

Chapter 4, Decisions

The dalek emperor's command module returned to Skaro. Shortly later the emperor of the daleks descended as the lift slowly locked into position in the supreme council chamber. Eleven other daleks waited there, interfacing with the room's separate local network. The dalek emperor connected himself to the network, surveying the dalek supreme, his lieutenants, the supreme controllers, and the other supreme council daleks.

"Something interesting has come to my attention." said the emperor through the link.

"What is it?" was the immediate response from one of the supreme council daleks.

"There has been a type three temporal incident." He said gravely. They all knew what that meant, a timeline jump.

"What are the details of the incident?" asked the dalek supreme.

"We have discovered an alternate timeline in a low level of technological progression. Analysts have categorised the point of relative divergence at over ten billion years ago."

"How low is the level?" asked one of the controllers. The emperor uploaded the data.

"We could use this alternate universe as a resource production and military facility." Said the dalek supreme.

"That is my intent." replied the emperor, once again satisfied with his second in command. "We must prepare a subjugation force." he added.

"Genetic Scan completed" reported one of the daleks. The other silver dalek rotated his dome to look at B'lanna, who was now struggling against the clamps. It wondered if it was worth bothering interrogating the prisoner. There was probably nothing of any real interest to the daleks in her mind.

"Remove the specimen" he said. The clamps retracted into the table, and the klingon engineer sat up, glaring around the room, though the two guard's weapons pointing at her discouraged her from doing more.

"Stand" instructed one of the grey daleks.

"She is to be taken to holding sub-area delta." grated one of the silver daleks

Meanwhile the captain was not faring quite so well. As the analysis disk probed her mind it began to do damage, not the psychological damage that came with most interrogations, but real, physical damage.

On level nine hundred of the one thousand possible levels neurones began to die. Voltage was not something the human brain was well able to tolerate well. There was a point at which the chemical transmitters of the brain were insufficient to communicate the pain, the daleks had an answer to that.

Part of the disk's induction apparatus contained a diabolical invention, a remote potential transmitter, based on a trans-mat it induced an election flow in millions of neurones at once, bypassing the limitations on how much pain an organic being could possibly experience.

Fortunately for herself, Janeway wasn't very conscious of the agony she was in now, there wasn't much room for the formation of thoughts under such nerve induction.

She wasn't even able to croak any more. There was little she could remember, other than pain. Pain. Pain was everywhere. There was no escape from the pain.

"Discontinue induction" commanded her tormentor. Janeway fell back to reality slowly, the pain was gone, but her memory of it was not.

Finally she was able to scream and react to the pain. As she rolled on the floor in agony the silver dalek turned to his grey minions. "Take her to an isolation cell." he ordered "We obey." They replied, one extending the sucker arm and clamped it onto the captain's head, dragging her along the floor and out of the room.

In another part of the vast construction, Seven of Nine was about to be examined. She was pushed into a large room, rather like a laboratory. There were silver coloured daleks working over a large array of instruments, on several large slabs in the corner were androids, white coloured, some in more disrepair than others. Several looked a little like the Borg, partly android, partly organic species.

It was obvious now to seven why she had been kept alive, the grey dalek behind her prodded her towards a wall with several barred recesses in it. One of the doors slid upwards into the ceiling and she was forced inside.

"So it is decided?" asked the supreme dalek.

"It is." Replied the emperor "we shall dispatch the seventh fleet, and a large ground contingent to this 'alternate' universe to establish a base of operations. We shall dispatch a supreme controller to oversee the operations."

Several days later the fleet was assembled. Six cruisers, (kill-cruiser class) sat amid forty destroyers and a dozen troop carriers. The pride and heart of the fleet however was something far rarer than any of those ships. Surrounded by the dozen strong flotilla of attack squadron galazar command ship 005 was one of the rarest ships in the dalek fleet.

The fleet orbited the desolate planet Terask at thirty six thousand kilometres. Ahead of them was a massive new space station, an extermination class defence station, it was about two kilometres across, one of the few constructions large enough to hold the time corridor generator needed for an entire fleet.

The sperical distortion, that glowed a dull red colour, began to appear around the fleet and the

station. A few moments later the distortion disappeared.

Aboard the command ship the operators performed a scan of the area.

"Sensors confirm that we have arrived in the alternate dimension. Negative response from dalek command network, no carrier signal detected."

The supreme controller gazed at the display system.

"Instruct station to begin carrier signal." He commanded.

"I obey." The dalek stopped. "Alert! Readings indicate that the planet Terask is inhabited! Technological level three, Spaceflight Capable Ballistic Missiles have been launched at our position." He reported "Estimated time to contact twenty two seconds, predicted probability of impact twenty percent per missile, probability of damage to dalek vessels is zero point zero zero zero two."

"Raise fleet shields!" instructed the controller "Ground bombardment, minimum extermination level." He commanded. Targeted maser beams lanced down at the urban areas on the surface, blasting them to rubble in seconds.

"All Terask major urban areas destroyed." Reported the sensor operator as the futile impacts of the missiles splattered against the shields. "Readings indicate that there are large numbers of survivors. Should we melt the surface?"

"No" replied the controller, "We may have a use for them in the future."

"Message from station, they are receiving a signal over the command network utilising trans-hyper signals."

"Display the signal" grated the controller.

The image of a dalek supreme controller filled the screen. It began to speak, it's luminosity dischargers flashing, "This message has been recorded aboard an anti ship missile. This missile was launched down a time corridor in order to intercept this vessel." The screen switched to show a disk shaped metallic spacecraft with two flimsy nacelles emerging from the back. The controller's voice continued.

"This vessel is the 'USS Enterprise', registry NX-01. It must be exterminated, as it has been created by uncontrolled time travel, and causes paradoxes with the established timeline of this universe. To avoid the risk of damage to this universe, the space time co-ordinates to intercept this vessel have been transmitted with this message. You must launch a missile through a time corridor to destroy it. You must also launch a beacon containing this message modified to clean the transmission."

A few moments later, a pair of missiles was launched from the command ship. They streaked into the

waiting time corridor, skipping through centuries and kilolightyears in an instant, before one slammed into the target, annihilating it totally.

Months passed, the Dalek Empire began to grow. Small engagements at first, testing their opponents. New daleks were manufactured to take over the garrisons of the conquered planets as they fell, ever quicker, ever in greater numbers.

On the boundary of the Klingon Empire, the mining colony of Ko'rath went about it's usual business. Little happened here, only the occasional freighter or antiquated bird of prey came here, until the fateful day the daleks arrived.

The destroyer group arrived first, sweeping away space and airborne resistance. Next came the troop carrier, dropping from its hyper-drive with precision over the capital. The dalek bombardment was brief, almost a formality. The colonists heavily opposed the landings, warriors took the fight to the daleks on every street.

The daleks rolled along the street of the capital in an arrowhead formation. Crowds of klingons were gathering at the end of the street. The blue leader stopped his squad and ordered them to set their weapons to automatic fire mode. The klingons were chanting something at the end of the street. The dalek could have used his onboard translator system to understand it, yet he did not. It didn't matter.

The klingons charged, thundering towards the enemy, disruptors occasionally lancing out towards the daleks. The daleks strafed the crowd with their own fire several enthusiastically chanting 'Exterminate!' The first few rows of klingons were thrown high into the air: their skeletons visibly flickering as their internal organs were scrambled by the insane energies harnessed by the dalek's projected energy weapons.

The rest of the crowds broke and ran in the opposite direction. The squad leader transmitted a brief message to his counterpart in a nearby transolar disk squadron. They wouldn't get very far. Sure enough he was rewarded by four daleks on the anti-gravity platforms dropping into position to cover the crowd's retreat, their guns blazing. His own squad soon joined in the massacre.

In many other parts of the city similar actions were repeated as the invaders clamped down on the city. Those not able or willing to fight were rounded up at gunpoint and forced to assemble near the centre of the administrative district.

Meanwhile, the dalek base on Terask was growing every day. The first ground based installations had been finished. The daleks had used their ship's weapons to bore great gashes in the planet's surface to mine out minerals and metals. Entire deserts had been turned to glass by airbusts to provide landing fields for the daleks.

Captain Janeway picked up one of the melted and blackened rocks and shuffled back to join the line of prisoners shuffling along the miles of perfectly straight canyon. Some of them were species she recognised, most she was unfamiliar with.

As she limped back along the artificial canyon she could hear the drone of the automatic mining machines above, and the occasional hum of supervisor drones. It wasn't that the daleks seemed to need to use slaves for mining, more that they derived some sadistic amusement from it.

'Killer' class cruiser 132 communication dispatch.
Source: Attack Squadron Dalazar
Destination: 'Imperial' class command ship 003
Transmission follows.

Hyper-drive folding completed.
Distance travelled: 1.4e4 light years.
Subjective time passed: 782.9 rels.

Fast-space drive has now been engaged. Cruising velocity now 25000 c. we are proceeding to investigate infrared shifted stellar radiation source.
Anticipating fast-space drop out 500 rels, at a distance of 80 hyper rels from the source.

The black dalek commander deactivated the dispatch system through the hyper-signal projector and looked up at the display. The display showed the dalek attack ships in a picket formation against the swirling whiteness of the slower drive system. The fifty minutes remaining until they appeared back in real space slowly ticked by.

Inside the dyson sphere the USS Newton was fielding another expedition to re-supply Curvetown base. In the years since curvetown had been established it had grown greatly, filled with federation researchers.

The Newton's away team looked up at the research base. It was built in a horseshoe shaped protrusion that had been found early on in the exploration of the sphere, to protect it from the radiation of the dangerous star above, though several more had been located since, seemingly placed at random.

There was a deep pit in the centre of the protrusion. It seemed to be a machine of some form, resembling nothing more than a massive replicator on a truly gigantic scale - many kilometres across. Two were even larger, almost a hundred miles each, both deep delvings at the poles of the sphere.

The dominion war had brought demands for Curvetown to be turned into a shipbuilding centre, most notably from Admiral Alyeska of the USS Sovereign, though the great replicators buried in the sphere had not yet revealed their secrets to the research crew.

Commander Gallagher walked into the entranceway. The large stack of supply boxes was piled outside, next to a large shuttle park. The force field strung across the way had a temporary look to it. The emitters simply sat on the floor, as there was no way to easily penetrate the ultra hard carbon material the majority of the sphere was made of, let alone the nutronium spheres embedded into it.

He tapped on the console and waited impatiently. The man who, eventually, came to answer him was short, with a mop of greasy dark hair. "We don't need another inspection from starfleet thank you very much." He said, glaring daggers in Gallagher's direction. "If we were just left alone we'd have made a lot more progress by now."

Gallagher sighed. This was the third time he'd done this supply run, every time these scientists moaned at him. They had no idea just how much starfleet actually did for them, ingrates, he forced himself to relax.

"No inspections, no supplies." He said threateningly. The doctor was suitably taken aback, and the commander allowed himself an inner smile as the other man lowered the force field.

Outside the dyson sphere the attack squadron dropped out of fast-space. Aboard cruiser 132 the black dalek watched the screen as the sensor operators picked the dyson sphere over like a child given a new toy. The sphere was made of degenerate matter spheres suspended in a carbon nano isomer, quite a piece of work, in any universe.

"Scan for life forms." He instructed

"Alert, An alien vessel has been detected inside the sphere." Replied a red dalek controlling the sensor systems.

"Tea, earl grey, hot." Picard said to the replicator. The machine hummed and produced a cup of the steaming liquid, which the captain picked up, walking back to the door of his ready room.

His combadge beeped once. "Bridge to Captain Picard." came Data's voice though the miniature speaker. Picard tapped the starfleet icon once. "Yes?" he asked.

"There is a message from starfleet command for you sir." The captain frowned for a moment, just as he was about to have a drink as well.

"Very well, I'll take it here." He replied turning to sit behind his desk, flipping the computer display on. A man in a starfleet commodore's uniform appeared on the screen.

"Commodore Clark" said Picard; "It's good to see you again."

"Quite Jean Luc, but I'm afraid you won't like what I have to say." He said, with a frown. "We've lost contact with the Dyson Sphere research crew, and their starship, the USS Newton." Picard sighed.

"Any idea who was behind it?"

"None, whoever it was were able to get deep into federation territory undetected."

"The Romulans?" asked the captain.

"I don't think so, there hasn't been any action on the Romulan boarder lately, they seem to be going back into isolation for the moment." Said the commodore, "in any case, we're going to need the Enterprise to check it out while you're in the area Jean Luc. Starfleet out." He said formally, as the screen shut down.

Picard walked onto the bridge, drink in hand, and marched to his chair. "Mr Paraski, lay in a new course, two four eight seven mark twelve, Warp factor eight point five. Engage."

The officer glanced at the captain for a moment, then turned to face the controls, tapping them momentarily.

"Done sir." He said.

The first officer turned to Picard. "Care to tell me what's going on Sir?"

Half an hour later the enterprise dropped out of warp, a safe distance from the massive gravity of the spherical object, hanging in space like an enormous billiard ball.

"Captain, I am detecting a vessel." said Data, "it's design is familiar, it broadly matches the vessel which destroyed the last Borg incursion into the federation, though this one has significantly less mass. It appears to be on an attack trajectory."

"Shields up." Ordered Riker and the officer at the tactical station obliged.

"Sir, if this vessel has similar firepower to the last one that was observed, it would be a futile and provocative gesture," said Data. Picard stood up, looking over the dimly illuminated light grey ship headed toward them.

"Hail them" he said. The ship's counsellor, Deanna Troi seemed to choke for a moment.

"That won't be necessary." Came a clear, calm and unexpected voice from behind him, as a slight hum

could be heard. "I am here to negotiate with you."

The entire bridge crew turned as one to face the intruder. She was a tall woman, with striking blond hair and dressed in strange black robes.

"I am Annika Hansen, ambassador from the Daleks." She said, smiling.