





so frustrating. And by the way, what kind of a name is Wee Beastie? Really? I liked the idea of being called Willie Wallace, or even Barkheart. But noooooooo! Wee Beastie it was. Ugh! So frustrating.

So yeah, when she came at me this morning with a “treat”, as she called it, and it taste like something I evacuated out of my body yesterday I was a little testy. As punishment she didn’t feed me. And that was not the final bone. The final bone came by locking me up in this doggy brig. Don’t I have any rights? Shouldn’t there have been some kind of trial, or at least a tribunal. You can really lock up intelligent creatures like myself for no reason, without any due process? That was not right. The time had come to fight back.

First, to get out I needed to make her believe that if I didn’t get out I was going to lay an amount of waste out my rear end that it would look like that experiment that got out of control a few months ago. So I whined, and whimpered incessantly until she came over.

“What the matter ya wee son of a ...,” she said. I guess she was still irritated from the nip I gave her. Finally she rolled her eyes and said, “Fine. I’ll let ye oot. But ye better be gud doggie.”

Finally I was free. Now was the time to launch my plan. She had already turned her back and was walking toward some plant that she had brought back from some mission that she hadn’t taken me on. The wench. Oh she’ll pay. She Will Pay!

I launched my first attack at her ankles. I bit hard and I bit deep, and it felt goooood. She screamed and dropped the plant to the floor. Then she tried to kick me. If I had vocal chords that would have allowed it I would have laughed because she missed me by a mile. However it did give me an opportunity to attack her other leg. This time a little higher. I could feel my teeth dig into her muscle. The taste of the blood was a little metallic, but I wasn’t in this to enjoy the blood. This was personal.

She dropped to her knee, a little wobbly, looking at me. That was the look I was looking for. The moment when anger turned into fear. Oh yes my friend, be afraid. Be very afraid. I ran as fast as I could and launched my body into her as hard as I could. This caused her to tumble all the way to the floor and put her in the perfect position. I jumped at her face, my teeth bared. She screamed and covered her face with her arms. Perfect.

I redirected my attack from her face to her now completely exposed throat. Opening my mouth as wide as possible I slipped my teeth over the flesh then squeezed my jaws as hard as I could. The screaming changed to a different sound. It was all liquidy, and gurgles. When I was at the maximum capacity for my jaws I put one of my paws on her should and pushed away. My head pulled back bringing a large piece of her throat flesh with it.

She started to spasm and thrash around, sending squirts of blood throughout the lab. It was like it was raining blood. It was horrifying. It was fantastic. It didn’t take long for the body to stop moving. All the movement that was left was for the pooling lake of blood to roll across the floor, towards me.

Suddenly the door to the lab slid open. A familiar face in a blue uniform stepped in and let out a gasp. Then he saw me. Oh no, a witness. He was going to have to go as well. I turned and bared my teeth again, starting to move towards him. He pulled out one of the sticks that I had seen before. Maybe he was going to play after all. Suddenly a bright light poured out of the stick.













Sekal looked up as Matrix announced his entrance. The center had a number of chairs arranged before the control boards.

"Ensign Matrix reporting as ordered Captain."

"Take a seat please Ensign. This will not be brief. What do you remember of Roanoke and the events that transpired on Mars?"

(Reply: Matrix)

The Captain settled back as he recounted the high points. "The cell on Mars was eventually ferreted out due to the efforts of Commander Perters and his security contingent while President Stieve Atremi and the bulk of the Admiralty were found to be corrupt and in collusion with those who set off the devastation bomb on earth which caused untold death and destruction. Roanoke was believed to be snuffed out as its leadership and the bulk of its operatives were rounded up. However this has proven not to be the case."

(Reply: Matrix)

"What we now know to be former operatives penetrated a facility and were running an operation dedicated to weapons research which is a Roanoke staple. They were killed in what was found to be a fluke accident. I find the circumstances to be extremely pat and illogical and have my reservations that the conclusion is correct. Logic tells me there is more behind this. Command believes more ships and bases have been penetrated and I find it likely that today's events point to the Illuminar being one of them."

(Reply: Matrix)

"What I require from you is this Ensign. I wish for you to go back two days in the system power output logs and look for any sign of irregularities while you monitor ongoing usage and note them. Where and when being keys and bring the data directly to me. Once power usage has been noted I want you to begin looking at other areas of the ship operationally. Someone is getting information off this ship and perhaps receiving it and it is imperative this flow of information be shut down. Do you need anything from me to help in that regard?"

(Reply: Matrix)

(Posted by Charles G)





















When

the doors opened she stepped inside and looked around. Unsurprisingly, sickbay was a buzz of activity, as one might expect with a shift change occurring within the hour. But Quinna was not to be seen. T'Mur walked over to the CMO's office and sure enough, there she was. She stepped into the office, Gregory close behind.

"Good

morning Quinna," T'Mur said. "I'm sure that everyone has made sure that you are aware of my arrival."

Gregory

stepped forward, handing the medical tricorder to the doctor. "Commander Williams-Verin wanted me to give you this. She had been taking some readings that might be useful. She also mentioned something about serotonin levels that are elevated."

Quinna

took the PADD and started reading. She knew the symptoms, but was unclear as it was not T'Mur's time. Quinna looked over at Gregory, "I can take it from here. No need for you to stay."

(Reply

Deiter)

Turning

back to T'Mur. "We should run some tests. Do you have an idea what is going on?"

T'Mur

gripped the edge of the chair in front of her and almost spat out, "Nothing is going on. I have been a little ... on edge. I cannot explain that. If I rest then maybe I can reduce my stress. But I am unable to rest."

"Then

sit back and relax before you tear my chair apart." Quinna made another check in her symptoms chart. She wanted to have a discreet conversation, even though Vulcans do not talk about it.

T'Mur

made her muscles relax and stomped around the chair like a petulant child to sit down. She sat back and crossed her arms. Quinna was her friend, but this sounded like a conversation that she just did not want to have.

"Okay,"

T'Mur said sarcastically, "what?"

Quinna

moved to the front of T'Mur. She squatted down and placed her hands on T'Mur's "For now I want you to take some deep cleaning breaths." Quinna demonstrated. "In through the nose and out through the mouth."

Quinna

then stood again. You could hear the joints in her knees crack as she stood. She moved over to Gregory. "It is time for you to go." Quinna stood there. "Do I need to remind you who rules the roost here?" Quinna was obviously still wound up from the day before.

Gregory

had heard rumors of Dr. Solice's tirade. He was not one to get involved in questioning another department head's running of their department. "I have discharged my duty," he said "Thank you Doctor."

With

that Gregory headed out, noting he had time before his morning run.

T'Mur

reluctantly went through the breathing exercise until she could feel her body settle and her mind come back in tune. Finally she was able to speak.

"Quinna,"

she said, "I apologize that I was short tempered with you. It is not usually how I treat my friends. It's just that for some reason Lt. Gregory and Sienna had just.. well.. they just irritated me. And I don't really even understand why. It has been this way for the past few weeks. I am... afraid that the treatment on Vulcan has failed. It is not the same, and yet it is. Does that make sense to you?"

Quinna

nodded, "In a strange way, yes." Quinna pulled out a medical tricorder and started to scan. "I am not picking up any traces of your treatment failing." Quinna said. Then she asked, "Can you talk me through the events, leading up to being here. Thoughts, emotions, anything you can think of?"

T'Mur

forced herself not to roll her eyes. She took a deep breath.

"I

could not sleep so I went for a walk," she began. "After about a half hour I decided to go to the bridge and observe the Gamma shift. Once there I noted that CPO Falcon had made unauthorized adjustments to the tactical station. I asked him to put it back to

its original status and he .. did not immediately comply. I was a bit over emphatic when I insisted that he comply. Then Lt. Gregory asked me to go to the ready room and told me that I skipped the chain of command.” She felt the rising irritation again. “Then Sienna, Commander Verin came in and they all seemed to think something was wrong with me.” She grit her teeth and almost spat out, “They forced me to come here.”

She took a deep breath and held her tongue from making any further statement. “How did I feel? I don’t know. It all ... bothered me. I know that it shouldn’t but it did.”

I am not seeing anything related to your pan’ar, but I do not to rule anything out.” Quinna said. “These are symptoms to number of concerns. It could be anywhere from lack of sleep to more serious such as lack of oxygenated blood to the brain or perhaps even...” Quinna paused, “Pon Farr.”

T’Mur’s eyes widened, almost in horror, her voice a whisper. “Pon Farr? It cannot be.”

“I know it is too soon so, Lets make sure it is not something else.” Quinna commented back.

“No, you don’t understand,” T’Mur said, pleading in her eyes, “it CANNOT be. I have never been bonded. When my time for bonding came there was too much neurological damage. My proposed mate ... opted out. And my body, well, never went through the initial imbalance. I just assumed that I would never be afflicted so.”

She leaned forward, her face reflecting her deep contemplation. “What was it that Dr. Tate said about the procedure? “The neural regeneration rolls back the clock for a patient.” Is it possible?”

“It could be, I don’t want to jump the gun yet, but I don’t want to ignore the possibility.” Quinna commented.

“Jump the gun?” T’Mur looked at the doctor oddly. “I do not understand how jumpin on a weapon would possibly make this situation better, but I can understand that doing so would be unwise. Perhaps you are suggesting that I defend myself in some way? Perhaps a good workout would help?” She shook her head. “There are still some human phrases that I do not understand.”

“Why

don't we just go to sickbay and run some scans. No one will know." Quinna Suggested.

T'Mur

could feel the irritation start to rise again. The suggestion of the workout seemed like a much more likely option. "If this is what you are suggesting, it is something that I would have gone through to end my adolescence and be bonded to a mate. What tests could you possibly run? I am not stupid. I have seen Sienna, and you, already run medical scans. You already know my condition. What are you not telling me? Did this treatment turn me back into an adolescent? I do not know what to do. "

With

that she gripped the edge of Quinna's desk and stood up. When she release her grip the metal desk had imprints of her grasp still in it. She stook several deep breaths and then looked at Quinna. But the look had changed. She was no longer angry. It was more ... feral. She stepped around the desk and put her body against the doctors, pressing her back to the wall.

She

grabbed Quinna's right arm with her left hand in a vice grip. Her right hand reached up and stroked her face gently. The dichotomy of the two actions was off balancing. Her eyes locked onto Solice's with an intensity that almost burned into her brain.

"I...

need..." she breathed on her neck.

Quinna

heart pounded, she did not expect this to happen. She could see in T'Mur's eyes the blood boiling. "You need to let me go now, Ensign!" Quinna demanded.

T'Mur

looked into Quinna's eyes, searching for ...something, but not sure what. She was looking for something familiar, but there was nothing familiar to this. It took a moment for the words to sink in. She did not release the arm but she did step back. Then T'Mur looked at the arm in her hand as if she had no idea how it got there. Finally she let it go and stepped back.

"Where,

is the logic in your actions?" Quinna managed to ask.

"Logic?"

she was talking to herself. "Logic... has little to do with what is happening."





It was not a shove of removing something that was completely alien, but a gentle shielding of his mind that did not budge, but gently moved her own, wild mind further away. "I need to belong. I need to feel... complete. Why is this happening to me? Why am I so empty? I need to be... one."

"You were never bonded?" His eyes showed confusion for an instant. He retained his grip on her chin and leaned closer as he fought through the rampaging emotions emanating from her. "Yet I sense a faint bond that has begun forming." He received the flash of the thought that leaked through and stiffened his arm as she fought to get closer to him, holding her in place. "It appears that Doctor Solice is correct."

Finally she dropped her eyes. "The bonding could not be fulfilled. He that was meant to be... found a replacement. I never reached this time. It just seemed logical that I never would."

Her eyes turned back to his, "But I feel the draw. You sense it. I sense that in you. But it is not you, is it? Why can it not be you?" T'Mur took her two fingers of her right hand and ran them over the back of Sekal's hand. It was an intimate touch usually reserved for mates or lovers.

"I am already bonded and I am the Captain. My duties and expected comportment are clear." The primal, savage nature of her need came through with clarity. It was attractive and magnetic to an extent certainly. Her life was at risk because of Pon Farr, without a mate her system would continue to teeter farther toward the edge driving her toward madness and death from the shock to her body. Vulcan wasn't a convenient option since they were on mission many days away by high warp. Fulfilling her physical needs was an option if a suitable mate could be found but bonding her to him was not. But there was another forming bond and he could logically extrapolate who that was to.

A moment of clarity and calm in the storm of her emotions came. "I apologize, Captain. This is not your problem. I must solve this, or get control of myself. I need to ... think. But my thinking right now is not very clear. I must clear my mind. I should go."

She turned to walk away. This situation was already embarrassing enough. Now she had compounded it with accosting her commanding officer. There was really only one that she wanted to bond with. But was it even possible? It was not usually a choice but an obligation to fulfill. Even if she could make the choice, does she know what it entails?

"Ensign." The word stopped her midstep. "You have only one clear choice. You are already forming a bond. Commit to it and deepen it. That bond will stabilize and bring you through Pon Farr. You have permission to take what time you need to take control of yourself before returning to duty."

T'Mur looked at the captain and nodded. They both knew what had to happen. It just became a matter of when. With a plan in mind she had to prepare. "Thank you Captain," she said with genuine gratitude. This one Vulcan had treated her with more kindness and respect than her whole planet. She hoped she could be worthy of that respect. "Thank you for everything."

With that she almost ran down the corridor towards the turbo lift.

(reply none)

(Posted by AI and Charles)





(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 - Holodeck 1 - SO Hercules Devers and COps/3rdO Lieutenant Dieter Gregory - 0808)

Inside the holodeck, the security NCOs were at their daily practice. Gregory was with them. He still could outrun them all, but hand to hand was not his specialty. Today they were practicing ground techniques, or what to do when your attacker is on top of you.

Gregory watched as one of the NCOs Alex Collier knelt over Hercules Devers, his hands around Devers neck. Devers moved his hands in between Colliers and with a quick motion, dislodged the hands from his throat. Devers then pushed off his legs, while rolling to the side. Suddenly he was on top of Collier, Devers fist inches from Colliers nose.

"Remember to keep control of the hands till you have completed the buck and roll. At that point, apply punches liberally," came the voice of the instructor. "If you don't control the hands, your opponent can thwart your buck with a quick slap to your ears, or worse. OK, Places."

As Gregory looked at his opponent, he was not so sure of this. "It'll be fine Lieutenant," Crewman Chinlo said.

"Easy for you to say," he said as he laid down.

Suddenly the ships comm burst to life, "Captain to sickbay. Medical Emergency on deck 5. Security to deck ... to deck..."

The NCO's sprang into action, bursting out of the holodeck and into the hall.

Gregory was last out the room as the Security teams started taking control of the situation. The doctor was there already, taking care of the Captain. Nearby was another body crumpled on the ground. Gregory recognized the man as one of the newer members of operations. Kind of a loner. Why was he here. Gregory pointed "Collier, Chinlo, you stay with the Captain. You don't leave his side unless I tell you to."

The medics got the Captain onto a gurney, rushing to sickbay.

Pointing to another two, "Lincoln, Edwards, you take Sanchez there to medical and stay with him. Same thing, you don't leave his side unless I tell you to."

"Computer, order yellow alert. "

"Gregory to Lee. The Captain has been attacked. Scramble your men and start searching for the assailant."

(Reply Lee)

Gregory paused, "Devers, lock this hallway down. Start searching here."

As the yellow alert klaxon began to sound, Gregory entered sick bay for the second time today.















Gregory walked onto the bridge. Looking at the viewscreen, it was clear the ship was at warp. He looked over at Operations and nodded. "Lieutenant Menzi, Sanchez was attacked and is in sickbay. Make sure someone looks in on him."

The Saurian operations officer nodded, while Gregory walked to the ready room. He pushed the chime.

"Lieutenant Gregory reporting as ordered," he said to Commander Verin.

Sienna was sitting behind Sekal's desk, looking exhausted. Sitting on the desk was a small black device that would be easily recognized as a sonic wave disrupter, used to disrupt voice prints onboard a ship. Sy looked completely exhausted and like she was running on fumes. It took a few minutes more for the blue haired Betazoid counselor to appear as well.

"Oh my gosh, the Captain's been hurt and in surgery? And can you get Luma to calm down, Commander? She is not listening to me at all." Alaya looked between Gregory and Verin, "Something weird is going on, the crew have been edgy since that guy was beamed aboard yesterday." Alaya was a strong telepath and could not keep out everything on a ship even this small.

"No, I'm not having much luck with her. I think it has to do with the Captain being one of her bondmates in the past. If Vex were here, she would likely be calmer, but from what I understand she views all of her people as well, her own to protect and nurture and we've learned that death hits her extremely hard." Sienna turned to Alaya, "This is why I have invited both of you here. We have a problem. Starfleet has Intelligence that there are operatives aboard this ship. And I don't know who I can trust. I hate to have to ask this of either of you - but as the strongest telepath aboard the ship, Alaya can scan both of us to make sure..." Sienna shook her head, "Information came recently that there could be hidden personalities and that a phrase or an image can trigger that personality and orders. I would like Alaya to read me, deeply, then read you Lt. Gregory. Since the Captain is going to be out for at least a day, probably more... and with Commander Peters gone... You are the de facto First Officer until the Captain is back on his feet." There was so much raw emotion in Sy's words.

Alaya glanced between the two, "No, I won't. Sienna, Commander... I won't need to know that you can't be one of those horrible Roanoke people. Your twin lost his Imzadi to this crowd.."

Sienna spoke quietly, "I will not ask anything of Lt. Gregory that I would not endure myself and I need the reassurance that I do not have one of those implanted personalities." Sienna looked over towards Lt. Gregory, knowing that as a human, they tended to not be as open as other species.

“There is a question, Commander, that was asked by a Roman poet, “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?” Gregory began, looking between the two. “It is generally translated as ‘Who watches the watcher.’”

“I don’t know anything about these hidden personalities. It sounds like science fiction or a boogeyman designed to frighten little children. ”

“That sounds like you do not believe the orders that I have received. Do I think that either of us have this implantation? No. But I can not say it 100 percent.” Something was bothering her, making her edgy. Alaya looked up in concern.

“I am sorry, but I cannot comply with your request. My rights to privacy are sacrosanct and form the basis of the Federation Charter. To do what you ask is wrong.” He paused. “I swore an oath to protect and defend the Federation, and I will do so with my dying breath. I hope that is sufficient for you, because if you order me to participate in this scan, I will be forced to resign my commission.” Gregory looked at Sienna and then Alaya.

“Yesterday I was ordered to deep read the operative if he died. This left me feeling awful but the order was there, it came from Admiral Winters. I am glad that I did not have to do so, but I would have done it in the interests of Federation Security.” Sienna was exhausted, and it came out in her voice.

Gregory shook his head, “That idea, ‘I was following orders’ has been used throughout history. It is a short road from that to rampant paranoia. The difference in your order is that the operative would be dead. I am very much alive and will not give away my Seventh guarantee.”

::He means what he is saying. He is angry, stubborn and a little sad.:: Alaya sent to Sienna. Sy nodded.

“If we can get Luma calmed down, would you rather that she was the one to read you? She is the only person aboard that I can trust implicitly. And I would rather not have to ask this. I don’t want to believe it. But Roanoke was in the Admiralty of Starfleet and the President was involved. We thought they were gone, but they are not. I need you at my back, Dieter and I don’t know you at all. That breakfast meeting we planned for tomorrow was supposed to take care of that, let us get to know each other informally.” She sighed and put her head in her hands.

Gregory looked at Sienna, “Ma’am, I will have your back. However, I will refuse and reject any attempt to use any telepathic scanning of my mind. I am sorry that you feel this is the only way for you to trust me. However, what you are asking is such an intimate violation of my person, I cannot and will not allow it. If my word is no good for you, my oath to StarFleet, then we are an impasse.”

Sienna looked into Dieter's eyes and knew, somehow, that he was safe. "My parents told us stories of what it was like during the time of the civil war. And the compromises that they had to make with themselves in order to save the Federation. I hate that I was ordered to ask this of you. And I hate that I have to literally be suspicious of everyone, friend or not."

"I was only following orders has been used to justify too many tragedies throughout history. I thought that Starfleet wanted officers who wouldn't blindly follow orders, but analyze the situation first." Gregory said. "I refuse to give up my essential liberty to purchase temporary safety."

"Yes, I know what your views are, you have expressed them. The thing is, I don't know you Mr. Gregory. We need to be able to trust each other implicitly to work together. The Captain and I were in the Academy together, we were in the same department on Mars but had much different focuses. He and I compliment each other very well. I'm a biologist first and a people person. For a Vulcan he's very people oriented but his scientific focus is in harder sciences. You have been very focused on the ship, there are few rumors about you and as far as I know... " She paused and winced, "Luma likes you. She's still in shock from the Captain's attack. Can I trust you, Mr. Gregory? Do you have my back? Can you fill in where I am stuck? I did the rushed version of the command course, I got promoted due to my work on Trill. I know the basics of engineering and operations, I do not know the intricacies of it. If you can answer yes to all of that, and Counselor Hammons senses that you are being perfectly honest, then I can ignore the order I was given. Besides, she doesn't want to do it and neither do I." Sienna really didn't know who to trust. "Alaya really needs to go deal with Luma before we all meet in the conference room."

"Yes, I have engineering training. All my actions have been, and will be in the best interest of the ship. And yes, I will have your back, and will not be afraid to share my mind. That is implicit in the oath. Is that sufficient?" Gregory replied.

Sienna did not have to look at Alaya before she nodded. "Sufficient. No Ma'am. I'm Sienna. Commander Verin if we're being formal. Williams-Verin if my Dad's around." She smiled with a bit of worry in her eyes as Alaya slipped out of the room to find a quiet place to deal with Luma.

"I already know we can't keep our shields up and run at warp speed efficiently. Do you have any suggestions?"

"Ma'am, at warp, the deflectors are sufficient to protect against space debris. There is no place to transport to, and the shields come on quickly. Better to push our scanners to make sure we know what's out there. Between tactical and their sensors, and science with their sensors, having two sets of eyes will be better than one. Tactical are shorter range, so we effectively have a nested defense."





External sensations were minimized. Pain had been blocked out. His body was his consciousness, his consciousness was his body. He had been moved to a stable platform. He seemed to feel the light and drink in sounds. It took too much effort to focus on the sounds so he concentrated rather on the sensations. Time had lost any meaning and he seemed to exist in a void.

The wound had been enlarged so he routed the majority of the blood flow around the damaged area. The skin cells could not exist without it but they could be maintained at a reduced rate for many hours if necessary before they began to die. He called on his energy reserves to maximize the replacement of blood cells, plasma required a larger fluid reserve than his body carried but he was receiving that fluid from an external source and he was aware an IV had been applied. He made instant use of it.

At some point his heart stopped and his brain noted it dispassionately. There was no fear.

"The healing trance is the most important discipline you will learn. Master it and it will save you many hours of recovery. Your body will respond to your mind to prolong your life."

The memory had come unbidden. He was looking into the face of his Kohlinar trainer.

"All things die master."

The old Vulcan was sitting cross-legged before him. "Not all things young Sekal."

The young Vulcan was confused. "That is illogical. All things have an end."

"Not the Katra." The trainer leaned toward him meaningfully. "Your katra will continue to exist. It can be transferred and stored as we have done for many of our greatest minds. You have seen it."

"I have seen the chamber yes but is this life?"

"It is consciousness young Sekal and consciousness is life. Where there is still life your katra will command."

He commanded ... his heart obeyed. And beat...

He monitored the flow of blood through his system and it took not many minutes to determine that his blood pressure was steady and building. Also the blood was now flowing to all areas of his body uninterrupted. Slowly at first but in a rising tide. He began the process of resuming normal function.

There was a great deal of healing to be done but he had expended much of his mental energy. Small blood vessels and skin needed to be knit along with two places, his lung and aorta but that process could continue for now at a low level while he regained strength for a renewal of the process.

He slept.

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles G)

















Hammons noted the location and nodded. "Do you have everything at the scene recorded yet?"

"Yes sir, I was just finishing up my double-down check. Give me just a minute."

Steven folded his arms and his eyes surveyed the scene restlessly until the crewman was done.

"Scans complete. All evidence has been entered and I can make a complete three dimensional map from it. Every drop of blood, hair and fiber."

"Good. That means I won't spoil any evidence." He moved to the wall where the blood droplets had already dried and turned his back to it then slid to the marked spot where Sekal had sat on the deck and stopped. He reached out with his left hand and though the Vulcan's arms were longer it was within reach.

"What are you doing sir?"

Hammons gave him a disbelieving look. "I'm reconstructing events. You know back before sensors kept an eye on everything the authorities had to do actual work to gather evidence and solve a case." His eyes dropped to the spot the other crewman had occupied and he frowned. A couple of steps from the wall and he would be almost atop him. So Hammons slid back to the spot with the blood and looked around. "That's peculiar." He stepped out from the wall and turned back toward the gym, he could have reached out and touched the guy. James Merriweather watched him with interest.

On impulse Hammons turned and took 3 normal steps which put him not far from the cordon. "Merriweather come over here and face me." His eyes were hooded as the crewman came around and stood before him.

"The CO was leaving the gym so facing the way I am. Pretend you are driving a knife into my heart."

Merriweather took a step back to position himself then sidestepped to Hammons right. Thrusting his hand forward he stopped it at Hammons chest and held it there.

"All right. Now you hear someone behind me running down the corridor and shouting. Can you see him?"

James repositioned his body. "The CO is a lot taller than you but I can see around you without any problem."

"Do it with your left hand." The man repositioned himself, due to the placement of the wound the offset was larger.

"The same except I have an even wider view."

The wheels in Hammons head were turning. "And if you wanted to take that guy out too?"

James pantomimed withdrawing the knife with a swift jerk then stepped around Hammons.







As she became more lucid she began to make their quarters more receptive to her plans. She replicated flowers. She wanted real ones but didn't dare leave the quarters for the trip to the arboretum. She put roses on the table, and made a carpet of rose petals on the floor that lead to the bedroom. Then she replicated candles that produced a scent that she knew Sienna would appreciate. Finally she had to prepare herself.

That was when the wave of torment struck her again. It took every ounce of self control to not destroy everything that she had worked so hard on. She managed to stagger to the sonic shower to remove the layer of perspiration that coated her. Then she looked in a closet to try a find something to wear, but leather was not what she had in mind. She went to the replicator one last time to get a loose flowing gown that left very little to the imagination. She climbed onto the bed and sat in the middle, in an attempt to meditate until Sienna arrived.

It took Sienna until the afternoon for her to get free of shipboard duties to get back to her quarters. Absolutely exhausted she staggered inside, leaning against the wall in her exhaustion for a moment. Her eyes took in T'Mur's preparations and Sienna found herself smiling, following the rose petals into their now shared bedroom. She looked upon her mate and smiled.

"Are you feeling any better?" She asked carefully, moving over to sit on the bed as she took off her uniform jacket and draped it on a chair. Sienna reached one hand out to stroke T'Mur's hair, forgiveness and acceptance already in the young telepath.

T'Mur opened her eyes and looked at Sienna deeply. She so wanted to feel better, but she knew that she had to be honest.

"No," she said softly. "I do not. I cannot. I have a hole in me. It is a hole that must be filled."

She reached out and grabbed hold of Sienna's hair and pulled her in for long, hard, passionate kiss. Slowly, through the contact of their lips she opened her mind and began to let the wildness slip through. It began to invade Sienna's own mind. Then she quickly withdrew. They were not ready. Sienna was not ready.

"I have to tell you something," T'Mur said. "I am certain of it now. The treatment has put my body back into an adolescent stage that prepares it for the bonding to a mate. It is... an unpleasant experience. It is... embarrassing. And now... now I have a need. I need you. I... NEED... you."

Sy drowned in T'Mur's presence then when the kiss broke, that feeling left. Her eyes flew open, as T'Mur began to speak. "You are not unpleasant or an embarrassment. I.. don't know what you mean by having a need, but I will help you any way I can. I know I can't be a mate in the traditional Vulcan

sense but I want to be yours and I meant the words I told your Father. Earlier hurt, I felt like you were rejecting me, but T... I'm here." Sienna felt herself parroting words that her brother had once said to another, but it seemed to fit. "If I didn't want to be here, I would have found another place to sleep. Now can you tell me what's wrong? What with the Captain, no one filled me in on what is going on with you. Do we need to get back to Vulcan? I can defy Starfleet and get us there."

T'Mur shook her head. "I do not believe that will be necessary. What I need..." She let that trail off for the moment. "Pon Farr is no menial task."

"T, pon farr? How can I help you with that? I don't have the correct parts as I understand the way it works, which is hardly at all. I love you." Sienna kept stroking T'Mur's beautiful hair as if she could do not help doing the caresses."

"This is different," she said. "This is the Time of Awakening. The koon-ut-kal-if-fee. "It is the time of maturing. Mating is more than procreation. It is a connection. It is a connection to every part of the mate. Mind, body and Kahtra. We will never be truly apart again. Never, no matter what. It is not your anatomy that I need. It is your strength. What I have is yours, what you have is mine. We will, forever... be one. It goes beyond a ceremony. It goes beyond sex. It is, in its truest form, a bonding. Please, do not take this on lightly. No matter what happens between us, we WILL be connected."

A beautiful, whimsical smile flitted over her features, then true utter delight, "T'Mur, what do you want? If your body was not driving you...would I be what you wanted? Lynn thought I was what she wanted, and I turned out not to be. What happens when I die and you live on another lifetime?" Sy continued to pet T'Mur's hair, not touching her skin at all. Not daring to sense the person she loved.

"If your body were to die," she admitted, "you would remain in me. A part of you will always live in me. Even if I find another mate, your imprint will remain. And you ask if you are what I want. Our bond has already begun to form. I have known this already. Others have known also. I would be completing what has already been started. Perhaps that was what finally pushed my body into this state."

She could sense the reluctance to actually touch her skin. The direct contact would link them. Gently T'Mur brushed the hair behind Sienna's ear and slid her palm along the cheek line, Their minds instantly connected

::This is inevitable. We are already connected. This will bind us::

She moved her hand away, knowing she needed to hear the words before she pressed deeper.

"Sienna, Sy, I will know everything about you. There will be no secrets between us. We have both felt pain at the hands of others. We will share that pain. And the pleasure."

“T’Mur, I love you. I have only loved twice in my admittedly short life. I do not have a lot of experience but for many Betazoids this is true, we love only a few and very deeply. I’ve known all of my life that I fall into that group. I think that even if you had been born a guy, I would have loved you. You are beautiful, intelligent and deadly. You balance me, and I like to think that I balance you. I feel, deeply that I belong to you, as you do to me.” Sienna turned her caress so that just her fingertips stroked along T’s neck.

::Please:: That one word had so much emotion and desire behind it. ::What little bond I had before was nothing but pain, I never experienced the pleasure. I would like to share that with you, to be yours. This bond will not be one sided, I could not endure that:: So much emotion.

A tear formed in T’Mur’s eye. She had never truly allowed herself to share her emotions with another. Vulcan emotions are raw and savage. Even when it came to love. But the pleading was more than she could take. She reached up and took hold of Sienna’s neck with her right hand. With her left she reached around and unzipped the tunic and pulled it down to expose her shoulders. Then she began to explore the flesh of her throat.

Pulling her in she reignited the passionate kiss that she had started earlier. She allowed herself to think the one thought she had not allowed herself to say out loud. But she drove that one thought as deeply into Sienna’s mind. ::I love you so much::

Sienna surrendered herself to T’Mur and gave as good as she received. Met emotion for emotion. ::How do we do this? Or is it a you do this with my desire?:: Her words were tinged with want. ::My dearest...: She continued stroking her fingers along T’Mur’s face, seemingly intoxicated with the feeling of their souls touching.

Slowly she moved her hand to position her fingers on pressure points and blood vessels on her face. “This may feel a little... strange at first. I will have to change the blood of certain vessels and use pressure points to make the strongest connection.”

She leaned in and kissed Sienna one more time, and used her strength of her hand to press into her head. Then she used her left hand. “My mind to your mind. Your mind to mine. We are one.”

As she spoke the words she drove her mind deep into Sienna’s. She could see the images of what she was thinking. And deeper she pressed. T’Mur could sense the discomfort of Sienna as she reached her mental barriers. They were now sharing each other's surface thoughts entirely. She could see the image of herself and Sienna intertwined on their bed, breathing heavily, in the act of expressing their love. It was... beautiful.

They fell over on the bed and their bodies began to react to the images. But it was not enough. It was wild and exciting, but the feral nature of the awakening was not even close to being satiated.

::My Beautiful girl, I open myself to you. Take what you need, I am yours. Your partner, your lover and your mate. I decided this months ago. I want this. Do what you need to.:: Sienna tried to relax those inner barriers that all telepaths had. Something deep in her feared this slightly but almost all of her wanted it. The fear was rooted in her lack of knowledge and the taboo nature of Vulcan. ::I am yours...:: She repeated the thought.

T'Mur pressed her mind against the imaginary bubble of Sienna's telepathic defenses. She knew that this was going to hurt. She drew on the feral strength of the ancestors and pushed past them. Her body could hear the sudden draw of breath and cry out. And then she pressed deeper.

::That was the pain. Now comes the pleasure:: she sent down their connection. The tendrils of her mind began to stretch out and intertwine with Siennas, as their very souls began to intertwine.

Sienna opened herself entirely to T'Mur, taking a leap of faith as even the fear that T would reject her faded completely. T'Mur could see everything as she could see all that was T. ::Yours.:: Sy spoke as firmly as she could manage, lost in the wonder of the bonding. The entrancement that was T'Mur. That sense that she truly belonged with her.

Now they were connected and T'Mur made a discovery. She was able to tap into Sienna's telepathic ability. She was able to remove her hands from her love's face and still press onward. She had reached her deepest secrets. The mental images were surprising but also intriguing.

::This is what you desire?::

A sense of deep shame crossed their shared thoughts, ::Yes. Always. It's why I love when we meld like this. It makes me feel complete.::

::Then I shall give it to you. I shall make you feel safe.::

In the real world T'Mur reached for the edges of Sienna's uniform and ripped it off her body. She pushed her down and sat across her waist.. And still her mind pressed on. She used her considerable strength to hold her hands over her head and began to nibble on her neck.

A soft sigh of relief as Sienna surrendered the last pieces of her to T'Mur and enjoyed the pleasure amplified between the two.

T'Mur had never felt so connected to anything or anyone. The discovery of each other's desires and pleasures. Nothing was off limits. And she intended to explore those avenues. She knew this was going







He had overheard the man's story, and what truly shocked Weston was that there was no question to the veracity of such an unlikely tale. To suddenly be rendered unconscious in a hallway that was unoccupied by anyone other than himself and the captain seemed... odd. He wondered what the doctor's medical readings showed. He was sure that it would show some form of confusion, and there would be a bruise somewhere around his head or neck, roughly the size of the captain's hand. But getting out of his bed to check on it would have drawn attention away from where it needed to be.

When this Sanchez character left sickbay, with an escort, Michael wondered how long before he ... disappeared. He doubted it would take very long. It had already been six hours. Weston was sure he'd be hard to find, even on a ship this small. His mind began to work on the ways somebody could get off a Federation starship without being noticed. The list was rather small, but extensive enough.

Then he saw the doctor pause at his door and nodded at him. Was there a hint of a smile there? It was the only interaction that he had with anyone, besides a series of minor noticeable empathic sweeps by the Betazoid watchdog outside, that were easily brushed off. Time with a telepath in ... intimate circumstances will build up certain abilities. But those had disappeared when Ariel Trei had left sickbay.

He checked his shoulder to see how much it could handle. Pain was not always as useless as people gave it credit. It could also focus someone. He used some of that focus now. Swinging his legs off the table he was able to stand. He made his way to the doorway. There were not many people in the medical room. And with Trei not there to monitor his emotional state he was able to make a conscious decision. These people needed his help, and now he could finally give it.

Weston checked the central medical bay to see that it was empty for a brief time. He knew that this condition would not last long. He found a medical uniform that was about his size and quickly changed. He stretched his shoulder and winced at the pain, but he would be able to handle the pain. Then he looked in at the ICU room where it showed the CO still alive, and in a form of coma. Most likely it was a healing trance. He looked at the doctor and smiled. She was cute.

Then he turned and walked out of sickbay. The best way to fit in is to look like you belong. Still he needed information, without attracting attention. His first order of business was to find something that get left sitting around all the time, a ship's PADD. He would need to find this Ensign Sanchez.

(reply none)





"Luma?" Sienna asked out loud, noticing that Luma was much calmer feeling.

=^= Our Sekal is doing better but Luma can still not feel him.=^=

"Let him rest, Luma. I will go check on him before I go back to bed, but for now we need to do some work, my friend. Open a secure, encrypted channel to Admiral Saleke please. I need to speak with him." Luma opened the channel and greeted Saleke.

=^= Greetings Luma.=^= The Vice-Admiral spoke. =^= And to you Commander. What is the purpose of this communication? =^= He was wearing casual clothing and not in his office.

"Sir, I am calling for a few reasons. The biggest is to tell you that earlier today, the Captain was stabbed, and spent most of today in surgery. Sekal is out of surgery, and he is in some sort of trance. I assumed command." Sienna had done her best and on very little sleep. She should still be in bed, she knew with that half feeling down her back from when she had foreseeing ability of the Q, that in the very near future she would need every moment of that sleep.

The face of the Vulcan at the other end of the channel had gone taut for a moment then relaxed. It was a small thing and not easily noticed except by those who knew him. Sienna had spoken with him on several occasions as he was based on Mars and the father of the Captain.

=^= The damage must have been severe for him to place himself into a healing trance. I know that he has confidence in your ability to run the ship. I also logically assume that this is related to your mission. What do you have to report? =^=

"I do not know what to report. The attack appears to come out of nowhere, in a public space. Luma sensed and saw nothing and the attack on Captain Sekal threw her into telepathic shock. The first thing I did was throw our shields up and have us going in a random direction away from the base." She sighed, "My thought was that we can make the distance up quickly if needed by running at high warp. The stress factors on the ship itself seem fine, I glanced over at the engineering reports before initiating this call."

He nodded. =^= A logical precaution.=^=

"I called the senior staff together and got some of the pieces of this puzzle. Our Captain has been playing his cards close to his chest. The operative we beamed aboard is recovering nicely in sickbay and will be under guard. I did not want to believe that we had operatives of that group aboard this ship. I know logically that all of the new ships likely do, but it makes me angry Sir." She had come to Saleke in the past when she had difficulties. Saleke was a strong, wise safe place and she needed to have someone tell her she was doing ok. She was on the defensive, protecting the ship and those aboard her.

He nodded. =^= As we know more we will begin in-depth planning against them. The next time we will not stop at dismantling their power structure but will move in swiftly to crush them. Any intelligence you gain on their organization will be used toward that end. =^=

"There is another issue. Well two. I have had personal orders from Admiral Winters about reading the thoughts and memories of the operative if he died. Those orders extended to reading the ship if necessary. I do not know how I feel about that. And Sir... I need to know, would you trust Ensign Bohb with this ship? He and Luma tussled the other day and as a Magellian he is a null."

=^= The Bohb will find out why the crystal cracked so Luma will no longer be trapped. The Bohb is like Luma, different and alone. The Bohb promises not to break the skin. Luma misses her Vex.=^= Longing in the Lenai's voice. ^= The Father Saleke, when will our Sekal have a sense again? He feels like he is not there. Luma wants him awake.=^=

Saleke sat back in his chair. ^= Sekal is not sleeping Luma but in a deep healing trance and working to rebuild his body. Due to the depth of that trance it will be necessary to assist him to wake at the proper time. ^= Saleke knew very well what Luma might do upon seeing the necessary measures taken to assist his son to full consciousness. ^= Luma this is very important. When it is time to wake him physical stimulus will be needed to do so and it will take the form of hard blows. When this happens you must allow it or he will not awake. Do you understand? ^=

=^= No Luma does not understand why her Sekal must be punished for healing but the Saleke says it must be so. Luma will allow it but she will not be the happiest. And she will only allow it because her father figure says it must be so. ^= Luma did not sound happy with the request.

=^= Commander Verin I am well acquainted with Bohb and recommended he be reinstated to Starfleet. He is a valuable asset as well as crew and you will find his expertise invaluable. You can trust him on my word. ^= From a Vulcan that was high praise.

"The last matter is personal, Sir. I have bonded with Ensign T'Mur. Her treatment caused her to ah. Enter the time of bonding. I do not know much about Vulcan rituals, and our Doctor doesn't have enough knowledge. I need to know if there is anything I should be doing to help her through this time. If the Captain were able to advise me, I would speak with him." Such was the relationship between the two that had been in the academy together. Sienna strongly felt that Sekal was one of her closest friends.

Saleke leaned closer to the monitor and quickly pulled up the file on T'Mur, Ensign, CTac on Illuminar and selected her medical history, latest entries. He was quiet for the moment he did this before blanking that screen and returning his attention to Sienna. His look was guarded if not uncertain. ^= She has regressed to Koon-ut-la, the time of bonding? I am familiar with the treatment she received and this is an uncommon side effect. But enough of this, you requested information. The bonding links the betrothed pair and brings them together at Pon Farr, the time of mating. Pon Farr if extended too long will drive the dominant one mad and kill them due to the stress upon their body. This is the time of Plak-tow, the blood fever. This is not a ritual as you know it Commander, it is part of the life cycle of a Vulcan. Koon-ut-la was instituted as a way to ensure the mating of two willing participants lest at the time of Ponn Farr the urge to mate should strike out at random targeting one who was unwilling or already mated. You have no doubt heard that the history of Vulcan is steeped in savagery but were unaware of how deep it extended. I do not tell you this without hesitation but these are things you need to know of if you are to understand what you are entering into. Those chosen as mates by Vulcans must be aware of our past. It is hypothesized that Panar syndrome extends into our darkest history and

those times of savagery, I'm certain you can understand why ... as well as why it is a taboo subject among my race. =^=

"Yes, Sir. While as a biologist I am curious, it is more of a need now. I observed her acting impulsively and erratically and she came to me finally. I left her alone for several hours while I tended to the needs of the ship" Pain crossed her features as she remembered the things T'Mur had spoken to her.

=^= The mating ceremony itself is a ritual that merely marks the pair as mated. Ponn Farr normally requires that a return to Vulcan be initiated lest death occur but that presumes that one of the pair is on Vulcan. =^=

Having finished imparting the background information and seeing the alarm in her eyes he continued.

=^= As you are both on the Illuminar I do not believe this will be an issue. Is Ka-li-fe required? =^=

"I am not sure what that is Sir." A deep breath of worry underlied her words.

=^= Ka-Li-fe means marriage or challenge in Federation standard. The submissive one may require a fight to the death between the bonded one and another suitor. The winner of the trial by combat gains possession of the one who called the challenge. Should this be called and the bonded suitor elects to not take possession of the prize then the bond will dissipate and Pon Farr is satisfied. I presume this is not required? =^=

"Ah no. As far as I... Oh." Sienna was not used to the depth of the bond. "She went to Sekal first. He confirmed what was going on and sent her to me. We had a beginning of a bond forming between us already but it did not hurt so I dismissed it." He knew her history.

=^= I assumed correctly then. If the bond between you is strong then Plak-tow will dissipate on its own, most often quickly. This is not a surface commitment Commander. If you do not intend to make a lifetime commitment she must be returned to Vulcan quickly so that a priestess can bond her to a suitable mate otherwise her life is forfeit and she is a danger to herself as well as untrustworthy to the ship and those on it. She could become violent or make an attempt to commandeer the ship for a trip to Vulcan. It has happened a number of times in the past. While in Plak-tow she may not be in possession of her mind much less able to control her actions. =^=

"She does not believe she needs to be on Vulcan. I would already be on my way if she did. I feel uncertainty Sir. I want to do what is right for everyone. And as for my intentions, I commit to her. I did earlier today. I never knew it could be like that." The wonder of it all was there to read, like many non vulcans she glowed with the joy of the bonding. "I love her, Sir. I find myself wishing that Ambassador Riven Mias was still aboard. This crew is so young and I find myself wishing for his wise words." Only to Saleke or her parents would she admit her fears.

An eyebrow quirked.. =^= Ambassador Mias is what I believe a human would call ... a handful. A wise mine certainly, highly emotional and a personal friend. I assume you would wish to make use of his priestly duties. Unfortunately he has returned to Betazed for a time but will be available in the future. Should the Illuminar divert to Betazed at some point I anticipate you will seek him out. =^=



Sienna unlocked the office, opening it to find her T'Mur standing there. "Hey." Sy spoke softly. "I had to make a call, and I have to lock the office before we can initiate the encrypted connection. It has nothing to do with ... I don't know how this bond works yet, do you have the information from the call, or should I tell you about it?" Sienna took a few steps forward and reached out to pet T'Mur's face.

T'Mur, now completely in control of herself, gave an approving look to her mate. The thought of that word sent a wave of pleasant thoughts through her mind, along their connection and deep into Sienna's mind.

"I am not completely certain myself," she admitted. "I believe I have access to the information, but I still need to learn how to reach it. Learning to separate your thoughts from my own will take some time. Or perhaps I just love hearing your voice. Tell me."

Sienna peeled off her uniform jacket and dropped it on a chair. She twined her fingers with T'Mur's and drew T'Mur back into their bedroom. There Sy rid herself of her boots, pants and a tank top.

T'Mur allowed herself to be dragged along. She watched as Sienna slipped out of her clothing studying each movement, memorizing the curves of her body in the angles required for disrobing. She could not help but feel how voyeuristic it all seemed. Her thoughts turned to memories of earlier in the night and she could feel her blood begin to boil again.

Quickly she closed the distance and pressed herself against her beautiful... love. She sat on the edge of the bed and dragged Sienna to stand before her. She missed her stomach, feeling it quiver at the gentle touch of her lips.

"Tell me about your call," she said huskily.

"I needed to touch base with Vice Admiral Saleke on Mars. He is Luma's father figure and Luma needed the reassurance of speaking with him. I wanted to be sure that he heard from someone he trusted about apaq the Captain's attack now that we know that he will survive. And I needed to talk with the Admiral about the ship's orders. He basically told me to trust my judgement and he was the only person I knew who could convince Luma that it was ok for someone to help awaken the Captain from the trance, now that I know it is a healing trance. I talked with him about us as well."

Sienna sighed happily, "I needed to know what to do since neither of us have gone through this before. I wanted to do everything right and I needed to talk to someone that I trusted about it." Moving to sit beside T'Mur and leaned in and kissed T'Mur's lips.

"I need you to know that I trust you, but if what I understand is correct, you will know everything, even things that you wouldn't know due to your security clearance. Once we wed... If you still want to wed

me, we can see about fixing that. Starfleet is going to insist on that. Can you tell me how you are feeling?" Sienna had a hard belief about herself that she was not worthy of being kept as a mate to anyone and now that T was better, T would absolutely move on to someone better. The earlier meld was wonderful but the old fear continually intruded and she just could not believe how lucky she was to have T in her life.

T'Mur reached down through their connection and heard the voice of Admiral Saleke saying, "I assume you would wish to make use of his priestly duties.", then hearing her reply of "Yes, sir." She smiled a little.

::So wish a ceremony?::

::Mhmm hmm. It would make me feel more secure about us. And he was my mind-healer, and I saw him marry Alaya and Hammons... I just want, wish. I want to be wed properly. On my parent's ranch, properly naked, beneath a tree. Which will make my Dad and my twin uncomfortable but that's my dream. I don't want a white dress. When I played dolls as a youngling, I always had them buff. I don't even know what a wedding or ceremony is like on Vulcan. How horrified would your Father be?:: A soft smile as she stared into T'Mur's eyes after she had broken the kiss.

"Sienna... do you wonder why it is so difficult for my to use the diminutive Sy?" she asked. "It is because I feel so strongly about you that it is unnatural. I want to say your entire name because I enjoy the way it sounds coming out of my mouth. I enjoy the sensation I receive when I say it. Sy is over too quickly. I do not want anything about you to be over quickly. I want it long and drawn out. To take its time and bathe in your essence."

She reached up to make their connection complete. ::I do not understand some of these things but I want to make you happy forever. I love you as I have loved no other, nor do I want to love another again. Will you marry me?::

She sent an image down their connection of the exact wedding that she had described.

Sy blinked in pleasure at the image, ::Do we always have to touch in order to speak like this? Lynn, she never could speak back to me. It never was a priority for her to learn. I don't mind, in fact I really, really like it. I feel safe when we are connected like this.::

When T'Mur felt for the difference in the relationship with Ailynn Bracken, she could feel the one sided Imzadi bond that had tried so desperately to form but had never been accepted and was weak. She could feel how terribly the whole experience had hurt Sienna and how it had formed this belief that Sy just was not good enough. But when they were connected, Sienna felt like everything would be all right. That T was her safe place. That their love eclipsed anything she had felt with Lynn. A brief thought

circulated between the two women that Sy avoided Lynn's company because she could not face the memories and move on.

"I just get scared." Sienna finished, slightly out of breath from the emotions in her. Almost drunk.

::I... feel you always. But our connection is more complete when we touch. My system connects with yours and I know what you know. I am who you are. I have noticed that even when we are not touching I can access your telepathy with you.::

She disconnected to prove her point. ::I do not know how far this goes. But it is ... intriguing. ::

::You are the most important person in my life. I love you. It deepens by the second. But I have two favors to ask of you.:: Sy reached back up to brush her hand down T'Mur's cheek, lost in the pleasure of the skin on skin moment. It was the little things between them that brought so much pleasure.

::The first is that I am going to need a bodyguard. Are you going to be stable enough by tomorrow to do that for me? If not, can you recommend someone else in security who is? I don't particularly like Lee and trust you. The other is, I need to be trained in self defense work. I took the required course at the academy but I did not do well. I only passed because of my Dad being the head of the Academy. This person who attacked the Captain attacked him and the Captain is a skilled fighter. This shows that I need to be too, that I'm not safe walking the decks of this ship.:: Sy was looking for T'Mur's tactical mind.

T'Mur sent her confidence and strength down the connection like body armor. ::No one will protect you like I will. They are all able fighters, but when it comes down to it, I WILL lay down my life for you. I cannot guarantee the same level of commitment from any other. ::

She stretched her neck and gave Sienna a long and loving kiss. :: And I will teach you how to defend yourself. At least against a basic attacker at first. I will warn you that these lessons come at a cost.::

::Well, my body is going to hurt terribly because I am out of shape, but what sort of cost were you thinking my love?:: Sienna loved calling T'Mur her love.

T'Mur sent a quick image of a series of joint locks that could disable any fighter. Then she sent another image. One not nearly so violent. But one that still had their bodies entangled and active. ::The cost will be high... my love.::

::You will be trying those poses on me? The disabling ones?:: There might have been a touch of sexual hope to her request. ::The other ones sound intriguing as well.::

T'Mur moved swiftly grabbing Sienna's arm, swinging under it and using it to drive Sienna to the bed.  
::Those, and many more.::

With Sienna in that helpless position she began to the back of her neck. She continued her caresses down her back, eventually letting go of the arm.

::Well, I do not believe we can make out on the floor of the gymnasium, not even the security's particular gym. Let us keep trying out these poses.:: Sienna pushed back slightly against T and laughed quietly.

::Perhaps we can lock it out for time as a reward for your... hard work.::

Suddenly she flipped Sy over and found herself presented with an intriguing position. T'Mur could feel the raising tension in her blood and reached deeply into their bond. She needed to be one with her again and this seemed a great time to connect.

Going deeply into the bond hurt for a brief moment but the hurt passed so quickly. ::Hi Gorgeous. This is your place.:: Sienna for all of her time as a telepath had spent most of her time blocking the bonds she had. First of her twin and then of her 'imzadi'. ::Teach me how to do it as well.::

::There is little to teach. Relax and let go. Become one and embrace it. :: Then T'Mur sent back, ::This place is OURS. I give this of me to you. This goes both ways. We are partners. I do not own you, we belong to each other. All of me.::

::I know that even when we play that we are partners. But I also know that all of me is yours. And that I need the safe place that you provide. Where I am no one's anything but yours. Where I am not the Commander. Because I am so afraid there will be times like this morning when I will have to be the Commander and I'm mortally afraid that I will have to send you to your death. I almost am afraid I am now, asking you if you can bodyguard me. Admiral Saleke said that this should pass quickly for you, but you are unique. Can you focus to protect me?:: There were many things that Sienna obviously did not understand about vulcans, even after that talk.

::The burning need is already passing. What is left will be what is left. I will always feel the way I do. Vulcans love more deeply than they are given credit to. Perhaps even more deeply than humans. But perhaps not more so than Betazoids. And I am already focused on your protection. It will be my single greatest focus where all others around you will be safe because you are there. Do not fear for my death. Have you not heard.:: T'Mur paused for dramatic effect drawing on Sienna's own humor, ::I am indestructible. The only thing that can hurt me now is losing you.::



The knitting of the vascular tissue was sped up by a number of times and while it continued he turned his attention to the damaged left lung. It too had been sutured but this covered a far greater expanse. We are talking mere centimeters here essentially so the concept of vastly greater must be taken into context. The pulmonary tissue was a different story than the vascular though it must be noted not remarkably so. Blood was routed through the pulmonary system into the lungs where oxygen depleted blood released CO<sub>2</sub> and exchanged it for oxygen which is the purpose of respiration. So before the blood left the lungs to be routed through his heart into the arteries it was oxygen rich comparatively speaking since Vulcans don't require as much of the gas. Except in the case of healing. By increasing oxygenation of the platelets he could also speed up the healing process therefore he did so.

This was the primary advantage of the healing trance, this ability to control the foundational aspect upon which his body rejuvenated itself. This was his first time using it outside of Kohlinar and he had started the process a bit late but in the future would not make the same mistake. He was dimly aware of another presence in the room somehow since his senses were active. His attention on them was not great but existed on a very minimal level. But he knew, he just didn't know who and attention couldn't be spared on determining their identity if indeed he could climb out of the depths of the healing trance to do so.

It would take hours for the vascular tissue to properly knit and more for the pulmonary but he had set them well into motion. At some point the nutrients being delivered by the IV would be insufficient and he would have to call on his reserves. His fatty tissue was minimal but would do and since it would be best to begin the process of breaking it down before it was needed rather than later he set it into motion.

The layers of muscle and skin over his chest were not as important at this point as his internal systems. Once they were completed he would turn his attention to them.

"When was this ability discovered master?"

In memory he was seated before the ancient teacher mirroring his crossed legged posture. The Master was wearing his dull orange robe with a black sash.

The monk opened his eyes and shrugged slightly. "Who first discovered it is unknown young Sekal but the healing trance has been spoken of throughout recorded history and detailed instructions kept in medical records."

"Should we not learn the practice much earlier?"

The teacher gave him a long look before answering. "No. The healing trance has its own danger for those who are young and unwise therefore it is only after one has reached the maturity needed for Kohlinar that it is introduced. We have already spoken of this. You have learned to reach beneath the surface of your body but only when you have been properly prepared will you be directed to the fullness of its depths."

"And what will I find there Master?"

The ancient monk inclined his head slightly. "There you will find your Katra young Sekal and learn how to direct it to the benefit of your life. In this there is danger in changing your bodily functions without



ice cube is lying vulnerable in sickbay after nearly having his heart split open and you my dear Sienna are commander of the ship fleeing from fear and uncertainty. Had you kept my gifts you could have foreseen and avoided this. But not knowing seems to be the method of lesser races who desire to be warmly embraced by the comfort of ignorance."

The

word ignorance rang through T'Mur's mind brining her to consciousness. Her form materialized beside Sienna. This was the scene Sienna had shared with her of her parent's farm. Looking down she noted that she was clothed in what could only be described as ... farmer clothing. She looked at the strange male in front of them dressed in a Starfleet admiral's uniform.

He

cast his eyes toward the Vulcan who had appeared beside her. "I wouldn't think of separating such a devoted couple. Besides it adds spice to the game when more can play." His words dripped with sarcasm.

T'Mur

looked around as if waking from a dream into another dream. Her connection to Sienna sent information directly to her brain, and she knew as much as Sienna did about what was happening. She took a defensive posture in front of her mate.

"So

this is the almighty Q, come to play some torturous game," she said. "And I am invited to play?"

"What

is your present game?" she asked.

Sienna

was proud of T'Mur for being there, standing up for her. Sienna knew why Q was here. There were two events that had happened in the same day to appeal to Q's amusement in tormenting the beings on this ship. "I suggest that you answer my Lady's question Q."

"The

game of life of course." Q's eyes twinkled in mirth at her threat which was less than nothing to him. "Unlike my brethren and those like us I prefer to observe the tumultuous events of primitive creatures such as yourselves up close rather than from afar.

I sometimes also interact and on occasion may impart some nuggets of wisdom which is beyond your ability to grasp. Besides..." he stood to his feet and snapped his fingers. With a flash they were seated in a dusty bar not far down the road. Q leaned forward

with a grave expression. "I like you Sienna. As I've told you before you have fire."

His

eyes lit on T'Mur. "However now you've gone and added logic to your makeup." He addressed T'Mur directly. "Tell me then what is the logic in mating with such an emotional and volatile being Ensign T'Mur? I'm all ears."

T'Mur

looked at her new surroundings. The bar scene suited Sienna's image of her family. She wondered what pattern of Q's behavior represented. It was intriguing that he wanted Sienna to be in a comfortable surroundings but he also wanted her to feel uncomfortable.

The

one thing he said that T'Mur agreed with was that Sienna had a fire in her. She was fairly certain he meant an emotional fire. Now was not necessarily the best time to play the linguistic game.

"If

you knew anything at all about emotions you would know that they have a pattern. It is an almost logical pattern with a completely illogical sensation. One can almost, with a 97% chance of certainty, predict an emotional response. But then there are random displays of emotions that lend more a chaos theory of mathematics."

"Therefore

your logic is based on a clinical study of illogical behavior. How droll. In other words your choice wasn't made on logic but on emotion. Quite an admission for a Vulcan. Perhaps there's hope for your species yet. Your Captain is quite progressive in some ways but in matters of logic he is more pragmatic and it is quite satisfying to overturn his conclusions. You are too easy."

T'Mur

nodded, "He and I have had different experiences. Logically we would have different outlooks. However I have seen no evidence to support your statement that I am "too easy" unless you are speaking of something other than logical conclusions."

"We

will have ample opportunity to test my theory in the future." Q's biting remark was delivered with excruciating enunciation.

He

turned his attention back to Sienna. "You two make quite a pair but you've seen what is coming down the road so to speak. Are you ready?"

"Are you here to offer back those annoying precognitive abilities? Not interested." She lied. She missed them, and the flashes that she was still experiencing were annoying and vague. Not that his 'gifts' had been any more forthcoming. "If you mean those bug creatures that Dr. Mias identified, the future is not set in stone, Q. But whether she is with me for a day or a lifetime, I treasure her." Sienna groped for T'Mur's hand.

"Oh no, that deal is over and done but I see she has already infected you with her subjective logic. A pity." Q leaned back in the chair. "I had such high hopes for you."

"Subjective logic? What does that even mean?" Q was trying to make her angry. So she would not get angry. Yet. "So if you are not here to offer me back my abilities, why are you visiting? Just to wish us well?" One could hope.

T'Mur could feel Sienna's hackles rise. "Much to your misinformation, logic is not an infection. It is a way of using information to make decisions based on the most likely outcomes. If that is an infection then I would say that you, in your own way, act in a most logical manner. Although some might think that your behavior to be illogical or, as I have heard, whimsical, I believe that you are looking for information to make logical decisions, based on the outcomes that you can see. What is illogical is that you continue to try, time and time again, to follow the same pattern, expecting different outcomes. That is illogical, perhaps even insane, by definition. And yet the question remains consistent. What is your purpose for being here."

Once again she drew on Sienna and added, "Perhaps you wish to ... give away the bride."

Q chuckled. "The wisdom of the wise is as foolishness to babes. No, I'm here to broaden your horizons. Think of the good you could do in the galaxy Sienna, you and your duplicitous first officer if some chance tragedy should happen to your commanding officer in sickbay."

"Nothing will happen to the Captain, Q. And who is the duplicitous FO in this case? Any person in particular?" She twined her fingers with T'Mur, almost clinging to the woman.

"Mr.

Gregory doesn't trust you enough to comply with a simple request. Why then should you trust him? Intrigue abounds my dear Sienna and the unwary get swept away by it."

T'Mur

was listening dispassionately now. There were clues in Q's words but she could not quite put them together. It was as if Q wanted or needed the question and answer session. What was he really up to. Clearly the direct questioning was getting them nowhere.

"Are

you implying that if something were to happen to the captain, and Sienna became CO, that Lt. Gregory would be her first officer, and he has a duplicitous nature? Perhaps Sienna's request was not as simple as you suggest. Perhaps he has a reason for refusing to participate. That does not make him either duplicitous or untrustworthy. I have found him to be quite trustworthy."

"He

is referring to when I asked Counselor Hammonds to read Lt. Gregory. I needed to know that I could trust him. He quoted a bunch of regulations at me, and said that if his oath was not good enough for me, then I should let him resign. I can't entirely trust him. But that does not make him duplicitous, it makes him human. Betazoids, we don't lie. We can't when everyone can read us and lying mind to mind is difficult, if not impossible." Yes, when the Captain was up and about again they would see about raising T'Mur's security credentials.

T'Mur

was slightly surprised by the admission. This would be something that they would have to discuss later, Now was not the time. They needed to be as one with this Q character.

Sienna

tried to focus on what T'Mur had said earlier and focused as deeply as she could ::I have orders.:: She sent very fast, very deep and hopefully too fast for Q to catch it.

"In

a number of possible timelines that's the way it plays out. But which ones will it be? I will leave you to consider the implications."

With

that Q snapped his fingers and vanished along with the backdrop leaving them floating in each other's minds.

Sienna

bolted out of sleep and their bed, running for the restroom. She threw up the little she had eaten that day, unable to contemplate what Q had said. After cleaning herself up, "In your opinion as tactical chief, is there harm in keeping the defensive shields up while we are running at warp 4? I checked the stress on the hull integrity and it is within limits."

T'Mur

sat up in the bed with her legs crossed and looked at Sienna carefully. Then her eyes narrowed slightly.

"As

tactical chief," she said, "although it is possible to continue running defensive shields at warp 4, the drain on the warp core is excessive. Unless there are ships capable of firing upon us at warp speed, I am uncertain as to the necessity of the power drain. It will, eventually, draw power from other systems."

"Ignore

the power issues. This ship can do things no other ship can. Luma considers power balancing to be a fun little game. I mean, drill down into the problem because in 5 hours or so I need to make a decision."

T'Mur

looked directly into Sienna's eyes. At this moment they were not lovers. They were Commander and her Chief Tactical Officer. She chose not to use their connection. But she had questions she needed answered and she wanted to hear her say it.

"What

are you not telling me Sy?" she asked. "You had orders. What should I know that you are not saying?"

"I

still do not have most of the pieces. Right now I do not have many that connect. We have isolated circumstances that are connected somehow." Sienna gripped T's hand and saw the memory of a rather lovely red headed woman with streaks of silver shot through it. The conversation had taken place on Vulcan, telepathically. The gist was that Admiral Winters believed there were sleeper agents from a Starfleet terrorist organization on the ships, working their way into command positions. And that if something happened to Sekal, that she had the emergency authority to have the entire ship read, if Sienna felt it needed to happen.

"I

asked Gregory to the ready room and Alaya came too. Before the conference. Gregory adamantly told me no and that if I pushed he would resign."

Back

to telepathy:: Luma doesn't know him, no one does. I don't feel like I can trust him at my back.::

T'Mur

reached up and touched Sienna's cheek. ::I see his reaction in your mind, and your reaction. But here is the question. If Dieter is a sleeper agent, and we let him resign rather than be read, which is his right, then will that bring us any closer to finding these people. Would it not be more prudent to simply keep a watchful eye on him. I can keep track of his movements on the ship without him knowing.::

She

sent a picture of a rat in a trap down their link. ::Sienna, I know you have trouble trusting what you cannot see, but for humans, that is simply how they exist. To question that is to question them as a species, and from experience I can tell you that that will never be well met. Let's call it a guarded trust. I have no evidence to the contrary of his explanation to you.::

::I

don't want to have to do any of this. My role here is to grow under the Captain's hand like a plant flourishing under a gardener. I'm not ready for this and I have to be. I also need to know if it would be best for you to bring the Captain:: And under that were the tones of 'My friend' ::out of the healing trance and however long would be best for him to remain there?::

::When

he is ready he will reach out for assistance. Quinna must know what to do. If I am there I will help, but he will come out when his body is healed.:: Then T'Mur sent another message and wave of pride. ::I disagree love, I believe that you are ready and will rise to the occasion. I did not know that I was ready for you. And yet here we are. Trust yourself. Believe in yourself as I believe in you. My love, my captain.::

She

leaned her forehead against T'Mur's. ::Sometimes I wish I could have the oblivion of alcohol, but alcohol, even the few I can actually drink, just doesn't react well to me. The reason I have the shields up is that I want the Captain's attacker trapped on board and I have no illusions that a group that can evade sensors, attack one of the best fighters aboard and likely has sleeper agents on a ship with a telepathic watcher in the computer... that they could not get this guy off the ship and the Operative with him. And I have had no chance to speak with the Operative once he was stabilized. I don't even know the guy's name, T. And I need more sleep to be able to function at a decent level come morning. I need you with me.::

A

long moment later, ::Da\*\* Q anyways. I really liked what we did to get to sleep.:: A light smile quirked her lips in invitation.

T'Mur



game since then but I know I'm on the edge of what the shield emitters can stand. I don't know how to get around this as I would really like to keep the shields up." A deep breath. "We need to find the assailant. Daddy, I am not ready to command this ship yet. I need to be taught by Sekal!" Sienna looked like she was about to cry.

=\=I'll send you some instructions on how you can do a better job balancing the energy after the call. As for not being ready, in a way none of you are or were ready, not you, not Trip, not Sekal, not Bracken. Y'all should have had time to develop as officers before we threw you into the deepend. But my generation screwed up, and we need y'all and y'all answered the call, ready or not. And y'all have done amazing jobs, exceeding all expectations. You are ready baby girl, whether you know it or not. Hell if you're brother can figure it out so can you. The only thing you need to be taught by is your gut. We've been training you for this your entire life, and I believe in you baby girl. 100%"

"Daddy... You might believe in me, but I don't believe in me. I don't know how to fix this mess. Sekal's in some sort of healing trance. I contacted Admiral Saleke because he needed to hear it from someone who is a friend. And I am Sekal's friend, Daddy." Sienna had her tell, she bit her bottom lip and she was certainly doing a lot of that right now.

=\=Baby girl, do you remember when you were 15, we were out at the ranch, and we had just gotten that brand new mare, because we were gonna breed it with the Andalusian Stallions we had gotten, what was her name?=\=

"Sunsinger. She's a gorgeous girl. And she had several lovely offspring." Sienna nodded happily.

=^= Right Sunsinger, that's her, that's the one. And she got sick that summer, you were out at the ranch because it was the summer, and your mom was at work, and I was up on the moon with Trip for a baseball tournament, and it was you and your grandma, and the horse got sick, and you were worried sick. But the vet couldn't get there until the next day because she had to go deliver some baby cows. You were worried as all get out, but you listened to what the vet said, you stayed by the mare all night, and you even managed to think of some herbs to help the mare get better.=\=

"Well, I'm a biologist Daddy. I couldn't let anything happen to her. And she was going to die, if I didn't try something and Grammy may know horsies, but I know plants." She smiled in memory.

=\=That you do baby girl. And you acted in full control, and you saved Sunsinger's life. Now I'm not saying that Sekal is a female breeding horse, but what I am saying, is you my darling girl, you've got the mind, the spirit, and the tenacity, to handle this, lead your crew and support your captain no matter what.=\=

“But I’m scared. Trip’s never scared. Believe me, I sense him pretty much all the time for years. Trip’s confident and smart and he knows how to do all this. He was born for this Daddy. I wasn’t. You took him with you and taught him and I’m jealous and I feel lost. And I know Mom taught me lots of other things. It wasn’t until pretty recently that I was forced to acknowledge that. And I know it wasn’t your fault and if I’d just shown more interest you would have dragged me along too.”

=\=Sienna Giovanna Williams-Verin, how many times do I need to tell you, you are not your brother and to stop comparing yourself to him. Yes your brother is a natural, he's got a confidence that even I lacked at that age. Because he's a competitor, a knack for getting in the zone, eye for duty. But while he has the brains for it, you've got the heart for it. Both of you have been tasked for this in different ways. Your mom and I, we raised you two to be among the Starfleet Elite, but we raised you and gave focus to you each in the ways that would magnify your individual strengths. You may not have the fire he has, but you have warmth. Warmth is what your crew needs. A reassuring voice telling them everything is gonna be ok. Trip is a soldier, a fighter. You are a scientist, a healer. Both have merit. Hell, they named a research hospital after you on Trill baby girl. Sure your brother may have more medals, but he doesn't have a hospital named after him. Your crew needs warmth be the voice they need, the voice that sang to Sunsigner. That's your strength and why you'll be a good captain.=\=

“I don’t want to be a Captain yet, Daddy.” She admitted in a very small voice. “I had to spend yesterday with T’Mur and left the ship to run itself after giving out assignments.” A deep breath. “And I still don’t really know what to do. I haven’t had time to read the reports from the last 6 hours or so.”

=\=Sometimes you never do. Look, sweetheart, I was never a captain, so I don’t know the ins and outs. But What I can tell you, is I know you can do this. Whether it is now, later, or maybe you choose to never be a captain, which is fine. Whatever happens. I know you will make the right choice, because I’ve seen you time and again achieve greatness. You may not believe it, but you’ve got the skills to succeed.=\=

“You weren’t a Captain? Like you skipped the rank to just go into teaching? Or did you just not want to go be in the chair?”

=\=Its.....well.....at the same time I was asked to become Captain of the USS Excelsior, your mom was offered a position in StratOPs at Starfleet HQ, a Captain’s rank position. She had never been a CO either, and it looked like it might not happen for her. And well, you two were about to be born, and we talked, and as much as I wanted my own chair, I didn’t want her to pass up an opportunity for me, nor did I want us to be a separated family. I wanted to be there for you two, for you every day. So at the same time I was also offered a position of Dean of Engineering at Starfleet academy, also Captain’s Rank, and chose it, because Family was more important to me than anything.=\=

“Daddy, that’s what I wanted with Lynn, but it wasn’t going to happen. Ambassador Mias, he taught me that a lot of what was wrong between me and Lynn wasn’t my fault. And it wasn’t hers. And it wasn’t yours either. It just...was.” Sy had managed to convince herself of that at least but the hand that started that particular bout of healing was Riven Mias, the mind healer.

=\=That is a very mature way of looking at it babygirl, I’m proud of you. Now then what’s the personal reason for the call?=\=

“The other, more personal reason. Daddy her name’s T’Mur. I really like her, and yesterday...Daddy we bonded. She’s pretty amazing. I wasn’t expecting to bond with her on no sleep, with a ship having issues, 6 hours after the Captain got stabbed. It was an emergency that we had to bond that quickly. She’d just moved into my quarters yesterday and I didn’t have time to talk to you or Mom about it. I told Trip in a video-mail though. Daddy, I need to hear that I haven’t made the same mistake Mom did. I know she didn’t bond with Skyler’s Dad, just gave him a body when he needed, uh help. And we got Skyler out of it and Sky’s pretty amazing so bad things turn out well. But Daddy... I feel like a failure. I want the wedding on the ranch, a proper Betazoid wedding.”

=\=Well there is a lot to unpack there. But I’ll start with this, you can have your Betazoid wedding at the Ranch. If that’s what you want, you can have it. Now had your brother asked for a Betazoid wedding, I’d have said no, but that’s because I would have known he’d only have asked for it to look at all the boo....anyways.=\= Duke paused to change the train of thought, =\=Just give me enough time to get back into the gym. I’m in my 60’s. Medical science is great, but I’d like to have some time to firm some things up.=\= Duke began to laugh.

“The only girl’s boobs that he cares about belong to Ash. And Daddy you don’t look like you are in your 60s. You look great.”

=\=As for feeling like a failure, or making the same mistakes as your mom. Baby girl. Your mom made a choice, not a mistake. It’s only a mistake if you look at it in a critical lense, but getting your sister, well that’s why the choice will never be a mistake. A bad choice maybe, not a mistake. And baby girl, I mean this sincerely, you aren’t your mother, you’re Sienna my darling girl, you’re your own person, with different qualities, different strengths, different weaknesses. Whatever happens will happen, but the joy, it will far outweigh the bad in the end. I’m sure of it.=\=

“Daddy how did you know that Mom was right for you? Did you have a hit from nowhere moment like I did with T’Mur?”

=\=Well, it was more gradual with your mom, more middle school. I changed seats with our Chief Medical Officer so I could sit next to her in meetings. So she could have a good view of me.=\= Duke laughed. =\=I knew her for a few years before our bond developed. But I had to get over my own

things. I've told you about Myka, my first wife, and how she was killed by the borg. It took awhile for that wound to heal. But your mom healed it. It wasn't an aha moment, but it was one of those, where in time when I finally had the courage to talk to her and the strength to jump in again, well I knew that she was who I was gonna spend the rest of my life with her.=\=

"With T it was like a lightning bolt hit me and I knew it was her." Sienna at least was smiling every time that she talked about T'Mur. Which was why the next question bothered her a little, but it needed to be brought up.

=\=But I have to ask, why do you feel like a failure?=\=

A light frown as she looks down, "Daddy, I failed with Lynn. And Trip. Instead of talking to the man who mattered most to me about why he was making me so darned uncomfortable, I hid from them both. Lynn broke me Daddy. And the only time I feel safe is when T and I are in a meld. She's stable and she makes me feel safe."

=\=Then that is all that matters. Look, I'm, not one to comment on my children's relationships, but what happened with you and Ailynn...look it's no one's fault there. And it shouldn't make you feel like a failure. These things sadly happen, and oftentimes life moves at the wrong time. And it sucks, and it hurts, and it makes you feel at your lowest. But you have T'Mur now. You're bonded and that's wonderful. I look forward to meeting her, but I need you to promise me something.=\=

"Yes, Daddy?" She looked up, her eyes so very like her Mothers.

=\=Don't let past hurt become a barrier that keeps you from moving forward. Like any....battle wound, for lack of a better term, there will be times where it swells, throbs, or aches, but just let it be a scar, don't let it be a ghost. Give T'Mur your all, everything, your focus, your heart, your soul. Let her be your true north and everything will be just fine=\=

"Can she come in and say hi? Also Luma's poking me Daddy. You never answered her. And she's rather insistent that I head down to sickbay and check on our Captain." Sy seemed much calmer and happier after their long talk.

=\=My apologies Luma, sometimes I'd lose my head if it wasn't attached. I'm a very visual person and sometimes, well sometimes I can lose sight of things not in front of me. Which reminds me of the time I lost poor Risa at the Zoo. I hope you take good care of my baby girl.=\=

=^= You are the Duke? Vice Admiral the Duke? ^= Luma sounded confused by this.

=\=Well Duke is my name, James Andrew Williams the second, but everyone calls me Duke. Engineer by trade, and all good Engineers have nicknames. So I went with Duke, an in joke from the academy

where...well it's a silly story. My dad is James Andrew Williams the first, and was a captain when I was in the academy, so they called me little Lord Duke, cause I had a famous dad. Instead I took it as my one, to say, make fun of me if you want. It dont bother me. You can call me Duke, Admiral Williams, Sy's daddy, James, or whatever you'd like. Just don't call me late for dinner.=^=

=^= Luma does not always understand human jokes but that is from a 1950s sitcom and Luma watched many of the 1950s era television shows. Luma watches over all her small ones, especially the ones that belong to her. Luma is not pleased that beings devoted to embracing entropy are loose in her skin.  
=^=

=^=Well miss Luma, don't worry, my little Sienna Giovanna here is gonna make sure those beings get justice.=^=

=^=As for meeting T'Mur, has she met your mom, don't know if she'd ever forgive me if I met her before she did. But c'est la vie right baby girl.=^= Duke smiled.

"Dad if she had met Mom, Look she hasn't officially met Trip yet. But I gave her the necklace you gave me and said it was from you." Sy smiled at that little deception. She quickly unlocked the door and opened her mind, calling T'Mur in.

"Daddy, this is my Lady, Ensign T'Mur, our chief tactical officer. My Dear, this is my Father, Vice Admiral James Williams, often called Duke, the way my twin is Trip. Daddy runs the Academy these days, but he also is a gifted engineer and well. He's sending me some settings to help but we'll likely need to have Luma's assistance in implementing them."

=^=T'Mur, it's a pleasure to meet you. I hope my daughter isn't being too much of a pain in your ass.=^= Duke laughed.

T'Mur stepped over to the monitor to get a better view of Sienna's father. She studied him a little before responding.

"Admiral, the pleasure is mine," she said, returning the introductory pleasantly. She was already starting to feel more like herself. Then she looked over her shoulder and down at her buttocks. "And no, I do not believe that she has hurt my ... ass... yet. But there is still time for that."

She looked at Sienna with a serious question as to whether she had the intention of hurting her buttocks. She'd seen some images.

"Daddy." Sienna said in a flat tone, "T'Mur he's being a joker. He doesn't understand vulcans in spite of bringing up a half vulcan daughter." Sienna couldn't stay upset with her Father. "I love you Daddy. I need to go and head out. Can you send those settings to Luma please?"

=\=I will, I'll also send you something else. Something your mom and I talked about. We gave Trip's his on his wedding day, since you have a bond mate, it seems fair to send it to you now.=\=

"But Daddy we're going to have a wedding I promise..."

=\=As you know, my dad gave me and your mom about 90 acres of land when he and my mom broke up their property. They kept 30 for themselves, and gave each of my siblings and I 90 Acres. Well you're mom and I are doing the same. When you start your grown up life, your tribe, we'd give you 15 acres each. Trip has his, Skylar has hers, and now you have yours. I'll send you the deed with the engineering report.=\=

Sienna sat stunned. She knew she had her cabin but this was different. This was official.

=\=Its the 15 acres around your cabin. That's why we spaced them out the way we did. Planning for your future. Everything is going to be fine sweetheart, and you are going to do great and say the day. I love you babygirl,,And honey, do be safe.=\=

T'Mur put her hands on Sienna's shoulders and looked directly at the Admiral. "Do not concern yourself with her safety Admiral. She will be safe. I will ensure that with my life."

=\=Thank you T'Mur, I greatly appreciate it.=\=

T'Mur nodded, "Your appreciation is not necessary but I welcome it. I would protect Sienna because she is Sienna. The most important person in my universe. You have given her some sage advice. That also is welcome. It has been beneficial to meet you at this time. Live long and prosper." She gave him a traditional Vulcan salute.

Sy took a moment and blew a kiss. "Love you Daddy." She smiled happily, in a much better mood now that she had talked to him. "Tell Mom hi for me please? And the kids?"

=\=Always. Love you baby girl. Admiral Pops signing off.=\= Duke smiled, Returned T'Mur's vulcan salute, and then ended his side of the call.

T'Mur looked at Sienna with a questioning eyebrow, "Admiral Pops?"

"Yeah, my Mom's the Vice-Admiral in charge of StratOps. Dad's the one in charge of the Academy. You'll be rubbing elbows a lot with the 'elite'." Sy wrinkled her nose at that term.

T'Mur looked at her own elbows with curiosity. "An intriguing prospect, to say the least. But I would enjoy seeing Admiral Pops on his letterhead of his communiques."

Sienna laughed and stood up to wrap her arms around T'Mur. "Luma wants us to go visit sickbay to check on the Captain. She seems to think that since we don't have a vulcan healer aboard that you are the best person to check on him."

"A most logical decision," T'Mur said, kissing the back of Sienna's neck. "Then later you can explain this concept of being a ... pain in the ass."

"Do you like the tattoo? My body belongs to you now. If you don't like it, I'll have it removed." Sienna laughed as she stretched and headed for the door. "Do you want me to wear my body armor today? I didn't put it on under the uniform but I will if you decide I should."

"Your tattoo I find aesthetically pleasing," T'Mur said. "As for your body armor. I do not plan on letting you more than a few meters from me, so it may be an unnecessary discomfort. I WILL keep you safe. Now, it is time to make your presence seen as the commanding officer. I believe in you, your father believes in you. Now you must believe in yourself."

"Yes, T'Mur. I will go be the commanding officer..." Luma let out a wordless whine telepathically that reverberated down the bond, "After we go check on the Captain and you reassure Luma." Sienna gently touched T'Mur's hair.

::Remember that I am always here for you. Always. ::

(Reply None)

(posted by Mel, Al & Will Banowsky [ SPC Vice Admiral Duke Williams] )

-----END TRANSMISSION-----