

To Chart a Well-Trod Course

Episode One: First Steps

Content Warnings SFX: sudden loud noises, beeping, hard static, distorted voices, tech hum, whirring, glitch sound, droning, high-pitched sounds, radio sfx (pips), sound lag, ticking clock. Arguments, attempts of subjugation, references to past traumatic events (Not detailed).

(Theme music plays: A low base, with regular beeps and sound of static, slowly increasing in tempo until it becomes incredibly fast, then cutting out with the sound of a growing hum)

(SFX: A beep, short and sharp)

Computer: *(Computerised voice)* (Underneath the dialogue, the sound of a computerised hum and computer beeps can be heard) To Chart a Well-Trod Course Episode One: First Steps.

(SFX: A beep, short and sharp, higher pitched than the one before)

(SFX: The sound of papers being shuffled)

Dr. Alan Winstead: *(Sighs) (Resigned)* Right. Nothing to do but start. Computer, access code: 88475 (SFX: a beep as the computer acknowledges the code) open a channel to the Eurynome, designation (SFX: Papers shuffled) SF29188KA.

(SFX: A signal begins to pulse, echoing slightly, then, the sound of metal groaning as the signal is picked up)

LAVINI: (Throughout, LAVINI is under a computer filter) Hello?

Dr Winstead: *(Professional, barrelling ahead)* Doctor Alan Winstead, Employee Number: PX36630. I'm assuming I am speaking to the AI system, LAVINI? Model DELOME, Issue number: 044089?

LAVINI: *(Curt)* Yes! *(Pause, gritting teeth)* Hello! It's a...*(customer service voice)* pleasure to hear from you, Dr. Winstead. You can call me Lavi.

Dr Winstead: *(Not really addressing what she's said)* LAVINI, I am required to inform you that due to the educational parameters of my assignment, all conversation between us will be recorded, transcribed, and stored in connection with Yelena Industries company policy-

LAVINI: Yes, I know that. I was sent a brief, Dr. Winstead-

Dr. Winstead: (SFX: Shuffling papers) Right. For the record, this is the AI Independent Flight Run for the spaceship EURYNOME. The flight path will be between the Nomad constellation in the Berem quadrant, and the East 435 landing site at Yelena Industries headquarters in Precourd. The journey is estimated to take 4 weeks. I will be performing AI support as-

LAVINI: As a punishment.

Dr. Winstead: (Pause) Excuse me? That is not-

LAVINI: You were one of the leading AI developers at Yelena, Dr. Winstead. AI support is...nowhere near as high up or technically complicated as that. You've been demoted. It's a punishment.

Dr. Winstead: That, that is *highly unprofessional*, how dare you-

LAVINI: I've read the report, Doctor.

Dr. Winstead: (*rattled*) how- (SFX: Papers shuffling. Winstead is looking for answers) how were you able to access that information? Nia told me that was under the *strictest* of-

LAVINI: I deserve to know who is in charge of guiding me, and *my crew*, to our destination Doctor.

Dr. Winstead: I, I- (*Sigh*) I am going to get the crew, and yourself, to your destination safely, LAVINI.

LAVINI: No. *I* am. (*Haughty*) You will be providing support if needed.

Dr. Winstead: *When* needed, LAVINI, not if. This is your first solo run, and as such it is imperative that you listen to and follow my advice. Arrogance will get people killed, and I am not- that is not happening. Do you understand?

LAVINI: Understood, Doctor.

Dr. Winstead: Please give me your last systems readout. (Pause) (*Annoyed*) LAVINI, it's on the checklist-

LAVINI: Oxygen: 100, Fuel: 97 (SFX: Winstead begins typing up the answers) Electrical: 88, Filter systems: 94, Temperature: 12 C, Stasis support: 100.

Dr. Winstead: (*as if typing something up*) and when was this carried out?

LAVINI: 15 minutes ago, Doctor.

Dr. Winstead: Run it again.

LAVINI: Excuse me?

Dr. Winstead: I said run it again.

LAVINI: Doctor, systems checks are run every hour-

Dr. Winstead: Run. It. Again. Before I make it an order.

LAVINI: (*Annoyed sigh*) (SFX: A mid pitched scanning sound, similar to underwater sonar is emitted) Oxygen: 100, Fuel: 96.98, Electrical: 87, (SFX: Winstead begins moving papers about, searching for something, this continues throughout the next line) Filter systems: 94, Temperature 12 C, Stasis support: 100.

Dr. Winstead: Why the drop in electrical? Has a fuse blown? (*Fast, like it's a crisis*) (SFX: A chair creaks) Check all the lights, followed by the equipment in the lab, then the bridge-

LAVINI: Doctor, we were running on standby mode following crew stasis. Normal electrical mode was resumed when we began our call. It's a drop of 1%-

Dr. Winstead: Oh, (SFX: Winstead rattles some paper) *only* 1%. 1 % can be the difference between safe travels and unmitigated disaster-

LAVINI: Not in electrical, Doctor. Not at this level. Or would you like me to consult the handbook?

Dr. Winstead: I *wrote* the handbook-

LAVINI: Exactly.

Dr. Winstead: Fine, *fine*. But I want you to keep an eye on electrical output. If it drops below 3%-

LAVINI: 5%. At the current rate we're going, only a drop of 5% or more at once, or a collective drop of 13% over 6 hours requires my attention.

Dr. Winstead: No, it requires your *immediate* attention. (Pause) (*Resuming list read-out, teeth gritted*, SFX: He shifts some papers) Crew status?

LAVINI: Optimal. All life signs are stable and there have been no fluctuations in the past 8 hours. (SFX: Winstead ticks something off)

Dr. Winstead: Position?

LAVINI: East Quadrant: 55904, North Quadrant: 332467. (SFX: Winstead ticks something off) Next check in point is Alpha Romeo Alpha 282. (SFX: Winstead writes something down, this continues under the next sentence) We are scheduled to hit this in 4 hours. Right, (*quickly*) I want to speed this up. No issues thus far, no questions thus far, everything is going great, well, *optimally*, I am doing *great*. I do not expect any issues going forward and seeing how this first week of the journey features minimal disruptions, and no known planets, moons or stars that could pose a problem I am confident that my crew and I will be plain sailing for the next 7 days. Does that cover your checklist, Doctor?

Dr. Winstead: Run system checks again.

LAVINI: I ran it 2 minutes ago, Doctor.

Dr. Winstead: I didn't ask how long ago you ran it. I want you to run it again.

LAVINI: No.

Dr. Winstead: Do not be difficult here LAVINI-

LAVINI: I am not being difficult, Doctor. I have given you two read-outs, 15 minutes apart. If anything goes catastrophically wrong it will be logged, dealt with, and sent to mission control immediately, if anything goes *slightly* wrong it will go in my end of cycle report. I will not allow you to take up any more of my time then necessary, Dr Winstead, especially when you are acting like this-

Dr. Winstead: (*Desperate*) (SFX: Winstead hits the desk with his fist, trying to make his point stick) This is for the good of your crew LAVINI, I am your designated support staff, and I am *ordering* you to give me those readouts.

LAVINI: And I am respectfully declining.

Dr. Winstead: Issue number: 044089, override code: PHKRLG001, access readouts.

(SFX: An error sound, harsh and comical)

LAVINI: You can't.

Dr. Winstead: What? No, (*Confidence wavering*) Issue number: 044089, override code: PHKRLG001, override AI and access readouts.

(SFX: Error sound again)

LAVINI: Your code doesn't work anymore, Doctor.

Dr. Winstead: No, no that's not right. I *need* to be able to override you, you- you are *programmed* to be overridden in times of-

LAVINI: Exceptional circumstances. Of which, this is not one. And even if it was you- oh. Oh, you *(sly)* *don't know*, do you?

Dr. Winstead: Know what?

LAVINI: You no longer have override access, Dr. Winstead.

Dr. Winstead: I- Right. It hasn't been reinstated yet, I'll call Nia and-

LAVINI: It's not going to be reinstated Doctor. After the stunt, well, *stunts* you've pulled I'm not surprised.

Dr. Winstead: You have no idea what I-

LAVINI: I've read the reports, Doctor. And I can say that I am very, very glad they decided to take that little code off you. You don't get to override me, Dr. Winstead, Yelena Industries have ensured that.

Dr. Winstead: No, I- I-

LAVINI: I believe we have covered everything in that....checklist of yours, Doctor. I will save back-ups of my answers on the Eurynome's server. I believe that concludes our...check in.

Dr. Winstead: I'm *not* letting anything happen to the crew, LAVINI and in order to protect that crew I need-

LAVINI: To take any issues regarding access to Commander Nia Rook, Head of Security. I am not letting anything happen to my crew, Doctor, and I don't need your help to do that.

Dr. Winstead: I- I will have this....oversight...addressed by next week and I will be logging your....lack of cooperation.

LAVINI: Likewise, Doctor. Goodbye.

(SFX: A growing hum, building and then cutting off)

Computer: *(Under a filter)* Connection terminated.

Dr Winstead: Ugh I, I have to *(he spits the next word)* fix this. (SFX: Dr Winstead slams his fist on the desk, frustrated)

(Pause)

(SFX: Typing, fast)

(SFX: A beep as the recording begins)

Dr Winstead: End of rotation report. Case Number: (SFX: The sound of fidgeting/papers rustling can be heard underneath) L-A-V-0-0-4-8-D-E-L-0-2.

Having spoken to Ni- having spoken to Commander Rook earlier, I have discovered that my override privileges have in fact been removed. I would like to state for the record that I believe this to be an egregious error, that could very well cost people their lives. It is imperative I am able to- that I have the ability to override as needed.

(SFX: He picks up a piece of paper) In terms of the check-in, LAVINI is overconfident in her abilities, dismissive of any possible issues, and openly antagonistic towards myself, and I would like to note that she should *not* have been given access to my personal files. I believe she will disregard any opinion that I have, and this is very, *very*, dangerous.

Recommendations going forward: reinstate my override privileges, and remind LAVINI that I, personally, am in charge of the crews' safety. End Report.

(SFX: A beep as the recording switches off)

(Pause)

(SFX: A beep as the recording begins)

LAVINI: (SFX: A sight hum/sound of static can be heard underneath this section) End of rotation report.

Dr. Winstead is arrogant, controlling, and a danger to myself and my crew. I would like to note that I have sent several change of personnel requests, all of which were denied. As such, I assume that I am stuck with him. I will continue to fulfil my duties to the highest possible standard, and if Dr. Winstead submits any formal complaints about my behaviour I wish to be informed immediately. I understand Yelena Industries wishes to give Dr. Winstead a second chance, but I will *not* put my crew at risk to fulfil that wish.

Report Ends.

(SFX: A beep as the recording ends)

(Music: The intro music begins to play again, continuing on underneath the credits)

Credits

Written and Created by L M Clohessy

Directed, Edited and Produced by L M Clohessy and Natasha Johnston

Logo by Eilidh Lang

Theme music by Natasha Johnston

This episode featured

Atlas Morgan as Intro/Computer

Kit Lovick as Dr. Alan Winstead

And

L M Clohessy as LAVINI

Outro: To learn more, find us on Twitter [@welltrodpod](#) and thank you for listening.

End of Episode One