Dark Space

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As the ship stubbornly decelerated, something nagged Sean at the back of his brain matter. What, what is it? He focused his thinking. Had he miscalculated the reverse energy required or the time needed to avoid a disaster impact? Had he forgot some small detail in the mechanical docking system? It was so easy to fall into very negative thinking like his Uncle Ramos always did. But he had learned to use these dark forwarding thoughts to recheck and re access his work. He didn't feel that was it. He had used the old flight computer his father had passed on to him. It may have be an antique, but its math and computing skills were still valid in standard space maneuvers. He had even backed it up using the non-human flight engineer he had resurrected from the discarded derelict ship "Benan" that he found while exploring a back waters ship graveyard of his home moon. That was a story that wreck of a haunted place. It was amazing how old ships and equipment could still have energy systems that continued to function way past any end of life manufacturing predictions. And how eerie to have some lifeless looking piece of junk blare out in perfect electronic diction, "may I assist u sir? What are your needs? The fact they could still identify a sir or mame in their presence amazed him. Not to mention the wealth of useful

knowledge this machine could provide if needed. And you never knew what or when you might need something useful. During that adventure he had scrounged out a small army of robots, computers, and none humans. He even hauled over to his ship some equipment that looked just looked interesting and useful, but he knew nothing about. — What is that feeling that thought that nagging tell tale? "It will come. I see it now. I now know what it is". This was his method of connecting with that inner voice, that inner guide — Positive affirmations on a want or need. He let go and let god handle it. Another part of the method. He switched to a rear screen view of the space chute he had devised. It was based off the idea of a parachute that captures the air to slow or propel and object except this one captured static particles of energy causing drag. It wasn't a huge amount of drag, but it was better then none. A thought was creeping into the forefront of his mind: Old non-humans robotics needed input to create output— something his uncle had talked about. But so what? Older robots worked with older equipment and software. So what he thought. The timer unit bleeped out it's 15 minute warning to dock lock or maybe — impact. The massive dented and gouged dock loomed out the view port and on the main screen. It was scary how enormous it was—how solid it looked. Why do I keep thinking about all those old NH's, Bots and computers? A warning alarm went off on a corner of the systems screen: Docking systems have not been initialized. Abort forward

headway. Impact imminent. Dam. He activated his only worked out option—

the compressed air emergency brakes out on the forward docking hub. He

could here the valves open and the blast of air energy. But would it be

enough he hoped. His mind raced. How did that docking system come alive

now? Shit. Why? How can I interface with it something that old? "Imminent

impact" flashed over and over. The air brakes were not going to be enough

flushed over his face. OK OK what what else. That nagging spark in his mind

said something about the old stuff, the old equipment down below in the

hold. It was like his crazy uncle said "the hold, go to the hold now is the time

to pay attention to your intuition—run! And with that he did. He slid down the

ladder carefully but fast. There they were his rows of dilapidated bots. Now

what he thought. Input makes output ran through his mind. Just then the

ships collision voice activated—loud and with authority. With a speck of

knowing flowing into his head, Sean loudly commanded, "Emergency, all

aware units, all compliant NHrs and Bots, scan and initiate all known docking

software and maneuvers immediately! As Sean looked down the rows four

seemly useless machines lite up tiny flashes greeted his eyes. three of them

shown green solid indicators. Digital voices responded, "docking software

up". Now what??? A forth NH responded, "implement cohesive software

interconnect and commence dock translation and communication. I fifth unit

flashed to life and all five seemed to flash together at the same rate. Sean

heard a low screeching of metal on metal. Red beacons about the ship flashed emergency. A view screen to left showed a huge telescoping arm swinging out from the dock unit. Like a giant arm It began extending out toward the ships heavy locking extensions. With screeching, clanks and groans and a deep rhythmic moan. The arm engaged the heavy reinforced extensions. The forward heavy momentum was dampened by the enormous shock absorber arm. The metal stress moans and the hiss of gas compression release vibrated through the ship. A digital voice commanded loudly, "g-force emergency dampeners engaged". A whirring sound imbued through the craft. Without the dampeners anything not strapped to the structure would have been violently thrown forward. Sean still had to grip the console tightly an the final scream of structural stressing vibrated through the docks mass and the Benons's framing. The ship made a deafening sound almost like a human "uggghh". And then silence. A wonderful silence. A fear reducing silence . After ten seconds or so, numerous whirrs and lite clanking was heard as the seal locking hammers engaged their palls and complicated systems activated to complete safe mating of the two massive ships.

   A computerized voice with a British sound to it, said "locking complete all systems meet minimal accepted parameters". "Visual maintenance, minimum upgrades, and biological protocal are required per regulations.   Welcome to Dock 13 xxl".