

(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 - Sickbay - MO - Dr. Kyllee Stev - 1312)
(USS Illuminar - Corridor - Leeza Pel - 1312)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1313)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1314)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - CEO - Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1314)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - So/ATac - Ensign Andy Taylor - 1315)
(Qo'nos - Conference Room - Diplomat Setan - 1315)
(USS Illuminar - Shuttle Bay - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 13.15)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 12 – Environmental Control – OO Ensign Scott Matrix - 1316)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 9 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice - 1317)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory-1318)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 1, Bridge – ACONN Alex Dyson – 1319)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay - Flight Deck Officer Ensing Grafrig - 1320)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1320)
(USS Illuminar -- Bridge -- Leeza Pel 1320)
(USS Illuminar - Montero's Quarters -Pilot Ensign Vic Montero -1320)
(USS Illuminar -- Bridge -- Leeza Pel 1320)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 – Shuttle Bay – OO Ensign Scott Matrix - 1324)
(USS Illuminar - Main Shuttlebay SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 13.24)
(Qo'nos - Conference Room - CSec/Tac Lt Commander T'Mur - 1325)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - CRSD Office - CSRD - Lieutenant Bohb - 1325)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1325)
(USS Illuminar - Main Shuttlebay - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 13.26)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Main Shuttlebay - CEO - Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1326)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1326)
(USS Illuminar - May Shuttlebay - Pilot Ensign Vic Montero - 13.27)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay - CSRD - Lieutenant Bohb - 1327)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge -- Leeza Pel - 1327)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1328)
(USS Illuminar - May Shuttlebay - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 13.28)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1328)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1329)
(USS Illuminar -Deck 10 - Shuttlebay -pilot Ensign Vic Montero -1330)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay - CEO - Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1330)
(USS Illuminar - Turbolift - Leeza Pel - 1330)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - CRSD Office - CSRD - Lieutenant Bohb - 1331)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1331)
(Qo'nos – Corridor – SO Kelly Long – 1332)
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(Qo'nos - Outside the Conference Room - SO CPO P'Rah and Hercules Devers - 1334)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1335)
(Qo'nos - Main Hall Corridor - Klingon Security Officer - Kor'chek - 1335)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 11- Main Engineery - MO - Dr. Kyllee Stev - 1335)
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(Qo'nos – Main Hall, Corridor – SO Ensign Kelly Long – 1336)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - Ops Ensign Victoria Morganthall and a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory -13:37)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1337)

(Qo'nos - Main Hall Corridor - Klingon Security Officer - Kor'chek - 1337)

(Qo'nos - Main Hall Corridor - Security Officer - CPO Hercules Devers, CPO P'Rah - 1338)

(Qo'nos – Corridor – SO Ensign Kelly Long – 1339)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregor - 1340)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Bridge --Civilian Doctor Agnes Vanderstein- 1340)

(Qo'nos - Corridor - SO CPO P'Rah and CPO Hercules Devers - 1340)

(Qo'nos - Corridor - SO Ensign Kelly Long - 1341)

(USS Illuminar - Sickbay -- Deck 5 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice - 1342)

(USS Illuminar -- Surgical room -- Deck 5 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1345)

(Qo'nos – Great Hall, Ventilation Tube – SO Kelly Long – 1346)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay - Pilot Ensign Vic Montero - 13.55)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - CRSD Office - CSRD - Lieutenant Bohb - 1355)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay Floor - Pilot Lt. Arthur 'Snoopy' Corday - 1356)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge- a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 14:05)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - CRSD Office - CSRD - Lieutenant Bohb - 1436)

(Qo'nos - Conference Room - Klingon Minister- Pe'tah - 1415)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Main Shuttlebay - CEO - Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1424)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 14:25)

(Qo'nos – Sewer – Civilian Fach, son of I'n - 1425)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge- ATAC- Lt. Andy Taylor - 1426)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Conference Room - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 14:30)

(Qo'nos - Ante Chamber - Ambassador Quentin McKenzie - 1430)

(Qo'nos – Sewer – Security Officer - Ja'nus Daughter of Kem'chuk - 1430)

(Qo'nos – Great Hall. Ventilation Tube – SO Kelly Long - 1430)

(Qo'nos - Ventilation System - SO CPO P'Rah - 1430)

(Qo'nos – Sewer – Civilian Fach, Son of I'n – 1431)

(Qo'nos – Imperial Orphanage 17, Office – Civilian B'll, son of S'kes – 1432)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Conference Room SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 14.32)

(Qo'nos - Ante Chamber - Dr. Riven Mias - 1433)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Conference Room - CEO - Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1434)

(Qo'nos - Ante Chamber - Ambassador Setan - 1435)

(Qo'nos - Ventilation Tube - SO CPO P'Rah - 1435)

(Qo'nos - Ventilation Tube - SO Ensign Kelly Long – 1437)

(Qo'nos - Ventilation Tube - SO Ensign Kelly Long – 1438)

Joker felt odd being in civilian clothes. ~How did I end up here ?~ After he had graduated the Civilian Freighter School, he had spent three years as an engineer aboard the SS Farragut. The Farragut was an independent freighter that didn't have a set route, but instead took jobs and commissions. That was, until she got a job to deliver a shipload of food to Kraus IV.

Farragut's pilot had been George McHale, who had still been a bully and an idiot. He had demonstrated the latter by messing up dropping out of warp. ~And boy, did he mess it up.~ The Farragut had collided with the SS New York, an automated cargo drone. New York and her cargo full of grain had gone up in a massive explosion, while the Farragut had ended up spiraling towards the planet.

Fortunately, Joker and the Captain had managed to level the ship out and crash it in a desert. The only casualties had been the Farragut and George McHale's face. Captain Kyra 'Volcano' Rodriguez had not been happy with losing her ship and had made her displeasure known by breaking McHale's jaw and nose. And because Joker had felt that McHale kind of had it coming, he had not felt any pity. But that was where the good news ended.

The bad news was that the local authorities had been very unhappy with them. Which would have resulted in all of them getting arrested. But Kraus IV was an independent world that was on friendly terms with the Federation. And the Federation ambassador had managed to calm things down. So it had been only McHale who had been thrown into jail. As for the rest of the crew, the ambassador had tried to get them transport off the planet. Alas, he had failed. So they had been forced to go to Plan B. Which had been to find jobs to get off Kraus IV.

That was when Emile had ended up in the office of a Starfleet recruiter, who had talked him into joining the Marines. His first response had been to laugh at the suggestion, thinking that his Vrolik Syndrome would render him unable to pass the medical exam. But then the recruiter had reminded him that they were on Kraus IV, where the Federations laws regarding genetic engineering did not apply. And so he had ended up in a local hospital, asking the doctors what his options were.

They had told him that there were several types of Vrolik Syndrome and that not all of them could be cured. Joker, however, had gotten lucky. The therapy had taken a month, but it had worked. There had been the issue of the bill. But Kyra Rodriguez had been salvaging and selling bits and pieces of the Farragut. She had used the proceeds to take care of it. With the bill paid and his condition cured, Joker had gone back to the recruiting office and had signed up.

He had ended up assigned to the Federation embassy on Sigma Zeta II. It was a backwater world, where the marine detachment had needed a technical man. After six months, things had taken a turn for the worse the brass had gotten wind of his therapy. They had wasted no time and dragged both Joker and the recruiter in front of a disciplinary board. It had looked like the two of them were headed straight for court martial. But then the Lieutenant-Colonel in charge of Maintenance Battalion Avalon had taken notice of the situation.

Avalon was a small unit that had travelled from post to post to troubleshoot and install upgrades. And the Lieutenant-Colonel did not allow people into his unit unless he was sure they were good. Like really good. So when he had spoken up on Joker's behalf, it had carried a lot of weight. In the end, the

Claudia looked at the sleeping twins and smiled. ~You just turned their life upside down and they just see it all as a big adventure.~ It had all begun three days ago. After she had finished telling Joker about her time with Alex, he had told her about growing up in the orphanage. He had then dropped the bombshell that Alex had joined Starfleet. While she had been processing that impossible bit of information, Joker had been talking to Doctor McKinley.

McKinley had been worried about how Joker had managed to find sublevel T in the first place. It turned out that Joker had a talent for doing people favors. This had led to him hearing plenty of rumors from plenty of places. Which was how he learned about Dyson joining Starfleet. As for finding Claudia, he had not gotten any traction on that. So he had gone to his old CO and told him everything. The Colonel had given listened and then simply dismissed him. Not one to argue with the Colonel, Joker had simply left. Ten minutes later, the Colonel had told him to report to his office.

When he entered the office, the Colonel had handed him a PADD with directions to the El Sleezo. Joker had asked how the Colonel knew this, but all he had gotten in reply was a sly smile. And that was the only answer he and Doctor McKinley were ever getting. ~Not that doc was happy about it.~ But that was his problem, not Claudia's. Her mind was on what she should tell the twins. She had taken Joker back down to the bar, where they sat at a table and continued their conversation. By the time he had walked out, she had been left with plenty to think about.

For the rest of her shift, she had been doing just that. Until she had gotten advice from the most unexpected source. Of all the El Sleezo's customers, nobody was as silent as Norman "Norm" the letter carrier. He usually came in, said the word 'Cola' and thanked his server when the drink came, before drinking it in silence. But today, Norm had taken a seat next to her and spoken up.

"You need to think of what's best for Sam and Henry. And ask yourself this...was Alex really that bad or are looking at the past through the lenses of heartbreak and regret?" Her jaw had dropped at that point. "You're a good judge of character, C. You'd never date anybody that horrible."

He had kissed her on the cheek, before going back to his regular stool and drinking his cola in silence. As soon as the shock had worn off, she had realized that Norm was right. So at dinner – for the first time ever – she had told Sam and Henry about their dad. They had asked a million questions and she had answered them as best as she could. By the bed time, they had been exhausted. The next morning, it had been Sam who had asked the big question. ~Do we have half-brothers or sisters?~ She given told them the truth in reply. ~I don't know.~

And then she had send them on their way to school. While the children were doing sums and learning history, Claudia had gone to Zachary. Being the boss, he already had heard everything from Yorrick. He

had told her that her job and her apartment weren't going anywhere. Then he had handed her a PADD with five tickets. Two for children and three adults.

"The Colonel isn't the only one who knows people and things," He had said. "The Ocean Pioneer leaves for New Romulus at 1600 hours. Be on it."

She had thanked him and he had given her a smile. By the time school had been done, she had packed their bags and been ready to head out. But the extra tickets had puzzled her. Until she had headed for the ship, which turned out to be an Edmund Fitzgerald class freighter docked to a space station in orbit.

At the airlock, she had met Joker. Zachary had apparently spend the entire night doing research, making calls and cashing in favors. Her boss was also well aware that Claudia wasn't her real name. And that she was a stingless hiding from some very nasty people. So he had no intention of letting her leaving sublevel T without protection. Hence, the two extra tickets. That had been on the 26th. ~At warp 6.2, that's two lightyears ago.~

The twins had never been outside sublevel T, so the freighter had been one big adventure for them. Snapping back to the present, Claudia tiptoed out of the cabin and locked the door behind her. Then she went to Cabin 2, which was next to hers, and knocked on the door. There was a pause before the door opened. Joker was wearing the same civilian clothes he had worn during his visit to the El Sleezo.

"Good morning, Joker."

"Good morning, Claudia."

"Where's your roommate?" Claudia said as she walked into the cabin.

"She's doing....stuff in the bathroom." He shook his head. "She's...."

"Yeah, she tends to freak out most people when they see her for the first time. But once you get to know her, you'll realize she's a kind soul."

Gregory replied, "I believe you know Commander T'Mur. This is Ensign Dogan and chief petty officer P'Rah. While the diplomats finish their preparations, we are here to review the security of the site, and perhaps sample some of the food that will be served for the delegates. I have been told that the pipius claw is exquisite."

"Of course," Pe'tah said as he perused the foursome. Then his eyes fell upon the huge Brikarian. He had been described as a walking pile of rocks, but that was inaccurate. He wasn't exactly made of rock. However, his hide was extremely tough, almost rocklike, to protect him from the extreme gravity of his homework. Those who had never met a Brikar before were often taken aback by the sight of one.

When Pe'tah finally found his voice again he said, "We can, of course, make it available, but as you were so kind as to prepare our food for us, we made a similar effort for your people. Please, follow me." He led them to a chamber not far from the main meeting hall.

"We are in your hands Minister Pe'tah," Gregory replied as they walked.

As they walked T'Mur gave silent signals to her team to watch for any suspicious activity. Then she focused on the tapestries on the wall. She had begun to familiarize herself with the Klingon language, but some of the morphology still escaped her. However, it seemed that they were all flags of the houses of the council.

"Minister," she asked, "how many houses are there involved with the High Council?"

"There are twenty-four houses to the High Council," Pe'tah replied. "These are the most powerful or most influential families in the empire." He pointed to a pennant. "That is the house of Nogga. We are not the largest house, but we do hold the ear to the Chancellor on many issues, including our relations with the Federation."

P'Rah walked behind the others, eyes scanning the area. His tail swished back and forth as he assessed the area. The smells were unfamiliar, so foreign to him that he had a hard time processing them. It was heavy odors.

Gregory walked next to the Minister, "I am sure you are aware, but our Ambassadors expect a certain level of, how shall you say, pomp and circumstances, to be recognized for what they are and what they represent. I must admit our databases don't highlight Klingon customs in this regard. What should we prepare them for?"

Pe'tah chuckled under his breath, "That is the problem with diplomats. They want a lot of show and... dog and pony... acts? Whatever that means. We are warriors. Even our diplomats are warriors.

Unless they are puj' biHunch. In which case, they would not be representing us long. What kind of... "pomp" do they require."

"Minister, I am but a simple engineer, I do not usually share the rarified air that the diplomatic corp breaths," Gregory replied. "They will expect people to be differential to them, especially those of lower status. They tend to want the finest, most expensive of food and drink, and to listen to their stories, laugh at the right places, and more."

He chuckled, "I am sure that is something covered in the Klingon hospitality manuals."

"As you say, that is not what we are known for. But be aware that these negotiations are not as welcome by all of our council."

"Indeed," T'Mur spoke up. "I would be interested in knowing your security protocols that you are planning on having in place."

Pe'tah's assistant spoke up, "We have a meeting scheduled with Colonel Jogust D'ghush in thirty standard minutes," he said. "She is a formidable force in our local security. You can be sure that she will, 'ach patlh chuH reH patlh, 'ach chuH," he smiled.

P'Rah paused, something didn't feel right. He looked around, trying to place what he was sensing. "Ensign," he called, "A word please."

It is always difficult for a Brikar to be inconspicuous about anything. However, Dagon managed to move to the side of the corridor and looked down at the Caitian.

"Speak your word," Dagon said in his gravelly voice. "However, I believe that you mean to have more than one."

"Sir, I can't place it, but something is wrong here."

Dagon breathed deeply and smelled the air. As a warrior race, the Brikarian was always ready for battle. However, he did not possess the insight outside of battle that many others did. In essence, he often wound up reacting, rather than being proactive. He had come to respect P'Rahs instincts. If one looked close enough that might have seen Cal's lips form a frown.

He nodded, which seemed more like a bow, "In that case stay aware, my friend. I too have an odd sensation, or perhaps a foreboding. Stay close to Commander Gregory."

With that, he stepped closer to T'Mur than he had been before. The Klingon was speaking.

Shifting to another camera view, he re-watched the explosion and saw the plume enter the shuttlebay and expand about twenty meters or so. He looked back at the shuttlebay and realized that would explain some of the fallen beams near the shuttlebay doors. His team would need to also check to see if the shuttlebay doors could be closed and if any of the craft were damaged.

For the Lieutenant's benefit, he said. "I think we got lucky. The main force of the explosion was outside of the Illuminar, although some of it was funneled into the shuttlebay. Lieutenant, we need to make sure that we get anyone hurt cleared from the shuttlebay and then I want to try and close the doors. From reviewing the cameras, we have structural damage for at least the first forty or fifty meters and then it's probably superficial after that, but we'll check every square centimeter."

At this point, Cadet Ocana came over. "Sir, the fire suppression system didn't activate. I heard you say that some of the explosion was funneled into the shuttlebay, but it must have just been a shockwave." Tegian frowned and she looked fearful. "Cadet, I'm not upset with you. I'm frowning because it wasn't just a shockwave." Tegian replayed the camera angle that showed the plume of the explosion entering the shuttlebay. It was a fiery plume. "Granted, it didn't ignite anything nearby as the only things in the immediate vicinity were metal alloys and what we call 'air', but it went through the force shield and thus the fire suppression system should have been activated. I want you to run a diagnostic on it, right now. And double check that we don't have a fire between decks. Thank you for letting me know, immediately."

The Cadet moved away with her PADD and began her tasks. In the meantime, Lieutenant Trei wandered off, seeking information from one of the pilots who just showed up to the shuttlebay. Tegian shook his head.

He hadn't yet heard from Ensign Waffles. He hoped they hadn't had difficulty getting to Deck 9. He hit his comm badge. "Ensign Waffles, this is Lieutenant Pex. What's your situation?"

=^= Lieutenant? ^= He could hear coughing. ^= Sorry for the delay sir. We ran into fire in the tubes on the way to Deck 9. We've put it out, but we haven't made it, yet. ^=

Tegian didn't like what he was hearing. "Ensign, get back to Deck 10, find some breathing apparatus and then try to get to Deck 9. I'll call up some of the Beta shift to meet you there. Tegian out."

He hit his comm badge twice. "Lieutenant Tegian to Operations. Please summon the Beta Engineering shift to Deck 9 to meet Ensign Waffles. Warn them that there's been a fire in the Jeffries Tube between Decks 10 and 9 that wasn't put out by our automatic fire suppression system. And some of the Turbolifts are offline. If they encounter an offline turbolift, have them check in with Ensign Zh'Firre to

be coming from superficial wounds. He did, however, have a concussion. It looked as though something struck his head.

“What happened?” Kyllee asked.

Becca was a strong woman, but seeing Woody this way had shaken her reserve a little. “When the explosion happened, things went flying all over the place. Then the window cracked, and I was getting pulled out. Woody grabbed me and held on until the forcefield went up. Then something fell and hit him on the head. He’s been like this for a while now.”

Kyllee nodded, and pulled out a hypo spray. Pressing it against Woodrow’s neck he sent an analgesic and a healing agent into his system. Then he turned to Miju Tusimu. “Watch him. Let me know if anything changes. We’ll need to get him to Sickbay though.”

“Yes doctor,” she replied, taking out her own medical scanner.

Kyllee pulled Becca aside and ran a scan over her head. As he suspected, it was superficial, but he could see the sign of her stress in her readings. He pulled out a dermal generator and began to apply it to the wound on her head. It quickly sealed and the blood flow ceased. He talked to her as he worked.

“Well, you’ve had some excitement, Ms. Becca,” he said, stating the obvious. “However, you’re going to be okay. No long lasting symptoms from the sudden decompression and your head wound was superficial.”

When he was done he used his thumb to wipe some of the blood away from her forehead mark. “What you really need is just a shower and something to calm your nerves.”

As he prepared his hypo spray she put a hand on his, “No. I’ll be fine.” Then she pulled the doctor into a big hug. “I’m just worried about Woody.”

“He’ll be fine,” Stev said, extracting himself from the embrace. “I day in sickbay and he’ll be good as new.”

“That’s such a relief,” Becca replied. “I don’t know what I’d do without him. We’ve been together since our days on Risa. You’re my hero, Stev.”

Kyllee shifted a little uncomfortably. He’d never truly been comfortable with women, and had avoided most women since the death of his wife. “Just your everyday doctor doing what he can. Come and see me if that starts to hurt,” he pointed to where he sealed her wound.

“I will,” she said, then looked around. “What a mess. This will be a while fixing up. And we just had it running so well.”

Stev chuckled and stepped away, and returned to Woodrow. “How’s he doing?”

Qo'nos - Conference Room - Klingon Minister- Pe'tah - 1415)

The tone of the conversations in the negotiations had shifted several times in the last hour. The Federation ambassadors, of course, began by oozing sweetness and platitudes that did little to impress their hosts. Martok had looked around the hall at the other Klingon heads of houses, refusing to speak. He would allow the others to speak for him.

"What possible reason would the great houses of the Klingon empire possibly have for entering into any agreement with a weakened Federation?" Kim'tar of the house of Kor asked. "If we so chose we could turn our attention in your direction, rather than that of the fallen Romulan empire. You offer us no strength."

There was a roar of appreciation for Kim'tar's words that grew in the hall. McKenzie stood up and faced Kim'tar.

"Minister," McKenzie said, "I think you will find that the Federation is not without teeth, as the recent incident with the Illuminar should prove. It is not our only vessel of such power. Do not underestimate us. It will be your undoing."

Another roar came up, but this time in protest. Suddenly Pe'tah stepped forward.

"Before anyone says anything that might be taken.... badly," the Minister said, "perhaps we should take a break to consider all that has been said."

He turned and looked to Martok, who nodded. h

Pe'tah turned back to the Federation ambassadors, "Gentlemen, my aid will escort you to a chamber where you can refresh yourselves, and contemplate our next step."

McKenzie looked at the others who seemed to be in agreement. He sighed deeply, hating to stop when he felt that he had delivered an upper hand, but he acquiesced to the wishes of the others and nodded. "As you wish, Minister."

Pe'tah motioned to his aid, who quickly led the Federation entourage from the room. Now Pe'tah spoke to the others, "We also should think about what has been said, and what we should say, but Chancellor I have a request. I have been approached by this Ariel Trei to be backed for the right to walk the River of Blood."

His announcement was met with a round of laughter, and cries of objections. Is that who we have become now, Pe'tah? We are allowing some hybrid *Ilich* to participate in our most personal rituals? We are expanding our empire for the Klingon people. Klingon people, not hybrids of Klingons with whoever they chose to... copulate with. That was the downfall of the Romulans as they allowed outsiders in."

Pe'tah shook his head, "The Klingons have had hybrid children for hundreds of years and we are far stronger now than ever."

"But none of those abominations have ever claimed rights to be Klingon," another voice called out.

The big search was turning into the big flop. Their tricorders didn't work and the ventilation system was a maze. They had been forced to split up to do a grid search. ~This is SO not working.~ Not to mention that Lieutenant-Commander T'Mur would probably not be happy with her for this little spontaneous operation.

Especially if they came back with a big, fat nothing burger. ~This is going to be a bad day.~ She could hear the Commander ranting now. If she was lucky, she would end scrubbing plasma conduits for the next two years. And she didn't even want to think about the worst case scenario.

Then she noticed a shadow. Acting on instinct, she grabbed her phaser and fired a shot. It was only then that she realized that her target had been Chief P'Rah. ~Nice going, Kelly !~

"Ensign," The Chief began. "Be sure of your target."

"Sorry about that, Chief."

"Wait," P'Rah said. "I hear it again. Like little needles on the metal. This way," P'Rah entered another tunnel. "They are this way."

Kelly nodded and followed. They passed Chinlo and Kelly gestured for her to follow them, which she did. ~I just hope that this leads to something...or somebody.~ After a couple of sections, they passed a vertical tube. Based on the height, she figured it ran from the top of the building all the way down to the basement.

"Chief, what do you think of this ?"

(Reply P'Rah)

She tried the tricorder again, but it still didn't work. So she sniffed the air. "T'Mur is SO going to have my head for this. Operation Guy Fawkes is going to go down as the biggest flop in the long, sad history of flops."

making this easy. He closed the camera program and activated an encrypted communications program that his “friends” had provided him when they had set up this little operation. ~They won’t like this second setback. I’ll have to leave Qo’nos.~

His first set back had taken place a while ago. He had attempt to charter a ship called the SS Something And Something to carry a load of acquisitions. But her owner – Captain Richard O’Connell – had realized that this really meant slaves. So he hired the SS Cape Town to deliver the cargo and eliminate O’Connell. The first part had gone to plan, but O’Connell had escaped to Starbase Freedom. This had put him out their reach.

B’ll send a pre-programmed message to his contact, then took out a disruptor and vaporized the computer. As he did that, the security officers began breaking the door down. B’ll cranked the setting on his disruptor up and pointed it at the door. He fired a bolt, which vaporized both the door and the two officers who had been breaking it down. B’ll looked around for more officer, but didn’t see any. So he headed for the front door. Unfortunately for him, there was something he had not taken into consideration.

Security Officer Da’yos, daughter of Gi’Har, was a private security guard who worked for the Museum of Alien Artifacts. Located next door to Imperial Orphanage 17, it was exactly what it said on the label. Over the years, the Empire had managed to gather a collection of alien bits and pieces worth showing. Which was exactly what the museum did. And it was Da’yos job to keep it safe. She knew that most government paid Security Officer considered her an inferior ‘rent-a-cop’. But she had no intention of sitting this one out. Even if she did not have a disruptor.

As soon as B’ll stepped out of the front door of the orphanage, she punched him in the face. He dropped his disruptor, but managed to take out his d’k tahg and come at her. She dodged his attack and took out her own d’k tahg. They struggled. But Da’yos was young and fit, while B’ll was old and lazy. She planted her knife into his chest three times and that was it. The fight over, Da’yos picked up the disruptor. It was a normal disruptor. But there was writing on the side.

~As the Humans would say, Gotcha !~ The writing made it clear that the disruptor had come from somewhere else. A place that was called...~Chalche’yon, sounds like a ship.~

She figured that since the orphanage was not issued weapons, B’ll had probably gotten the weapons from one of his underworld contact. Which meant that the name of the ship was probably a major clue. So she took the disruptor and went to find a government security officer.

His eyes focused on the desk and the items in the room. It looked different than the last time he'd been in here, but he wasn't sure if that meant that the Lieutenant had removed his personal effects or not and he was loath to make that assumption.

Bohb strolled into the office and stopped with a start. "Oh, sorry Tegian, just used to nobody else being here. I've found this office to be a fortress of solitude when I just needed to get away."

Tegian got up, quickly. "Sorry, sir, I didn't mean to intrude. The Captain told me that I'm in charge of Engineering now and that this is now my office, but I didn't want to touch anything. I'm not sure that I'm comfortable with this. You ran this department extremely efficiently and I don't understand why the Captain would replace you with me."

Bohb chuckled and put a heavy hand on the Trill's shoulder, "Because I recommended you for the position. Sure, I know how to make things, and fix things, but I was never really into the reports and everything."

Tegian looked into the Magillan's eyes. "Sir, if you wanted to get out of a few reports, I would've done those for you. I feel ill equipped to take over this department after only a few months onboard. There are plenty of others who have a much longer tenure than I do."

The Magillan laughed, "That's not the only reason. Sekal has made me chief of research and development. So don't worry about me. I'm where I should be. R and D will also keep me involved with engineering, so you're not rid of me yet."

Tegian smiled. "So, you get to play with new toys then?"

"It's more like I get to make the new toys then play with them," he said, quite pleased with the description of the position. "If I get an idea, I can develop it, and then test it. I already have something to try out. I'm just waiting for the right moment."

Tegian raised an eyebrow in amusement and interest. "Oh? How about helping me solve the problem I'm having integrating Professor Runud's calculations and Illuminar's unique shields? I've received word that his calculations are working for other Starfleet ships. I'm struggling with the quantum entanglement angle since the Professor's equations didn't account for that."

Bohb's eyes narrowed suspiciously, "I'll gladly look into it, but there is nothing wrong with the Illuminar's shielding system. Our shields are not standard, and Runud's calculations are more to improve the shield harmonics of older model shield generators. Of course, if we can increase the impact to generation ratio that would be fantastic. I will most assuredly look at the calculations and see how they

affect our shields. I might bring in Doctors Penn and Teller on it. They know more about entanglement than anyone else I know.”

Tegian nodded. “Of course. I’ve been wracking my brain for a few weeks without success, so any help would be appreciated. Honestly, I’m not sure his calculations apply to our shields, but I attempted to modify them to add a quantum entanglement element. And that seemed to not matter one bit. One other thing I’d like you to look at is that now we have more power available to us, mainly in the higher plasma state, due to the retrofitted plasma injectors, what can we do with it? On Trill ships, we’re able to funnel that to many systems, but without replacing the entire energy relay system, it’d be hard to do that with the Illuminar. But, we could, potentially, modify the phaser arrays.”

Bohb stroked his chin, “That sounds more like a question for Commander Gregory than myself. I can see that power shunted to many areas, especially sensors. But I think it would be more of a need of the ship that I am unaware of. I wish that I had information of the new arrays before I had you help me rebuild the old ones. It might have saved some time.”

Tegian frowned, and grabbed a PADD off the desk to pull up the schematics of the sensor array. Sure enough, the sensors used the higher plasma states. “It seems I still have a lot to learn about the function of this ship, sir. I thought the phasers were the only other system that could use that extra energy. Okay, then a conversation with Commander Gregory is in order. Right now, the extra energy is available and it won’t burn out the main plasma relays. But, I want to make sure that if we want to use it for the sensors, phasers,” Tegian was scrolling through the systems that used the higher energy plasma or “deflectors, that all the plasma relays can handle it. I guess probably not something to do while we’re in Klingon space, but next time we’ve got some downtime, we can look at a project or two.”

“Lieutenant, may I ask your first name? Or is Bohb your first name and you don’t have a last name?” asked Tegian wishing to be able to be less formal now that they were of similar rank.

Bohb chuckled, “I do have another name but I can only say it in my native language, and I seriously doubt you would be able to produce the right sounds to speak it. Bohb is the closest approximation. Why would you want that information?”

Tegian looked down, self-consciously. “Sir, you’ve done nothing but look out for me since I boarded the Illuminar. But, now that I am no longer reporting directly to you, I was hoping we could be friends and I didn’t want to keep addressing you by your last name. But, since I’m not likely to be able to pronounce your other name, I will be happy just calling you Bohb.”

Bohb beamed and thrust the back of his hand against Tegian’s chest. With his other hand he ruffled the young Trill’s hair. “Tegian, I already consider you a friend. I could spend weeks teaching you the complexity of Magillan language and you’d probably still wind up in some kind of conflict by

“Ma’am, P’Rah heard some noises in the distance, not Klingon he said,” he began, “Ensign Long took P’Rah and Crewwoman Chinlo to explore. She was concerned with her smelling something called Tylum and with people sneaking around, well they went into the ventilation system, “ he said, pointing to the grate.

“They have been gone a while, Ma’am, and I’ve been unable to reach them by Com. In fact, my Com badge is having issues contacting anyone,”

T’Mur’s eyebrows furrowed as she leaned her head to the side slightly, trying to activate her memory. “I am unfamiliar with this Tylum or the odor that it produces. I have to wonder why I was not informed of this. Your standing orders was to protect the ambassadors. Was that directive unclear?”

“No Ma’am,” he replied. “Which is why I remained behind. I cannot speak to Ensign Long’s ultimate thought process to her decision. I apologize for not notifying you about the odor, but thought the Ensign had done that.”

“Apparently Ensign Long thinks she should be the security chief,” T’Mur said, channeling a little of Sienna’s sarcasm. “I have great appreciation of your fighting skills Chief, but we have no idea what we’re facing down here.”

She tapped her comm badge, “T’Mur to Long, Chinlo, and P’Rah, sit rep.”

There was no reply. She tried again.. Then she tapped her badge and tried a different tact. “T’Mur to Illuminar.”

Again there was no response. Concern washed across her face. She looked at Devers. “Maintain your post.”

“Yes Ma’am,” he replied. “Any changes to the rules of engagement?”

T’Mur went to the door. When they opened she stood on her tiptoes to attempt to reach the ear of Cal Dogan.

“Lt. Dogan, I have need of your services outside.” she said softly.

Dogan nodded, which looked more like a bow and he ducked to get through the doorway. When the door closed T’mur spoke softly, but forcefully.

“Gentlemen, I believe that we are in danger,” she said. “You are to prevent anyone from entering this chamber, without my expressed permission, under any circumstances. Is that clear? To answer your question Chief, use all means at your disposal.”

