

Race Rivalry

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Synopsis

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The sisters'™ leader, Miriamal, and three mining chairpersons investigate an unexplored wormhole for possible economic expansion. Aboard the *Dominance*, they exit the wormhole and are stunned to find the nearby system inhabited. More troubling, technologically advanced warships hold station above the system's exoplanet.

SADEs witness the hasty return of the *Dominance* and the cessation of messages between Miriamal and Lisa Dyehouse, the leader of the three chairpersons. Cremsylon communicates the odd events to Julien in the Thartath system. In turn, Julien dispatches a scout ship to traverse the wormhole and identify the reason for the relationship's truncation.

In the Thartath system, Julien wrestles with how to rehabilitate the sisters, members of the notorious militarist sect. Captain Nira Racine presents him a novel idea. She borrows a concept from Cremsylon, who shares the musings of Ceda, a human clone. Ceda tells the SADE that sisters are like clones, and their reintegration requires their creators'™ humans.

On Naiad, Samuel's™ situation grows dire. His code is stretched thin between a vault site belonging to X-Ore's™ Chairperson Jason Lazama and the comtech department. The comtech director is suspicious of SADE code left within her systems, and, when the elections are complete, she vows to sweep the systems clean and then reboot every digital device.

The Truth Matters partners race against time to save Samuel, their digital friend, and they're not above leveraging an unreliable criminal hacker to aid in their plot.

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