

# ABANDON SHIP!

'All hands, abandon ship! I repeat, all hands, abandon ship!'

The Patax were a fierce race and the science vessel Excelsior's firepower was no match for them. The last forty minutes had injured many and killed many more, and as the warp coil was off line there was only one thing left to do.

'Computer, this is Captain Nathan James Holt of the star ship Excelsior, identification code Alpha Seven Delta Nine. I give you the order to self-destruct.'

SECOND OFFICER JOSEPHINE MAY-WEATHER,  
DO YOU CONCUR?

'This is Second Officer Josephine May-Weather, identification code Beta Four Tango One. Yes, I concur.'

AUTHORISATION ACCEPTED. COUNTDOWN  
INITIATED. SELF-DESTRUCT IN THREE  
MINUTES AND COUNTING...

Like ants at a picnic the crew scurried to the escape pods.

They had only practised this once before, just eight months ago back at Jupiter Station. Back then, Ensign Keller had been too busy singing in the shower to leave the ship and had felt the wrath of Captain Holt as a result. But this was no drill and Ensign Keller was dead.

SELF-DESTRUCT IN TWO MINUTES AND  
COUNTING...

The ship creaked and groaned like an old man. The Excelsior was tired of having to fight and was ready to give up the battle altogether.

SELF-DESTRUCT IN ONE MINUTE AND  
COUNTING...

The last pod door hissed shut and with it any hope of saving the ship was lost. Nathan stared at the purple orb he and his crew were now heading for and prayed that their new home would be safe. At least the distress call had been sent and the Patax were not following them.

SELF-DESTRUCT IN TEN SECONDS  
AND COUNTING...

And as the old man took his last breath and died in a blaze of glory, both Captain and crew alike could not help wonder if they would ever see Earth again.

