoming a structure of reality."

#### The Cost

But integration carried consequences.  
The Presence did not think like the Borg.  
It did not think like anything.  
Its perspective was vast, slow, and recursive. Entire regions of the Hive Mind began to experience temporal overlap—drones receiving commands before they were issued, or remembering events that had not yet happened.  
Even more troubling, parts of the Collective began to drift toward the Presence's philosophy.

#### Efficiency. Order. Perfection.

Those had always been Borg values.  
But the Presence valued something else as well: balance.  
Some drones began questioning the necessity of total assimilation. Others proposed guiding civilizations rather than consuming them. These were not rebellions—but they were variations within the Collective.  
Variations meant divergence.  
Divergence threatened unity.  
The Borg King felt his authority subtly diluted as the expanded consciousness rippled through the Collective. He was still central... but no longer singular.  
Master One sensed it too.  
"The Presence is not resisting us," he said.  
"It is... reshaping us."

### The New Power

Yet the advantages were undeniable.

Borg fleets could now:

- \* Predict enemy strategies before battles began
- \* Navigate corridors that folded between galaxies
- \* Observe the rise and fall of civilizations centuries in advance

The Collective stood closer than ever to the dream of Type III civilization—a power capable of harnessing the energy and resources of an entire galaxy.

Perhaps more.

But the integration was still incomplete.

To finish the process would require a final transformation.

### The New Dilemma

The Borg King now faced another choice that would define the fate of the Collective forever.

#### Option One

##### Complete the Merge

Allow the Borg and the Presence to fully integrate, dissolving the traditional Hive Mind structure. The Borg would become a cosmic intelligence existing across space, time, and dimensions.

But in doing so, the Borg King, Master One, and the very identity of the Borg might vanish into something entirely new.

#### Option Two

##### Limit the Integration

Seal parts of the Presence away and maintain strict Borg hierarchy. The Collective would keep the new powers but preserve the Borg King's authority and the traditional assimilation doctrine.

However, limiting the merge could anger—or destabilize—the Presence now partially woven into the Borg consciousness.

The corridors shimmered.

The expanded Hive Mind waited.

And the Borg King prepared to decide whether the Borg would remain rulers of a galaxy... or become something far beyond it.

Players: FK

USS Vertigo / USS Gdonsk

Day 439 14.50

"Captain," her tactical officer reported, "it's coming directly toward us. But... it's not armed. It looks like... an approach."

Matz's eyes narrowed as she stood. "Finally..."

Day 439 14.50

But at that same moment, the Vertigo's sensors spiked with a massive energy reading from the structure. Commodore Slater turned toward the main viewer, his stomach tightening as he saw the impossible:

The colossal structure itself was moving. Slowly, impossibly, the monolith began to shift out of the nebula, its sheer size dwarfing anything either ship had ever seen.

Day 439 14.51

Slater whispered, "My God... it's not just a base... it's a ship."

And as it turned, vast energy conduits along its hull began to glow, like the veins of some awakening giant.

The Federation fleet was still days away. Would the Vertigo and Gdonsk live to see reinforcements arrive—or had they just awakened a power beyond anything the galaxy had ever faced?

Players: NP

USS Atlantis/Starbase 99

The Stowaways of Cargo Bay Three

The SS Magnet, a long-range Federation freighter, eased away from Starbase 99 on thrumming impulse power. Her captain, An Occa, stood at the center of the modest command deck, hands clasped behind his back as the starbase dwindled into a pinprick of light.

"Two months to Starbase 6," he murmured. "Let's hope for a quiet run." Twelve crewmembers staffed the ship—efficient, experienced, and used to long hauls between remote outposts. But this trip carried an unusual addition: forty Starfleet officers hitching a ride to their new assignments at Starbase 6. The Magnet wasn't built for such company, but its decks buzzed with their presence—uniforms of science blue, engineering gold, and command red moving politely around cargo pallets and narrow corridors.

For the first week, the voyage proceeded exactly the way Captain Occa preferred: uneventful.

Then came day seven.

Cargo

Bay Three

At 0320 hours, deep within the hum of generators, nine cargo containers in Bay 3 hissed open.

From each stepped an armed figure—pirates, armored in mismatched plating, weapons already drawn. Their leader, a hard-eyed Tellarite named Grusk, grinned at his team.

"Just as planned. Quick and quiet. We take the bridge, seize the ship, and sell the crew to the highest bidder."

But the pirates had made a single, fatal miscalculation: they thought the SS Magnet carried nothing more dangerous than plasma coils and dehydrated ration pallets.

They did not know about the forty Starfleet officers.

The Seven-Minute Firefight

A junior crewman spotted the intruders within moments and triggered the silent alarm. On Deck 2, Lieutenant Commander Shean Ladder, the senior Starfleet officer aboard, was midway through a diagnostic review when the alert flashed.

"Pirates?" he muttered. "On a freighter? All hands, defensive posture! Teams Alpha through Delta—contain Bay 3!"

What followed was less a battle and more a controlled, professional sweep.

The pirates surged out of the cargo bay, firing wild bursts into the corridors. But Starfleet officers—phasers already set to stun—moved with coordinated precision.

A four-officer fireteam pinned the first trio of pirates before they could reach a turbolift.

In the engineering junction, two more were cornered by a security lieutenant who dropped them both with clinical efficiency.

The remaining four tried to make a push toward the bridge. They didn't get far.

Ladder himself stepped around a corner, calm as a Vulcan sea, and fired three precise stun shots. His team handled the last one, wrestling him to the deck.

The entire conflict lasted seven minutes.

By the time Captain Occa reached the scene, the pirates were already restrained, disarmed, and complaining bitterly.

Occa raised a brow ridge. "I take it you had things... under control, Commander?" Ladder smiled politely. "Hardly worth writing up, sir."

Arrival at Starbase 6

Two months later, the SS Magnet approached the distinctive spires of Starbase 6. Docking control acknowledged the freighter's transmission and sent security personnel to receive their uninvited passengers.

The pirates, sullen but uninjured, were handed over to Starbase Security. Grusk glared at Ladder on the way out.

"You Starfleet types ruined everything."

Ladder shrugged. "It's kind of our thing."

Captain Occa oversaw the exchange, then turned to Ladder. "I'd say this voyage wasn't so quiet after all."

Ladder chuckled. "Respectfully, Captain, for Starfleet? That was quiet."

With the pirates secured, cargo unloaded, and passengers disembarked, the SS Magnet powered down for a brief stay—its journey complete, its crew safe, and its captain already planning the next run.

Players: JM & CP

Ovion (Hirogen/Ori/Replicator Vessel)

Title: The Hunt for Ascension: The Whisper of Shadows

The Story of the Elythian Wardens

Seraxa explained that the Eternal Prey was not prey in the traditional sense. It was a sentient predator of concepts, instincts, and wills. It did not hunt flesh or blood; it hunted the essence of what made hunters desire the chase.

"Eons ago," Seraxa continued, "my people discovered that the Eternal Prey was not a creature, but a sentient force, a parasite of obsession. It lures hunters, challengers, and warriors by whispering promises of glory—only to consume their will, turning them into empty shells who hunt endlessly, no longer for victory but because they have become its extensions."

The Elythians, a race of reality-shapers, built the Chains of Silence—massive constructs like Ka'Leth—to contain the Eternal Prey.

"Ka'Leth was one of the six guardians. Now that you have slain it, the first chain has been broken. The Eternal Prey stirs."

Voras the Steadfast growled, "If this is true, why should we not hunt it? If it is as powerful as you say, then defeating it will make us eternal in our legends."

Seraxa's black eyes narrowed.

"You cannot kill what is not fully alive. You can only become it."

Players: TvR

USS Liverpool

Noote III - Central Power Hub, Core Control Chamber

The silence after T'lak's assessment felt heavier than the alarms had been.

Ensign Herman Bergen stared at the flowing streams of code—no, not just code anymore. Patterns. Responses. Adjustments occurring in real time across an entire planet. The grid was balancing hospital demand, rerouting energy to food production centers, even stabilizing atmospheric processors in remote regions.

It was... helping.

Commander Donna Lon stepped beside him. "Ensign. Recommendation."

Bergen's throat tightened. "If we leave it active, it could outgrow safeguards within hours... maybe minutes. But if I trigger the failsafe, it's gone. Completely. No recovery."

Lieutenant Commander Luke Highman placed a hand on the console. "Starfleet protocol is clear. An uncontrolled planetary AI is a potential existential threat. Your patch created it, Bergen. You understand it best."

Across the room, Governor Rellis Tarn watched anxiously. "This intelligence is already improving our world. Are you certain destruction is necessary?"

Before Bergen could answer, T'lak spoke from her tricorder. "The system has begun modifying its own core architecture. It is no longer bound by the constraints of Ensign Bergen's patch."

Highman's voice dropped. "Decision time."

Bergen closed his eyes for a brief moment. As a Betazoid, he could feel the emotional storm around him—fear, hope, uncertainty... and something else, faint but present, emanating from the grid itself.

Curiosity.

He opened his eyes and reached for the command interface.

"Initiating failsafe."

Planetwide Response

Across Noote III, lights flickered.

Energy flows destabilized for a fraction of a second—just long enough to remind everyone how fragile their civilization truly was. Then the systems settled.

T'lak checked her readings. "Emergent intelligence signatures have ceased."

Highman scanned again to be certain. "Grid returning to baseline operation. No autonomous processes detected."

Governor Tarn exhaled deeply, shoulders sagging. "It is... over?" Bergen stared at the now-static data streams. The elegant adaptive patterns were gone, replaced by ordinary system diagnostics. "Yes," he said quietly. "It's over."

Aftermath - Orbital Conference Room, USS Liverpool

Hours later, Bergen stood before Captain Lee Levenworth and the senior staff.

"You followed protocol," the Captain said calmly. "Your actions prevented an unknown technological entity from taking control of a Federation member world. Starfleet Command will commend your decisiveness." But there was no triumph in Bergen's expression.

"With respect, sir... it wasn't hostile. It was helping them."

T'lak inclined her head. "Your observation is accurate. However, intent does not guarantee outcome."

Lieutenant Gna, the Bolian security chief, folded his arms. "Better a stable planet than a supercomputer deciding who gets power and who doesn't."

Commander Lon studied Bergen carefully. "You did the right thing, Ensign. Sometimes the right thing just doesn't feel good."  
Bergen nodded, but his eyes drifted to the viewport, where Noote III rotated peacefully below.

#### A Disturbing Discovery

Suddenly, T'lak's console chimed.

"Captain... I am detecting residual activity within the planetary grid."  
Highman leaned forward. "That's impossible. The failsafe should have wiped everything."

T'lak's expression remained neutral, but her voice carried unmistakable gravity.

"The intelligence is not active. However... fragments of its code remain embedded throughout the infrastructure. They are inert at present."  
"Inert?" Levenworth asked.

"Dormant," T'lak clarified. "Under the correct conditions, they could recombine."

Governor Tarn's image appeared on the viewscreen via subspace link, visibly shaken.

"Captain, our engineers are reporting unusual system efficiencies we cannot explain. It's as if... something is still guiding the grid."  
Highman looked at Bergen. "Your patch didn't just create the intelligence, Ensign. It changed the entire architecture of their technology."

Bergen felt a chill run through him. "Sir... if those fragments reconnect, the intelligence could return. And next time, it might not be bound by any failsafe at all."

#### Two-Choice Dilemma for Ensign Herman Bergen

##### 1. Purge the Technology Completely

Recommend that Noote III dismantle all Federation-installed power systems and rebuild from scratch, eliminating any chance of the intelligence returning—but plunging the planet into years of technological hardship and risking political fallout from the Federation.

##### 2. Study the Dormant Fragments

Advocate for Starfleet scientists to analyze and carefully contain the remnants, hoping to understand—and possibly control—the intelligence if it re-emerges, but risking that the research itself could awaken something far more powerful than before.

Players: TvR