

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District – Free Lands – Dr. Riven Mias -- 1558

(Kal'Shar – Personal Meeting Room – Admiral Skeese – 1600)

(Kal'Shar

– Gertin District - Frelands - Admiral Skeese, Skipta, Riven Mias – 1601)

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District – Free Lands – Skipta the Skeptic – 1605)

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District – Free Lands – Dr. Riven Mias – 1608)

(Kal'Shar – Kitchen space – Shary'll - 1610)

(Kal'Shar - Gertin District - Free Lands - Skipta the Skeptic -- 1612)

(Kal'Shar – Personal Meeting Room – Admiral Skeese – 1617)

(USS Illuminar - Prancing Pony - Counselors Lieutenant jg Ariel Trei & Ensign jg Reea - 1702)

(Kal Shar - Athid Weir - ACOUNS ACMO LT JG Ariel Trei - 18.30)

Day 11

(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony Lounge - ACOUNS ACMO LT JG Ariel Trei)

Day 12

(USS Illuminar - Bridge - CO- Captain Sekal- 0900)

(USS Illuminar - Bridge - COps Lieutenant Dieter Gregory - 0905)

(USS Illuminar -- Deck 5- CMO office--CMO Lt. Quinna Solice -1601)

"I see that the deterioration has accelerated, from the documentation you provided it appears the myelin sheathing over her nervous system was compromised by the dosage of radiation she received on Kal'Shar. Is this your diagnosis doctor?"

"Much has happened but it does come down to yes, that is the final analysis." Quinn replied.

"I believe I am aware of the treatment you are referring to and I find it highly illogical this resource was not offered immediately. As a matter of fact I intend to look into it once we arrive at Vulcan."

"We, Sir?" Quinna thought that it was a runabout trip to Vulcan.

He nodded sharply. "Yes doctor. The well being of the crew under my command must take precedence. As soon as this mission is completed I intend to divert to Vulcan. StarFleet has plans for the ship but our return to Mars is unnecessary. It will cause a delay but not an insurmountable one. I will relay the report to command along with my plans."

"Yes, Sir." Quinna said. "Now that we have talked, I will discuss this with M'Tur. I do not want to catch her by surprise."

He rose to his feet. "Thank you doctor. The treatment as I understand it will completely revitalize her nervous system. Had this not been caught now we might have been too late. Thank you for bringing this to my attention immediately."

When the Captain stood to leave, Quinn stood as well. "Let's hope we are not already too late."

When the captain left, Quinna turned her attention back to her desk and on the computer. She sent a message for T'Mur to meet her when she had time.

(Reply T'Mur)

(Played by Kris B.)

(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony Lounge - CMO Lt. Quinn Solice -- 2342)

The doctor turned to Vic, "Can you hear me?:

Vic cleared his throat, "tjahts righxt doctor, ri don't dnlink alcohol. f never touch tahe stunff cnisce i lsot my becst nrifaed yto tbhe damned fool errand that the diploamtic ckorp sent kus oin. he's deadi, and i'm viela. e i stay swober in hims memorqy."

Vic blinked hard as the CMO leaned closer, "Ensign" she said in his ear.
"i sewbar edoc, ii'm soyber."

After he failed to get up, Quinna put a hand on Vic's shoulder, "Wait here, I will get a med kit." Quinna stood up and felt that she went too fast. She had let herself relax, hence the rum. She quickly shook it off. It takes more than two drinks to really get her going.

Quinna moved to the bar to find the standard medkit. Quinna noticed that it was missing. The ensign showed signs of deep inebriation. She moved around back to Vic and the pilots. "Ok Guys, Let's get this Flyboy to his feet. We are off to sickbay."

(Reply Vic, others)

"It is better if he walks than transports. We do not things going though the transporter biofilters. Never know what may happen." Quinna turned to Vic, "Ensign, do you think you can walk with me?"

(Reply Vic, others)

Quinna was now back on duty. She needed to try to suppress the urges to flirt. That was rum does to her.

(Posted by Kris)

(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony Lounge - Q - 2345)

He watched with an amused expression from the end of the bar as the crooning pilot made a flop to the floor and was being helped by the chief medical officer. He hadn't played with the doctor on his initial foray to the ship but knew who she was. He was Q, he knew all ... all except how the little white mouse had tricked him on Earth. He knew he had been tricked but he didn't know HOW and that was something he would rectify one day. A localized time distortion field could have accounted for time passing outside of their little game while he and the Betazoid were locked in a struggle but he was Q and no one could form a prison of time that could hold him.

The doctor came to the bar with a serious expression as though looking for something and he knew what that was, a twitch of his fingers sent the medical kit into the blackness of space. After she had searched the area for it he walked over.

"Sorry doctor but we are all out." He gave a smirk as she returned to the table empty handed. He was still wearing the bartender's face and would continue to do so until his experiment reached its conclusion. "So much for a tea totaler's plans." The good doctor looked a little bleary-eyed as well. "Everything is going splendidly."

His eyes turned to the table she had vacated. The Navigations officer was swaying slightly in her chair. While it would be fun to refill her glass for the third time he decided against it. He wanted her to remain entertaining and it wouldn't be as much fun if she passed out at the table. The Aldeberan whiskey she had consumed would be more than sufficient.

The Vulcan and Sienna were in much better shape.

"Ah yes Sienna. You turned down such profound abilities to remain boringly normal. You who had one lover break your heart already in such a short span of linear time. What does the night hold for you pray tell? My little experiment may hold some surprises for you."

His mocking smirk graced the lips of the bartenders facade.

"Only time and your primitive urges will tell."

He turned his eyes away to watch the rest of the unfolding spectacle. "What a lovely night."

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles G)

(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony Lounge - CSO Lieutenant (jg) Jaton Alyl - 2346)

Jaton had just come down from the stage and was moving over to rejoin the group gathered around the bar when he noticed a kerfuffle starting to brew among them. It was then he saw the med kit vanish into thin air, and heard a familiar voice come from the mouth of the bartender. A voice that still haunted his dreams.

"Sorry doctor but we are all out."

Jaton snuck around, trying to keep himself out of sight of the entity inhabiting the bartender, and grabbed a bottle from the bar. He flipped it once in his hand, wielding it by the neck as a club.

"By all the ancestors, it's you. Don't you do enough damage, haunting my dreams with threats to kill me? Again?"

(reply Q)

"Give me one good reason why I shouldn't conduct a little experiment involving this bottle, your skull, and a considerable amount of blunt force trauma."

(reply Q, any)

(posted by Spencer)

(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony Lounge - Q - 2347)

"By all the ancestors, it's you. Don't you do enough damage, haunting my dreams with threats to kill me? Again?"

Q turned his eyes to the right and gave a yawn at the sight of the outraged Trill. "Oh my. The little worm is threatening me with bodily injury. I'm trembling in my boots. I admit however I'm surprised you ferreted me out." His voice dripped equal parts sarcasm and disinterest.

"Give me one good reason why I shouldn't conduct a little experiment involving this bottle, your skull, and a considerable amount of blunt force trauma."

Q wagged his right index finger before Jaton. "Now, now, now. Apparently you've forgotten who you are dealing with. Inferior beings really should mind their manners when addressing one such as myself."

There was a flash and the two were gone.

(Space- Outside the USS Illuminar - Q - 2349)

They were standing some distance ahead of the ship and keeping their distance as the Illuminar paced the Sharlayan asteroid/generation ship.

Q turned away from Jaton's threatening stance and looked ahead. He had dropped the bartender guise and was once more using the form he routinely wore when out and about. "It really is a beautiful sight isn't it? The vast expanse of airless reality. A trillion times a trillion burning suns hurtling towards their destruction at the end of time with trillions times more beings scurrying about as though their existence somehow had meaning."

(Reply: Jaton)

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(Reply: Jaton)

Q chuckled mirthlessly as he turned back toward the confounded being. "Don't be so melodramatic. You wanted to talk to me or you would have tried to bean me with your insignificant weapon. I prefer to talk in private tonight. I require that my machinations continue uninterrupted and you were threatening to cause a scene. So tell me little worm what you wanted to talk to me about or I'll drop you here and dash back to the party. Is it about your rebirth? Still pondering the weight and meaning of destiny? Had a change of heart and want to chuck it all?"

(Reply: Jaton)

(Posted by Charles G)

(Space- Outside the USS Illuminar - CSO Lieutenant (jg) Jaton Alyl - 2350)

In a flash, Jaton and Q were floating in space, the Sharlayan ship in front of them, and the Illuminar floating behind them. Despite the fact they were out in space with no environmental suits, he could still breathe. He looked over at Q. He had dropped the bartender guise and was once more using the form he routinely wore when out and about. "It really is a beautiful sight isn't it? The vast expanse of airless reality. A trillion times a trillion burning suns hurtling towards their destruction at the end of time with trillions times more beings scurrying about as though their existence somehow had meaning."

"A funny time to wax poetic. If you're here to kill me again, then why not have done with it already?" Jaton said, lowering the bottle.

Q chuckled mirthlessly as he turned back toward the confounded being. "Don't be so melodramatic. You wanted to talk to me or you would have tried to bean me with your insignificant weapon. I prefer to talk in private tonight. I require that my machinations continue uninterrupted and you were threatening to cause a scene. So tell me little worm what you wanted to talk to me about or I'll drop you here and dash back to the party. Is it about your rebirth? Still pondering the weight and meaning of destiny? Had a change of heart and want to chuck it all?"

"For someone wanting to be uninterrupted you certainly have no skill for stealth," Jaton began. "What do you want from us? And don't think I'll believe your dangling my new life in front of me. The Prophets have taken credit for that, not you."

(reply Q)

(posted by Spencer)

(Space- Outside the USS Illuminar - Q - 2352)

"For someone wanting to be uninterrupted you certainly have no skill for stealth," Jaton paused briefly. "What do you want from us? And don't think I'll believe your dangling my new life in front of me. The Prophets have taken credit for that, not you."

Q put on his most wounded expression. "Always this. Why does everyone think I want something from them? Every time I appear I have to field the question. What could a being like myself possibly require from such primitive and inconsequential creatures?"

(Reply: Jaton)

Q scoffed. "You yourself are a scientist. You delight in experimenting with ways to get around the immutable laws and are only beginning to glimpse that there is no such thing to one who has the knowledge and power. Your scientific community experiments on lower life forms, everything from microbes to higher forms of life and yet you ask me why I choose to interact with your kind while knowing how primitive you are in comparison."

(Reply: Jaton)

Q waved his hands theatrically. "Of course I admit I'm limited in my experience with subterfuge, one like myself has little need for it however in an effort to avoid the inevitable pestering questions I endeavored

to take a lower profile and observe in your natural habitat so to speak. But a flashy exit is not an issue for one who can return in the same instant he left thus voiding the issue."

(Reply: Jaton)

The snark in Q's voice was evident. "You thought I was waxing poetic eh? Consider this then little worm. Destiny in it's essence is the product of one dancing like a marionette to another's bidding. The Prophets may have brought you back but it was done with a purpose and its goal is not something you may avoid. Free will is merely a facade as every one of those beings are marching to the beat of another's drum like pawns upon a game board. A vast cosmic game played out on what to you is an unimaginable scale."

(Reply: Jaton)

(Posted by Charles G)

(Space- Outside the USS Illuminar - CSO Lieutenant (jg) Jaton Alyl - 2353)

"Always this. Why does everyone think I want something from them? Every time I appear I have to field the question. What could a being like myself possibly require from such primitive and inconsequential creatures?"

"Because every time you show up, you decide to use us as your playthings. And unless we're the one special case in the universe, I suspect it's the same with everyone.

Q scoffed. "You yourself are a scientist. You delight in experimenting with ways to get around the immutable laws and are only beginning to glimpse that there is no such thing to one who has the knowledge and power. Your scientific community experiments on lower life forms, everything from microbes to higher forms of life and yet you ask me why I choose to interact with your kind while knowing how primitive you are in comparison."

"Because there is something that separates the life forms we experiment on and you and I: we both are sentient. They are not. And when we are not experimenting on them, we take care of them. We grow attached to them. An old colleague of mine would go so far as to hold a funeral for any of the lab mice that died. We genuinely care for those under our custody. Can you say the same?"

(reply Q)

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"That might be, but vanishing a medkit might be a little bit harder to explain. And going back much further than that in the timeline will greatly endanger causality. If you can even fathom such a thing between monologue sessions."

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"So you admit it was the Prophets that brought me back, and not you? Then why take credit for it?"

(reply Q)

"Ever since you first invaded our dreams, I see your face every night, tormenting me, looking at me as I lie in that coffin on Mars."

(reply Q)

"You might regret making me angry. Joined Trill like me live many lifetimes. I might not be able to kill you or to harm you in any meaningful way physically, but I swear I can be a thorn in your side for the next ten thousand years. Easily."

(reply Q)

(posted by Spencer)

(Space- Outside the USS Illuminar - Q - 2355)

"Because there is something that separates the life forms we experiment on and you and I: we both are sentient. They are not. And when we are not experimenting on them, we take care of them. We grow attached to them. An old colleague of mine would go so far as to hold a funeral for any of the lab mice that died. We genuinely care for those under our custody. Can you say the same?"

Q's eyes narrowed in amusement. "Truly? You also send observers to planets where the inhabitants are more primitive than yourselves to 'study' them without their knowing. In what way is this different from the activity you just discovered me involved in?"

(Reply: Jaton)

Q's expression became sober. "And by taking care of those more primitive than you do you mean like Jean Luc did?" He waved a hand negligently. "When informed of a civilization about to be wiped out what did he do? He ordered his Commander Data not to contact them. He gave them not a seconds though as an entire planet died." Q stepped closer to the Trill. "Because of your prime directive numerous civilizations have been wiped away by disaster or disease while your Federation wipes its hands of them." He snorted. "Yet you claim the moral high ground over me? What utterly hypocritical drivel."

Q waved his hands theatrically. "Of course I admit I'm limited in my experience with subterfuge, one like myself has little need for it however in an effort to avoid the inevitable pestering questions I endeavored to take a lower profile and observe in your natural habitat so to speak. But a flashy exit is not an issue for one who can return in the same instant he left thus voiding the issue."

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"So you admit it was the Prophets that brought me back, and not you? Then why take credit for it?"

"When my dear little worm did I take credit for such a thing and why would I? I have no interest in resurrecting those killed by their own inadequacies."

"Ever since you first invaded our dreams, I see your face every night, tormenting me, looking at me as I lie in that coffin on Mars."

"You mean you dream of me? I suppose I should be flattered." Q then gave a wicked grin after his sarcastic quip.

"You might regret making me angry. Joined Trill like me live many lifetimes. I might not be able to kill you or to harm you in any meaningful way physically, but I swear I can be a thorn in your side for the next ten thousand years. Easily."

Q stared at him for a moment in disbelief before narrowing his eyes. "Your track record for surviving doesn't support such a threat. Do I need point that out? You are here now only because of someone else's meddling and just how do YOU expect to be an irritant to ME? I could wipe you from existence with the merest thought, devolve you into a mindless state or return you to the primordial ooze. And just so you don't forget this."

Q snapped his fingers and Jaton found himself with only the merest flicker of intelligence crawling through the slime of a swamp. His flipper like limbs propelled him through the muck slowly as screeches and howls sounded around him. The rough sawgrass scraped his slimy flesh and the sun was only a dim sliver casting broken light through the trees. Thunderous footsteps sounded and grew closer as a howl broke out and a shadow fell over him. A huge foot lifted from the ground and came down, it filled his dim vision.

Ayl found himself on his hands and knees gasping before Q. The beings voice was a dangerous whisper.

"Remember that lesson. If that is you don't want me to step on you."

Then with a flash he was once again within the lounge. Of Q there was no sign.

"Because you don't see me doesn't mean I'm not here." The voice whispered in his ear. "I'll be watching you."

(Reply: Jaton)

(Posted by Charles G)

(USS Illuminar - Quarters - EO Ensign Scott Matrix – 0111)

"You were up there for 32 minutes...you don't remember?" asked Abbie

“What the hell was I signing?” replied Scott as he entered Abbie’s quarters. “This okay...to come in?” He asked?

“Of course, come in.” Abbie replied. “...I’m not entirely sure...a few songs sounded like Klingon...I didn’t know you speak Klingon, a few vaguely familiar Earth songs and a few I think you just made up with the alcohol.”

Scott blushed, "Well you got your wish...you got me up there to make a fool of myself."

“Yeah, that was the goal right...to have a good time and to get to know one another.” Abbie started.

Scott couldn't disagree, "I had fun..." he said as he nearly fell off the chair.

“Easy there commadore. You okay?” asked Abbie as she helped Scott sit down. “I guess you had more than I thought.”

"No...no...no...I am just tired. I only had four drinks." Scott replied.

Scott noticed the time..."Geez I'm on duty in four hours I need to get to my quarter and get some sleep."

Abbie felt bad, "Let's get you to sickbay for some TLC and I'll get you to your quarters."

“Okay. That’s probably a good idea. I’d hate to piss off the CEO.” Replied Scott.

Abbie escorted Scott to sickbay and explained the situation to the sympathetic medical tech on duty. Scott received a hypo of a multivitamin and a mild sedative. A few minutes later Abbie tucked Scott into his own bed and kissed him on the head. "Good night my prince." She said exiting Scott's quarters. "See you tomorrow...I hope you remember something of this evening."

(Reply none)

(Posted by Steve)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 4 Transporter room 1 – COps Lieutenant Dieter Gregory - 1100)

“Commencing final check,” Gregory said.

“Copy. All systems show green Lieutenant,” the chief petty officer said.

“Excellent, now turn around Ms. Ywan,” Gregory said. He looked at the sensors. “Your suit is green. We’re good to go.”

The two took their place on the transporter pad. "Chief, we're ready. Energize."

The transporter chief activated the controls and matter was converted to energy, sent across time and space to be reassembled on the other end.

(USS Johnson – Outside Staging Area – COps Lieutenant Dieter Gregory - 1105)

Gregory and Ywan materialized in the transporter pad of the shuttle craft. Open to space, the thrum of the engine could be felt through the skin of the ship. This was the life support for the Sharlayan ship.

Moving carefully off the pad, Gregory activated his magnetic boots to help Ywan into her portable propulsion system. When she was suited up, the rolls were reversed and the two operations staff headed out to the surface of the asteroid.

"Why again, Sir, did you want to come here?" Ywan asked.

"Well, I've been seeing the pictures, but need to get a feel for the scope and magnitude of what is being done. It's all abstract on the computer. This is real. I didn't want to interfere while there were radiation concerns, but that cadet had a brilliant idea. There still are pockets that are being decontaminated, but we are no longer on the two-hour shift schedule the CMO established."

Floating in space, it was hard not to appreciate the enormity of the job they had. To repair, while in motion, a ship that was a 1000 years old, and guide it to its final destination. "This is one for the record books Ywan. And you'll be able to say you were here."

"Yes, Sir." She replied as she activated her suit. The two moved forward down the cavern space, checking where lighting had been installed, and noting the power conduit running from the surface to the depths.

(Kal'Shar – Engine space – COps Lieutenant Dieter Gregory - 1115)

After about 10 meters, the tunnel opened up to a very large room. It was empty now that the fission reactor had been removed to a safe distance. Disposal was another issue, but the vast of space could accept some more radiation, the Sharlayan people could not.

The engineering teams were working in different sections. One team getting the footing in place for the new fusion reactors. With two reactors working at 50% capacity, there was sufficient recumbency in case one had a problem. Priority was being given to life support and such over the propulsion drives.

A second team was constructing the control interface stations. These would be very simple structures, based on what Ensign T'Mur had learned. That reminded Gregory that he had to look in on the security officer. She had a good head on her shoulders, and while she was assigned to tactical, he's love to see if she was interested in more.

The third team was finalizing the power coupling stations.

"Ywan, who is on shift at the moment?" he asked, testing to see if she had read the schedule.

“Sir, we have a cadet team working on tracking down the last contamination. Ensign Mendoza and Transitor are busy on the fusion reactors, while Ensign Matrix is handling the interface installation.”

"Excellent Ms. Ywan. Let's step over to the side while they work. I just want to see what is going on. Warp and particle physics are my personal loves, but this is the job," he said motioning to the busy space. "And I love my job," he added.

“Should I call any of them over Sir?” Ywan asked.

"Not now, I don't want to disturb them, and as much as I want to jump in with the toolkit, they have this well in hand. Let's run some scans just to make sure we have the data for our final calculations. The load and power balance is going to be critical and another set of measurements won't be remiss."

“Aye sir.”

Ywan and Gregory linked up scanners and started a stem to stern sweep of the room. Making sure to measure not just space, but density estimates of the rock in this area. They would need more from the rest of the asteroid, but those were going to happen soon.

(Reply, any Engineers, IFW)

(Posted by Tim)

(Kal'Shar- Engineering section- Cadet Berr)

Berr had been kept busy with the radiation Devon project. He had asked to be put on the fusion design team, but had been stonewalled by the ranking engineers. Typical of this in authority. They wouldn't know an advancement in fusion drive it fell out of the sky and hit them on the head. He probably had more design work under his belt than the officers on the Illuminar combined, just in his class work, never mind his own personal obsession.

Still, the work to clean up the radiation was exhausting. And radiation was a tricky little bugger. It stuck to damn near everything and then spread like a field on fire once a particle left the containment area. He had suggested and adjustment to the comm badges so they acted as micro radiation detectors. Confirmation of that meant hours in a lab and on the replicator and then getting the new comm badges out to the crew.

His team was down to the last particles of radioactive material, and then they would have little to do but stand around and watch. Suddenly he noted that Lt. Gregory had arrived. He was standing in the background, surveying the activities of the Illuminar crew.

With the leaked radiation contained the plan had been to incorporate some of the Sharlayan people and perhaps restart their engineering caste. Having them work with the cadets would be one way to go. They could be exposed to a more diverse group. Secondly, they would be exposed to much less sensitive material that might compromise the prime directive more than they already have.

It was time for a chat with the person who was really in charge of this project. He straightened himself up and handed his equipment to the nearest cadet. He made his way over to the Chief of Ops and presented himself.

"Lieutenant Gregory," he began, " Cadet Berr. I wanted to speak with you about the next phase of the operation."

(Reply Gregory)

"Well," he continued, "I have not been privy to the team working on the fusion reactor, but I do have some ideas on improvements over past models, and some ideas in improving the production of the deuterium that may be used as fuel."

(Reply Gregory)

(posted by Al Muir)

(Kal'Shar - Engineering Section, COPs Lieutenant Dieter Gregory and Engineering Cadet Oda Berr - 1125)

Gregory was chatting with COP Ywan when a figure came floating over to their location.

"Lieutenant Gregory. Cadet Berr. I wanted to speak with you about the next phase of the operation."

Gregory turned his attention to the young man. "Cadet Berr," he replied. "Excellent work on the solution for the decontamination solution. Pardon the pun. Your ingenuity helped save the crew a lot of extra work and headache."

He paused, looking at the reading that Ywan was sending to his heads up display (HUD). "In fact, most recent scans show a 99% reduction in radiation levels, almost to background levels. But more than enough for relaxing of the work rules imposed by the doctor."

“What would you like to know about the next phase of the operation?”

The first step was taken. ~At least he didn't just shut me down.~ Berr smiled, then wiped the smile off his face and put his brain to work. He hadn't exactly expected to explain his plans now, but he could lay them out. After all, Gregory knows his particle physics.

"Well sir, I know that we are treading lightly around the prime directive here," Berr began. "I have designed a fusion generator that could give the appearance that it was put together by the Sharlayans, using the materials that would be available here on the ship. All they would really need is a spherical vacuum chamber large enough to produce the energy to power the ship, a vacuum pump capable of reaching at least 75 microns vacuum, a secondary diffusion vacuum pump, a thermo coupling, a neutron radiation detector, of course the deuterium, and the shielding. There are a few other items but those are the basics. What the Sharlayans might have trouble with is the deuterium, and perhaps a ballast resistor large enough."

He paused for a moment, then spoke again before Gregory could say anything. "I also have a plan that could help them produce the necessary deuterium."

Gregory looked at the Cadet. "Where did you get your training Mr. Berr. This sounds well beyond the standard Academy workload?"

"Yeah," Berr replied a little impishly. "I come from a long line of tinkerers. Unfortunately my caste prevented me from attending the schools I would have needed, so I tended to... experiment a great deal. I've always been interested in energy, but by lineage I should have wound up a power line layer. Fortunately one of my little experiments caught the attention of Starfleet. I'm afraid particle physics and nuclear fusion have always been a pet project of mine. Our experiences here have just put adrenaline into those old notions."

"I had raised the issue of General Order one with the Captain and Ambassador several days ago. In those discussions it was decided that we would use spare Federation reactors, like we use on the Impulse drives. However your proposed solution offers something more elegant," Gregory replied.

“Perhaps you should come back to the Illuminar with me and we can review these plans of yours in more detail. It’ll be easier to work without suits.”

Turning to Ywan, "Ms. Ywan, get back to the ship and take over the high energy physics lab. Get Lieutenant Alyl there as well. We'll group there at 1300."

Looking back at Berr, "Well Mr. Berr, you're seconded to me at the moment. I'll let Engineering know. We'll go back to the ship. You get your plans and we'll regroup in an hour. You are also invited to join me for lunch, I do my best physics after lunch."

Berr could not hide the smile. ~If my mom could see me now.~

"Aye aye sir," he said and turned to let the others know where he was going and put Cadet Johnson in charge. Sharon will live that. As he moved over to the cadets he wondered what officers ate for lunch.

(Reply None)

(Posted by: Tim - Dieter Gregory and Al - Oda Berr)

(USS

Illuminar - Deck 4 Officers Lounge - COps Lieutenant Dieter Gregory and Engineering Cadet Oda Berr
-- 1205)

After

returning to the USS Illuminar, Gregory and Cadet Berr went through the usual decontamination procedures before removing their environmental suits. A quick turbolift ride to deck 4 and they entered the Officers Lounge.

Berr

looked around in awe. It was not decorated that different than the mess hall that he was used to eating at, with the exception of the comfortable seats, and the live servers. Actually, it was very different and Berr had just been making an effort to make it all seem normal. He could get used to this. There were a few other officers eating in small groups around the room.

Grabbing

a table in the corner, Gregory motioned for one of the Stewards to the table. "Order what you want Mr. Berr," he said as the man came over. "I'll have my usual."

Berr

sat down and looked at the blank looking server, who stared down at him expectantly. "Ummmm... you don't make hasperat do you?"

The

steward frowned and tsked, "Sir, of course we do. We make almost anything YOU could desire."

Berr

bristled a little at the way the steward talked down to him, then shot back, "No, I mean do you make... hasperat?"

"Sir,"

the steward replied blandly, "your hasperat will cause your tongue to climb out of your mouth and find an ice bath to cool down until the tears stop streaming from you eyes. Is that what you desire."

~Oh

my Prophet, challenge accepted.~ "That is exactly what I desire," Berr looked directly into the stewards eyes as he replied.

"Very

good, sir," the steward shot back. "I will have your next of kin notified."

At

that the steward turned and left the table, with a smile and a nod to Gregory.

"Tell

me more about your experiment that caught Starfleet's attention," he said while they waited for their food.

"Well,"

Berr said sheepishly, "I had been trying to develop a way of detecting the asymmetrical aspects of antimatter in a field stream in order to recharge dilithium crystals that were still in a power loop.

Needless to say it required a little more energy than

I had available to me at my institute. When somebody came to check on my power usage they were... distressed by my project,"

Gregory

raised an eyebrow, "Indeed. That is not a trivial issue Mr. Berr. When I did my internship at the Daystrom Institute they were still working out the theoretical considerations of that idea. I should put you in touch with the team leader there. She would be interested in your practical approach to the problem. It is a good thing you didn't blow yourself up."

"Yes,"

Berr admitted, "I'm kind of glad of that as well. It was pointed out by the investigator that was accusing me of being a bio terrorist that I could have taken out most of the city. But to be honest, I think he was just trying to scare me. I had it all under control... mostly."

Gregory

could not help but laugh. This young man would clearly go far, and wasn't afraid to speak his mind, or get his hands dirty. Assuming that others didn't quash his enthusiasm. "Personally I'm more into the behaviour of high energy particles. I would like to see if we can get you some more training in this area, some specialized work while you are here on the Illuminar. I still have some connections at MIT, that is the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and I'd like to sponsor you, if you're interested."

"I

would love the opportunity, sir," Berr replied, eyes wide. It was probably the most understated feeling of his entire life. He had enjoyed his time at the academy, but the work was... well, it was kind of boring. He hated simply studying what others had done.

He wanted to take things to the next level. That was not always condoned by his instructors. His time on the Illuminar had been kind of similar. He spent a great deal of time doing "scut work." He understood that everyone had to pay their dues. It was up to the individual to create his own path.

"I

have not heard of the MIT that you speak of," he admitted, "but I would do anything for the opportunity to learn more. This project with the Sharlayan ship has provided me with more inspiration in the last week than I've had in all my years at the academy.

I'm afraid my record may not support my desires. I am not considered "top of the class" by most of my instructors. It was my hope that my time on the Illuminar would change a lot of minds."

"Sorry

for my Earth centric view. MIT is one of the best and oldest engineering schools on Earth. I went there before I entered Starfleet. I had planned to get into theoretical engineering, but decided I liked the practical things instead. Four years at the academy

and 9 months fixing waste replicators on Deep Space Nine before a berth came open on the Illuminar." Gregory paused, "Any person who can find a solution like you did, an elegant solution at that, has what it takes. Let's say that this fusion project is your

entry exam to MIT. Once we finish with the Sharalayan ship, I'll make sure it's forwarded to my old academic advisor for his input. From there, we can arrange that you have time while on the Illuminar to do the classes. I'd hate to see you lost in the fleet fixing replicators."

The

Steward came back to the table, "Your hasperat, sir," he said smugly. "And you have been warned," as he slid the plate in front of Berr. "And your Ploughmans lunch, Mr. Gregory," the man said placing the odd meal in front of Dieter. "Enjoy. And I have medical on standby, just in case things are too difficult for you to handle."

Gregory

waited for the man to leave. "Now, Mr. Berr.

Berr

looked at the odd assortment of meat, cheese, bread and various vegetables. He could not believe that much food could be consumed by one person at a single seating. He figured that he was about to find out. He understood the stewards odd comment towards the Chief of Operations. Absent mindedly he picked up the roll of hasperat and lifted it to his mouth.

The

absent minded look quickly disappeared as his took a bite. At first the flavor of the hasperat filled his mouth with a joyous memory of childhood. Then, slowly, a tingling began on his tongue. The tingling grew to a mild heat, which grew to a burning sensation, which then grew to the sensation his tongue dissolving in a pool of hydrochloric acid.

Without

warning the steward appeared at his shoulder with a satisfying smile on his face.

"Is

the hasperat to your liking, sir?" he asked.

Berr

fought down the urge to cough, and willed his eyes not to tear up in an attempt to fight the affect of the spices.

Berr

looked up and nodded. "It is very good, thank you." Then he took a second, large bite, while staring directly at the steward. He closed his eyes and made a moan of pleasure, He hoped that with his eyes closed it would hold the tears in. He thought that his mouth was literally on fire.

"I

must admit," the Bajoran finally said, "this is some of the best hasperat that I have ever eaten."

Gregory

looked at the steward, "Nothing more to see here. Compliments to the chef and all."

The

steward looked a little confused but decided to switch to a look of pride. "Thank you, I will pass your compliments along. Enjoy your meals." With that he disappeared.

As

soon as he was out of sight Berr reached for the glass of water in front of him and downed the entire glass. He looked up at Gregory and gave a sheepish smile. It took him a moment but he was finally able to speak again.

“Wow,”

he said softly.

“Indeed,”

Gregory replied, “You did well,” he said as he slowly worked on his lunch. “After this, we’ll go to the high-energy physics lab. I want you to outline your idea for me and our CSO. Have you been running any models on this system as we’ll want to look at that data as well.”

“Alyl

and I will do our best to find holes in the system, so that any limitations can be addressed. Do you have anyone you’d like there to assist you.”

~Assist?

Me?~ “Ummm... no sir, not that I can think of. I showed my designs to most of the cadets, but their suggestions had been more on the esthetics rather than the functionality. I will warn you that it does not look pretty. But I designed to look like something that the Sharlayans could have designed with what they had available. Perhaps, in five years, their new engineering clan will actually think they made it.”

“I

don’t care if it looks like a tea kettle had a baby with a wave inverter. Function is the priority for an engineer Mr. Berr. There are others who can make it look pretty, but a true engineer makes it work, and work right the first time, every time. That’s what we will be hammering at. Will this work. Do the units work out? Is the math correct? If those fall into place, you have yourself a winning design.”

“Oh

the math works out sir,” Berr assured him.”Even though I haven’t built a working model, yet, I am certain that it will fire up. I am still working on the harmonics to make sure that there is no shimmy that would shake it to pieces, but it will fire up, and it will yield energy at a level of at least 10 to the sixth power more than their fission generators. And please, that is not a boast. It is a mathematical fact.”

“Excellent.

It is not a boast Mr. Berr if you produce. You’ve done that so far and from what I’ve seen, I expect no less. However, we do our best to double and triple check everything because this is going to be a critical piece to get these people home.”

“I

agree,” the cadet said, “I would not have offered my designs Lieutenant if I were not certain. I’m pretty sure a false claim at this level of life and death importance would not look good on my transcripts.”

With

that he took another bite of the hasperat, suddenly coughing at the spices that assaulted his tongue again.

~Modest,

yet confident. This kid has lots of potential, ~ Gregory thought.

“Let's

finish up and see about this design. You have my curiosity quite piqued."

(Reply

none)

(Posted

by Al - Oda Berr and Tim - Dieter Gregory)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 7- High Energy Particle Physics Lab - COps Lieutenant Dieter Gregory and Engineering Cadet Oda Berr -- 1240)

After lunch Berr had rushed to his quarters to dig out his personal PADDs that he had been workin on. He did have to take a minute to eat some bread to settle his stomach. That hesperat was still eating through his stomach. And he wasn't sure when he would be able to taste anything else again.

However, when had his PADDs and his actual drawn out designs he made his way to deck 7. He stood outside the door for a moment. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. ~Don't muck this up Oda.~ He took a step forward and the door swooshed open. Oda took a step into the lab.

Gregory was sitting to the side, by one of the analysis stations. He had been inputting some data when Berr walked in. Next to him was a woman Berr had seen before. A Petty officer Ywan, as he recalled.

"Come in Mr. Berr," Gregory said. "Ms. Ywan and I were just finishing inputting the data we obtained when we were over in the engineering room. Why don't you take station one and get your data loaded up."

Berr nodded and went over to the station that he had been directed to. He put the rolls of diagrams and plans down and they began to escape from their place. He tossed the PADDs down to collect the fleeing plans, and quickly looked to see if anyone had seen.

Once everything was back in place he began to unroll the diagrams. As he unrolled each one he looked at it, considering which he would share and which were just a little too crazy to share. Once it was all organized how he wanted he sat on a tall stool and waited for whoever else was going to join them.

Gregory waited till everyone had settled down before speaking. "As you know, and with the Federation's consent, if not blessing, have been given permission to retrofit the Sharlayan ship with fusion reactors to replace their thousand year old fission drive. Clearly this is a better, cleaner energy source for them to complete their journey."

He entered some commands into his station, and a holographic display in the center of the room lit up. "We have to invent a way to fit a square peg into a round hole," he began "using nothing but what we have." As he said that, a list of resources started scrolling on everyone's station.

Moments later, the display changed, "As you can see from this model, the proposal has been to place two smaller federation type reactors to separately power propulsion and life support, while providing redundancy as needed. The details and specifications are at your stations."

He paused, "However, this causes several levels of issues around General Order one, as well as training and operation. Mr. Berr," he motioned to the cadet, "has come up with a more elegant solution. The purpose of this meeting is for him to present his ideas, while we vet them, make sure the math works and that we have the necessary supplies in store to implement it. Failure, needless to say, is not an option. I need every one of you at the top of their game. We check, and double check, then check it again before we move on. There is no rank here, just engineers and scientists trying to do what must be done. Federation history will have its eyes on us today, on what we do."

"Mr. Berr, the floor is yours."

It was a daunting introduction to say the least. Berr mustered his courage and stood up.

"So the problem came to me as a way to create a safer and better source of energy than the Sharlayans had in a manner in which the Sharlayans might have come upon it on their own. Who knows, perhaps the engineering caste of their society had been working on it already. All we would then have to do is give credit for it to someone in their clan."

He paused for a moment to let that thought settle in, and see if there were any questions.

"Well," he went on, "it seemed the next step was for them to move from a fission generator to a fusion source of power. I know that in itself is not a new idea, but if the Sharlayans had developed fusion power do they have the resources to build the generator?"

He pulled out the first drawing that he had made. It showed a scale image of a fusion generator similar to those of Earth's mid twentieth century.

At that moment, Jaton walked through the door. He looked up as the others looked over at him. "I am so sorry I'm late. Plenty of fires to put out today for some reason. But I'm here now. So how can I help?"

"Right now, listen to Mr. Berr's proposal. After that, help make sure the math adds up," Gregory replied.

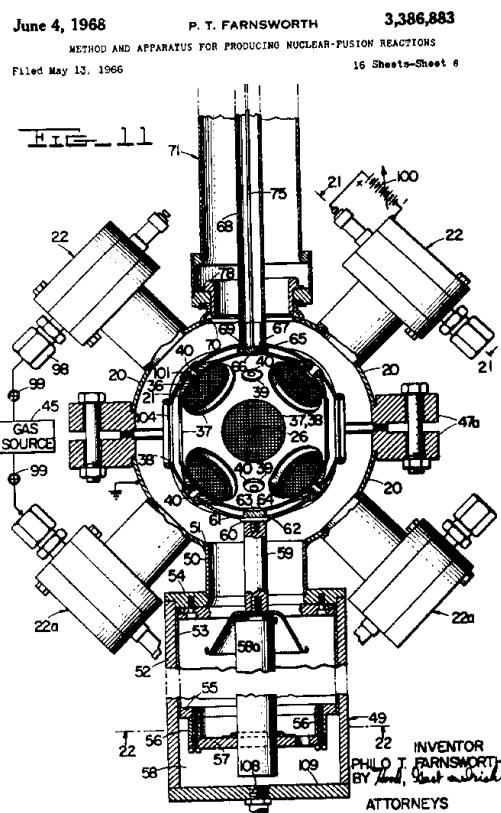
Jaton nodded, and took a seat next to Gregory, nodding to Berr to continue.

“Mr. Berr, continue please.” Gregory said.

‘Ummm...’ Berr collected his thoughts, “well... we were just starting Lieutenant. I was just explaining what led me to the plans for a Sharlayan fusion generator that might solve any prime directive issues with giving them som Federation technology. I believe that Lt. Gregory was looking for flaws in the plan or hello in how we can implement it. You are welcome to help.”

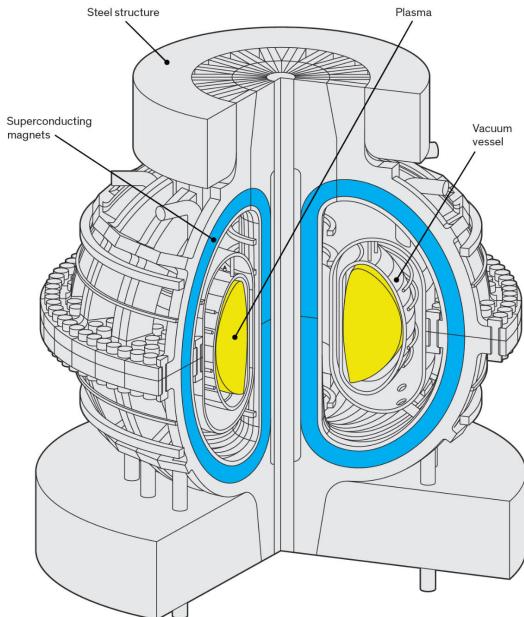
"I'll be happy to in any way I can," Jaton said with a friendly smile.

With that said he referred to the plan he had drawn.



"This is a standard plan for a fusion generator. But the problem with these types of generators use lasers to fuse atoms together to create energy. That is a very inefficient method of creating energy as the quantum destruction of atoms is not imminent using lasers. That was why I propose that we use deuterium and tritium infused plasma in multiple cores of the generator."

He rolled out a second diagram.



"This would be the superconducting magnetic containment unit for the infused plasma. These housings would fit inside the main generator which would contain the reactions. To avoid the problem of the randomness of the fusion, the plasma will need to be superheated to about a million degrees Celsius. The other problem is the production of gamma radiation, which will need to be monitored."

He paused again and looked up at his superior officers to get a reaction.

Gregory looked up at the diagrams, "Superheating shouldn't be a problem with the right superconductors, which also offer the advantage of eliminating the two most common problems of plasma systems, in particular VDE. Some questions come to mind."

"First, how do you plan to address the potential of thermal quenching? Second, have you considered adding a FLiBe blanket around the system. It'll provide additional protection and should modulate the neutron flux outside the system." He paused.

Oda nodded and smiled as he stood up, suddenly very excited, "Yes, I was worried about that as well." He picked up the first PADD and tapped it to life. He turned the display so that the officers could see it as he pulled up the display entitled "Thermal Quenching". "What I found was injection of large shattered pellets of variable quantities of deuterium and the high-Z impurities of neon into the plasma of the pods demonstrate a control of thermal quenching and current quench properties in mitigated disruptions. You can see here that TQ radiation fractions increase continuously with the quantity of radiating impurity in the pellet, with a corresponding decrease in divertor heating. Post-TQ plasma

resistivities increase as a result of the higher radiation fraction, allowing control of current decay timescales based on the pellet composition.”

Berr knew he got very tech specific with that and hoped that the mathematical computations were enough to prove his point. But then again he had spent the last few days trying to explain his ideas to cadets that only really knew about warp cord technology and matter/antimatter reactions. To them this was an archaic and pointless exercise. They wanted to totally replace the present level of Sharlayan technology with something completely alien. These were trained Starfleet engineers.

“As far as using a FLiBe blanket, to be honest I had not thought of that, but it would solve many of the attemperation issues. I had been looking at a Heat Recovery Generator, as well as high-pressure and reheat interstage piping, but that requires constant monitoring and repairs need to be made immediately, and to be honest I’m not sure the Sharlayan’a are ready for that. The blanket would be a great addition.”

He picked up the PADD and typed in the suggestion. He wanted to figure it out right now but there was more to discuss.

“The gamma radiation issue is especially concerning,” Gregory went on. “We just cleaned up their engine space, only to introduce penetrating gamma radiation into the mix.” Gregory looked down at his computer, “I am calculating we’d need to have a shield at least a meter thick around the system.”

“I was looking into this product called...” he looked on his PADD, “concrete. If we infuse lead into the concrete the shielding required would be significantly less. Perhaps on a third of a meter thick.”

“I wonder,” Gregory added, “however, if we can take advantage of the gamma radiation in another way.”

“How so?” Berr asked.

“There were some studies done that used gamma radiation to heat up lead and use that to generate electricity by coupling it to a more traditional steam generator. I don’t remember the specifics, if we shield the habitable side from the gamma, and use a reflector type setup to guide them to a specific point, we might be able to harness additional power.”

“That would be amazing,” Berr sounded excited again. “I think I recall it had something to do with using silicon semiconductor cells made of p-type Si single crystal wafers. I can do some research into that.”

“Other preliminary questions for Mr. Berr?” he asked, looking around the room.

“I know that we’re still skirting around the Prime Directive,” Jaton began, “but can’t we just use the most recent declassified shielding technology we have and just adapt it to use the Sharlayan power grid?”

“Actually,” Berr said, “that will be essential. The one thing that is going to be necessary in order for this to work, and to give the impression that the Sharlayans came up with all of this is to get as much Sharlayan participation as possible. Granted, the Engineering clan of Kal’Shar was all but wiped out by the accident six years ago. However, their progeny are still viable alternatives. I went through the manifest and found that the entire clan wasn’t wiped out, but their families, their children are now of age to take their parents’ roles as the new engineers of Kal’Shar. If we can train them now this could all be theirs. They should already have a basic knowledge of how their own power systems work.”

Jaton nodded. “So we should definitely be focusing on the training. But I suppose the best we can do in this meeting is figure out how far we can actually go without getting a ticking off from the captain.”

Berr smiled, “At the academy we would always say it is easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.”

Jaton returned the smile. “I’ve heard that too, cadet. I think your plan is sound, if a little conservative for my taste, but when it comes to the Prime Directive that’s inevitable. Now we just need to iron out the details.”

Gregory looked at Oda, “The elephant in the room remains. The success of this plan requires that the Sharlayan people learn to run this themselves. It’s not going to happen overnight. We can technically get this setup in a few days, with lots of long hours, someone will need to stay with the Sharlayans and train their clan. Are you willing to be that person?”

Oda’s eyes opened wide. His mouth begs to move but words didn’t come out at first. Finally his body caught up with his brain.

“Me sir?” Was the first set of coherent words he could get out. “I would be honored. But what about my studies, and the fleet?”

“We will have a ship following the Sharlayan vessel for a bit where you can get access to necessary material for your studies,” Gregory said.

“It would be a huge undertaking that would take me a few years to get done. But I would appreciate the opportunity. Thank you Lieutenant.”

Gregory stood up and walked over to where Berr was seated, with petty officer Ywan behind him. Turning to her, she handed him a PADD and a small box.

“Attention to orders,” he called out. Waiting till everyone was standing, he looked down at the PADD before speaking.

“Mr. Oda Berr. In recognition of your completion of the proscribed course of study at Star Fleet Academy and your exemplary performance on your cadet cruise aboard the USS Illuminar, it is with great pleasure that you are promoted to Ensign, junior grade with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities appertaining thereto. Effective Stardate 2445.10.22. Signed by Captain Sekal, Commander, USS Illuminar.”

Handing the PADD to the Ywan, he took the small box from her, opened it up and took out the Ensigns pip. He removed the cadet rank on Berr's uniform, placing the pip on his right side.

He took a step back. Ywan called out, "Hand, Salute."

With a smile, Gregory saluted the newest Ensign. Dropping his salute, he reached out his hand. "Congratulations Mr. Berr. You have a heck of job ahead of you. I have the utmost confidence in your abilities."

(Reply none)

(Posted by:

AI -- Oda Berr

Tim - Dieter Gregory

Spencer - Jaton Alyl

Word had come to Geehoff to greet the security teams of the Illuminar in the Hall of Remembrance. This would be the easiest place to meet that would lead them to the entrance of the weirs than any other. He was a little excited to potentially see Ariel Trei again, but was not sure that she would be with this group. This was the business of Illuminar security and the Sec'or. There would be little time for meeting and greeting that Ariel enjoyed and said was her job.

He had gathered a small group of Sec'or to go with him, and they had waited in the Hall for some time. Finally a rather large group of the large people of the Illuminar filled the room. He did not recognize many of them. But one of them seemed to be in charge.

"I am Geehoff, Sec'or 2 of the Keeper Clan," he announced officially, hoping it would catch everyone's attention.

Ensign Lee called his three Security teams - Alpha 1, Alpha 2 and Alpha 3 to attention. He glanced at the young man in front of him "Assistant Chief of Security, Ensign Keung Lee of the Illuminar." said Lee, formerly. "It's good to meet you. Perhaps you can update me on the situation here."

Geehoff shrugged his shoulders, "You probably know as much as I do. Your Ambassador, Dr. Riven Mias wandered away from his security detail and disappeared. As I understand he may have been... I believe the term I heard was kidnapped. If that is the case we may know who might be behind it."

He paused for a moment to make sure that Lee had agreed with all that he had already said so far.

"I see. So who do you believe is behind the kidnapping of the Ambassador?" Asked Lee.

"It is most likely the action of a small dissident group who believe that they should only follow the old ways of Sharlayan people. They, I believe you would call them, religious zealots. They believe in the purity of the people and that there are old gods who need to be worshipped. Most of the Sharlayan people had moved past such notions generations ago. However, they have resurged in the past few generations, and have held an enmity against the Keepers, blaming us for the bad things that have happened, because we do not jump to their needs."

"

Incidentally," Lee continued, "where is the security detail that was supposed to protect the Ambassador?".

Ensign Picard the leader of the close protection team had not reported in and he was concerned about their whereabouts.

"I believe that the people of the Federation are in the Free Lands where Riven Mias was last known to be. I will take you there now."

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District- Freelands- Sec'or 2 of the Keeper Clan Geehoff/ ASec Ensign Lee – 1500)

Geehoff led his team and the people of the Illuminar through the Keeper District to the doors leading to the weirs. From there they went through a rough series of tunnels carved out of the rock. The walls were covered in art. Some of the artwork was simple, and child like using what appeared to be a form of chalk. Others were delicate and intricate paintings depicting life in green fields of bright colored flowers. Then there were pictures that looked as if they were painted in angry and haste. Those looked most recent. All of it was stirring and emotional.

The corridors led them to the Freelands. The Freelands were filled with rolling hills of greenery and trees. This was what produced much of the breathable air for Kal'Shar, which was why it was not allowed to build on it. Cutting down a tree in the Freelands was one of the few capital offenses on Kal'Shar. Taking away the precious oxygen producing plants was as bad as uncontrolled procreation. It was a fine balance that kept them all alive for 65 generations.

Keung Lee had his three teams spread out. Alpha 1 took point. Alpha 2 was in the rear and Alpha 3 were scattered among the rest of the area. Each team leader was using tricorders to scan for anything out of the unusual with the focus on finding lifesigns of the ambassador. Lee had recorded some of the art work on his tricorder. After all, the illuminar was a science ship and was fulfilling the mission statement of Starfleet to 'explore new worlds, etc!' He wasn't particularly interested in art but at least he had a record which could be interpreted later by the cultural specialists on the ships. As for the

Freelands, Lee was impressed with what he was seeing although he was fully aware that there could be hostiles among the trees.

"Ensign Lee to Ensign Picard. Report your position?" called Lee on his combadge. There was nothing but static, "Ensign Lee to T'Mur. We are in the Freelands. Any update information on the location of the Ambassador and the security team?"

=^=We have located Dr. Mias' position.=^= T'Mur replies. =^=You are within 3.3 miles from him. I am sending the coordinates to your tricorder now. Be warned, our scans do not complete permeate the shell of Kal'Shar but we do know that he is with at least twenty Sharlayans. Also note that Dr. Mias' security detail is nearby. Their life signs are intermittent, apparently due to structures in the area.=^=

"Acknowledge T'Mur" said Lee, glancing at his tricorder readings. "I have got the coordinates."

He looked at Geehof, showing him the tricorder scanner which displayed the coordinates."Do you know of this location? We need you to guide us there so we can retrieve the Ambassador. Are you armed? How much experience have you had in dealing with retrieving a victim from a kidnapping?"

This Ensign Lee presumed much. He needed him to lead his men there so that HE could retrieve the Ambassador. Geehoff was under the idea that they were there to help HIM.

He stood up to his full height, noting that it was still well below the nose of Lee. "We are trained in weapons but do not carry them. The taking of a life on Kal'Shar is viewed harshly, so we do not carry weapons inside the Core. We will not need them."

He took the device from Lee's hand and stared at the readout. It showed a map of the area, vaguely. There were red dots on it that he decided must be them. Then he saw another set of dots that appeared just to the right. This must be the security detail that lost Mias. Finally he saw a series of blue dots. He knew that it was where Riven Mias was. He knew of the location. It would be difficult to approach undetected, but not impossible.

"I know the place," Geehoff stated, "but you may only come if you follow MY lead. If you violate Sharlayan law it will be taken very seriously."

"Yes certainly." said Lee, remembering the Prime Directive. Did that apply here! It probably did. After all this was Geehoff turf and Lee intended to follow his lead. It would fall on Geehof's head if anything goes wrong. "My team and I will follow your instructions according to Sharlayan law."

He turned to his security team with Geehof behind him. "You will follow Geehoff lead on this rescue mission to the letter. He alone is responsible..we just follow orders." He winked.

Some of the security team had the same thought. At least the boss won't get it in the neck, if this Geehof balls it up.

"What is your plan of action" asked Lee, wishing that he and his team had more than a phaser type 2. A few phaser rifles, flash and explosive grenades wouldn't go amiss. He had at least three snipers on the team.

Geehoff had his hackles up. He had enjoyed his time with all the other people of the Illuminar. Perhaps he was being sensitive. After all Geehoff was less experienced. But he could sense the condensation in Lee, and so following their leader, his men seemed to display a similar condensation. They all seemed to have moments of stroking their weapons. These people clearly are used to having others simply do as they are told... or else. That was not what he had learned from Ariel Trei. He wished she were here right now.

"My plan of action?" he repeated the question. "I do not have a plan of... action. If a Sharlayan had planned to harm Dr. Mias that harm would already be done. These people want to use him as a point of leverage. We will find them. We will speak with them and find out what they actually want. I believe that we can solve this issue with talk, not with action."

Geehoff didn't wait for a response from Lee. he began to head to where the clump of blues dots were. "You may want to contact your other team. They are walking the wrong way."

Lee believed very much in the process of negotiation for a peaceful solution but this needs to be backed up by possible action if negotiations fails. Geehof seems to misunderstand what Lee said by a 'plan of action.' For a moment, was this a cultural misunderstanding of the use of words?

As for ensign Picard and his team. Walking the wrong way?

He called to Geehoff as he walked off. "What do you mean by walking the wrong way?" He pressed his combadge. "Beta 1. This is ensign Lee. What's your status?" There was nothing but static. "Alpha 1. Crewman Leeson. Close up the distance with Geehoff. Not sure what he doing..walking off like that. The last thing I want is someone to waylay him and his people."

“Roger that, boss.” said Leeson “Okay guys. Let’s go.”

“Everyone. Be on the alert.” ordered Lee. He watched Alpha 1 following Geehoff spread out with Crewman Leeson walking alongside with Geehoff. Leeson was a tall, muscular guy who would deter any would be attacker with his appearance.

Alpha 1 and Alpha 2 were widely spread out, no longer in close formation. It would probably put the hackles up Geehoff. . .

(Reply none)

(Posted by Al Muir and John)

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District Frelands— SO Ensign Picard – 1500)

At first sight one might think that Ensign Picard was frantic, afraid of the fallout of the situation where the security detail that he was in command of had lost the one person whom they had been there to protect. However that was not actually the case. He was certain that there would be repercussions, however when the facts came to light and cooler heads prevailed, Dr. Mias would have to accept, in part, some of the responsibility.

Picard had his team in good positions, but Mias actively avoided them, And made a point of "getting away" from them. In fact, Picard wouldn't be surprised if Mias some kind of Betazoid mind trick for him to get away from them.

On top of that, they had been in an area with an abundance of trees, for lack of a better term, a forest. Most of his squad had never seen that many trees in one place so keeping track of the intentions of the Ambassador was even more difficult.

Of course nobody would have expected Mias to disappear, completely, let alone be captured by some rogue members of Sharlayan society. However it had happened, he was, ultimately, the responsible party. He only wished that Mias could have been equally responsible with his own behavior.

To make matters worse they were in an area where, for some reason, tricorder scans were intermittent, and comm signals were almost nonexistent. They would catch glimpses of scans, and started heading towards them. There would be staticky attempts to communicate with the Illuminar, and most like, Chief Lee, who was probably already on Kal'Shar.

Then, as they cleared the line of trees Picards comm badge chirped. He already knew who it was, and most likely what they were going say. Expecting a long stint of guarding the photon torpedo bays he tapped his badge.

"This is Ensign Picard," he mustered as much authority in his voice as he could and waited for the response.

(Reply Lee)

(Posted by Al Muir)

(Kal'Shar – Assistant Chief of Security Ensign Keung Lee – 1505)

Keung Lee noted the positions of his security team. Widely spread out but now surrounding Geehoff. So if any hostiles happen to attack then they find themselves in a unpleasant position of encountering an armed security trooper. The rules of engagement – challenge, then if they shoot back, return fire!

"This is ensign Picard." Lee heard on his commbadge. About time! He decided he deal with Picard's incompetence later. Perhaps a dressing down and a demotion. Non gravity space walk training. Counting every single phaser located on the ship. Double shift sentry duty.

“Good of you to phone home!” said Keung sharply “Report. Mr Picard??”

(reply Picard)

“Maintain position and stay alert. Geehoff and Alpha 3 is on the way to you. Upon their arrival, you will take any instructions from Geehoff... and carry them out to the letter.” Keung meaning of “carry out to the letter.” Basically meant, that whatever let someone else take the can which Picard probably understood quite well.

(Reply Picard)

(Posted by John)

=^=Good of you to phone home! Report. Mr Picard?=^=

Picard heard the tone of Lee's voice. It could only mean bad news. Lee was not one to tolerate mistakes, and could blame the actions of a Federation ambassador on a lowly ensign. It's not like he could demote him. But a transfer off the *Illuminar* would not be outside of his power.

"Sir," Picard pulled himself up to bolster his courage, "so far we have had no joy in locating the ambassador. The structures in this area create a natural shielding against our tricorder scans. We are conducting a physical search of the area to look for clues as to which way the ambassador went."

=^=Maintain position and stay alert. Geehoff and Alpha 3 is on the way to you. Upon their arrival, you will take any instructions from Geehoff... and carry them out to the letter.=^=

Picard frowned, certain that having a Sharlayan in charge of this search was already rubbing the "Chief" the wrong way.

There was not much more that he and his team could do now until they were joined by the others.

“Understood, we are holding,” Picard replied. “Out.”

Picard sighed deeply. This was going to be a long day.

(Reply none)

(Posted by Al Muir)

Penny's eyes rolled as once again the computer sent out a warning to her. Putting her hands on her hips McTaggard pushed her chair back. Red faced she looked towards the ceiling.

“ This is just a simple elephants toothpaste . What is wrong now!!” Penny shouted

"The expansion of the liquid inside the beaker. Will engulf the entire lab and surrounding corridor" the computer warned.

The last thing Penny needed was another telling off. But she was sure the Ensigns eyebrows would grow back. One of Penny's fields of expertise was biology. So she knew what parts on the human body could grow back. The other was chemistry which was why she and the computer were at odds.

Mc Taggard thought for a moment. If the computer was correct then maybe it was prudent to behave.

(Reply , None)

(Posted by Norman)

(USS Illuminar - Science Lab Corridor - CSO Lieutenant (jg) Jaton Alyl - 1510)

Jaton was looking over the most recent reports from the Sharlayan ship and nodding happily. Things were finally going well. He was walking past one of the labs when he heard a shout from within.

"This is just a simple elephant's toothpaste. What is wrong now?!"

That stopped Jaton in his tracks. While it was odd enough to hear someone shouting in a lab when they were alone, something about an elephant's toothpaste was downright bizarre. He turned around and heard the computer give a warning. He then turned around and approached the lab to see MacTaggard sitting with a look of sheer frustration on her face. He knocked on the door frame to announce his presence.

"Is everything alright, ensign?" he asked cordially. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

(reply MacTaggard, any)

(posted by Spencer)

(Kal'Shar

– Gertin District - Freeland - SO Ensign Picard, Sec'or 2 Geehoff, Admiral Skeese – 1530)

Picard

continued to work on his tricorder, but could not get more than intermittent signals for his scans. By the time Alpha 3 had arrived he had managed to adjust the frequency enough to realize that the only distinguishable life signs were those of Alpha 3, their own, of course, and a group off life signs the opposite direction they had been traveling.

“Damn it,” he muttered under his breath.

As

he watched as Petty Officer Devers came marching down a hill with Collier. They walked up to Picard with smiles on their faces when Devers said, "What did I miss?"

"Oh
you are just hilarious aren't you Devers," Picard shot back.

Geehoff
saw the team of Federation officers and waved to them. Immediately he felt a little foolish. It was a childish gesture but he offered it before thinking of how it would be perceived. He walked up to Picard, whom he recognized from several days ago.

He
was already irritated by this Ensign Lee who had sent him off to fetch these poor wretches lost in the Frelands. He did not trust the man. He seemed so impetuous, and quit to act... perhaps even violently when not necessary. Hopefully they could make their way to the dissidents before he could.

"Greetings
Ensign Picard, Devers" Geehoff offered cordially.

"Sec'or
Geehoff," Picard replied

"I
believe that we have found the location of those responsible for the disappearance of Dr. Riven Mias,"
Geehoff said

~You
certainly have,~ Picard thought to himself. ~Thanks for the reminder.~

"If
you follow me," Geehoff said, "I can lead you to their encampment."

Picard
nodded realizing that the comment was not a quip against him, "Lead on McDuff."

Geehoff
looked at Picard with a quizzical stare, wondering why he would call him that. Did he already forget Geehoff's name?

Seeing
the look Picard realized that the reference was lost on the Sharlayan. "I apologize, Geehoff, it was an attempt at humor. Please, lead on Geehoff."

Geehoff
set off at a speedy pace in the direction of the life signs. He knew the area well, having played there often as a youngling. As they approached the area another group approached them.

After

the attempt on his life Skeese had realized that he was as safe in action as he was sitting back waiting for things to happen. He knew what they were up against, or more aptly, who they were up against. Skipta was an idiot, but he represented a portion of the Sharlayan population, as small as it was, that had not been addressed in many cycles. He knew that the fastest way to ensure the release of Riven Mias was to face Skipta. He grabbed a detail of Sec'or and headed out to the Gertin District.

After

a half a turn of hard walking he could feel the fatigue in his muscles and the tightness in his chest, but continued. Time was of an essence and he did not have time to feel old. It was shortly after the pain began he saw a band of men heading the same direction.

As they closed in he recognized Geehoff, and then some of the Illuminar's officers. This must be the group that Sekal had sent to help.

“Geehoff,”

he called over, "so you know where you are going?"

“Admiral!?”

Geehoff was surprised and concerned, "What brings you out to the Freelands?"

“ |

think my presence here will bring an end to this situation," the Admiral said, catching his breath.

“Very

"well," Geehoff acquiesced. "We are heading to a part of the Frelands that many do not go. There is just so little there. That's why the youngers go there to ... play."

“Well

"this is no longer a game," Skeese replied, "and Skipta has taken his position too far and now someone is dead. An innocent."

Geehoff

shook his head sadly, "Then follow me."

(reply

none)

(posted

by Al Muir)

(USS Illuminar - Sickbay - CMO Office - Deck 5 -- CMO Quinn Solice - 1535)

"Profit!" Reea realized she blurted that out too suddenly. "A better answer would simply be, life, its pleasures and rewards, and enjoying all it has to offer." She meant that, so she hoped Solice saw her sincerity.

“You know this is not a job interview. You can be yourself with me. Besides being a licensed Doctor, I am also a licensed psychologist. I do not run sickbay on rank formality. I feel that since we have to learn to work together and around each other, we cannot let ranks get in the way.”

(Reply Reea)

“So now I would normally take you to meet Ariel Trei. She is the assistant chief medical officer and lead counselor. But I guess that you have already checked in with her.”

(Reply Reea)

"So what would you like to know? You can ask me anything." Quinna offered.

(reply Reea)

(Played by Kris B)

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District - Freeland – Assistant Chief of Security Ensign Keung Lee – 1535)

Lee had given the order to Alpha 1 and Alpha 2 to start 'yomping' towards Geehoff who had made contact with Ensign Picard. 'Yomping' a term which he adopted from the British army in his time which basically means tactical advance to battle. He had tactically deployed his team with armed phasers to cover the party ahead. Lee was not convinced that this talking to kidnappers was not going to succeed.

"Ensign Picard to Lee." Lee heard from his commbadge "We caught up with..er...Geeholf. Admiral Skeese is here as well."

"Acknowledge." Replied Lee. Now it was a waiting game as he was closing up to Geehoff and Picard's position. Lee held one arm angled down, with his hand flat and his palm downwards. He slowly wave his arm up and down before slowing down. It was a sign to his team to slow down, to be extra quiet and stay alert for possible trouble.

(reply none)

(posted by John)

(USS Illuminar - Sickbay - CMO Office - Counselor Ensign jg Reea - 1536)

"You know this is not a job interview. You can be yourself with me," said Solice.

Rule of Acquisition 33, thought Reea. It never hurts to suck up to the boss. She would say what Doctor Solice needed to hear.

"Besides being a licensed doctor, I am also a licensed psychologist. I do not run sickbay on rank formality," said Solice. "I feel that since we have to learn to work together and around each other, we cannot let ranks get in the way."

"I understand," said Reea. That was typical in a medical situation. Patient care was the first priority. Arguing about ranks could come later.

"So now I would normally take you to meet Ariel Trei. She is the assistant chief medical officer and lead counselor. But I guess that you have already checked in with her."

"Counselor Trei must have heard I was here," said Reea. "She left a note for me to meet her for dinner in the Prancing Pony at 1700 hours."

"So what would you like to know? You can ask me anything," said Solice.

This was the same as the FO asking if she had questions. This time, Reea didn't. She wanted to assess the medical department first.

"I'm still getting settled, so I don't have anything to ask yet, though I like your philosophy of how you want the department to be run." Reea chuckled inwardly. Rule 33, after all.

(reply Solice)

(posted by Renee Bishop)

(USS Illuminar - Sickbay - CMO Office - CMO Lt. Quinn Solice - 1537)

"I'm still getting settled, so I don't have anything to ask yet, though I like your philosophy of how you want the department to be run.

"I guess I should not keep you. I will see you soon." Quinna said. She is not in the habit of telling anyone they were dismissed and she was not about to be in one as well.

(reply Reea, IYW)

(Played by Kris B.)

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District – Free Lands – Dr. Riven Mias -- 1558)

"Skipta. Our friends tell us that the Admiral is sending the Sec'O to find us. And they are accompanied by the foreign ones."

Riven was chagrined by the news which came at oh such a bad moment. Skipta had been wavering, he had sensed it. Now the gentleman across from him was showing a resolve the Betazoid didn't care for.

"So, it has come to this," he said. "Is our man in place to strike at the Admiral?"

"Yes, he is ready."

"Then tell him he is released. Let the deed be done. And may the Gods shine on endeavor."

Skipta turned back to Riven, "You are not part of our way Federation Ambassador, but it sounds like you are soon to become part of it. Once the Admiral is dead, the Keepers will be headless, and the True Sharlayans will once more be in charge of Kal'Shar. As it once was, so let it be again."

"Then Federation Ambassador, your people can remove the poision from the people, from the children."

The Betazoid shook his head grimly. "You know nothing about us Skipta. Oh! I'll make sure your children are cured but the Federation doesn't treat with militant opposition to the established order, not when there is no defensible foundation to it. So I won't be any part of your new order. We came in peace to help and we will leave in peace."

The added impetus helped him locate the subject he was attempting to contact. ~This will be a shock but it can't be helped.~

::Skeese this is Riven. I apologize for this unexpected intrusion into your thoughts but I have no choice.::

(Reply: Sekkese)

::Yes, yes. It's really me. No time to explain. These people, the True Sharlayans as they call themselves appear to have someone on the inside and already know you're looking for them. They are sending an assassin after you.::

(Reply: Skeese)

::Don't argue, just listen. Surround yourself only with those you trust and be watchful for an attempt. Don't spread this through your your security clan or else he will know you are waiting for him. You have a little time before he gets his orders.::

(Reply: Skeese)

The Admiral warned Riven broke off contact.

"Now let's get to the root of the issue here." The Betazoid pulled up a knee and put an arm around it.
"Just why was this sect 'The True Sharlayans' formed and what do you hope to gain Skipta?"

(Reply: Skipta)

(Posted by Charles G)

(Kal'Shar – Personal Meeting Room – Admiral Skeese – 1601)

Skeese had spent the last hour monitoring all of the radio frequencies that the people of the Sec'or used, as they made their way through the corridors to the Freelands to the Gerund district. It had been exhausting and stressful. He knew that a great deal rode on how this conflict concluded. He had not been very forthcoming about the conflicts between the clans of Kal'Shar, although he was certain that Michaela had informed the Captain about the Council meeting. He had finally sat down to take a breath.

Suddenly he felt a strange tickling in the back of his brain. It started as a feeling of tiny insects crawling around inside his head. Then it became a soft hum. Then there was a clear voice, echoing in his mind. It was like a voice of a memory. At first he feared that he was having a medical emergency, then he thought he was having a psychotic experience.

::Skeese this is Riven. I apologize for this unexpected intrusion into your thoughts but I have no choice.::

With wide eyes he recognized the echoey voice, and understood that it was Riven Mias. ~Riven Mias, is this really you. How is it I can hear you?~ Then realizing his opportunity he shot in the thought, ~Are you all right?~

::Yes, yes. It's really me. No time to explain. These people, the True Sharlayans as they call themselves appear to have someone on the inside and already know you're looking for them. They are sending an assassin after you.::

Skeese heard the statements in an order that was different than the delivery. His brain held on to the word "assassin", then "True Sharlayans," and finally "on the inside." However the message all came together, made sense, but did not make sense at the same time.

~I don't understand. On the inside? The True Sharlayans are only in the weirs. We do not see them in the halls of the Keepers.~

::Don't argue, just listen. Surround yourself only with those you trust and be watchful for an attempt. Don't spread this through your security clan or else he will know you are waiting for him. You have a little time before he gets his orders.::

That was the last that the Admiral heard from the disembodied voice of the Ambassador. Skeese looked around to see who was with him. There were only a few, but he really did not know who they

were that well. He didn't panic, but became very cautious of where everyone was. He was not a young man any longer, but he was certain that none there could overtake him.

Slowly he reached out a hand and picked up the handset of the radio communicator and pressed a series of numbers. Captain Rhysee was at the other end.

=^=Yes Admiral, how can I help you?=^=

"Captain, I would appreciate your presence in the Room of Communication. Is your son with you?"

=^=He is.=^=

"I would appreciate it if you brought him with you as well. We have something to discuss, the three of us."

=^=We are on our way.=^=

The captain sounded confused, but also could tell that there was a concern in Skeese's voice. It was rare that the Admiral ever called anyone to come to him. It was in his nature to go to others when he needed something. So that fact alone should have raised a concern with Rhysee. It would take a few minutes for them to arrive. Skeese backed his chair up so that it was against a wall so he could see everyone in the room.

(reply Rhysee, Kar'wi, any)

(posted by Al Muir)

(Kal'Shar

– Gertin District - Frelands - Admiral Skeese, Skipta, Riven Mias – 1600)

The

group approached the hill that had indicated where Riven Mias was being held in a cave. As they got closer the conversation between Skeese and the others grew heated. He had insisted on going to Skipta by himself, to discuss the situation. Not one other person in the group agreed. Even as he ordered Geehoff to step down on this matter the boy risked much by standing up to the admiral and making it clear that he was not going to go in there by himself.

Finally

they all agreed that the Admiral would go, with Ensign Picard, Geehoff, and Devers. The rest would wait for word to come forward. It was the best that Skeese could negotiate, which left him wondering about his negotiation skills. Hopefully Mias had already been at work while in the hands of the "True Sharlayans." Skeese still shook his head at the name. Nothing more than a cult that believed in alien abduction and genetic purity, which seemed contradictory.

Now

the quartet stepped towards the opening and Skeese called out, "Hello in there. This is Admiral Skeese. I am here to talk with Skipta. I am certain that he wants to talk with me. Will you allow us to enter?"

Riven

tilted his head to listen more carefully to the voice outside, this was what he had been expecting. "Skipta it is time for us all to talk I would say. This would have been handled much more easily had you not sent an assassin but that is water under the bridge.

We can work this out and move forward."

Skipta

shook his head, "Sometimes the blood must flow to purify a wound. Much like medicine to treat a tumor. Clearly, the medicine did not reach its intended target."

Turning

to his men, he nodded. "Let him enter," he said.

Orders

were relayed and two Sharlayans came to the opening. "Skipta invites you to enter."

Skeese

looked at the two ... men? For they were merely more than boys. Had they ever even looked at a woman with adult thoughts. He sighed and stepped forward.

"Then

we accept your invitation," Skeese replied. "Lead us to him."

The

two boys turned and led the group through the inlets until they entered a chamber. Seated on stool like rocks were Skipta with Mias beside him. He noted the two StarFleet officers tension and held up his hand to keep them still.

"Ambassador

Mias, are you well?" Skeese asked.

"Except

for a tender scalp I've been well cared for." The mind- healer replied but made no move to rise.

Skipta

looked at the Admiral, a man who represented all that was wrong with the Sharlayan people. Why they had been led astray from the true path. Here, now in front of him.

However,

he would not appear ungracious. Motioning, cups were brought, and a pitcher. Skipta poured water into the cups. "Welcome Admiral Skeese," he said holding the cup for Admiral, "Water is life."

Skeese

nodded in acknowledgment of the greeting. He took the cup and nodded, drinking deeply. "Water is life. Why then would you want to end mine so wantonly?"

"Why

would you dismiss the concerns of the people, Admiral. Why would the keepers shy away from those who work the land, who purify the air, the water? Why did you turn away from our history?" Skipta asked in reply.

Skeese

shook his head and placed the cup on a rock. He took a breath as he'd heard this all before.

"Skipta,"

he said trying to be understanding, "I understand the people's anger at the distance that has been created over the past six cycles. It was necessary to keep the Gatherers and the Colonists safe from the ravages of what was happening in the outer areas of Kal'Shar. We had already lost so much. But you were not abandoned. Our presence was just not as marked. Perhaps that was a mistake."

"The

history that you speak of... it is the history from a specific point of view. Not everyone believes as your "True Sharlayans" do. We have not turned from the history that you believe. We have never embraced it. We have left you in peace to think and believe as you wish, why can you not do the same for us?"

Riven

sighed. "Skipta doesn't know." He looked from the Admiral to the other Sharlayan. "And this is an example of why my Federation has what we call the Prime Directive in place for dealing with other cultures. Your people were divided during your history by another that perhaps wanted to help and now you..." he looked back at Skeese' "and you are dealing with the aftermath. We all look outward for something beyond ourselves, something to worship and that is not a bad thing but worshipping another fallible being is fraught with peril."

Riven

looked at Skipta. "The world they sent you to is dead Skipta. It was recently struck by another body. Now I don't expect you to take my word for it, this is a matter of faith after all so I'm going to show you... the both of you. Once the repairs are done Illuminar will be leaving and another ship arriving. I will take you both to your destination to show you in person that I'm telling you the truth. And afterward." He stood to his feet.

"Afterward

we are going to talk and decide how you will proceed from here. Will your people remain at each other's throats and doom your race or will you find a way to work together and bring yourselves to your journey's end? I am here to help you through the transition and I will stay until it is done."

Skipta

eyes Riven closely. "You have been fair to me. I will agree to your proposal. I find it hard that the Gods would send us to a dead planet, but if you are true to your word and can show me this place. Then I will talk."

Skeese

smiled a big smile. "See Skipta, this is why I have put my trust in these people. Riven Mias speaks truth and with wisdom. I also would like to see the world that was to be our home. Would it also be possible to see our new home and speak with those people.

Five years may seem like a long time, but it could be a short time to reach agreements with those that already live there. And I think Skipta might appreciate seeing where his gods are leading us now."

Riven

gave a slight smile and nodded. "I think that can be arranged. You two are being afforded a rare privilege. The Illuminar was the Federation's newest ship but has just been replaced for that honor by the Tolliver. It's not every day I get to ride on the newest and best. I think you both might enjoy it." His eyes twinkled as he looked toward Skeese. "Minus the chocolate of course."

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir, Tim, and Charles)

"You know nothing about us Skipta. Oh! I'll make sure your children are cured but the Federation doesn't treat with militant opposition to the established order, not when there is no defensible foundation to it. So, I won't be any part of your new order. We came in peace to help and we will leave in peace," Mias said.

He listed to the explanation that Riven made about the Federation's policies. "This is nothing about a new order, this is a return to the traditional values of our people. Something that has been overrun and

usurped by the Keepers. So, in this case you would be dealing with the right and proper Sharlayan's. Of this I will convince you," Skipta replied.

He motioned for another cup and a pitcher of water to be brought for the two men.

"Now lets get to the root of the issue here," Mias said, "Just why was this sect 'The True Sharlayans' formed and what do you hope to gain Skipta?"

Skipta took a sip of the water, cool and refreshing. While others might share a fermented beverage, he believed in a clear head. "The sect, as you say, has been around since the beginning of our endeavor on leaving for the New Sharlaya. It is over time that the Keepers fell away from the true faith over time. It is why there was the accident, which caused the troubles that we have been undergoing for the past few cycles."

He paused, "I wish our keeper of the faith was here, but she is praying for deliverance of our children. I am a poor second of our history but will do my best."

"Many years ago, at the dawn of the Sharlayan people, it is told that we were visited by the Gods. They came in a giant cylinder that cast a shadow over the planet. The Gods descended from the heavens and walked among us. After a full season, they left our planet, taking with them some of the faithful."

"Many years passed and we were visited a second time by the Gods. This time, instead of walking among us, the descendants of those who had been taken came down to greet us as brothers and sisters. Their time with the Gods had changed them, made them different. Again, the Gods stayed for a season taking new Sharlayan's with them, leaving the descendants of the original faithful to stay among the people. These people were touched by the Gods, and are the True Sharlayan's. From them, we learned much about the world, about technology. Our people grew strong, but there was infighting. Factions emerged and wars were fought. For over 100 seasons or more, we did much damage to our planet. The True Sharlayan's went into hiding, in the northern mountain ranges, becoming legends and figments of the people. "

"The Gods visited us a third time, about 1500 cycles ago, bringing with them the second group of True Sharlayan's. And a warning. The damage we had done to our planet was too terrible to save. We had destroyed that which was most precious to us. They gave us dire predictions, and that within 1000 cycles, the planet would be unable to support Sharlayan life."

"However, they also gave us hope. They told us of a new home, far beyond the stars, where the Gods had come from. They gave us the means to unite the people for an epic task and an epic journey. The descendants of the original True Sharlayans returned among us with tools and ideas. Combined with the second True Sharlayan's those touched by the Gods, the people slowly stopped fighting. Those that could not, well they were purged or exiled to remote islands where they could do no harm."

"It was then that the people began the great work of creating the Kal'Shar, the ships to be our salvation. In honor of the Gods, we started to build three ships. Hallowing out these giant rocks in space, creating living space where we could survive the journey to our new home."

"It was long, hard work, so the histories say, but in the end, the three Kal'Shar were finished. Lots were chosen as to who would be able to make the journey as a gatherer. The Keepers had already been chosen based on their aptitude in the work they did to create the Kal'Shar. Many were left behind destined to die as a sacrifice so that the people could go on."

"Each Kal'Shar was headed by an Admiral, one briefed in the ways of the Gods and knowledge of the True Sharlayans. Our course was set based on the will of the Gods and we left our planet, our home. For many years, we did have contact with them through radio communication, but soon that was lost as the distances became too great."

"Three hundred seasons into the journey, we received a cryptic message from the second of the Kal'Shar, and then no more contact. We had no means to know what happened other than the phrase 'Beware Mycorrhiza.' A hundred seasons more and the third Kal'Shar was destroyed, exploded. We gatherers found out about it a hundred seasons later, when the truth came out of the Admiral, in a fit of intoxicated rage. We were all that was left of the Sharlayan Civilization, the last Kal'Shar. We had to fulfill our destiny to find the world the Gods has planned for us. And so we became extra diligent in our duties, in our tasks and for many years lived under a dictatorial rule of the Admirals to endure we would survive. It was about another 100 seasons before the sleepers began to awake. Those who were descendants of the True Sharlayan's began to find each other again. What was lost was found again. In secret we began to breed our people together to purify the bloodlines. We began to learn more of the truth of the Keepers and the Admirals, who had become weak-willed and feeble minded. We prepared to take what was ours and return us to the purity that the Gods demanded of us. They had, of course, set us on this path. We believe that there was corruption and evil among the two other Kal'Shar, and that the Gods destroyed them. Proof of this occurred several seasons back when there was an explosion in the power plant, the heart of the Kal'Shar. It was then we decided we had to act. Your arrival has accelerated our plans and needs."

"I hope you can understand our past and why we are not the usurpers, but the true heirs to the traditions of the Sharlayan and our pact with the Gods. As you have dealt with me honestly, so have I dealt with you honestly."

Skipa sat back and took a long draw from his cup, waiting expectantly on Mias.

(Reply Riven)

(Posted by Tim/Skipta the Skeptic)

(Kal'Shar – Gertin District – Free Lands – Dr. Riven Mias – 1608)

Riven smiled but didn't share what was on his mind. There was a time to talk and a time to listen. Now was the time to listen and ask questions. The more information he gathered the better. Knowledge would empower him to help resolve the situation if it could be resolved peacefully.

"The history you shared is extraordinary.

Did you say the planet you were journeying to was the home of the beings who contacted your race or was that just a general reference to them being from space?"

(Reply: Skipta)

"And the infighting and war you mentioned after the first True Sharlayans returned. How did that come about? Who started it and why?"

(Reply: Skipta)

"I am very appreciative of all the information Skipta. I find it fascinating. The history of a culture tells you a great deal about them. So why do you believe the Admirals have turned from the worship of your Gods? And the damage to the reactor due to age... you believe this was some sort of retribution I take it?"

(Reply: Skipta)

"One more question if you please." Riven hugged the leg close as he leaned forward. "Let's say hypothetically that all of the people returned to the worship of the True Sharlayans. Would that end the matter for you or do you believe that only by taking control of Kal'Shar can the True Sharlayans set matters right? Would it be possible for your two groups to resolve this matter peacefully by talking? If that is the case I would be available to help as an intermediary. That is why I'm here, to gather information and resolve disputes."

(Reply: Skipta)

(Posted by Charles G)

The time was upon her, and she had to act. Her kin demanded this action of her, even if she should lose her life, it was the right thing to do for the true Sharlayan's. The people must be lead back to the true faith and follow the path of the old Gods, lest they too be destroyed. Wasn't the explosion of six cycles enough of a sign. What about the infighting among the gatherers? The withdrawal of the Keepers from sharing with the Gatherers. Now it was all demand, demand, demand.

Skipta had reminded her of her heritage and their sacred mission. And now it was time to act.

She reached into the cupboard, pulling out a small glass vial filled with a clear liquid. Next she gathered a pitcher and careful poured the liquid into the pitcher before filling it with fresh red nectar of the Pome'va fruit.

Finally, she prepared a small tray with fresh breads and some soft cheese she had been able to get from the gatherers. She also placed a small jar of the sweet honey from the pollinators.

She rang a bell, "Gav'vec. Come here you lazy boy. The Admiral is in need of sustenance. Bring this to him in his meeting room. And don't spill a drop. If you are good, I have a sweet pie for your efforts. "

The lad, no more than 10 seasons old, nodded his head. "Of course Shary'll. I won't disappoint you."

The tray carefully balanced, the boy took off to the Admirals meeting room.

(Kal'Shar – Personal Meeting Room – Gav'vec – 1615)

Gav'vec stood outside the chambers archway. Balancing the tray, he knocked and called out, "Admiral, Sir. Shary'll has sent me with refreshments for you. Bread and cheese and honey, along with Pome'va nectar."

(Reply Skeese, others)

(Posted by Tim)

Kal'Shar - Gertin District - Free Lands - Skipta the Skeptic -- 1612)

Skipta listened to the Ambassadors questions.

"The history you shared is extraordinary. Did you say the planet you were journeying to was the home of the beings who contacted your race or was that just a general reference to them being from space?"

"The legend speaks of the Gods preparing the planet for the faithful. We would not be worthy of living among the Gods. Only the faithful few have that honor," he replied.

Mias continued , "And the infighting and war you mentioned after the first True Sharlayans returned. How did that come about? Who started it and why?"

"It was started by those not chosen. Those who were jealous of the return of the people. Jealous of what they did not have. They tried to take what they did not deserve," Skipta replied "A sad, dark day of our people."

"I am very appreciative of all the information Skipta. I find it fascinating. The history of a culture tells you a great deal about them. So why do you believe the Admirals have turned from the worship of your Gods? And the damage to the reactor due to age... you believe this was some sort of retribution I take it?" Mias asked.

"How could a project, guided by the hands of the Gods fail to age? The Gods has appeared to us over thousands of years, so it is clear their technologies would last for eons. No, this failure is due to a lack of faith. Much like the loss of the other two Kal'Shar ships. Instead of 100,000 of Sharlayan's settling our new home, we are down to thousands. However, we will thrive with the blessing bestowed upon us." Skipta said.

"One more question if you please. Let's say hypothetically that all of the people returned to the worship of the True Sharlayans. Would that end the matter for you or do you believe that only by taking control of Kal'Shar can the True Sharlayans set matters right? Would it be possible for your two groups to resolve this matter peacefully by talking? If that is the case I would be available to help as an intermediary. That is why I'm here, to gather information and resolve disputes."

"You ask a fair question," Skipta replies, "We must lead to the promised land, that is the goal of the Kal'Shar. If the Admiral and the Keepers would consent to the importance of the concerns of the True Sharlayan's and the proper faith, we would be content to let them continue to monitor the physical efforts, supervised by members of the True Sharlayan's. Only that way can we be sure for the purity of our goals and people." Skipta paused, "I am not a violent man, but sometimes action must be taken. How do you propose to solve the dilemma?"

(reply Riven)

(Posted by Tim)

(Kal'Shar – Personal Meeting Room – Admiral Skeese – 1617)

"Admiral, Sir," a young boy interrupted the Admirals pacing along the wall.. "Shary'll has sent me with refreshments for you. Bread and cheese and honey, along with Pome'va nectar."

The Admiral looked at the boy, scrutinizing him, then dismissing the possible threat. "Thank you..."

"Gav'vic," the boy said, standing tall. "I hope to one day join the ranks of the Sec'or."

Skeese nodded at the boy, not really paying attention to what he was saying. He picked up a piece of cheese and touched it to his lips, then shook his head. Then he reached for the drink. At the last moment turned back to look at the information he was receiving on the his computer monitor. He just was not in the mood to be nourished right now.

“Leave it there Gav’vic,” he said pointing to the table.

The boy gently put the tray down but decided not to leave. He was, after all, in the presence of the Admiral. This was the man who single handedly held the fate of all the Sharlayan people on Kal'Shar. To many he was like a legend. He just seemed a little... smaller than the boy had expected.

Skeese became aware of the boys presence. His first instinct was to send him away, but on second thought felt the presence of such a young one might deter a more violent approach to his ending.

"On second thought Gav'vic, you may consume it," he said, trying to be friendly. "I seriously doubt I will feel much like eating for a while and I don't want the food to spoil."

The smile on Gav'vic's face grew. "Thank you Admiral."

Gav'vic reached out to the food with child like enthusiasm and began to stuff the cheese and bread into his mouth. Then he reached for the cup of ice and took a big drink. A moment later he felt an odd sensation in his throat down to his stomach. Skeese wasn't paying any attention until there was a crash of the food tray to the ground, and a strange gurgling sound coming from him.

By the time Skeese knelt by the boy's body he knew that he had already died. He could feel the instant coolness that he had felt so many times before the moment the heart stops pumping the warm blood

through the body. Foam came flowing out of the boys mouth. White form with swirls of blood red mixed. Skeese looked from the body to the food now sprawled over the floor.

He turned to the Sec'or that was standing at the door, "Go to the place of food preparation. Bring me the woman called Shary'll."

The Sec'or left quickly, leaving Skeese on his own with the dead boy. He went over to the intercom box by his computer. "Genesse, I have need of your services."

(reply Genesse, maybe, anybody)

(posted by Al Muir)

(USS Illuminar - Prancing Pony - Counselors Lieutenant jg Ariel Trei & Ensign jg Reea - 1702)

Reea had met the FO, followed by the CMO, but there was still one more person to meet. Stepping into the Prancing Pony, Reea easily spotted the red-haired Ariel Trei. Moving to her, Reea stopped and smiled.

"Good afternoon. I'm the new arrival, Counselor Reea. May I join you?"

"Yes. Take a seat. May I offer you some nutty tasting beetles while we wait to order dinner? Klingons like them but it may not be what you like."

Reea looked at the offered snack. "Sure. Don't mind if I do. Thanks." She scooped up a handful, slowly chewing them.

The first thing Reea experienced, was the crunching. It was more of a warm vibration inside her mouth, than a sound. It was like the refreshing feeling one felt in a sonic shower. It was soon followed by a slightly bitter taste, not overpowering, but just enough to still be enjoyable.

Ariel ordered a glass of iced tea and prompted Reea to order a drink.

It was unlikely the lounge had Slug-o-Cola, so she ordered a glass of ice water.

"So I understand we are sharing an office. Have you seen the office yet?"

"I did see the office," said Reea. "I was going to ask if you wanted to share or if you want separate offices. I'm the new girl, so I'll follow your lead."

She was not used to sharing an office but was willing to share one with Reea. She did not need to think that long to decide to share the office with her.

"I am ok with sharing the office with you. You can move some personal items in when you are ready. I am not used to sharing an office so it may be hard for me to adjust to that for a bit. Tell me about yourself so we can get to know each other better."

Reea was going to ask Ariel to talk about herself, but Ariel got there first. Reea always wanted to have the advantage in every situation, so she sidestepped the question.

"Before we get personal, I'd like to ask you something professional. What do you think about contacting engineering and having holo emitters installed in our office? It could help ease a person when they talk with us if we could counsel while in a more comfortable environment. Of course, the higher-ups would need to give their approval, but you're senior counselor, so I'm asking you first."

She considered the question. "Yes that would be great. I have something like that on Mars I have used a few times during a session. Anything else you wish to ask?"

"No, that's all," said Reea. "I'm ready to get started. What's it like serving here on the Illuminar? This is my first starship assignment."

"Well it has been very exciting. We have been to the Trill home planet. I bought the stuffed animals in our office now from Trill. The lion I call Simba and the Elephant I call Dumbo. We also had a mission on Bajor that proved to be very interesting. You can read the logs for more details of those missions. As far as serving on the Illuminar, everyone is kind and understanding to work with. Tell me about your time at the Academy. Did you have any hobbies you enjoyed there? If you read my bio you know I was a cheerleader on Betazed growing up and a champion gymnast."

While listening to Ariel, Reea snacked on another handful of beetles, followed by a gulp of ice water to wash them down.

"That's why I wanted to be on a starship. Serving on Earth was okay, but out here is where you experience and learn. It's where you meet all kinds of interesting people." Reea paused to reflect on the journey so far that brought her to the Illuminar.

"As you can surmise, being one of only a few Ferengi serving in Starfleet, it was an adjustment. It took time for me to be accepted. Once I was, I enjoyed it. I love studying and learning." Reea didn't mention all the Federation credits she won from other cadets playing Texas Hold 'Em.

"I also play a flute," said Reea. "Not a fancy one like you'd see in a symphony. A small one." She held her hands about a foot apart. "It helps me relax."

Reea always preferred telling as little about herself as possible, but after only a few minutes, she liked Ariel.

"Yes music is a great way to relax. I sing pretty well. If you wish, I can sing something for you. I like popular women artists from the late 20th century Terra. I do a lot of classic rock but there are other artists I like."

Reea didn't know if Ariel meant now, but if she was willing, why not?

"Sure. Go ahead."

She got up on the stage and thought of trying something from Heart. Crazy on You was probably not the best choice so she went with Magic Man.

Reea couldn't believe Ariel was actually going to sing. The lounge had a nice crowd, though it wasn't overflowing. She didn't understand most of the words, but she liked the loud, intense music. When Ariel had finished, she came back to her seat.

"That was really good," said Reea.

"Thank you. Now that you have seen me sing, tell me what you like to do."

"I enjoy reading and learning, but I especially enjoy earning profit." Reea smiled.

She expected a response like this from a Ferengi. What she wanted to hear was something Reea liked to do beside the typical Ferengi pursuits. She nodded at the response.

"What do you do for fun?"

Reea didn't understand the question. "I enjoy reading and learning, but I especially enjoy earning profit."

She saw that she was not going to get anywhere with this question so she called the server over to order dinner. She gathered all the information she needed to work with her for now. She will learn more as they work together in the office.

Ariel appeared to be satisfied with Reea's answer. She got the server's attention so they could order. Reea hoped the menu had choices she would enjoy.

NRPG: Ariel's song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vlAdMeZSfw>

(reply none)
(posted by Edward & Renee)

Ariel called for Geehoff to join her here to act as a mediator between the weirs and the Keepers clan so a bridge can be established again. As she waited for Geehoff to come, she made telepathic contact with Riven Milas to inform him of her intentions.

:: Ambassador Milas. This is Ariel Trei. I am here in the Athid Weir trying to establish a bridge between the Weirs and the Keeper Clan. I am waiting for Geehoff to help facilitate that. Lets hope we are successful. Trei Out:::

(Reply Milas, Geehoff)
(Posted by Edward)

(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony Lounge - ACOUNS ACMO LT JG Ariel Trei)

She sat in the lounge and sipped on iced tea while munching on nutty beetles. She made a log on her PADD reporting on the effort to mediate between the Keepers Clan and the Weirs. With the help of Geehoff, she was able to get the process started. She munched on some more beetles reflecting on the relationship she had with Geehoff. She liked the man. Perhaps she will see him again at Deep Space 9 Station or the new planet the Sharlayans are going to. Deep space 9 would be preferable since it is closer in time. She ended the log and looked upon the Sharlayan ship one last time. She made a gesture of goodbye until they will meet again.

(Reply None)

(Posted by Edward)

Mission: The Uncaring Stars

Day: 12

Stardate: 2445.10.25

(USS Illuminar - Bridge - CO- Captain Sekal- 0900)

The ship was ready with everyone aboard. Everyone that is except for the Ambassadors who would be remaining behind. The logistics of what had been accomplished were formidable but the work was still ongoing. Ambassador Mias had been rescued but had elected to remain behind to mediate between the Keepers and the True Sharlayans. It was Sekal's understanding that the leaders of the sect had been shaken by the news that the destination chosen by their gods had been nearly destroyed but they had rallied and altered their stance only slightly. Only with a coherent voice would the Sharlayans be acceptable to the Eridani and Dr. Mias was confident that that could be accomplished. Some of his crew had stayed behind to safeguard the Ambassadorial party and the newly constructed USS Tolliver was on its way to pace the Sharlayan ship and eventually remove Riven and Michaella after the negotiations were concluded, hopefully successfully.

The fusion reactors installed had been tested and were working satisfactorily. The temperature within Kal'Shar had climbed steadily and was expected to peak in three weeks time at a chilly (to a Vulcan) 86° Fahrenheit, 8° above the mean temperature upon their arrival. The spectrum of their internal "sun" had been determined to be at near optimal levels.

The unloading of the freighters had been a herculean task and only just completed. The Forlorn Hope and Hope Reborn were even now preparing to warp back to Bajor. The unexpected windfall of food had changed the outlook of the Sharlayans significantly. No longer were they staring hunger in the face but were faced with another dilemma... how to eat or store all of the produce that had arrived. The Sharlayans were familiar with the drying of certain vegetables and were using those techniques in an effort to extend the life of some of the fresh produce they had received and were turning some of the fruit into juice. Dried beans and grain were easily stored where they could find or make room. The process of storing it all was still underway. Reports also noted that the colonists themselves had opened the heart up for storage and were now mixing more freely with the rest of their brethren. The true thoughts and aims of the colonists however were still clouded in mystery.

The ailment of the children of the True Sharlayans had been identified as a missing enzyme in their systems which caused them to be unable to properly break down the gluten in the emergency rations.

This had caused a virile reaction from the IgG antibodies within their systems as the biological material had been identified as an invading pathogen. The reaction had been suppressed by medication and supplements provided to stimulate the production of the enzyme.

Admiral Skeese had also been informed privately of the heart valve issue within his own body and given an option of treatments. Michaella Kirien-Mias was a medical professional and had everything necessary on hand to tackle the issue pending his decision.

Needless to say the cultural survey was still ongoing and would continue until all parties were satisfied or an impasse was reached. Until the Eridani were satisfied Kal'Shar would not have its course altered. But there was optimism that the factions on Kal'Shar would come to terms. Once the Ambassador was removed by the Tolliver it would depart.

Sekal concluded reading the report and forwarded it to command along with his recommendation that a succession of smaller ships should keep pace with the generation ship until it arrived at its destination in order to monitor its progress and the integrity of its systems.

He then looked about the bridge until Lieutenant Grey Wolf called out. "Captain the freighters have entered warp."

"Thank you Lieutenant. Is the course for Vulcan laid in?"

"Yes sir. Ready to initiate on your order."

"Engage and enter warp when clear."

"Engaging now sir."

The Illuminar sheared away from Kal'Shar's course and began picking up speed quickly.

"Going to warp."

The engine harmonics changed and Illuminar sprang ahead causing the doppler shift to accelerate.

"Warp factor sir?"

"Maximum warp Lieutenant."

Sekal looked to his right where Dieter Gregory was seated rather than Ops. ""Lieutenant Gregory you have the Conn."

(Reply: Gregory)

The Vulcan stood up and moved to the Ready Room. He had changed the command shifts back to their original slots. Commander Verin would be taking over at 1400. For the rest of this shift his Chief of Operations and 3rd officer would be "running the show" with Sekal available. Gregory's two week stint with the Captain had begun.

The Illuminar would be at Vulcan in a little over 2 days time and a mistake would be rectified. Sekal himself would be looking into why Ensign T'Mur had slipped through the cracks in the system... and recommending action if warranted.

(Reply: Gregory, All)

(Posted by Charles G)

As the Illuminar left the Sharlayan ship, Gregory was filled with a sense of accomplishment. While there was still work to be done, the Sharlayans were well on their way to a new home, and he was sure the Ambassador would right the issues among the people. The engines would work, the people would have food. A win for Star Fleet.

"Lieutenant Gregory, you have the Conn."

It was time. He was going to be learning the ropes from the Captain. His first official day as third officer.

"Aye sir," he replied. Standing as the Captain stood.

He watched as the Captain entered the ready room before sitting down.

"Stations update," he called out. "Operations?"

Ensign Kud turned his chair. "Operations reports all systems are nominal. I am compiling the list of minor repairs to be forwarded for your approval sir. There is a request here from Ensign Reaa from several days ago that you have not addressed."

Gregory nodded. The last couple of days were a blur of finishing the work, with double shifts the norm. He hadn't had time to review the councilors request. "Thank you Ensign. Make sure to review the current supply levels so we can request resupply at Vulcan. I am sure we are depleted from our recent efforts."

"Science?" he called out.

(Reply Alyl)

Gregory nodded, "Thank you Mr. Alyl."

"Engineering. Mr. Matrix?"

(Reply Matrix)

"Thank you Mr. Matrix. When Ensign Kud has the work orders together, please oversee the assignments."

Gregory turned to face Tactical, "Tactical? Ms. T'Mur."

(Reply T'Mur)

Gregory made the appropriate notes in the ships log. It should be an uneventful trip to Vulcan, which would give him time to review bridge procedures. But first he tapped his Comm badge. "Ensign Reaa, please report to the bridge."

(Reply Reaa)

(Reply - Alyl, T'Mur, Matrix)

(Posted by Tim)

--END TRANSMISSION-