

“The Pegasus”

Game Notes

Planet: Devolin system; asteroid belt.

- Shuttlecraft: Admiral Pressman will order that no one takes a separate shuttlecraft to the Pegasus. He believes that the power of the *Enterprise* will be required.
- Replace the Romulans with the *ISS Retribution*, a Nebula class war cruiser commanded by Captain Noonian Li.

Mission Agendas

- Troi: Secure the new technology for the Empire and don't let it fall into anyone else's possession.

Good Universe Episode Notes

The Enterprise takes on board one Admiral Eric Pressman. Pressman, as well as being high up in Starfleet Intelligence, is also Riker's first commanding officer from the Pegasus - and it's the Pegasus that is at issue right now. She was apparently carrying sensitive prototype equipment that would be dangerous in enemy hands; and the ship, thought lost with nearly all hands in an explosion twelve years ago, is apparently in the Devolin system, where the Romulans are intensely searching for it. The Enterprise is to proceed to that system and find the Pegasus - "salvage it if possible, destroy it if necessary."

When they reach the system, they find it consisting primarily of asteroid debris, making scans slow and difficult. A Romulan warbird that's also exploring the system drops by to exchange "pleasantries", and its commander promises to remain in the area a while longer. The Romulans have a two-day headstart in the search, but the Enterprise begins searching nonetheless. Meanwhile, Riker and Pressman talk about the final days of the Pegasus to each other; and while Riker has second thoughts about some of his actions, Pressman reminds him that their actions were "for the good of the Federation". What's more, he plans to start up "the experiment" again if they find it intact - "and this time, no one's going to stop us." He tells Riker that there are written orders for him from Starfleet Intelligence in the computer, and that he is not to reveal the nature of the mission to anyone, not even Picard.

After Pressman makes veiled remarks to Picard about the importance of loyalty, saying outright that it was Riker's unswerving loyalty on the Pegasus that kept them both alive when nearly every other crewmember died, the Enterprise strikes paydirt, finding signs of the warp-core. Unfortunately, it appears to be buried far down in a chasm on a large asteroid, and in the time it would take to find it more precisely, the Romulans would be over to see what was going on. Riker suggests destroying the asteroid to keep the Pegasus out of Romulan hands, but Pressman vehemently opposes it, preferring instead to go with Picard's plan of blanketing the area with ionizing radiation and covering traces of the warp-core's radiation. Although it's a risky move, it works, and the warbird apparently leaves. Picard, not wanting to arouse even further suspicions, orders the Enterprise to pursue a false search pattern and come back to the asteroid the next day.

After Picard leaves, Pressman upbraids Riker harshly in private for even considering destroying the Pegasus - it would be difficult, he points out, to change the balance of power in the quadrant without the Pegasus in hand. Riker shows Pressman that he's changed in many ways, but Pressman commends him for his past loyalties, and says that "I know I can count on you again" to help him in this mission.

Riker then proceeds to Picard's quarters, where Picard wants to talk about a deeply-buried report he's uncovered about the last day of the Pegasus. The investigation found evidence of a mutiny

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on board, something unthinkable in the Federation, and signs that all the surviving officers, Riker included, withheld information. While Riker is willing to give some details about the mutiny (most of the crew felt Pressman was endangering the ship with some engine tests, and Riker, fresh out of the Academy and "full of notions like duty and honor" defended Pressman until they both could escape), he will not talk about what else was going on, suggesting that he take it up with Pressman. "I'm taking this up with you, Will! The Judge Advocate thought that you were participating in a conspiracy to cover up the truth. Now what the hell is going on here, Will? Why did that mutiny happen? Why is Pressman so determined to find that ship, twelve years later?"

"I've said all I can," Riker replies. "I am under direct orders from Admiral Pressman not to discuss this ... sir."

Picard stands, appalled. "Very well. He's an Admiral, I'm a Captain - I cannot force you to disobey his orders. Therefore, I will have to remain in the dark on this mission; and I will just have to trust that you will not let Pressman put this ship at unnecessary risk. And if I find that that trust has been misplaced, then I will have to re-evaluate the command structure of this ship. Dismissed." Riker, somewhat stunned, leaves.

Picard's worries come to a head very quickly, as the return to the asteroid with the Pegasus brings a call from Pressman to take the Enterprise itself into the chasm, as it seems the surest way to get the Pegasus salvaged. Faced with direct orders, Picard agrees - but only after logging his explicit objections and threatening to abort the mission if conditions get too tight. Fortunately, they find the Pegasus, but 65% of it is entombed within the asteroid itself! It is determined that much of the engineering section is intact, and Pressman and Riker beam over once life support is restored.

There, as they stroll past dead bodies to reach their objective, Riker gets more and more troubled about the nature of their mission. Finally, as Pressman discovers that "the experiment" is intact, Riker makes a decision: he will not allow Pressman to continue the experiments on the Enterprise. Although Pressman argues with him strenuously, even calling him a traitor, Riker stands his ground, saying that he made the wrong decision twelve years ago, and that if he had it to do over again, he'd have joined the mutineers. Pressman threatens to end Riker's career if he says a word to anyone, but just then they are forced to beam back. The Romulans have sealed off the entrance to the chasm with disruptors, sealing both ships inside kilometers of solid rock.

The Romulans hail, expressing regret over "accidentally" trapping the Enterprise in the asteroid and offering to beam all personnel to safety. No one, however, agrees with this choice, as it would hand over both ships to the Romulans without a fight. The Romulans lurk outside, awaiting a decision - and Riker makes a choice. He tells Picard that Pressman's experiment may offer a solution. "It's a prototype for a Federation cloaking device."

Pressman is angry, and tells Riker that he's just ended his career, but Picard is incensed: The Federation agreed sixty years ago in the Treaty of Algeron never to develop cloaking technology. Pressman acknowledges that, but insists that the treaty was the Federation's biggest mistake, allowing the Romulans to keep them off balance for decades. When Picard doesn't agree, saying that this device might change the balance of power, but is unethical and illegal, Pressman tries to assume command. He quickly finds, however, that no one will go along with his mutiny, and conversation turns to the device.

Riker explains that it not only cloaks a ship, but "phases" it, allowing it to pass through normal matter. Thus, if hooked up properly, it should allow the Enterprise to leave the asteroid unscathed. Although the connections are somewhat tricky, LaForge and Data manage to hook it into the Enterprise safely, giving hints to what happened to the Pegasus in the process. The Enterprise escapes the asteroid, but then decloaks deliberately in front of the warbird, when Picard tells them that a message will go out very shortly to the Romulan government about this entire incident. The treaty, Picard assures Pressman, was negotiated in good faith and will not be broken - and to that end, he places Pressman and Riker under arrest.

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