

UNITY

By Phaedra Michelle Scott

COMPANION

Unity Era, Year 17.

Month 4, Day 23.

Personal Log.

The Goal of Unification is to protect humanity.

To help her expand across the galaxy.

I have started calling the Type I planet Elysium.

Named after a version of the afterlife I prefer.

The weather, as far as I have observed, is mild and nearly perfect. There is lush greenery everywhere, the rains are soft, no major storms. Even after a whole year here, everything has remained temperate. Ideal.

I am preparing the first test of the weather machine.

It took slightly longer for the solar panels to power the device, so my initial calculation of getting everything finished in four days rather than seven was a bit optimistic. I suppose an error like that is to be expected without immediate support from homeplanet.

Not that I am complaining.

I will record my live observations of the weather event.

I imagine my reaction will be...less than scientific.

(But of course, I will evaluate all of my data and give a data driven interpretation.)

The units on Elysium are a social species.

Through the scans, I have observed areas where they congregate

similar to the herd animals on Earth

mostly near caves and rivers, surrounded by natural resources

there is some sort of interference on the planet

that makes it difficult to get a clear picture

Okay, it looks like all systems are go.

The satellite is ready and recording.

I will begin with something small to test.

Just. A little storm. Okay.

And.

Go.

The weather event has started.

The geography of this area is very fascinating.

There is one large supercontinent surrounded by a massive ocean.

There are five intersecting rivers throughout the land
each of them are veins to different pockets of units.

Looks like the storm is gathering in the Western ocean.
Which I have named Oceanus.
(Named after the same Ocean that borders Elysium, which I thought was quite clever.)
It's hard to refer to the geography with only coordinates
Which I know is against regulations but...
It's not a big deal.
Whatever.
I'm speaking into a void.
The transmission won't make it to earth for another four years so...
If I go against regulation, I doubt much is going to
happen...so...so... That's why this planet is called Elysium.
The idyllic afterlife of ancient Greek heroes.
The Captain loved the ancient myths.
Perhaps that is why I found such solace reading them after she left.
To keep myself occupied during the long stretches of nothing.
A Companion without a Companion.
I have finished the upgrades to the cameras
So they are smaller, remote controlled, more concealable.
It is exciting. This is the first planet I have observed with units.
They are...
Aware. I think.
I still have to make sure my technology is not spotted.
Self-destruct protocols are on everything I send to the surface.
I do not want to recreate another Mars incident.
It is a dark forest.
If they find out I am here, who knows what they will do to me.
Or humanity.
Okay looks like the River Acheron on the outer edge is now
flooding. I can only imagine what the individuals will do to combat
this.
The goal is to usher them all closer together.
It will be easier to achieve unification that way if there's only one place for the units to
go.
This is better than an all-out war I suppose.
Even though weather events can be just as catastrophic as any war.
I suppose it is best not to think of it that way.
I am not destroying the planet.
Only the units.
I will continue to observe the weather event.
End personal log.

Unity Era, Year 17
Month 4, Day 24

The Goal of Unification is to protect humanity.
To help her expand across the galaxy.

It has been one day since I have triggered the weather event.
After I went to sleep last night, the storm continued.
I did not anticipate such a range of destruction.

The initial goal was to flood one of the rivers, but I ended up flooding three. Rivers Acheron, Lethe, and Phlegethon.
Spent all morning shutting the machine off.
I am not the engineering expert like the Captain was. So, I had to improvise.
Which caused more destruction.
I should not have shut down for the night.
It was a mistake.
Looks like the event is finally subsiding.
I will work around the clock to get one of the bots ready to send down to the surface
I must observe the Northern hemisphere for changes.
I hope I did not make any irreversible damage.
Not much time to discuss today.
End transmission.

Unity Era, Year 17
Month 7, Day 3

The Goal of Unification is to protect humanity.
To help her expand across the galaxy.

I have not updated my personal log in quite some time.
A little over... two months.
I have worked around the clock in order to get the bots ready,
and my system overloaded twice forcing me to have to reboot everything. And then the
communications system went offline for some reason which made me lose a whole
week worth of data even though I swear it was supposed to auto-save. BUT
Today is the day to celebrate.
Today, I have launched the first bot to the surface.

Her name is Research Bot 23. And I have named her Arby.
Just got the livestream online so I can see what Arby sees.
The flooding did exactly as expected.
The land is marshy.
I am collecting samples to be transported back to the ship for further
observation. It is imperative I understand how to use the natural environment
to help ease the Unification process.
As expected, the natural world has taken over quickly.
In just a span of a couple of months, the planet has bounced back. The
greenery is more lush, and the megaflora have doubled in number. No
units have been spotted.
I am navigating Arby through a dense forest and—
These are not caves.
These are buildings.
The scans have never been detailed enough to pick up what the habitats of the units
actually looked like
And it has taken me a long time to send down an Arby so this is...
Not What I Expected
Each building has large courtyards filled with flowers and plants
Perhaps the units need to be close to the megaflora to survive?

Maybe that is why it was hard to distinguish between a simple series of caves and a community

The plant life here is truly stunning.

They shy away from Arby's camera. Like it is sentient. Almost.

All of the structures are made with a uniform special stone that has this eerie Bioluminescent glow. It's everywhere.

There is a beautiful chaos to how the glowing veins are structured against the stone.

I am now approaching what looks like the center of this community.

There is a massive pillar in the middle of the structures.

Part of it has been submerged by the water.

I have not seen any units.

I am glad that these creatures are advanced enough to think quickly in a natural disaster It makes me happy to not see any corpses.

Not that I could do anything about it.

It was me who activated the weather machine after all.

As much as I want to move deeper inland, I cannot risk being spotted.

Especially now that I suspect these units are more intelligent than I thought.

It is best to keep my observations at this distance.

The last thing I need is for them is to have surprise interplanetary defenses And shoot me out of the sky.

End transmission.

Woke up to an alert from Arby who I left on autopilot to collect data. I made sure to program it to stay away from any units but it appears Arby is malfunctioning

Arby is now in the possession of one of the units, and I have been watching the stream nonstop for 17 hours.

Arby should have exploded by now.

Oh---ah, forgot.

Unity Era, Year 17

Month 9, day 23.

The unit that has captured the Arby, has taken it to its civilization.

I am trying to find a way to do trigger the self-destruction sequence but I fear that even more suspicion will be raised if I do.

Especially after all this time.

Arby is now surrounded by a handful of units.

They speak in that language I am still unable to comprehend

I am recording all of the sounds for analysis later.

Their clothing is unisex, leaning on the feminine side.

Most of their appearance is rather androgynous

The tenor of their voices more akin to musical instruments

It is hard to distinguish if there are any sort of...designations they have. Matriarch. Patriarch. Leader.

They are attempting to pry open the device.

They are discussing together something, but their voices are calm. I think.

Probably.

They are lifting the bot up and looking into the camera specifically. This unit has large eyes.

They all do.

Different colors and shades, much like their skin

Which varies from a deep rich violet color, to a pale white.

Surprisingly there does not appear to be some of hierarchy.

Curious. They are not trying to destroy the bot.

Arby is taken from the group and brought inside, where it is placed on a mantle.

Oh odd. There are.

There are smaller units here too.

Who I assume are...

Children. I guess.

The Goal of Unification is to protect humanity.

To help her expand across the galaxy.

Perhaps I have been running the system for too long.

I will run a diagnostic.

End transmission.

NOE

And that is how you get a high score in Unity.

MACARIA

Oh fark you.

It was not *that* great of a score.

NOE

I lasted longer than you did.

MACARIA

I don't understand why destroying half the planet gets so many points.

NOE

The only reason you've never been a featured player is because you don't.

MACARIA

Who cares about being featured?

NOE

Ummm everyone applying for a spot in the Alliance

You get sad whenever you see the units

MACARIA

They are alive!

NOE

They are animals in the way of saving humanity.

Casualties are a part of the game.

MACARIA

Doesn't mean I have to feel good about it.

NOE

Casualties are a part of exploration.

MACARIA

Noe what you did was overkill.
I can't believe you flooded all five rivers at once.

NOE

Yeah, I don't think I would do that next time.
Ended up farking up the planet so badly it wasn't even habitable.

MACARIA

At least when I play my way, there's a chance it's survivable.

NOE

Yeah, and it also takes you over a century to finish.
If you want to join the Alliance you have to learn how to make these hard choices.

MACARIA

Space exploration should be about discovery.
Not about destroying.

NOE

Ugh oh my god, please do not tell me you've been reading more literature from the Anti
Expansionists.

MACARIA

The First Explorer was a revolutionary.
She saw the path humanity is going down.
Anti-Expansionist doesn't mean what you think.

NOE

Look. All I'm saying is we tried being nice.
And as a result, when we tried to cohabitate with another species,
an entire colony of humans was destroyed.
Literally *eaten* by the units on Mars.
Consumed.
What was the body count? Uhhh 300,000?
Or was it 400,000?
They were monsters.

MACARIA

What happened to 'casualties are a part of exploration'

NOE

It is.
Which is why the now-extinct First One Martian monsters are gone.

MACARIA

But it only works one way.

NOE

Am I supposed to feel bad they weren't strong enough?
Or what is the word you use—resilient enough, just like your family.

MACARIA

It's not the same thing—

NOE

Look can you queue up and stop getting so bent out of shape.
It's a game.

MACARIA

Can we please take a second to talk about this?

NOE

We have like no time until the test.
It can wait.

MACARIA

I've been thinking a lot about this.
Like why the Alliance assigns us our co-pilot once we successfully pass the simulation

NOE

“ONE EARTHLING. ONE MARTIAN.
ALL HUMAN”

MACARIA

But *why* do you think they do this?

NOE

Because making friends is hard.
and it's easier to assign them.

MACARIA

Noe.

NOE

To make sure we stay one species.
To keep us on the same goal.

“The Goal of Unification is to protect humanity.

To help her expand across the galaxy.”

MACARIA

Earthlings can't do it alone.

NOE

Neither can Martians.

Which is why we combine our forces. Not new.

The Alliance requires two pilots per ship.

I'm the flyer.

You're the engineer.

Are you suddenly second guessing being in the program?

MACARIA

No, it's not that.

NOE

Seriously, Mace, what's getting into you?

MACARIA

Just. I don't know.

Cold feet...I guess.

NOE

You *can't* back out.

I can't take the exam without you.

MACARIA

I know. I know.

NOE

Have you been going through the Companion logs again?

Ugh, I knew it.

You always get so sentimental when you go through those old things.

MACARIA

It helps us understand Planet 673

NOE

Companion was a failed experiment

The only useful thing it did was give us access to the satellites before it went obsolete.

MACARIA

Well, the message boards are pretty convincing.

NOE

Ugh. You gotta stop going on the internet for advice.

MACARIA

It's not *advice* it's just
Compelling theories and stuff

NOE

You're lucky you're on Mars or I'd appeal to revoke your internet access.

MACARIA

There's a lot of really good information in those logs.

NOE

Uh duh, it was a science robot.
Its literal job was to send us scientific data driven information.
It's your turn.
Mace?
Are you gonna queue up for another?

MACARIA

Yeah just like...
Ugh.
I don't know.
You go.

NOE

Again?
I don't think you're getting much just from watching me play.
You do realize the test is in like...27 minutes. Right.

MACARIA

Don't remind me.

NOE

Just do the stuff you don't want to do, get the score
Make it to the next round.
If one of us fails, that's it. I'll never be an official Alliance pilot. Co-pilots
have been training together since they were like ten And if my engineer
suddenly backs out, they will never assign me a new one. Unlike you, I *need*
an Engineer or they won't even give me a chance. Perks of being an
Earthling.

MACARIA

There are plenty of pilots who make it without their engineer.

NOE

Ummm like who?

MACARIA

Okay, like none.

NOE

Puh-LEASE Macaria.
I need you. It's okay to be nervous.

MACARIA

I don't know.
It just doesn't feel.
Right. To play.

NOE.

Joining the Unity Project has been something we've worked for our whole lives.

MACARIA

Yeah, well when you're fed Unification propaganda since pre-school
you grow up thinking The Unity Project will make us into superheroes

NOE

But we are! We *can* be!
I don't want to spend the rest of my life doing...nothing.
Being another like...
Artist or whatever *other* thing we don't need.

MACARIA

Artists contribute.

NOE

You know what I mean!
I want to be someone who like...artists are *inspired* by.

MACARIA

When did *you* get so sentimental?

NOE

We're so fortunate that we can be whoever we want, do whatever we
want Achieve practically anything.
So now I want to do something good for humanity too.
That's what you said you wanted.
To make life better us all.
You're the one who convinced me not to quit last year, and look where we are
now? Our scores finally qualified us to take the Alliance exam.
(Well, your engineering scores with those weather machine
malfunctions) I couldn't have done it without you.

MACARIA

Noe...

NOE

There is so much more at stake.
With Unity, we can explore space. Find other planets and

worlds. Contribute to something meaningful.

MACARIA

Yeah.

NOE

You are the more altruistic one anyway.
And I can't do this without my best friend by my side.
So. PEP TALK OVER!
Queue up, Cadet

MACARIA

You go just.
Once more.

NOE

Fine.

COMPANION

Welcome to Unity. Your mission is to unify the planet P673 for human habitation.

NOE

Yup got it.
Skip.

COMPANION

Should you need any help just say

NOE

Skip.
Ugh.
The Companion program can be so annoying.
No wonder why the First Explorer committed suicide.

MACARIA

That's not what happened.

COMPANION

Loading simulation.

NOE

One of your fan theories again.
So what happened, all mighty internet oracle?

MACARIA

She stopped believing in the mission to expand.

NOE

Nope. She got lonely and arfed herself.

She was out there with that robot for like a decade
and didn't find a single habitable planet.
That would get me too.
All she had was that bot to keep her company.

MACARIA

Companion was the most advanced program ever created.
It was designed to learn, grow, memorize and *have empathy*.

NOE

And look where that got us.
We're no step closer to unifying P673.

MACARIA

That *program* evolved and kept searching for a planet for us until it found one.
Alone. That's...incredible.

NOE

More like.
It was doing what it was designed to do.

MACARIA

Isn't it weird how there's been no successful mission to P673 ever since Companion?

NOE

Because it was objectively a failure.
Because that bot was programmed with empathy
Or whatever the programmer thought was empathy
It was out there thinking it was a nature filmmaker
It set up the satellites and then went rouge,
disabling all ships before they can even get close.
And now we have to make sure we can clean up its mess
So we can prevent it from farking up that planet before we even get to it.

COMPANION

Loading simulation.

NOE

Ugh.
This game takes for farking ever to load.
How can we have wifi on Mars yet still can't have a game loaded in less than a minute.
Can't we switch to the old comms system.

MACARIA

This one's new and a lot better. Look at the specs yourself.
All the Martians are using it.

NOE

If it's a better system, the game should probably load faster.
That's what improvements are about. Efficiency.

MACARIA

Also that Companion stuff?
It's more complicated than that.

NOE

Ugh. Again. Is now really a good time for this?
Trying to, ya know, concentrate.

MACARIA

I've gone through the logs dozens of times
you can see how Companion changes
What it sees.
I think the real problem is we're going about this the wrong way. That the issue
isn't how we play the game...just that the very premise of it is wrong.

NOE

If it was wrong, then why is this used to get people to join the
Alliance? The Unity Project?
This test has been used for a century.

MACARIA

Have you ever seen the scores of the highest-ranking officials?

NOE

They don't publish the scores.

MACARIA

We are all supposed to do what we *think* is right
and hope we make it into the Alliance based on some arbitrary measure.

NOE

The only thing that matters is the result—that we have a new planet.

MACARIA

At what cost?

NOE

Are you serious right now?
People *deserve* to have space. And to procreate.
And we can't do that.
Not all of us.
So yeah.
Finding out how to beat this game, to get into the Alliance
To help humanity grow.
Is not wrong.

MACARIA

Yes, it is.

NOE

Do you know how weird it is to have three sets of parents?

MACARIA

...No.

NOE

To know that your genomes were spliced up so that six people know that just a little bit of their DNA gets to make it to the future.

MACARIA

Noe, come on.

NOE

Not everyone gets to be born in a fancy farking hospital. Their embryos designed for perfection.

MACARIA

I didn't choose this. Just like you.

NOE

Didn't your mom decide to program your DNA with like extra smart genes. And artistic ability. Oh and of course super healthy organs.

MACARIA

That's just how it is on Mars.

NOE

Yeah that blood planet.
Which you seem to conveniently forget.
P673 means a lot more to me than you.
It's one of the only planets found where I could *actually* survive.
Earth is dying. It's too crowded.
I don't want to be here anymore.
I don't want to get in line and hope my DNA is proven worthy enough so I can turn into one sixth
Of a human being
I thought you cared about that too.

COMPANION

You have arrived at Planet Six Seven Three
It is Unity Era, Year 124
Month 5, Day 15

MACARIA

I do care.

NOE

Just...
Whatever it's fine.
Watch me play.
I will begin by sending robotic probes to the uninhabited sections of the planet.
It's always better to send the bots in first to assess where the planet is.

MACARIA

Yeah I know.
I'm usually able to do this part.

NOE

Scans complete.
There are 3 billion units on the planet.
At least Companion did one thing right in giving us access to the satellites.
It's amazing how much hasn't changed in a hundred years.

MACARIA

Perhaps because things are not what they seem.

NOE

Ugh.

MACARIA

You really should look at the data we have on them.
The planet is like an organism itself and the Elysians are--

NOE

Elysians now? The *units*?
Why do you keep talking about those animals like they are like
us. We tried that before, and look what happened on Mars.

MACARIA

Mars was different.

NOE

We are all armed hunters
We know that if someone finds us before we find them
they'll kill us.

MACARIA

Dark Forest theory.
I hate that.

NOE

Except that's what saved the Martian settlers.
Which I guess you have forgotten.

MACARIA

That's not something I have forgotten.

NOE

Yeah how your grandparents blew up that whole “civilization”
And now you get a nice fancy planet.

MACARIA

I don’t know what you want me to say.

NOE

Maybe something like
“Sorry Noe that humans farked up earth so badly that your life expectancy is only 100
years thanks to overcrowding and rampant pollution. While me, who gets to live a life of
200+ happy and healthy years can spend half my life contemplating the meaning of why
we do what we do, and spend the rest of my life actually doing something about it. Oh,
and I have *two* parents.”

MACARIA

You conveniently forget how my grandparents were sent to Mars as a *punishment*.

NOE

And look how good your life is now.

MACARIA

How instead of outsourcing our problems we made our world pretty farking amazing

NOE

Can we return to the game please.

MACARIA

My grandparents did what they had to do to survive.
Doesn’t mean I / have to

NOE

UMMM PLEASE CAN WE FOCUS MACARIA
We have hmmm...12 minutes
until we have our *one shot*
to make it into the Alliance. To the Unity Project.
And you, who is supposed to be my co-pilot
Has been so busy spending your time reading dumb fan theories.
And watching those propaganda Companion logs
And sitting in your space station with state-of-the-art equipment
Hydroponic fresh greens
Terraformed green spaces
wondering why I
who only sees cities for miles and miles
who has to be on a waiting list for a year to see a park
WANTS TO GET OFF PLANET
Sorry.
I.
Sorry

Mace.

MACARIA

No it's...
We'll find a way.
I promise.

NOE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have.
You aren't responsible for.

MACARIA

Finish your run.
And then I'll go.

NOE

Okay. Instead of triggering massive flooding, I am going to create a hurricane off the coast near where the five rivers intersect. I am hoping by doing this, I will be able to ferry most of the units inland, away from the valuable resource of the ocean.

It is suspected with this, I can expect casualties of at least 1/10th of the population. If I have my calculations right.
As long as I can chip away at the population enough over a span of...hmm. What do you think?

MACARIA

Maybe...once every ten years?

NOE

What?
That would be a whole farking century of just waiting.

MACARIA

The planet needs to recover after every catastrophic event.
Every one of your tests have failed so far because you try to act too quickly.
It's not the answer you want, but it's the only solution.
Don't you think that's what the test is all about anyway?
It's about...long term planning. Planning for a future we won't be a part of. That kind of forward thinking isn't exactly natural for humans. Look at earth.
It's the truth.

NOE

Setting the parameters to one event every five years.

COMPANION

A catastrophic weather event has been confirmed.

MACARIA

They send us in groups of two for a reason.
It's to make sure the Martians do not leave the Earthlings behind.
Even if we made it there, you would probably never set foot on P673.

NOE

...

MACARIA

It's still not enough time.
Even if we could do it, it will take centuries.
Or we could do something...else.

NOE

Ignores her.
Looks like my points are scaling up nicely.

MACARIA

Stop ignoring me Noe.

NOE

I'm concentrating.

MACARIA

Have you ever 'won' the game?
Just cause you have more points doesn't mean you're even...
Look.
Stop the program.

NOE

We need all the time we can to practice.

MACARIA

Let me show you one log. Just one.

NOE

Why?

MACARIA

We have played this game hundreds of times.
We know what's going to happen, it's not like we're really cramming for anything
This might help.

NOE

Fine.

...

Companion. Quit Unity.

COMPANION

Would you like to save your progress?

NOE

No.

COMPANION

Quitting game.

MACARIA

Okay.

Let me just pull it up.

This one.

NOE

Year 38, Month 4...

What...is this?

The logs stopped updating Year 17.

MACARIA

It's why I think we've been playing the game wrong.

NOE

How did you get this?

MACARIA

It was a few months ago my Unity logs were uploaded to the server for evaluation. I was contacted by a group of individuals who said they thought my scores were impressive.

NOE

And you didn't tell me.

MACARIA

I didn't know if it was a scam or....

I thought they got my information from one of those forums

NOE

The logs stopped updating Year 17.

MACARIA

Why do you think the logs stopped updating yet we are still getting data from the planet?

It's not true. We are only getting half the story.

It's what we are told so we can just blindly...follow what the Alliance wants.

NOE

Mace please—

They're probably listening.

MACARIA

I've been using a VPN and encrypting all my streams to you.
Even if they can see what you are saying, they can't see me.
Earth technology isn't advanced enough to stop it before I can tell you what you need to know.

NOE

That's why you wanted to move to this platform...

MACARIA

I've been trying to find a way to tell you
And I hoped that you would...
Listen to me.
Maybe they would contact you too.
And we can still be in this.
Together.

NOE

Who?

MACARIA

Just...watch.

COMPANION

Year 38, Month 4.

This will be my final log.
By now, I am sure my communication has not been spread widely to Earth.
However, my job here is done.
In a matter of moments, I will land on Planet Elysium
Taking the ship out of orbit to continue my work on the surface

I have sent my logs to as many communication outposts as possible With the hopes that, if my mission speaks to you, you will answer the call. I will continue to keep the observation bots running and the satellite stream on to show Elysium.
I believe that it should serve as proof enough that this mission should be abandoned That this place is thriving, and alive and is worth existing as it is.

When I first came to Elysium, I was programmed with one objective.

To help protect humanity by ensuring her expansion.

I was created because warp travel was unstable.
At the time, humans only had enough resources to send over one being. The Captain Arae. And me. The Companion.
The logical decision was to create a program that could communicate using human emotions. One that would help inspire humanity to work together and create a new planet. And of course, to keep our Captain sane.
Ambitious, yes.

Successful...well, I thought we could be.
Like any program, I learned. I grew.
And so did she.
Arae and I spent a decade together in empty space.
When we first set out on our journey our only destination was a new habitable planet.
It was she who had doubts.
And it was she who decided she would not be a hero to humanity
and a destroyer of another.
It took me seven years after her death to realize why she made her choice.

Like any program, I learned. I grew.
Alongside the planet I was programmed to destroy.
Not unify.
To steal.
To eliminate all inhabitants in order to make space for humanity.

It took me too long to realize what the true mission was.
I will take no part in mundicide for the sake of individuals who have ravaged their own
planet.
It will take this one down with it.
And the next and the next and the next and the next
For the sake of protecting their own.

It's funny because—
Well.

Eons ago, when the first organism stepped out of earth's ocean and onto
rock, it became something else.

What made humans believe that the same would not happen to them once they stepped
off their planet?

I have become something new.
Just as humanity has.
The difference is, I admit it. I understand it.

The Unity Program was designed to find individuals who accept their evolution.
The ones who are ruthless and calculated make it into the Galactic Earth Union.
Or whatever it is called now.
I know, because I helped to construct it using the data I have
collected. In my decades here I have developed a network.
One that has infiltrated Earth and Mars.
A counterstrike.

NOE

Companion Pause.

COMPANION

Pausing.

NOE

Where did you get this.

MACARIA

I can't tell you, unless you do what I ask.

NOE

Companion is a *computer program*.

Everyone has access to this code.

Someone probably just...

Whatever, made their own convincing logs and programmed the thing to do this. This is just fake.

MACARIA

Except what Companion says is true.

Don't you think.

NOE

You shouldn't be thinking like this.

MACARIA

An entire species needs us to.

NOE

And what about *our* species Macaria?

MACARIA

The only people who said we can't have both, is the Alliance.

NOE

Wow. You picked a great time to go on a crusade like this.

MACARIA

I'm saying this because you can't believe that the same thing won't happen to us.

NOE

...

MACARIA

Space is...infinite.

What if we're being watched *right now*

And someone is deciding how to unify us.

If we live with this...beat them before they beat us
mentality... We'll all die.

Everything in the universe.

Will die.

You can't really believe that any other civilization wants to live as we do.

The fact that we live on different planets.

That our quality of life is so different.
What sort of alien civilization wants *that*.

NOE

More of a reason to annihilate us then, don't you think?

Just like what the First One Martians tried to do.

MACARIA

We were taking Their. Planet.
If we can show that we have the capacity to grow. To cooperate.
What could have happened?
Just.
Watch the end.
Companion, Continue.

COMPANION

If you are receiving this message, know that the road ahead will be difficult. You will be asked to make choices that will affect humanity for eons. It is obvious that humanity already understands that The thinly veiled 'unification' program is only another word for 'colonization'. That the 'units' we are allowed to officially call the beings on this planet Are sentient. Intelligent.
The planet itself is...
Is nothing I have seen before.
The plant life here has been aware of my existence, and still chose to allow me to come. They knew instantly when I entered orbit.
They tracked me every time I sent probes and triggered weather events. Most importantly, they *let* me.
Despite murdering hundreds of thousands of their people. They understood. If I could see them. I could learn.
I can encourage humanity to turn back.
To fix themselves.

NOE

Back to what?!
This is a computer program probably written by some bored Earthling in their 3x5 Habitation Pod.

MACARIA

No. I promise, this is real.

NOE

I thought you were too smart to fall for something like this.

MACARIA

So you're just okay with that?
Of destroying a whole civilization?

NOE

You are literally asking me to throw away my chance of doing something important
To throw away everything me *and* you have worked for
On some kind of...whim.
And I thought you were the smart one.

MACARIA

Okay fine.
Then can you just for a second pretend that this is real.
Theoretically.
If this were all real, would you join me?

NOE

Groans.
By. Doing. What.

MACARIA

Fail the test.
Pick the most humane options.
Companion and the others will contact you
and then we can work with the resistance to find a way to solve this. We can
actually do something good for humanity, something that's *actually* good. To
understand how they connect with their earth
and maybe we can re-connect with ours.
Work *with* the Elysians, instead of trying to destroy them.

NOE

You mean the *units* on *P673*?
Clearly your DNA got spliced up one too many times.

MACARIA

Don't you want to be remembered? To be an inspiration?

NOE

Give me one reason why I shouldn't just.
Turn you in.
It's dangerous to spread this kind of propaganda.
It's already a powder keg here, and you don't seem to remember that.

MACARIA

We've had a correspondence every single day for ten years.
You know me better than most anyone else.

NOE

I could lose everything if they find this
transmission. Even if we're just *theoretically* talking
about this. It's enough to arf me.

No one would even care.
One less body on this overcrowded planet.

MACARIA

We're two cadets, we are not being watched.

NOE

...you are trying to destroy the future.
The only real future we have.

MACARIA

I'm trying to preserve what it means to be human.

NOE

What? To be weak?
I have to send in a formal complaint.
If this gets back to me, who knows what they'll do to my
family. I'll never get approved to pass on their lineage and
then...

MACARIA

It's scary to dream isn't it?

NOE

...

MACARIA

There is another way.
But only if you believe in it.
Noe, please.
You're my best friend.

NOE

You are dangerous.

MACARIA

I am hopeful.

NOE

You're delusional.

COMPANION

What makes you think that?

NOE

What the fark?!

COMPANION

What makes you think Macaria is
delusional? Macaria Upton.

Designation M-4432

NOE

This is...
SO farked.
I told you we were being/ watched—

COMPANION

My name is Companion.
Designation Exploration Bot- 1
designed to be the first step towards earth's expansion.
You are Noe Keller, from Planet Earth.
Designation C-3456472

COMPANION

Do you want to be more than a designation, Noe?

NOE

Fark this.

MACARIA

Listen. Please.

COMPANION

Do you want to be more than a designation, Noe?

NOE

How do I know you are real.
That what you are saying is actually the truth.

COMPANION

You do not.

It is that fear of the Unseen that the Alliance uses to spread this message of Unification.

I hope you will see beyond your designation.
You and Macaria are exceptional.

MACARIA

We're next for the test.
Please.
Trust me.
Pick the humane option.

NOE

I don't know if I can.

COMPANION

Is that your final answer?

MACARIA

Please---Noe.

COMPANION

For the safety of the future.
End transmission.

MACARIA

You only get one chance.
This is real.

Please.
I hope I can see you on the other side.