

## BTPT 3, 4

Written by NHA

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*[Previously on Beyond TPT: Jack Bauer is in an underground tunnel full of raw sewage, following the transponder signal from a device stuck up the kidnap victim's bottom. Concerned about losing his sense of smell, Jack calls CTU and requests nasal backup. Little does he know that they have all gone down the local bar. Now read on...]*

Beyond The Porcelain Throne

Series 3 /4

Crew review and recruitment

Hi, Captain!

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Like with most things, there's an easy way and a hard way to do a crew review. The hard way is top down –we would have to find out which areas had the most crew and which were lacking by trying to take pictures of them from the outside. You can do this in an fMRI scanner if you have one lying around in your attic; if you lie inside it will take photos of the inside of the ship, and the computer can calculate the areas of greatest density or those that are a bit sparse. Then you can set them all to their tasks, one section at a time, and see who's working and who isn't, then you analyse the chemistry to see whether they're doing the right jobs or not. What a load of hassle!

The easy way is much more fun, doesn't need any tech, and is just as accurate. All you have to do is think a bit about the ambassadors; Gaz, Glenda, Conan, Anashar, and Mr Stock. Have a look through their profiles [I have them here] and decide how you feel about them. Then I'll tell you what that means. They're all short, so this won't take long:

Gaz [Gazket Cakeliner]

I work in Section/network 1

We mainly handle chemical manufacturing, recycling, construction and repair, and sensory-motor memory.

I like doing my work and having a laugh

I'm not interested in anything more creative or intellectual than jokes about cement. I'm a simple soul and network 1 runs a bit like an ant colony. My personal message to you is "Hi Ho!"\*[See footnote]

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Glenda [Dickbender]

I work in Section/network 2

We handle locomotion, physical expression and movement, body language, the mechanical side of speech, facial expression, timing and rhythm, grace and athleticism, muscle tone and appearance, and spatial memory.

I like exploring, dancing, having sex, eating good food, parties, games or sports, massage, exercise, and my clan. I'm a proud warrior but my focus is defense, so I take martial arts lessons, not hostages. I'm responsible for your fight/flight response if we're ever under attack, so I have to stay in good shape.

I'm not interested in anything that isn't about survival or thriving in a purely biological sense. Network 2 runs like an interactive clan system where each clan specialises and each helps all others. My personal message to you is "We Boldly Go."

Conan [The Librarian]

I work in Section/network 3

We mainly handle making maps; attaching emotion to input, relaying messages, eidetic and long term memory, and imagination.

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I like stories, music, movies, fantasy, poetry, reading and art, nature and the environment, and spirituality.

I'm not interested in intellectual facts, material matters or being creative; I just like to watch and listen. Network 3 runs like a garden or a festival; it just sort of organises itself. My personal message to you is "May the Force be With You".

Anashar [Grianfanacht]

I work in Section/network 4

We mainly handle creativity, your ability to use tools, dexterity and procedural memories of how to do things.

I like writing, maths, composing, performing, playing, making, inventing, working with tools and materials, solving problems, and thinking of new ideas. I like people and communication and humor and relationships, acting rather than watching. I'm very good with machines.

Network 4 runs like a computer program designed to bring order out of chaos. My personal message to you is "Who Cares, Wins."

Mr. Stock

I work in Section/network 5

We mainly handle intellect, your ability to use logic, articulation and memories of declarative facts.

I like language, calculation, non-fiction, scientific proof and information to analyse.

I'm not interested in material pleasures or emotional matters. I practice spirituality because it is beneficial to do so and therefore logical, not because I believe in any deities. My personal message to you is "Live long, and prosper."

Now, you remember meeting the Ambassadors, and what they were like...so tell me, which ones would you rather socialise with, work with, party with, spend your time with? Learn from? Did you find any one of them much more interesting than the others? Who was the most fun to be with? From the job descriptions above, if you had to work for a week in any Section yourself, which one would it be? And did any of the Ambassadors seem either rather dull or very strange? Who would you least like to spend time with? Who has the nearest interests to your own? Jot the answers to these questions down somewhere, and that's it, game over, you won again.

Let's see what you won this time...you won some vital information in the "Know Thyself" department. Since we don't have a Darragdomian present, I'll translate it for you.

The Ambassador/s that you would feel most comfortable socializing with and those with the closest interests to your own, work in the sections where your crew complement is fine. Those sections will have adequate crew already, so note that down in your review.

The sections run by the species that you found the most strange or boring will be the ones most

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likely to be short of crew [and in actual fact that's exactly why they'll seem a bit strange]. If the one/s that you'd most like to learn from are different from the ones with similar interests, your ship is already recruiting more crew for the section from which you'd like to learn, so just let them get on with it.

For the rest, in order to attract more quality crew all you have to do is play [getting used to this, are we?] If you are able to pick any one subject you are interested in from the lists of things the ambassadors like, and explore it even a little, they will come. You don't have to be interested in all their 'likes'; you just have to provide input for one or two. That's much much easier when you see that their interests range across many subjects and that anything of a similar nature will do. If you play with the subjects that interest them, the Darragdomians will direct the building of bridges between the relevant crew sections, and in this case it is absolutely true to say, "If you build it, they will come."

The only area you need to look at more closely is the bridge. This is where the chief of every section works; the ambassadors themselves. As Captain, you're responsible for their health and safety, and you need to know how to spot when they're not very well because if they get unwell, so will you. That makes diagnosis easier; you just have to notice when you yourself feel any of the symptoms below, to know which species is poorly. Symptom spotting is useful too for when you meet rogue ships, as you'll be able to tell what species they've been mutinied by. So here's your Interspecies Health Guide for spotting any problems:

The crew gets sick in one of two ways. Either they feel bad and go off duty, or they feel bad but stay on duty and start doing stupid things. Here's what happens:

### Vulcans

If the Vulcans go off sick you'll find it hard to think straight, seem overwhelmed by things like

Tax Returns or Parking Tickets, and have difficulty understanding conversation beyond the level of smalltalk. Your self esteem will suffer and you may think you are stupid, or in some way less worthy than other mortals.

The essential feature of a working poorly Vulcan is a preoccupation with themselves, their opinion, and why it's only logical that everybody else should agree with them. Their natural tendency towards rationality, intellect and orderliness becomes an inflexible perfectionism, and they try to take control over everything, losing efficiency in the process. Vulcans under the weather are still conscientious workers [indeed, they can become workaholics] and pay great attention to detail, but become more and more inflexible about issues concerning morality, beliefs, ethics, or value judgements. They will try to force everybody to conform to their own rigid moral principles and standards, becoming very narrow minded and adopting a 'Margaret' attitude. They are inclined to be severely self-critical and can get very prudish about sex, drugs, rock & roll and having a good time in general. They have no time for fantasy or fiction and tend to look on those who enjoy it as immature. Emotion frightens them, and they like to pretend it doesn't exist or suppress it. If you feel like this, your Vulcans are poorly. Give them some time off work and get them to read fiction, play computer games, go swimming, or meditate.

## Orlians

When ill, tend to collapse with exhaustion, go off sick, feel miserable and have no sense of humor that we are aware of. If they stay at work they can become very pompous and 'Margaret', like Vulcans, except where Vulcans look to logic and resources to solve all problems, Orlians look to 'society' or technology and can get horribly patriotic or political. They have a tendency to become dependent on machines, or sometimes on Vulcans, [and this is why they tend to gang together in a mutinied ship; the Orlians building tech for the Vulcans, because the Vulcans have more qualifications than them so that's logical]. Sick Orlians off work can develop a morbid fear of technology and machines. Comedy is a big yes yes here.

If you find yourself taking life way too seriously or getting pompous, keep an eye on your

Vulcans and Orlians. Ships mutinied by Vulcans and Orlians ["Front Loaders"] are the most common sort you'll find. They try to shut down all rear and middle networks or usurp them for their own purposes; consequently they often lose all crew from the centre back, and with them the ability to empathize along with their sense of rhythm and physical grace. Front loaders are a bit like old-fashioned robots. They turn the Cakdons into an aggressive military force and their mission becomes "Making money for the Toilet Lords". The best way to deal with this is to reopen the rear sections with a little lighthearted fun and relaxation.

### Darragdomians

When sick, they're more susceptible than anyone else to sentiment, especially when it comes to feeling anxious and getting worried about things, and they can get either militant and outraged if at work or paranoid and melodramatic if off sick. If you develop a morbid fear of poetry and mystical, magical stuff, you've probably got some sick Darragdomians down there. If they're badly ill they can start hallucinating and getting very confused, so it's important to look after them and pay attention to them if they're worrying, giving them some more of what they need [good examples of healthy ways to think about things]. They tend to give you a bad memory if they're off sick, which is another important sign, and they also become both self-pitying [thinking of themselves as victims] and very gullible. They'll join anything; cults, fan clubs, religions, organisations, whatever turns up. If you find yourself starting to believe in cosmic space elephants who created the universe out of their dung, or seeking answers to your problems by counting the spots on your bottom and interpreting the results, the Darragdomians are still at work but are probably not very well. Give them something worthwhile to join –like a gaming network, a movie club, a chat group, or a martial arts class.

### Cakdons

A healthy Cakdon is like a healthy leopard; a playful, fit, proud, pleasure-loving yet noble beast. A sick Cakdon is like an ill-tempered pig. Cakdons get addicted to things, they are susceptible to hedonism and when they're not well they go to extremes. They [and consequently you] may



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become addicted to drugs, booze, sex or food. Out of control in these states, Cakdons can become greedy and violent if they stay at work, both in thought and action. If the Cakdons are off sick you'll get clumsy, just as if you were drunk; you'll be in danger of accidents and injuries, and your coordination and sense of rhythm will be poor, even when you're stone cold sober. Poorly Cakdons need a change of input to get them back on form. They also often respond well to a 'good talking to' from the Orlians or the Vulcans [this is called 'cognitive therapy'] or some movies as inspiration from the Darragdomians. You can thus be your own sergeant major and impose discipline and encouragement from without...This technique won't work on Gnomes, however...

### Gnomes

Sick Gnomes are like depressed sloths; slow, apathetic and self-pitying. They rarely work. The first thing you notice if your gnomes are off sick is fatigue; you'll get very tired if there's not enough of them running the engines, and your immunity will suffer too. You may develop a reluctance to move, or go outdoors, or be distressed by changes of temperature or light. You'll find it hard to take pleasure in anything. It's usually quite easy to tell if you have a Gnome problem, because the body gets symptoms quite quickly and they're more obvious than, say, changes in mood. Sick Gnomes can make you very lazy though, so it's good to keep them fit.

So, you don't have to do anything complicated if any of your folks get sick. You're a Starship Captain; not a doctor.

All you have to do if you notice any of the above symptoms is give the appropriate crewmembers what they need. You can look that up in this story if you've forgotten it. Often all a species needs is a rest, and if you're overworking any sections you should consider who you might be forgetting about in the process. -If one section is having to work extra hard, what are the crew doing in the other sections? Sitting on their backsides smoking? Make sure all species get something to do regularly, and you won't go far wrong.

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You might have forgotten this, but we have an assignment on Dagobah...our first venture into Darragdomian space, right down the rabbit hole and out the other side. We won't need any cake this time for a relative shift in scale because we're going to use warp speed –and if you don't believe that achieves the same thing, read what the human called Einstein wrote about light speed and stuff.

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\*Footnote: "Hi Ho" is a Gnome working song, as well as a Dwarf one. Both species are miners, Dwarves are Ore miners, Gnomes are Data miners. Both are of small stature, making them also minors. The first ever Gnome working song was written to synchronise motion in a gang of Gnomes hauling an injured colleague out from under a collapsed bridge, and was called "Synchrony in A Flat Miner".

Incidentally, Dwarves in the body mine for excess metals and for Iron, which they sell to Liver Gnomes [for oxy-acetyl welding to blood cells, obviously].