

Mode 6 Test Chamber

Unbeknownst to all, a split had occurred. A rift in time. This is their story.

The humming neon of Resonance Laboratories' Epsilon Containment Facility had taken on a deeper, almost expectant amber hue as Dr. Vance Halberg and Dr. Issac Aaron "Izzy" Korr booted the SD-8516 into Mode 6. What lay before them resembled a giant computer chip blown up to room scale: intricate copper traces pulsed faintly like veins, laser-guided lightplates formed a shimmering maze, and at the center sat the heart of their experiment - the liminal bit array, woven from fragments of Sample SD-0064. Dr. Korr adjusted his energy goggles, peering at the readouts. "Conditions could hardly be more ideal!" "Fascinating. We seem to have developed a very slow teleport."	The humming in the Epsilon Containment Facility had changed pitch. Not louder, just, <i>different</i>. Where once the lab's lattice of lasers had whispered quietly across glass lightplates, now they pulsed in measured intervals, sliding across the tabletop apparatus that resembled a colossal silicon die. Copper pathways etched into the surface formed geometric valleys where pale green light crawled like bioluminescent insects. Dr. Issac Aaron Korr leaned forward, peering through thick lenses at the shifting grid. "Fascinating," he murmured.
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Halberg blinked. "A slow teleport? This suggests an entirely new line of investigation." "Quite right, Doctor Halberg," Izzy said, straightening. "Today is a red letter day, Dr., err, Halberg. The phase variance is stable, the zero-page addressing is locked in. Once the liminal charge capacitors are properly ensconced in the transmitter, we can begin." Halberg gave a wry smile. "Well, I can't take all the credit. Doctor Korr proved an able assistant." Izzy waved it off modestly. "What? Oh dear, you're right, I almost forgot." He leaned over the controls. "Very good. Final sequence. Commencing... now."	Across the table, Dr. Vance Halberg adjusted the stabilizer clamps with his usual blend of irritation and mechanical precision. His prosthetic leg clicked softly against the tiled floor. "Isaac," Halberg said, squinting at the diagnostic scope, "what the hell is going on with our equipment?" Korr didn't answer immediately. He turned a dial on the resonance meter, then adjusted one of the tiny mirror plates with the same miniature screwdriver he had used earlier. "Conditions could hardly be more ideal!" he announced suddenly. Halberg sighed. "You always say that right before something catastrophic happens." "What? Oh dear, you're right, I almost forgot." He tapped a clipboard nervously. "The transmitter array must be aligned first. Once it's safely ensconced in the epsilon field, we can begin." Halberg leaned over the giant tabletop chip, following a flicker of data running along the copper traces. "You're telling me," he said slowly, "that we're about to transmit a <i>memory address</i> through the liminal substrate?" Korr nodded eagerly. "Precisely! A small one, of course. Merely a pointer test." Halberg raised an eyebrow. Have you forgotten what happened last time? Our mutual friend? "That's how I lost my leg." Korr paused. "Dear me." They stood in silence for a moment while the lasers continued their quiet choreography. Then Halberg flicked the intercom switch. "We're all set on this end." Static crackled across the lab speakers. A technician somewhere deeper in the facility replied faintly. "Isaac, are you there?" Korr leaned toward the microphone. "I'm right over here! Speak to you again in a few moments." He turned back to Halberg and rubbed his hands together with quiet excitement. "Very good. Final sequence. Commencing... now."
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The array responded with a low, resonant hum. A faint distortion rippled across the tabletop. "Hold that signal!" Issac called, eyes fixed on the monitors. Dr. Vance Halberg monitored the flux. "I'm encountering unexpected interference." Halberg frowned. "Izzy, what the hell is going on with our equipment?" A sharp crackle interrupted him. Sparks erupted from one edge of the array. The distortion warped violently, bending light into impossible angles. The tabletop surface seemed to stretch and fold inward on itself. "Great Scott!" Izzy shouted. "Vance! Behind you!" Halberg spun just as a <i>giant claw</i> leaped from within the laser-light! "Shut it down, shut it down!" Halberg yelled, hands flying over the emergency overrides. "Izzy! Stop!" A blinding flash engulfed the chamber. Then silence.	The tabletop chip came alive. Lines of green light accelerated across the copper pathways, racing toward the center node where the SD-0064 sample floated within a crystalline transmitter cage. Halberg watched the oscilloscopes nervously. "Hold that signal," he muttered. The readouts began drifting. Korr's brow furrowed. "Oh, fiddlesticks." The laser grid flickered. "I'm encountering unexpected interference." Halberg leaned over the instruments. "What's going on, Issac?" Korr tapped the phase monitor. "Curious... the liminal variance is folding into the addressing space." Another beam fired. The room dimmed. The air prickled with static electricity. Korr's eyes widened behind his goggles. "Great Scott!" Korr was staring at the transmitter cage in awe. The SD-0064 crystal was <i>glowing!</i> Suddenly, a CLAW appeared from ... within the crystal! Halberg blinked. "Izzy! Shut it down! Shut it down!" Izzy yelled over the noise - "Halberg, Hold that signal!" The claw flickered halfway out of existence. A power conduit exploded in a shower of blue sparks. The room filled with blinding light. The lab filled with smoke. Alarms wailed. After a moment of chaos, the lasers slowly powered down. The oscilloscopes faded to quiet green lines. Silence returned to the lab.
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When the afterimages cleared, the array sat unchanged. No crater, no scorched walls, no bodies. Just the faint smell of ozone... and a soft, metallic chewing sound. From inside the terabit capacitor box came a rhythmic crunch. Halberg groaned, pushing himself up. "It's Leeroy!" Dr. Korr's pet crab, affectionately (and exasperatedly) named Leeroy, poked one tiny claw out of a ventilation slit in the capacitor housing, bits of terabit cable dangling from its mandibles like festive streamers. Halberg rubbed his temples. "That's... how I lost my leg. No, wait, never mind. That's another story." Izzy sighed, already reaching for the coaxing tongs kept on a nearby shelf. "Oh fie. It will take a week before I can coax him out of there again." Halberg glanced at the still-glowing array, then at the unruffled crab. "Unforeseen consequences, indeed." Izzy chuckled weakly. "Fantastic work, Izzy. Dr. Magnusberg is not going to like this!"	Korr slowly removed his goggles. Halberg rubbed soot from his face. For a long moment neither spoke. Then something inside the terabit capacitor housing made a faint chewing sound. *crunch!* Halberg froze. Korr turned toward the large metal box under the table. Another crunch echoed from inside. Halberg groaned. "Oh no." Korr's shoulders slumped. They both stared at the box. Inside it, something skittered happily among the glowing fiber bundles. Halberg sighed deeply. "Isaac," Korr pinched the bridge of his nose. "It's Leeroy." "Leeroy!" I'd wondered where he had gotten off to! More chewing. "Leeroy, come out from there at once!" Halberg opened the access hatch and peered inside. A small beige headcrab looked up from the terabit cables with unmistakable innocence. Several data lines hung half-chewed. "Oh fie." Halberg shut the hatch. "It'll take a week before I can coax him out of there again." Korr stared at the destroyed experiment. After a moment he adjusted his glasses and straightened his clipboard. "Well," he said thoughtfully, "this suggests an entirely new line of investigation."
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RESEARCH NOTES: DR. ISSAC A. KORR (ADDENDUM)

SUBJECT: Liminal Bit Incident / Leeroy

The slow teleport effect was genuine -- brief spatial shear observed, duration approximately 1.3 milliseconds. However, root cause traced to unauthorized snacking on primary data conduits.

Recommendation: Install crab-proof mesh on all terabit enclosures.

P.S. Leeroy appears unharmed. He sends his regards :claw-wave-emoji:

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