

Return to Dry Dock

"This is the Cerberus on approach, requesting access through Gate 5"
'We have you confirmed Cerberus. Standing down arms at Gate 5. You are clear to use Landing Bay 6. Welcome home'

The huge vessel passed through the gate into the Zion Dock. It was still only partially rebuilt after the siege, but was coming along quickly. Many vessels had to set down elsewhere, with special tugs being sent to recharge them. Cel set the ship down - a smoother landing than in the so-called 'Desert of The Real'.

"ETA on returning to broadcast, sir?" she asked.

"As soon as possible. The rest of the crew have been briefed. How's the juice?"

"We're running pretty low on primary. Backup generators are ready to go. If we have to leave again now we'll have about three hours if we stay at Tertiary Broadcast junctions. We wouldn't get the whole crew in there though."

"Alright. I'll see what the Commander has to say. Get us recharging ASAP."

As he left the ship, technicians were already getting to work on connecting huge plugs to points under the center of the hull, pumping it full of the energy it needed.

The main elevator shaft was still undergoing reconstruction, but tertiary elevators were now in full operation. He descended to the command level, to the office of Commander Lock.

Knocking on the huge wrought iron door, he was greeted with a gruff instruction to enter.

"Captain, it's good to see you're alive and well after that little skirmish. However I've called you here for other reasons than to ensure you're OK after a scratch or two."

LP didn't let this bother him - they both knew his run in with the lupines hadn't been a serious problem.

"Morpheus?"

"Precisely. You've seen him?"

"Not personally sir. Some of our operatives followed him for a while before losing him in the Moriah Projects area ..."

LP paused as Lock checked a schematic. Not being pod-born, the Commander didn't know the areas as well as his operatives. This was a point of contention amongst many operatives, including command staff.

"... but nothing happened out of the ordinary."

Lock sighed and clasped his hands together. Resting his chin on them, he stared up at LostProphet.

"You're sure that's all that happened."

"Yes, sir."

"That man is a disgrace to Zion. He cannot see the efforts it is taking to rebuild the city under the truce, and he DARES to threaten it with his ..."

"I'm sure he is aware of the hardships we endure to rebuild The Dock sir .."

"Are you sympathising with him LostProphet?!"

LP sighed inwardly. This was getting awkward.

"No, sir. But ..."

"But nothing! I should have thrown him in the Brig long ago. After he let that damn man run amok killing his crew..."

"With all due respect Commander, if it wasn't for him, none of us would be here. He believed in Neo when nobody else in command would. Neo saved us all, sir."

His gaze softened.

"Yes. That is true of course. But he still threatens to destroy the truce ..."

"We all know Neo is out there, somehow. We have SEEN his shattered RSI in the Matrix. Whether his body is dead or alive is irrelevant. The machines should give him back ..."

"This is not the talk I want to hear from you captain. Normally I'd confine you to quarters for 48 hours, give you time to think ..."

LostProphet waited out the pause.

"...but we need you and your crew. We both know something is happening in the Matrix. Get to the bottom of it. We'll discuss Morpheus further when you return. Dismissed."