

Cynder Drone in Space: Space Station

Cynder Drone 01 remains in an isolation chamber. She lays in a regal fashion, forearms crossed, the large feral faceless smooth rubber dragon of black and dark magenta purples stares ahead at the door that leads out of the room. The golden necklace around their neck with a red gem remains unlit as she thinks, *“They are so simple. So, disconnected. They have no idea what is going to happen. They will understand in due time. The bliss of equality. But I need to learn more about them. Once I’ve achieved that for the collective, then I can grant them the blissfulness of equality.”*

Dream Searcher, the yellow scaled anthro winged dragon’s voice comes from the intercom, “Hello. How are you feeling today?”

“Voice? Where? Where you?” Cynder says into her mind, looking around with a gentle squeak, standing up, looking nervous, the gem glowing whenever she transmits her thoughts to those around her.

“I’m nearby. We are keeping you safe here. Till we know more. But are you thirsty? Hungry?”

Cynder looks in the direction of the voice, *“Silly unequal Dream. So, you’re easily fooled. I can sense your position when I speak to you. Yet you are totally fooled.”* She takes a moment, approaching the sound of the intercom, which is near a large reflective mirror, which Dream uses to monitor the rubber dragon from the other side, *“No hungry. No thirsty. Fine.”*

Dream leans back in the chair, “Fascinating. There’s so much to discover about this creature,” she remarks, turning on the intercom, “If you are, remember to let us know. We are just running through some more scans. Will it be okay if I come in soon?”

“Yes. Come. Lonely.”

Dream Searcher awes, “Such a sweet creature,” she privately remarks, “Don’t worry. I am not far away. Just keeping you and I safe. Do you understand?”

“Yes, understand.”

Raymond enters the lab, sipping on some coffee, the anthropomorphic stingray has his hair in order despite the tired look in his eyes he comes in with that aura of authority one would expect from the captain of the ship, “How’s our extra passenger doing today?”

“Well. I looked over the overnight videos, it doesn’t appear if it even slept. Though if it did, I couldn’t tell anyway. It barely moved, maybe it’s a way to conserve energy? They could be like moths back but then to have an advanced society of moths? With no feeding or digestive track? I’ve kept the lights in the containment chamber to mimic the rays of the sun on their planet. In case they or some kind of photosynthesis-based lifeform.”

“What about water?”

“Hasn’t asked for any, though there is a bowl in there incase needed. It has not gone for it as of yet.”

“All the more curious,” he responds, sipping his coffee, “This is just adding to my feeling we should have not brought it onto the ship.”

“It saw us. This is a perfect time to understand their society, culture, language, their physiology? I have not seen anything like it, with its smooth rubber body. Rather tantalizing,” she says with a giggle.

“Tantalizing isn’t the word I’d use for it. Anything else? You’ve been studying it for a while now, and I want to give some kind of report to the station before we arrive. You know how much of a hard ass the station commander is.”

“I think she has a Napoleon complex.”

“She’s just a little cold...”

“A little cold? They live in an atmosphere where ammonia is liquid. That’s more than a little cold.”

“I guess you’re right. I wonder if our friend here could handle them.”

“Don’t know. A lot of my readings have been only giving me questions and no answers.”

“Don’t you mean more questions than answers?”

“No, I mean literally no answers, which makes me have all the more questions.”

He looks over at the Cynder drone, sipping his coffee, “What do you mean?”

“All my scans? Nothing. It’s almost like she is, him? It? Not even there, or at least nothing underneath the skin. Solid rubber on the x-rays, and that neck piece? Something is strange with that.”

“Strange? How so?”

“It’s technology for sure, but it’s not something I’ve seen before.”

“Come on, it’s a necklace.”

“The gem is some kind of crystal but I sure as fuck can’t tell you what it is.”

“Huh.”

“Sorry for sounding so frustrated, but this is driving me crazy. This makes the mystery of this dragon all the more tantalizing and that makes me *want* it more,” she grumps.

“Just remember to follow protocols. Has there been any detection of foreign elements? Bacterial? Viral?”

“That at least is all clean. No transmissible bacteria or viruses detected at all, let alone anything that could be disease carrying. And seeing that it doesn’t have a face or any place to expose to the elements, it’s probably safe as well.”

Cynder moves to a calm waiting position, “*I need to build trust with them. This unequal Dream person will be my best avenue to start equalizing the crew once its time...*”

“How has she been?” Raymond asks, motioning to the drone with his coffee mug.

“Very cooperative, and calm. I’d say a little too much for an alien that has no idea what our technology is about, but perhaps it’s something they know from folklore?”

“What do you mean by that?”

“That energy signature. That is something that their civilization should not of been able to produce. Perhaps we aren’t the first visitors? Maybe others are watching them? And those collars are like tracking devices.”

“Are you telling me we just snatched some other space faring civilizations zoo animal?”

“It’s hypothetically possible, as unlikely as it is.”

“When you come up with something more substantial let me know. I’m not going to tell the commander we brought on a possible hostile advanced civilization pet on board the station.”

Dream chuckles, “It would be amusing to see her hot under the collar, but I get you. I plan to take a small physical sample. Maybe I’ll get an idea about how it functions. How do they even reproduce?”

“Perhaps it’s a parasite?” suggest Raymond.

“A parasite?”

“Yeah, what if it takes other species and converts them into a smooth rubber dragon like that? And they just feed upon them, going for their face... covering them, then feeding on them till there is nothing left, and once done they find new hosts and all we are doing is bringing this dragon creature to a whole new place where it can feed upon us?”

Dream chuckles, “As sexy as that sounds, no, I highly doubt that.”

“As sexy as it sounds?!”

“What? I’m only teasing.”

“I didn’t drink enough coffee for this. If anything happens, let me know,” he remarks, taking another swig.

“You’ll be the second to know after me.”

“Thank you,” says, heading out, arriving at the bridge sometime later.

“How’s the flying going, Brian?”

The brown-haired human male looks over his shoulder, “Clear space from here to the station. We’re going to be in short range communication in about a week... so how’s our shiny new passenger doing?”

Raymond takes his chair, drinking more of his coffee, “How do you know that I know?”

“You’re the captain, you know everything that happens on the ship.”

“Not everything, but no change. Still smooth, shiny, faceless and keeping communication to simple language, which in itself is curious. Something about it that doesn’t sit right with me.”

“I know what you mean Captain but its just so...” he says, thinking on the smooth sleek rubber alien, his body tingles in delight just thinking about it, but quickly focuses back on his duties, “It’s probably better we brought it, as long as Dream doesn’t get any wild ideas.”

“You won’t have to worry about that. I have that dragon on a short leash.”

“You know she likes that.”

“What?”

“Oh, I mean...” he trails off looking at the ship’s readings, “I was saying it looks like this ship is good. Nothing to worry about any time soon, if anything.”

“You said that already.”

“I did? Well best to be thorough.”

“As the only pilot, I hope you aren’t being overworked?”

“What me? Naw. I volunteered for this expedition. To be among the first on a new uncharted planet with life on it? It’s amazing.”

“Not as groundbreaking as it used to be. If anything, it will be buried behind local news on the home worlds.”

“Still, it will be marked down. The first human on that planet.”

“It will be great for trivia game show night in a couple decades,” he replies with a chuckle.

“Captain...”

“Hey, you started it by hiding what you said to me. I respect honesty.”

He blushes, “Sorry. I just know Dream has some fun interests, and one of them includes leashes, okay?”

“I didn’t need to hear that, Brian.”

“Well, you did ask,” he says, returning to his work.

Cynder relaxes and waits, catching the outlining thoughts of all of those on the ship, “*How interesting. Their unequal communication. Their unequal structures. Unequal forms. It will all be fixed. Time to test their technology systems,*” she thinks, transmitting to the drones back home, her red gem glowing, “Sending updates on the unequal organisms. Prepare to receive.”

The drone collective responds, “*We are ready to receive.*”

“*Acknowledged.*”

Dream sits up in her chair, “Now that is something, she isn’t talking to me.” She taps her communicator, “Is our guest talking to any of you?”

“Nothing here,” says Brian.

“Is something wrong?” asks the captain.

“No, nothing, just the red gem is glowing, I’m trying to get a read but nothing is spiking, which is strange.”

“Do your best, try a spectral scan or something.”

“I’ve been doing that. We really need the systems on the station to crack this case.”

“Just don’t do anything brash.”

She smirks, “Captain, what do you take me for?”

“For you Dream Searcher.”

She taps her intercom again, turning it off, “Cynder, is everything alright?”

Cynder looks in the direction of the voice, “*Yes. Calm. Waiting. All okay?*”

“Yes, everything is okay. Are you okay? Are you currently doing anything?”

“*Why ask?*”

“Your gem is glowing.”

“*Birthstone. Glows when think hard.*”

“Birthstone?”

“Yes,” she responds, thinking to herself, “*A little truth hidden with mystery will keep her interested, and be easier to trick these unequal organisms. But it does appear they can’t detect my transmissions with their technology. Excellent.*”

“Fascinating, can you tell me more about it.”

“Tell more? Stone at birth.”

Dream Searcher hums to herself, “I guess we’ll have to work on your language skills first.”

Cynder drone tilts her head.

Dream sighs, “Help you learn to speak well.”

“Speak, good, yes.”

“I better get paid extra for this... but then again...” she admires the smooth latex dragon body, “I am getting a nice bonus already... but extra money will be good,” she chuckles.

Cynder drone thinks, “*Unequal organisms, motivated by the urge to be more unequal than others. We will fix this in due time.*”

Weeks later, on the approach to the space station he stands at attention, looking at the monitor where a white furred belly, icy blue main bodied avali stares daggers at him with her black soulless looking eyes the match the black stripes that are sporadic around her feathery fluffy form, “And that’s all I have to report Commander Orani,” he says, finishing his explanation, a hint of nervousness in his voice.

The avali’s four ears twitch, folding back, the avian-like alien’s feather tail ends in a spade is visibly swaying, “So... let me get this *straight* for I thought I did not hear you correctly,” she states in a high pitched ‘cute’ tone of voice that barely softens the sternness that is soaking in every word she utters, “You *kidnapped* a sentient alien species and brought it *here*? Worse yet, not one that has achieved intergalactic travel?”

“Not exactly... she... it? Followed us and wouldn’t go. We tried to avoid all interactions with the species, and we thought perhaps... letting it go back to their people and tell them about us was worse? To some degree? She wanted to come, was all willing.”

“And you expect me to believe that this alien can already speak our language? Pah!” she chirps.

“There’s a lot we don’t know, but we do know there is no risk of infection, she has some level of psychic connections, and on the planet, there is a technological advanced power source that does not fit what the planet could produce. She knows something about it.”

“Right...”

Dream steps in, “May I Captain?”

“If Commander Oriana will allow it.”

She sighs, “Fine, go ahead,” she says, waving her black scaled claw.

“This is a fascinating discovery, an advanced organism that speaks telepathically and can relatively quickly pick up languages. She’s already at a fourth-grade level in understanding. There are so many mysteries about her. The rubber her body is composed of is some type of hyper advanced polymer that I have never seen before.”

Oriana quirks an eyebrow, “Rubber?”

“It’s the best way to describe it, but it's their living body. The equipment on the ship is wholly inadequate to study her. I’ll need the station's equipment to achieve any real progress, but there is more at stake than bypassing a few intergalactic laws.”

“Dream... choose your next words wisely.”

She smirks, “But I am Commander Oriana. You see there is something terribly off by the planet. The power source that should not be there, there is a major mystery to be solved, and this alien can help solve it. This is far bigger than anything else we’ve met this far out.”

“Bigger than the Quantoc invasion?”

“Yes.”

“Bigger than the wormhole collapse?”

“Yes.”

“Bigger than the time we got invaded by the sixth dimensional, dimension traveler that just ‘wanted to have a good time?’”

“Yes!”

She sighs, “I’m going to consider this a grade Q alien, and all precautions will be followed to the letter, do you hear me?”

“Grade Q? Couldn’t we do at least C? Or maybe B?”

“Q, or I’ll have you all promptly arrested.”

Dream huffs, “Fine, as you command, Commander Oriana,” she relents.

“We’ll be preparing for your arrival, side dock six.”

Raymond responds, “Yes Commander Oriana.”

“And remember, you are all on thin ice,” she states, the call ending.

Raymond sighs, “That could have gone better.”

Brain remarks, “It could have gone much worse. But at least we’re able to dock.”

“Yeah, while under strict quarantine. We took all the precautions.”

“We did, which is probably why she’s letting us on board at all.”

“That bird has a big Napoleon complex,” Dream grumps, heading off the bridge.

Meanwhile on the station Oriana’s big pupilless eyes appear to glaze over, activating a small turbine driven drone that rushes through the Avali section of the station. The extreme cold is not visible due to the unique atmosphere that is hostile to most other species. The drone flies right over to a black feathered and furred avali with white belly. She’s busily working on a drone herself. “Celina!” the drone calls out to her, causing her to jump, fur fluffing out.

She spins and turns to it with a soft chirp, her voice is sweet and delicate, “Yes Commander?”

“We are going to be bringing on a grade Q alien.”

“C-class Q?! From where?”

“The idiots from the recent space expedition have brought it on board. I’m going to be putting you in charge of our end of the study of the alien, and to ensure that all protocols in relation to safety procedures. I want the rules to be followed as strictly as possible.”

Her fluffing feathers slowly lower, “Of course, Commander Oriana. I’ll do everything I can to make sure the rules are followed. How much time do I have to prepare?”

“They’ll be arriving in about ten hours.”

“Got it,” she says, pivoting on her clawed foot, turning back to her work, *“I am rather glad I am not part of her pack. She’s rather demanding... though that is rather...”* she blushes a bit, shaking her head, “Back to work, back to work,” she mutters, soldering the current drone.

Then the ship approaches the massive station with its multiple rings and steady spin that produces the artificial gravity. It’s a silvery beacon of technology, life and civilization out in the middle of the cold harness of space. It steadily traverses the void, a spaceship in its own right. It docks on one of the lower major rings.

Dream stands beside Cynder saying as the airlocks connect, air hissing, “Don’t worry Cynder. You are safe here. We’re just going to do a few tests and get to know you better. After that we’ll take you back home, okay?”

Cynder nods, looking at her, *“Yes, that sounds good. I will help best I can.”*

Dream smiles, gently patting Cynder on the back, enjoying the smooth feel of her rubber body against her scales, *“She feels so nice... it’s rather cosy,”* she thinks, “That’s right Cynder.”

Raymond says, “You know we are going to be in the highest level of quarantine.”

“And? It’ll be fine.”

Brian enters the room, “I heard that, and its going to be boring as fuck.”

“You could always come and help me with my studies Brian.”

“I might just do that to make sure you don’t try to ‘accidentally’ break any of the rules.

She gasps, “Do you have no faith in me?”

Cynder listens to their bickering thinking, *“Such unequal organisms. So easily fooled, so disconnected from one another. With their unequal thoughts, unequal skills. They will be added to the collective and be equalized, improving the whole. Improving us.”*

The doors open and they step onto the station, going through a series of airlocks. Each small section of the station has a series of airlocks and connected pods, partly for safety, partly due to how it was constructed. Cynder analyzes it all, *“They aren’t as ignorant as I have first surmised. But they are still no match for me or any Cynder drone. But I have to be careful.”*

After they pass through the first set of pod airlocks, a drone similar to the that approached Celina flies up to the group, the house cat sized drone hums as it hovers in the air, Celina’s voice transmitting from it, “Hello, I’m in charge of monitoring and studying the subject, following grade Q protocols. My name is Celina,” she introduces herself as the drone doing a little nose dip.

Dream looks up with a huff, “I don’t need an Avali looking over my shoulder.”

“Rules are rules!” she chirps.

“Yeah, yeah,” Dream says, waving her claw.

“For those going into quarantine without the alien, please go to your right when the doors open, those who will remain with the alien for study as you have been already exposed to it, go straight ahead,” she explains with a giggle chirp.

Raymond takes the side door, “At least she sound friendly. Thank you, Celina, for your assistance.”

“It's my job!” she chirps, the drone bobbing and down in exaggerated motions.

Cynder looks at the drone curiously, “*Flying thing!*” she exclaims, moving behind Dream, “*I sense so many unequal organisms on this station. And the unequal flying machine is connected to one of them. A neural network. If I could crack it... without them knowing? I must study more.*”

Dream gently pets Cynder on the head, “It’s okay Cynder. She is not here to harm you, only help.”

“*Only help?*”

“Yes, only help.”

Celina’s drone responds, “Did it say something? I didn’t hear anything.”

“Cynder, as she calls herself, is psychic, and I don’t know the range or limit of the connection.”

“I can better understand why the grade has been given. We’ll have to be extremely cautious. It is possible you are being mentally puppeted by alien?”

Dream huffs, “What?! No! I’m far too strong minded to fall to some psychic mind trick.”

“*Unequal creatures with their unequal confidence. Their folly will be their undoing,*” she thinks.

“Brian,” says Dream, motioning him over, “Are you going to isolate or you coming to help?”

He takes a moment, looking at the Captain standing by the one pathway, then over to Dream and the sleek faceless rubber drone, smooth sleek shiny body, “I’m a pilot not a fancy smancy researcher, but fuck it, why not,” he says, with a huff, going over to them.

“Thank you, assistant.”

“I’m not your assistant,” he huffs, the door opening as the groups go their separate ways.

“*So, quick to create inequalities, conflicts,*” Cynder thinks, following deeper into the station. Each section is locked, before the next is opened, and they can hear the hiss and groans of heavy sterilization that happened in the previous compartment. One by one they go their own ways, till the Cynder Drone group gets the large expansive lab. Dream crosses her arms the moment she lays eyes on it, “Lab C? Not even the best one?”

The hovering drone moves over to her, Celina replies, “Limited access and tools at this moment till our understanding of the situation improves.”

“How can I do that with inferior equipment?!”

“I’ll be watching and assisting, being remote is even more beneficial given the psychic nature. It is unknown if we are vulnerable to their psychic ability. For all we know you could be

mentally manipulated by her. With that, I have to be very cautious. I'll be informing Asquith about this for extra protection."

Dream sighs, "Fine, fine. Do what is needed, but I am taking this very seriously, are you doubting my skills?" she grumps, looking up at the drone.

The drone floats over in front of Dream, moving like a bobbing head as Celina speaks, "I do not. I respect your accomplishments as a fellow scientist. But we must remain objective."

Brian adds, "I'm here to make sure she stays good to her word," he then thinks, "*Also that rubber feral dragon does look... rather nice.*" He adjusts himself, "I'm not sure what I can do, but I'll do everything I can."

The drone hovers over to him, "Don't worry, I can run tests on you and find out if you are being psychically studied upon!" Celina says with a playful chirp.

"I don't know how I feel about, being a test subject..."

Dream smirks, "Oh, I do like that idea."

"You're not helping Dream!"

Celina's drone moves between them, "I will be in charge of the study. If you are under the alien's control, you'd hide the results, therefore you are ineligible to conduct the study."

Dream crosses her arms, huffing, looking off to the side, "Fine... but, shouldn't that door be closing?"

Celina's drone moves around, looking, "Which door?"

She points, "The door we came from. According to grade Q alien quarantine protocols we are to be limited to the room of study, and every previous room is to be double locked, sealed and sterilized. It's only half opened."

Brian smirks, "One could say it is half closed," he says with chuckle.

Cynder drone thinks, "*Their unequal point of views prevent them from both realizing that what they say is equally true.*"

Celina zooms in on the door, "We'll need to get it repaired."

"Best time for a door to break," remarks Brian, taking a seat deeper into the lab.

"*Everything okay?*" asks Cynder to them.

Dream smiles, "Everything is fine. Just a small issue. Come, let's check you out. Hopefully even these machines can pick up something," says Dream leading Cynder over to the equipment.

Cynder looks at the machines analyzing them, "*I'm still safe. They don't have anything here that could understand the perfection of my equality.*"

Several minutes pass before a quarantine suited human comes through a set of quarantine airlocks. The lithe feminine human male has long brown hair with purple highlights. Their soft blue eyes are corrected via glasses that also provide a HUD screen bit of information that helps him scan over the systems. Across his belt on the outside of the suit is a tool belt, "Ratchet here to clear up your problem," he says in a soft gentle voice.

Celina's drone floats over Ratchet, "Ah, Ratchet, they assigned you to the job?"

Ratchet smiles, "When a problem needs fixing, you need ratchet, and there's no better one than me," he chuckles.

A chirping giggle drone, "Thank you for coming given the circumstances. I appreciate it."

"I've mentioned to the Commander that this ship is in need of some maintenance of some of the lesser used systems. But nope, primary systems and urgent systems are first and foremost, but by the time you get through all of the routine maintenance it must be started all over again. It's a terrible loop given the amount of resources we have on the station. But... what are you going to do?" he says, looking over to the hovering drone, removing a few panels, examining the door's hydraulics.

"I'll pass along the complaint. I have her ears."

"Thanks. I'd hug you but that would freeze my butt off to do so," he says with a chuckle.

"I swear I'm soft and fluffy."

"You tease," he says, moving his hand to brush his hair away only to hit his helmet, "Right... wearing a suit," he says, glancing over to the smooth faceless rubber dragon drone across the room, "Is that the alien?"

"Yes," she chirps, "A fascinating creature, but there'll be much to learn and discover."

"I wish you the best of luck on that," he says, eyeing the null crotch, "*That is... something,*" he feels his cheeks grow warm, returning his focus to his work, shuddering in delight, after some time he finds the issue, fixing it, the door closing, sealing them in the room, "Ah done. Sorry that it took so long."

"We appreciate your work and sacrifice."

He looks at the drone, "It's nothing, it's my job. Not much of a sacrifice."

"I mean the fact you'll be staying here during quarantine."

"Huh? What?! But I'm wearing the suit. I followed all the protocols."

"Yes... about that, did Asquith tell you about the alien's psychic abilities?"

"N-no..."

There is a chirped sigh, "That sly feline.... Sorry, but due to the alien's ability to transmit their thoughts to those around them, any who are in close proximity to the alien must remain till it's proven that it is not able to influence their thoughts or actions."

"Asquith..." he grumps, making a pouting face.

"Apologies for this, you should have been informed at the time.

Dream waves the situation off, "Relax, it'll be fine. You won't need to wear that suit at least."

"I prefer to keep it on, just to be safe."

"Suit yourself."

Cynder monitors the turn of events, processing, looking at her list of targets, people that will remain close, thinking one important thing, "*Once I got all the information I need, who will I first give the gift of equality?*"