#[ENTER CREDENTIALS]#
Username: j2bw9an7h
Password: *********
#[ACCESS GRANTED]#
#[WELCOME DR.VOIGHT]#
#[ACCESSING LIBRARY]#
#[ACCESSING SHORT_STORIES]#
#[ACCESSING NANSEN_COLLECTION]#

Diligent.

It had been a dry summer.

Nansen peers through the binoculars, panning across the horizon. It had been a calm and peaceful day.

He lowers the binoculars and scribbles something into his logbook.

Late mid-day, Low humidity, warm temperatures, a steady wind. Conditions to be cautious in.

His nose sniffs the air, seemingly by reflex.

Resting the pen down on the open book, Nansen does a lap around the lookout's balcony.

Then he sees it, faint but present. In the distance a small plume of smoke.

Concerning.

Smoothly raising the binoculars, he peers closer at the smoke.

Wispy, light, fresh. Report and then investigate.

A human would require a fire finder, a synth has their brain.

Nansen eyes the smoke and darts his eyes towards the sun's angle for a brief moment before picking up his radio.

“Nansen. Lookout Number Seven-Eight-Four. Reporting smoke, distance approximately 1000 metres, azimuth 87.4 degrees. Originating from a clearing but I cannot get further visuals.”

“Affirm, clear to investigate. Be careful.” The radio speaks back gently.

“Takk, I will be.”

Picking up and donning a small backpack and a tool belt, Nansen’s boots hit the soft crunch of grass and dirt as he begins towards the smoke.

As he travels, the smoke seems to grow and darken. His large nose sniffles once more.

Nansen frowns as he moves on and shortly after, he sees them.

A group of 5 people, drunkenly laughing and throwing burning pieces of wood around a large bonfire. Between them the fire bellowed and burned, it was slowly spreading- albeit because they kept throwing wood onto and next to it haphazardly.

Visibly intoxicated, rowdy, careless.

Nansen eyes the crowd from the trees before speaking into his radio.

“Nansen. Smoke is from a large bonfire, 5 inebriated individuals. Will deal with the fire. Send a marshal to my grid sector please.”

The radio crackles something back, a vague confirmation.

Getting close to the rowdy civilians finally alerts them to his presence. The closest one to Nansen turns around and yells something indecipherable.

Assess, de-escalate, contain.

“I apologize but please, repeat yourself.” Nansen eyes the bonfire and the civilians, his lips forming into a toothy smile.

“I-I-said, you-you’re not in-in-invited!” The man stutters at Nansen before throwing a branch into the fire.

Nansen sighs before slowly approaching him, his arm extended out reassuringly.

“Sorry again but are you aware of what you are doing?” He gestures towards the bonfire.

He sheepishly nods, “Wha’ about it?”

Build trust to allow for cooperation.

“It is a rather large fire. I don’t doubt your ability to control it but the five of you are continuing to feed it, I’m rather concerned about the fire outgrowing you all.”

He grumbles, shaking his head.

“We’ll be f-fine. It’s just a li-little f-fire. Having a-a cookout!”

There is seemingly no food, just alcohol.

“No sir, it is a rather large fire. Please take a step back and see. Everyone, please step back.” Nansen gestures for the man to back up and the man staggers away from the fire. Right then some embers pop and crackle in their direction.

“O-o-oh. That’s kind-of big actually.”

Nansen nods before effortlessly smiling, “Please.”

The man nods and yells something to the others and they back up, some reluctantly.

De-escalated, cooperating.

Quickly clearing the area around the fire with a field implement and dousing the edges of the clearing with some fire retardant and foam, Nansen looks back towards the fire. Without the constant addition of branches and fuel it’s starting to die out and the hastily made firebreak will aid that.

“Why’s he making a salt circle around the fire? Is it demonic Aldrik? The hell you put in that?” A younger man asks with a few laughs in response.

The man Nansen had approached- presumably Aldrik- throws his empty beer into the remains of the fire.

A direct order may cause escalation, appeal and appease for now.

Nansen promptly turns his head towards the man and with a bold but gentle tone while still working on putting out a small patch of embers speaks.

“Drink your beers, do not throw them. Please save me one.” After a moment the group takes this to heart and stumbles away from the fire towards their coolers and belongings.

While unable to drink or become intoxicated, the simple request has aided in trust and or ensured they’d drink all the beers instead of throwing them.

After a brief struggle, the fire dies out and Nansen stands next to its ashen remains. Thankfully it had not jumped to the trees outside the clearing, despite its large size.

Nansen speaks into his radio once more,

“Fire and civilians dealt with. Waiting on the marshals.”

“Copy. Good work, a CMB officer reported to be enroute. Please remain till she arrives.”

“Takk. Over.”

Nansen fits his radio back into his belt and eyes the civilians, they’re now distracted by a squirrel and arguing about how many acorns they could fit in their mouths and elsewhere.

Situation handled.

Dedicated.

The sky burned, if you could see it.

Nearly as far as the eye could see into the distance from the perch, the fire stretched, consuming everything in its path. Smoke filled the sky and left it a grey-orange colour, the sun barely shining through. An agent orange sunset.

A radio crackle.

“Nansen, status on your grid’s firebreak?” The gruff voice asks through the static, further muffled by the overhead flyby of a helicopter. From the small dug-out, Nansen adjusts his view to the firefighters and volunteers working hard at clearing trees, snags and debrushing a clearing in the treeline.

People who’d sacrifice themselves to contain this. Regular and hard-working people.

“Bare bra- Progress is steady, Chief.” Nansen calmly replies as he waits for the Chief to respond.

The radio crackles to life again, some overlapping voices on the line before Chief Bowen sternly continues,

“Nansen.”

While small, Nansen can tell something is off, the slight quiver in the Chief’s voice.

Someone is in danger.

“Yes, Chief?” Nansen responds as he surveys the landscape, watching the helicopter empty a bucket of fire retardant across a swath of forest to his east.

“Use your synth legs and be quick, there’s a sighting of a civilian nearly trapped by the fire to your west, updating your grid as to their location.” The Chief quickly barks out before a small beep is heard from Nansen’s PDA.

“Moving out.”

Surveying the fire in the distance and with a quick glance at his map, Nansen begins to quickly move towards the civilian’s reported destination, making his way down the small hill.

His footsteps rapidly crunching the soil beneath him, leaving heavy footprints.

“Heya Nansen!” A rather friendly auburn haired woman waves towards Nansen, he does not know her.

Fraternization is crucial to a team’s wellbeing but an urgent task is at hand.

“Hei hei, sorry but duty calls.” He replies as he strides down the cleared path away from the firebase.

Another helicopter flies overhead, releasing another payload of fire retardant onto the landscape.

Passing by several work teams clearing bush and preparing a firebreak, Nansen eyes the team lead of a group, they return the look and after seeing the patch on his shoulder the team lead shouts out.

“Keep moving synth! This work ain’t for you!”

Rude. Likely stress caused due to the tense situation.

Nansen carries on past the firebreak and towards the fire in the distance.

“You deaf or something tuber? Fire. Is. hot.” The lead continues to yell after him while a couple workers look up and watch.

A witty comeback to defuse the situation would suffice, albeit would be difficult to pull off. Best to ignore them.

Nansen marches on. Behind him the lead begins to speak again but stops himself.

After navigating through lightly dusted trees and some earlier attempts at clearings, Nansen finds himself on top of a small rockface, quite far into the designated burn zone.

His ears perk up slightly, a scream.

Looking around, analyzing the terrain he turns his head north, closer to the fire- which is now dangerously close and if the wind decided to change direction would give him very little time to vacate. However there was the civilian, his leg crushed underneath a smaller tree that had fallen.

“Fuck- Dude fucking help me!” he cried out best he could, his mouth and lungs dry from the heat.

Nansen swiftly makes his way down the rockface and towards the man.

Assess, vacate, treat.

The man continues to swear and pant, in his hands a camera and around his waist a satchel. His hands fiddle with some pieces of film and he puts the camera into the bag.

“I would advise holding onto any belongings if you wish to keep them.” Nansen states as he begins to lift the tree trunk off the man’s leg. The man’s about to say something but instead utters further profanities as his leg is freed.

Nansen looks up, the fire is getting closer and fast.

No time to spare.

He hurriedly flips the man and loads him onto his back with care to not further injure his broken leg.

“A lot- of- fucking good- you firefighters- fucking- are! Leaving me! TO DIE!” The photographer curses as Nansen scales the terrain away from the fire. To his east and west it’s closing in but they will make it.

Ease his anger and reassure his safety. He will make it.

“I am uncertain as to how your situation occurred, however, you are safe in my hands. Please, stop squirming.”

The man swears some more as Nansen makes his way through a small clearing and back towards the firebreak team.

The lead eyes Nansen before realizing what he’s carrying, “Look who’s b- Shit!”

The majority of the team looks up from their work as Nansen lays down the injured man and with their relative safety away from the inferno, administers first-aid.

Nansen grabs a splint and some painkillers from his belt, “Do hold still, tusen takk." He instructs the man as he begins to set the man’s leg and bind it after quickly and painlessly injecting some painkillers via the man’s arm.

Tibia fracture, severe blunt force trauma, mild blood loss, minor abrasions, heatstroke, dehydration.

“You- Man, that stuff kicks in fast.” The man slowly relaxes.

Nansen gives him a thumbs up and smiles. After a moment of respite, Nansen picks the man back up, loads him onto his back and continues towards the firebase, leaving the firebreak team behind them.

The firebase is soon ahead and he can receive further medical attention there. Nansen’s objective has been completed.

Loyal.

The flames licked high into the starry night, burning across most of the horizon. However, that wasn’t their destination, a smaller ember fueled fire had crowned elsewhere within the last hour, close to a now evacuated hamlet.

Over the plane’s intercomms- static and then the copilot’s voice.

“Jumpers! We are - almost overhead. Leads, prepare.”

Near the back of the plane, with a hand on a bar and looking out the open doors the lead smokejumper yells from beneath his gear, “Don’t sweat it yet kid, that’s for when we get down there!”

Sitting away from the open plane rear is a smaller boy, barely even an adult but larger than most men. He chuckles nervously and peers out the window at the fire they’re quickly approaching.

Reassure, rebuild and encourage.

Nodding and with a soft tone, “Do not worry Tomas, Derran has been on many jumps before with a remarkable 100% success rate.” Nansen looks at the young smokejumper as they hit a small patch of turbulence, slowly waving his hand reassuringly. The senior smokejumper grins underneath his visor, barely visible.

“You did very well on your practical examination and training exercises, remember your training and follow Derran’s lead.”

Tomas nods in response. Nansen eyes him a little closer, his grip on the bar tightening and his left boot shaking ever so slightly. The other jumpers don’t seem to notice.

Further reinforcement may be required, Tomas is capable of the task however. The shakes are to be expected, especially in new situations. Touch and connection serves well to reassure.

Nansen leans over and gently taps Tomas’ knee, the boys’ head turning back away from the window to look at the synth. While hard to see underneath the helmet and visor, his blank blue eyes stand out and after a moment of eye contact Nansen nods and Tomas’ foot stops moving.

The intercom crackles once more, this time the pilot.

“Leads, clear to jump!”

With almost no hesitation, the two smokejumpers nearest to the rear of the plane- Derran and Hans, fall out. Swirling and flittering with them are streamers to guide the next pair to take the jump. Their chutes billowing open, guiding them safely towards the blow-up fire below.

After a moment, a bright green flare sparks out below. Nansen nods towards Tomas,

Further reassurement to take his mind off the drop.

“Wooden ships and iron men Tomas!”

As they jump together, Nansen can make out the boys' whooping. Their chutes billow out and they start to descend towards the leads, following the streamers.

#[ADDITIONAL ENTRY DETECTED]#
#[ACCESSING NANSEN_9820171_20092176]#

Nansen.

It had been the first clear sky in a while. The majority of the fires have either been put out or died out and humanitarian recovery efforts are in full swing.

"Kowalski, this shit's heavier than your mom!" A gruff younger looking man in a dirt covered uniform shouts as he stands up with a large rock in his hands, a wide strained grin on his face.

Another marine nearby grumbles something under his breath as he tosses a burnt branch off the road and into the burned scrub.

"Dude what the fuck are we even doing here on this proggie shithole? Can't they clean up their own fucking mess?"

"Ain't fucking mattering, we're here to help win hearts and minds for once." A deep-voiced woman, and judging by her chevrons, a lance corporal.

"By moving rocks and burnt shit? Ain't nobody around to even care, Progs'll never return the favour anyways!" Kowalski groans as he wipes his forehead.

A little ways away and carrying a burnt log with relative ease, Nansen speaks up, "UPP or not, aiding others is a noble enough goal."

"Dude shut the fuck up man, we should be visiting Arcturus or some shit." Kowalski begins to light a cigarette after a quick strike of a match to his boot, "This ain't going to matter to nobody."

Approachable, relatable, easy.

Discarding the log away from the road, Nansen approaches the marines. From a pocket he produces a small pipe and sticks it in his mouth.

"Put your smokes away. I'd expect better from a synth too." A marine says as he passes by with a shovel, flicking Kowalski's head.

“Ey fuck you!” He retorts as he reluctantly stomps out the cigarette after Nansen nods.

Nothing left to burn but best not to start that discussion here.

“You know.” Nansen removes the pipe and rests his hand on his knee, propped up on a rock.

“It’s not why you were sent here but if you take a minute, look around, take in the forest- or what remains for our case- both are the other.” Nansen pauses and takes a deep breath, filtering out the brief smell of the tobacco smoke.

Earth, mountain air, sweat, a sweet breeze, ash and carbon.

Kowalski hesitantly plays along, closing his eyes for a moment and inhales as well.

“Open your eyes and look over there,” Nansen points with pipe still in hand, towards a mountain in the distance, its tree cover still green and untouched from the fire. Its white peak boldly pierces into the sky and its dark speckled grey body dominates its surroundings.

Few things are quite as beautiful. It’d do Kowalski good to appreciate it.

“Consider that to be what you’re here for if you need to. It’ll protect and restore itself from anything that gets thrown at it, consider being here for the sake of-”

Kowalski pfts, “Cut the bullshit man, I get the idea. Be grateful for what you have and all that. I’m just saying there’s better shit to do with my life than move rocks for a bunch of commies., fuck em.”

Nansen stands back up straight, his gaze returning to Kowalski, “Okei- okay. I’ll let you get on with it then.” He smiles before stowing his pipe back in a pocket.

Kowalski gives a fake smile in return as Nansen moves away.

A little while later, after assisting a few marines move a wrecked vehicle Nansen looks back to where Kowalski was prior.

There the young man stood, complaining about this and that before the female NCO from earlier shuts him up with a vaguely threatening gesture. After falling silent and going back to work, he turned to face the mountain and paused for a moment.

Nansen softly chuckles before taking in the mountain’s charm once more, his laugh inviting a nearby marine to wordlessly join him.

His light blue eyes seemed to twinkle slightly as he noticed the other marine gazing at the mountain as well.

Spirit instilled.

#[LOGGING OUT]#