

Mission: The Root of Decay

Day: 19

Stardate: 2445.09.19

(USS Illuminar, deck 7, CSRD Office - ASCRD Ensign Stennin - 0846)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, CSO's Office - ASCRD Ensign Stennin - 0848)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, CSO's Office – ACSO- Lt. (jg) Jatón Alyl - 0855)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, CSO's Office - ACEO, Ens(sg) Vex'ahlia Jordaan - 0858)

(USS Illuminar- Deck 10, Main Shuttle Bay – Pilot Vic 'Raid' Montero – 1145)

(Bajor – Tunnels – Sec Ens. Penny Mc Taggard -11:56)

(Bajor – Tunnels – SecO- Ensign Janice Hammerfield-1157)

(Bajor – Tunnels – Security PO3 Hercules Devers -1200)

(Bajor – Tunnels – Sec. Ens Penny Mc Taggard - 12:16)

(Bajor – Tunnels – Security PO3 Devers 12:25)

(Bajor, Temple, Rear Rectory - Janus - 1250)

Stennin tapped his PADD a few more times as he examined his atmospheric readings. Bajor was sure experiencing some interesting phenomenon, and the Temple sat at its nexus. He took some notes when his commbadge buzzed.

=\/= Alyl to Ensigns Stennin and Jordaan. Please report to my office immediately. =\/=

Stennin rose a brow, but stood up and took his PADD. "Acknowledged, lieutenant. I will arrive shortly." With that, he closed the link and walked to the corridor. He took the turbolift down.

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, CSO's Office - ASCRD Ensign Stennin - 0848)

Stennin clicked the buzzer as he approached Jatón's office. The door swished open. Stennin walked in and looked at the Trill officer.

"Lieutenant. You requested my attendance?"

Alyl: (response)

"Affirmative, lieutenant. I will assist you."

He walked over, and looked at Alyl's console. "It would be logical if we compiled all our data in this console."

He looked up as the door swished open again. A young woman walked in, almost strutting.

"What can I do for you, Lieutenant?" She asked.

Stennin stood up straight and rose a brow. "Ensign. We require your expertise."

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, CSO's Office – ACSO- Lt. (jg) Jatón Alyl - 0855)

"Lieutenant. You requested my attendance?"

"Yes, ensign. From the data we collected from the reliquary yesterday, I have a working theory as to what is causing the debilitating disease in the temple. Now we need to either confirm or refute it."

"Affirmative, lieutenant. I will assist you."

Stennin walked over, and looked at Alyl's console. "It would be logical if we compiled all our data in this console."

He looked up as the door swished open again. A young woman walked in, almost strutting.

"What can I do for you, Lieutenant?" She asked.

Stennin stood up straight and rose a brow. "Ensign. We require your expertise."

"Indeed," Jatón said, side-eyeing Stennin, a slight edge to his voice. As the ranking officer and as the one who called the meeting it was up to him to explain the reason for the meeting. He made a note to talk to Stennin about it later. "We have a working theory as to what's causing the disease in the temple, and now we need to prove or disprove it. And since energy fields are involved, we could use some help from an engineer like yourself."

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, CSO's Office - ACEO, Ens(sg) Vex'ahlia Jordaan - 0858)

Vex nodded, feeling the irritation radiating from Jatón. She moved into the office, nodding to the Vulcan and

once a little closer, "I'm all yours. Anything to keep my mind off what could be happening to Taya." She said in a half joking, half glib response.

(Reply either)

"I'm sure Security will find her, but until then, I'm.." she had to stifle another yawn, "down to keep myself busy. Especially if I can be of use resolving the quandary in front of us."

(Reply either)

"So... break it down for me." She said taking a look at the information on the screen.

(USS Illuminar- Deck 10, Main Shuttle Bay – Pilot Vic 'Raid' Montero – 1145)

"That's it Gunsmoke. Five times in a row. The computer's reviewed the data and I think we have it down. "

"I am impressed, and defer to your wisdom and flying skills Raid."

"Let's go to the debrief and see if there is anything we are missing,"

The two pilots unstrapped and stepped out from the simulator. The FCO was there waiting with two cups of coffee. "Just what the doctor ordered for you two. I've got the debrief tapes up to review, but I'll say that was a nice bit of flying Raid. After the crashes, that is."

Vic and Bebe chuckled, "Can't make an omelet without cracking a few eggs, ya know." Vic said.

(Bajor – Tunnels – Sec Ens. Penny Mc Taggard -11:56)

Slowly Penny got to her feet and brushed herself down.

~ Ouch yer wee untidy lassie ~ She thought.

Devers shook his head, "That'll clea the cobwebs. Thanks Lannis." As he stood up he looked at Penny, "Thank you Ensign for breaking my fall. I owe you.

"Oh pay it no mind sir. Glad I was there to stop ya hurting yourself." Penny said aloud.

~ Ouch ya fancy wee Sassenach if me gran were here she'd show yer da back of her hand on yer heed for speaking to her wee lassie and no mistake if I am day~ Penny thought brushing herself down.

As my ancestor François 'Erbert once said, "Savoir qu'un piège existe est la première étape pour l'éviter. So they know we are here, just means we need to be twice as careful, twice as alert."

That was quite true. But was this ancestor walking through tight booby trapped tunnels. With limited light and following a blood trail?

"As me Gran often said, Whit's fur ye'll no go by ye! *What's meant to happen will happen.*" Penny replied

(Reply Hammerfield)

"What I saw was a circular room, about 10 meters in diameter. There looked like a table or something in there. Do you want Lannis and I to clear the room first?"

(Reply Hammerfield)

There had to be a reason the entrance to the room had been booby trapped. Penny suspected there was something on that table. No one but who put it there was to see.

(Bajor – Tunnels – SecO- Ensign Janice Hammerfield-1157)

The detonation pushed Janice backwards into a wall but not with its full force. A brief moment passed as she moved through some of the dust to get to her companions.

"That'll clear the cobwebs. Thanks Lannis." As he stood up he looked at Penny, "Thank you Ensign for braking my fall. I owe you."

"Oh pay it no mind sir. Glad I was there to stop ya hurting yourself." Penny said aloud.

As my ancestor François 'Erbert once said, "Savoir qu'un piège existe est la première étape pour l'éviter. So they know we are here, just means we need to be twice as careful, twice as alert."

That was quite true. But was this ancestor walking through tight booby trapped tunnels. With limited light and following a blood trail? "As me Gran often said, Whit's fur ye'll no go by ye! *What's meant to happen will happen.*" Penny replied

Hearing their voices as she approached she could be confident that they were ok and forwent asking their condition, "What was up ahead?" She moved in and brushed some small chunks of rocks clinging to their backs.

"What I saw was a circular room, about 10 meters in diameter. There looked like a table or something in there. Do you want Lannis and I to clear the room first?"

"We have to check it out. Move in slowly – expect more traps. Something tells me that first one might just have been a warning. If they wanted to get rid of us the explosion would have been bigger – maybe taken out part of the cavern on us as well.

(Replies SAR)

Moving in slowly Janice held out her tricorder hugging the right wall stopping as she reached a small cone slit in the wall, "There is a shaped charge here. Im going to remove the detonator," she announced to everyone keeping them in the loop. Drawing her phaser and looking at her tricorder readings she pressed it against the rock face and slowly burrowed a hand sided hole into it in the dim light. Once about a forearms depth was tunnelled she pulled the phaser back and looked in with the glow of the phaser burned rock showing the detonator in the explosive behind it. A quick scan revealed it was a relatively crude instrument. "This one looks to be attached with wires. I guess signals wouldn't be able to penetrate the rockface to reach them."

She removed a pair of cutters from her side and reached in and cut the wires then slowly removed the detonator. She placed it on the floor where she stood an moved on,.

(Bajor – Tunnels – Security PO3 Hercules Devers -1200)

"Ma'am, I'll guard the door for the moment while Lannis's potion does it's work."

As Hammerfield started down the right side of the room, Lannis started down the left, slowly scanning and looking ahead of her for more traps. "I see two exits, at 1 oclock and 10 oclock," she called out softly.

Lannis halted when she was parallel to the table, "There is a tripwire here," she called out. "It looks like it is rigged to something to the table." She paused, "And something here on the wall too. Ensign Mc Taggard, how good were your disarming skills in the academy?"

(Reply Penny)

"Time to put them to the test. Table or the wall? Which side do you want to be on?" Lannis asked.

(Reply Penny)

"OK, set your tricorder to 345 kHz, which is where I found the detonator frequency. When you have the explosive, let me know. "

(Reply Penny)

"Great, Ensign. Perfect. Now, on three, we're going to dampen that frequency. After that is done, quickly cut the wire that is connecting the two detonators. Third step will be to cut the red and blue wires."

(Reply Penny)

"One. Two .. Three, now." Lannis turned on the tricorder to emit a dampening field.

"Ready Ensign?"

Taking out a small pair of wire cutters, Lannis poised to cut the trip wire. "Now," she said.

"OK, great, finally let's cut the wires."

With two quick snips the trap was disarmed.

Lannis made a motion and Devers came slowly walking to her, before moving ahead to the one exit.

"Anything of interest on the table Ensign," Lannis called

(USS Illuminar- Deck 10, Main Shuttle Bay – Pilot Vic 'Raid' Montero – 1215)

“That’s it,” Vic said after reviewing the last simulation with Bebe and the FCO, “I think we can let Lieutenant Grey Wolf know we’ve got a solution if we need to launch the Hillary. With its extra capacity and maneuverability, it might come in handy if the greasemonkeys can’t figure out why we can’t use the transporter. Milkruns are a bit below my paygrade.”

“You’re fill of it Raid,” Bebe said. “What happened to any day you can fly is a good day?”

“I want some real flying, not this gentle curving don’t upset the VIPs. I lost a good friend who was on a milk run...” Vic’s voice trailed off and he turned away.

Bebe had seen the look before. She wondered why someone with Vic’s talent was still an Ensign, especially as he appeared older than the usual Ensign. Maybe someday he’d confide in her. There clearly were some stories there.

But he dripped talent, like he just showed with his single-minded determination to prove the specifications were wrong. When she had a spare moment, she’d have to run the simulation herself. Try to see how he pushed the systems, maybe get first chair herself one of these days.

Vic turned back to Bebe, “Sorry, Gunsmoke. I’m going to hit the shower and then the mess, if you’re up for it. That is unless Grey Wolf calls.”

(Bajor – Tunnels – Sec. Ens Penny Mc Taggard - 12:16)

Penny felt uneasy what with the closeness in the tunnels. Now the threat of stepping on something and being turned onto a dead jigsaw puzzle. Did not cheer her to this place.

Lannis halted when she was parallel to the table, “There is a tripwire here,” she called out. “It looks like it is rigged to something to the table.” She paused, “And something here on the wall too. Ensign Mc Taggard, how good were your disarming skills in the academy?”

Penny remembered the day she had her practical Security exam. She did well despite a late night drinking competition that she won. But things became a bit hazy three hours later after the test. Because they did it again to celebrate doing it.

“ Yes I do,” Penny thought. Best not to tell her new colleges.

“Time to put them to the test. Table or the wall? Which side do you want to be on?” Lannis asked.

“Table.” At least if Penny messed up. Her body would not be an interesting stain on the wall.

“OK, set your tricorder to 345 kHz, which is where I found the detonator frequency. When you have the explosive, let me know. “

Penny ran her hands over the tricorders controls. Finally she looked up smiling.

“ Got it!” She declared

“Great, Ensign. Perfect. Now, on three, we’re going to dampen that frequency. After that is done, quickly cut the wire that is connecting the two detonators. Third step will be to cut the red and blue wires.”

~ Cutting no one mentioned any cutting! ~ Penny thought

“ Ready “ She said aloud

“One. Two .. Three, now.” Lannis turned on the tricorder to emit a dampening field.

Well there was no escape for Penny now.

“Ready Ensign?”

Taking out a small pair of wire cutters Penny waited, poised to cut the trip wire. Once the nod was given she activated her tricorder.

“OK, great, finally let’s cut the wires.”

With two quick but shaky snips the trap was disarmed.

Lannis made a motion and Devers came slowly walking to her, before moving ahead to the one exit.

“Anything of interest on the table Ensign,” Lannis called.

Penny walked slowly over to the table.

~ Och what is this blood? ~ She thought as Penny looked at the table.

Penny found what looked like a scroll of paper. But she could not understand the wording. It looked like ancient Vulcan. No Penny studied it closer. It’s was Bajoran. Very old Bajoran script. She also found what looked a map. It had red dots scattered around on it. Including the room they were in.

“ Well. I found this scroll in ancient Bajoran. Plus this wee map. Looks like a plan of these tunnels.” Penny informed them.

(Bajor – Tunnels – Security PO3 Devers 12:25)

Devers watched from the tunnel entrance as the meds continued to work their magic. Eyes moving around, making sure no one was sneaking up from behind after the ruckus the explosion made.

He watched with anticipation as Lannis and the new Ensign disarmed the last trap.

The Ensign held up some items, “ Well. I found this scroll in ancient Bajoran. Plus this wee map. Looks like a plan of these tunnels.”

~Finally a break~

Devers moved forward to the table. "Good work Ensign, Lannis," he said

Taking out his tricorder, he scanned the blood that was on the table, "Ms. Hammerfield, the blood on this table appears to be Andorian. It matches Ensign Taya's."

(Reply Hammerfield)

"We have a map that Ms. McTaggard found as well Ma'am. It might help us with these tunnels."

Lannis walked carefully toward the two exits and began scanning for blood.

After a few minutes, she called out, "Ma'am, I have blood splatter here on this tunnel."

(Bajor, Temple, Rear Rectory - Janus - 1250)

Plan needed to be adjusted. Janus was breathing heavily as he stood in the darkened corner of the rear rectory within the Temple. Happy that the Dean Vedek had managed to evacuate all non-essential personnel from the grounds. It had made moving around unseen much easier.

Since he'd been made aware that his inner sanctum had been disturbed, he couldn't be sure whether the traps had injured or slowed down the officers who had stumbled across it. Perhaps they could have been killed, he could only hope.

Carefully watching the room before him for another couple of minutes to ensure that no one was going to enter and find him. He didn't enjoy having to kill, but if it was a requirement of the prophets, to allow him to bring their message to the people.

Happy that no one was going to interrupt them, he turned and reopened the hidden door back down to the tunnels and began pulling the electronic shed out into the light. The sight of the Andorian Starfleet officer caught him off-guard. Here in the direct sunlight and not in the shadowy darkness of the tunnels, she looked, well she looked ill, malnourished almost. He thought privately that perhaps cutting her Antennae off had done more than he could have, with a full night of torture.

Moving to her feet, he began to undress her. Stripping away any dignity she would have hoped to have in death, that thought made him sigh. But he continued up her body, stopping momentarily at her slightly swollen stomach and then standing back for a second once the job was complete.

Turning to the bag, he pulled out a large ceremonial knife from it and then stopped. What was that? There had been a sound outside the door. Shifting his weight quickly, he listened intently and then moved quickly and silently towards the rectory door. Holding his breath and waited.

There was a shuffle of footsteps and then the door slid open as a robed figure stepped in, the man was clearly busy with another task and had unwittingly stepped into a room which could lead to his own death. Janus counted in his head as he held his breath, there was still a chance the man would briefly look around and then leave without seeing the body of the dying, now naked, Andorian woman. People rarely saw what was directly under their own nose.

Just as he thought that though, it was clear that he would have to take another life. He couldn't see the mans face, but in the instant he saw him straighten up in fear he jumped out from his hiding place and brought the knife down across the mans throat. There was a horrific gurgling sound as the remainder of the air in his lungs tried to escape his body, but found a the gap in his throat where the blood was now pouring out. The mans body went limp and then sunk to the floor.

Cursing his luck he quickly jumped over the body and moved back towards the sled and began carving the prophets symbol into the Andorian's chest. Blood began seeping from the wounds he was creating and now the sands of time really had begun to move now.

Bringing the hood up over his face, he stuck is out of the open door and looked out into the marbled garden. No one. Good. He pressed the activation on the sled and it began following him out into the open air garden. In the middle of the Temple, as they were now, usually there would be tens of people flooding through this area at any given moment. A moan escaped from the Andorian's lips as the sun hit across her face for the first time since yesterday. Janus smiled and moved them both quickly towards the central large fountain.

Several years ago, one of the first things the young Kai had done, had been to set up ever-present cameras in the marbled garden. She'd wanted a way for worshippers all around Bajor to be able to look upon the garden and the fountain at any given moment and use it to help guide their prayers. There was no doubt that at some point soon, someone would notice them and he intended to be gone by that point.

He stepped over the low wall and waded in to the knee deep water and looked at the statue in the middle of it. Admitting to himself that the large figure looming over him, his arms out wide, welcoming the worshippers to the garden was impressive. Janus set to work quickly, keeping his face covered.

Three minutes and she was strung up, robes tied around the outstretched hands. Janus stepped back and briefly looked at his work. It looked as if the statue was holding up the naked Starfleet Andorian woman, the symbol of the prophets carved into her chest and blood still freely running from he body and into the main body of the fountain. The last thing he did was take a syringe and plunge it into her leg.

Hoping to help ease her passing, he had loaded it with a much larger portion of the same poison that had been unsuccessfully used on the Kai. This wasn't apart of the plan, but he couldn't bare to think she'd have to suffer unnecessarily.

He turned and moved towards the nearest staircase. The last movement of his symphony required another sacrifice and then he would be at peace.