

(Archanis IV - Camp Bella Woods - Landing Pad - Marine 2LT Charles Temerity - 1712)

(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - ICU Ward - Scientific R&D Vice-Admiral Saleke - 1730)
(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - Third floor, Room 37A - Vice-Admiral Saleke & & Strat Ops Admiral Sophie Verin - 1800)
(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - Third floor, Room 37A - Scientific R&D Vice-Admiral Saleke & Illuminar FO Commander Sienna Verin - 1813)
(USS Illuminar - Landing Bay - 2LT Charles Temerity - 1830)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 3 - Captain's Quarters - CO, Captain Sekal - 2255)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 2300)
(USS Illuminar — Quarters — EO ENS/jg Dano Vermyx — 2300)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 2303)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal- 2305)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - a1/O CMDR Dieter Gregory - 2307)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 2309)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 3 - Captain's Quarters- CO, Captain Sekal - 2315)

(USS Illuminar — Engineering Mechanical "Shop" — EO ENS/jg Dano Vermyx — 2317)
(USS Edmun Hilary - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 2350)

(USS Edmund Hilary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 2351)

DAY 2 - 2446.05.11

(USS Illuminar -- personal quarters -- Deck 2 -- 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice -- 0200)
(USS Edmun Hilary - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston and Leeza Pel -0400)

(USS Edmund Hilary – Cabin – ACONN Alex Dyson – 0403)

(USS Edmund Hillary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 0415)
(USS Edmund Hilary - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 0416)

(USS Edmund Hilary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 0417)

(USS Edmund Hilary - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston -0419)
(USS Edmund Hilary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 0420)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay - Pilot Ensign Vic 'Raid' Montero - 0700)
(Starbase 12 – Personal Guest Quarters – Medic - Ensign (jg) Jason Bell – 0700)
(New Romulus - The Dive - Klingon Embassy Lawyer Vag'Has - 0825)
(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building-Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0900)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 7 - Marine Camp Peleliu (cargo bay 1) - Major Audie Murphy - 0900)

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy - Prime Office - Ambassador Gosen – 0903)
(New Romulus, Eryx – Police Station – Police Officer Sam Wavor – 0905)
(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building-Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0906)
(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building-Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0906)
(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building-Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0906)
(New Romulus, Eryx - Police Station, Main Office - Civilian Yenna Valerius - 0907)

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building-Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak and Ambassaor Gosen – 0915)

(New Romulus – Klingon Embassy, Office – Legal Officer Vag'Has – 0917)

(New Romulus, Klingon Embassy - Basement/Brig - Civilian Mac Dyson and Lawyer Vag'Has - 0930)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - CEO Office - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 0930)

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building- Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0930)

(New Romulus, Eryx – Police Station, Main Office – Police Officer Sam Wavor – 0930)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 7 - Marine Camp Peleliu (cargo bay 1) – 2LT Charles Temerity - 0903)

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy - Grand Reception Hall - Klingon Ambassaor Gosen – 0935)

(USS Illuminar – Kelly Long's Quarters – SO Kelly Long – 0945)

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy, Grand Reception Hall - Ambassador Gosen – 0945)

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building- Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak and Gertran Strayner – 0945)

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy, Grand Reception Hall - Legal Officer Vag'Has - 0947)

(USS Illuminar – Sickbay – SO Kelly Long – 0955)

(USS Illuminar -- CMO Office -- Deck 5 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice -- 0957)

(USS Illuminar -- CMO Office, Deck – SO Kelly Long – 0958)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 1000)

(New Romulus, Klingon Embassy - Lobby - Civilian Mackenzie Dyson - 1000)

(USS Illuminar -- CMO Office -- Deck 5 -- CM/3XO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1001)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – SO Kelly Long – 1002)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1005)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 1008)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1010)

(New Romulus, Capital City – Roof – Gunnery Sergeant Emile Schofield – 1011)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 1013)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1015)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1015)

(New Romulus, Eryx Clinic – Emergency Room – Gunnery Sergeant Emile Schofield – 1020)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office -- Deck 5 – CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice - 1020)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 Cargo Bay 1 (Camp Peleliu) - Marine Major Audie Murphy - 1020)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – SO Kelly Long – 1022)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office -- Deck 5 –CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice – 1025)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 7 - Upper Cargo Bay 1 - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1025)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – SO Kelly Long - 1026)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 Cargo Bay 1 (Camp Peleliu) - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1029)

(New Romulus, Klingon Embassy – Office – Legal Officer Vag'Has – 1030)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office - Deck 5 – CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice - 1030)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office - Deck 5 – CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice - 1030)

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – SO Kelly Long - 1031)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, hallway - Gunnery Sergeant Kowalski - 1035)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, hallway - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1037)

The view from sickbay wasn't an unusual sight for Jana but at this angle, she could just see one of the exterior windows, the window was annoying her, she couldn't put her finger on what it was.

Unbearable pain shot through her body, she screamed, as if someone had just stabbed her in the stomach... it wasn't going well and the hand she was squeezing was suffering, suffering bad but the owner took it on the chin and only slightly weak at the knees.

... many hours later ...

“Yes Jana?”, said the Betazoid doctor who had made the trip over to help. For whatever reason, the USS Wraith was devoid of most of her crew and luckily, or unlucky for the bearer of the slightly bruised hand, the sister ship of the Wraith, the Spectre had been nearby.

The Spectre hung outside the window of Sickbay and Doctor Michaela Kirien-Mias had made a house call. She may have been listed on the roster as a medical researcher but expertly Michalla had taken charge of sickbay and the past 19 hours of constant work had not slowed her down.

Remae got his hand back as Jana dozed for a moment, he looks at Jason and quietly said, "Good luck kid, you are going to need it.", as his commbadge rang, he took to a corner of the room to take it.

“Doctor, I have to leave, the Spectre has been recalled to Earth and I suspect the Wraith won’t be far behind.”, he said heading for the door, “Captain?”, asked one of the other senior officers, questioning why he was dashing off.

(Posted by Anthony Keen)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2 - Quinna's Quarters- 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice 1440)

“Not me, Lieutenant,” Alex began. “I was talking to other people. But I’m pretty sure she was around here somewhere,” He turned to Vermyx. “Over to you, Dano. You’ve seen her?”

Tegian looked around at the mess. He hadn't noticed Dano Vermyx amongst the carnage. "Ensigns. I heard the last bit of the Lieutenant Commander's speech. I don't know who started this, but I expect both of you to stay until the last piece of debris is picked up and this place is restored to its pristine form. I need to find Lieutenant Trei and then I'll come back and lend a hand."

Tegian paused to get a reply from both Ensigns and then headed around the room.

(Reply Vermyx, Dyson)

Tegian made the circuit around the room, looking for Ariel.

(Reply Trei, Any)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

Tegian, near the entrance, "Has anyone seen Lieutenant Trei?"

“Not me, Lieutenant,” Alex began. “I was talking to other people. But I’m pretty sure she was around here somewhere,” He turned to Vermyx. “Over to you, Dano. You’ve seen her?”

A significantly intoxicated Iotian merely shrugged.

Tegian looked around at the mess. He hadn't noticed Dano Vermyx amongst the carnage. "Ensigns. I heard the last bit of the Lieutenant Commander's speech. I don't know who started this, but I expect both of you to stay until the last piece of debris is picked up and this place is restored to its pristine form. I need to find Lieutenant Trei and then I'll come back and lend a hand."

Tegian paused to get a reply from both Ensigns and then headed around the room.

"Aah—I dunno from nuthin'," said Dano. "M'still tryin' t'figger out where my drinkin' buddy went." Vermyx looked under the table to check for Klingsons and nearly fell out of his chair. "Oop!" he blurted and hastily got himself back upright, with some effort. "Lend a hand? Sure. I got two'a those." Getting up to help took two attempts. The first such effort was an abortive launch which landed Vermyx back in his chair. The second try was much more successful. "Hey! Has anyone ever noticed the walls are crooked?"

(Reply Alex, Ariel, Tegian, any)

(Posted by Frank)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar — Deck 4, Explorers Lounge SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 21.05)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Explorers Lounge - CEO Lieutenant Tegan Pex - 2107)

Tegian had almost made a complete circuit of the Prancing Pony when he found Ariel sitting at one of the few undamaged tables, alone. Her challenge to him was, "What do you want?" And that surprised him. Perhaps the party hadn't gone as she'd hoped or she was overwhelmed by the events of the past few days. He decided to ignore it.

He presented the polished wooden box with the House of Mogh on the top. Tegian handed her an ornate key for the lock. "This is for you, Lieutenant Trei. I made it as a present in celebration of you passing the Rite and obtaining your own House." Tegian repeated one of the few Klingon phrases he could speak without stumbling over, "SoHDaq qeyllS qa' ylnja!" (May the spirit of Kahless dwell within you!)

He set the box down on the table in front of Ariel and opened it. Inside, set in their own molded holders, were a matching pair of single-handed mek'leths. "These are custom fitted to your hands. As you can see, your House crest is on the blades. I hope you never have to use them to shed blood, but I thought you should have weapons of your heritage and your House. Congratulations Ariel Trei."

(Reply Trei)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Explorers Lounge SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 21.09)

She was presented with a gift from Tegan. A beautiful box with the House of Mogh on top. Inside were two daggers custom fit to her hands. It was the hope that she never had to use them to shed blood. She had the same belief that she never needed to do so. She looked at the gift then looked at Tegan gratefully.

"Thank you. This will hold a prominent place in the house. I invite you to the house when you are able for tea. Thank you very much."

(Reply Tegan iyw)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Explorers Lounge - CEO Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 2111)

"Thank you. This will hold a prominent place in the house. I invite you to the house when you are able for tea. Thank you very much," replied Ariel.

Tegian smiled, glad that his gift had been well received. "I would be honored, Ariel. I apologize for being late to the party," he surveyed the wreckage, "but then again, perhaps it's better that I was. It took me a little longer to finish your present than I was expecting."

"I told them that I'd help clean this place up, although I'd almost be tempted to beam the mess into the sun and start over." With a smile and chuckle, Tegian gave Ariel a nod and started to help the others restore the Prancing Pony to a semblance of order.

(Reply None)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(Earth, South Africa, Pretoria – Victorson Clinic, Doctor Donald Victorson's Office – Wendy Victorson – 0832)

Wendy Victorson was busy packing up her father's belongings. He had passed away peacefully in sleep last a week ago and had been buried three days later. ~It still smells like him.~ She hadn't been able to find the courage to start packing up his office until today. Well, some of his office. The furniture and the files would remain, but all of the personal stuff belonged to her now. She had cleared the rest of the office already and was now working on his desk.

~At least it'll be left in good hands.~ Her father had been preparing to hand over the clinic for the past three years. He had been the only doctor on staff, but he had decided that the time had come to expand the clinic staff. So he had trained two doctors to replace him, Kevin Conroy and Bruce Wayne. Conroy and Wayne were the human doctors. But to they had convinced Victorson that to keep the people healthy, you also needed to keep the animals healthy. So the clinic was also getting a new veterinarian branch.

Finally, version 2.0 would include a psychologist called Harley Quinn. It was Doctor Quinn who would be moving into her father's old office. Wendy finished the drawer she had been working on and reached the last one. Oddly enough, it was locked. She pressed her thumb on the scanner and it clicked open. The only thing inside was a paper folder, which was even odder. When she had been a child, her father had used old-fashioned paper files in folders.

But as part of the preparation process, they had digitized everything. It had been a good way for Conroy and Wayne to get up to speed on past cases. The paper copies had been put in storage off-site, so that they could serve as secondary back-ups. This didn't change the fact that all the files here should be digital.

They were all stored in the clinic computer system, with PADDs holding the primary back-ups stored in filing cabinets. She read the name on the folder. ~Kelly Long. Oh.~ She opened the folder. There was the usual paperwork, but what drew her attention was the handwritten letter that was had her named on it. Wendy opened the letter and read the note at the top.

(Reply Solice, any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

After another late night working and debating the biology quantum physics, the two scientists made it to the lab early.

Teller pulled out the percolator, an item they picked up on Earth. It made a much better tasting coffee than the replicator. Measuring the coffee out, he started the machine. The smell of the brewing coffee was enough to wake up the dead, and Teller hovered around it, taking in the aroma.

Finally the coffee was brewed. Teller took two mugs and filled them both, handing one to Penn. “Johnny Guitar to the Dancing Kid in the saloon.”

Penn took the mug from his partner and smiled, “Vienna, to Johnny Guitar, in the bar.”

A beep and flashing light came from one of Teller's terminals. "Helga Brandt to James Bond," he exclaimed. Setting the coffee down on a clear space, he started typing. Finally he finished his typing and sat back watching the screens in front of him.

Teller sat quietly, watching the screens plotting the data he fed it. He broke his reverie to make more coffee. Hundreds of data points, with a single point that was the Illuminar. Solving the n-dimensional problem would even take the computer of the Illuminar some time to digest and solve.

The screen finally settled on a single solution to the problem. Teller looked at the results and a smug grin grew on his face on his face. “ET phone home,” he said to Penn.

Penn joined Teller to look at the data that had been compiling. He traced the information with his finger and then stopped. He looked at Teller with wide eyes. “Vincent Gambini to Mona Lisa Vito, in the courtroom, about the car.”

Teller rubbed his hands together, like a kid at Christmas. “Venkman on backpacks. Stanz to the Hotel Manager.”

He went over to a clean worktable, as three others had projects in various stages of completion. Teller brought his tools over before sitting down at the computer again. Lost in thought, he hummed the tune to a classic 1960's show.

Soon, he finished his idea and popped it on the monitor.

The two security officers headed out and up to the Officer's Watch,

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Officer's Watch - - 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice and CO, Captain Sekal - 1310)

Quinna thought the captain had a valid question. The reply, "Again, I apologize for my lack of clarity. I thought, perhaps, it would be clear. In my estimation, do I believe that counseling treatments be sufficient? I would not have made such a recommendation if I did not believe so." Quinna nodded. Seemed reasonable.

Temas continued, "Is she fit for duty, I would say yes. Her current emotional issues do interfere with her ability to perform duties that are commensurate with the responsibilities given to a cadet." Quinna gave a hard look at Temas, What the f'ers was he talking about? Fit for duty but her emotional issues interfere with her duties. Quinna wondered why the two different stances on the same issue.

"As far as assuring there will be no recurrence of her behavior, I cannot, at this time, guarantee that. It is my... professional opinion that she was put in a position to make a decision that she was not able to judge for herself. But in my opinion, that is correctable and she can earn that position back. Of course, I am not a doctor of medicine, so I cannot attest to her medical condition. I would have to leave that decision to our medical staff." Quinna wondered which of the crew examined her after she beamed aboard the ship.

Quinna sent a message to Captain Sekal that they should talk. She had some concerns with the arguments.

He received the note and looked down at Quinna, nodded and turned back to the others. "There will be a short recess while I confer with Doctor Solice. You will be recalled when that is concluded."

(Reply: All)

He waited until they had cleared the room before taking his seat and turning to her.

"Yes Doctor?"

"If this is medical, then someone dropped the ball. Ensign Long was never seen by anyone in medical after the incident. We cannot make such decisions. But Also I am concerned about what Counselor Temas said. He claimed she was fit for duty, but then said that her emotional state interfered with that duty. It cannot be both. I hope I am being clear." Quinna thought she was circling in her words.

"Your concern is shared. Counselor Laredo gave conflicting statements about her psychological state. What is your recommendation?"

"Well, given what I just heard in there, I do not believe she is fit for duty. But I also question how she made it out of the academy if she had those issues, to begin with. But the question is, did she knowingly leave her post? Yes. I think her reason why was a reach."

"As noted, her breach of standing orders was without question. All security personnel on the planet were aware of them. Her decision to vacate her assigned position was made in breach of that standing order as was her decision not to notify her Commanding Officer for clearance first. Her error is unjustifiable."

"And your thoughts on everything else? Did we fail her as a staff?" Quinna asked though she did not see how they did.

"Negative." He replied. "All personnel are expected to act with decorum in the performance of their duties and Ensign Long has had no record of similar actions during her nine month period on the ship."

The defense's claim of improper training is questionable at best. At some point every crew member must take responsibility for their actions and this is that point."

“I was thinking that as well. I have not heard or read anywhere where she takes that responsibility but blames others.” Quinna said. “One of my first classes was owning up to my responsibilities, good and bad. But then I was raised like that as well. As an ensign, I assume she also has an officer career path ahead of her, maybe she should rethink that.” Quinna said without thinking.

"Your reasoning is logical and I am in agreement. Is there anything else?"

"If she is to remain onboard and seek counseling, I suggest she is seen by a different counselor," Quinna recommended.

His brows slanted as he tilted his head. "Fascinating. You appear to have had the same thoughts as myself. Doctor, at times you have the ability of being a highly logical being."

“Sometimes being logical is just doing things that just make sense. Thank you for talking with me beforehand.”

He nodded. "This was the reason you were asked to take part. If that is all I will recall the assembly."

At her nod he stood to his feet and activated his comm. "All personnel involved in the hearing are recalled."

(Reply: All involved.)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 , Officer's Watch – SO Kelly Long – 1311)

After she had made her statement, there hadn't been anything to do for Kelly. ~Well, except the old-fashioned wait and see.~ Now, things were clearly headed towards the verdict. She wished Alex was here, but he hadn't been on the surface. So he was not allowed to attend. Of course, she would tell him everything later. But she still missed him. Finally, Captain Sekal turned to the room.

"There will be a short recess while I confer with Doctor Solice. You will be recalled when that is concluded."

Kelly simply nodded and walked out the room. She needed some time alone, so she found a quiet corner and closed her eyes. In her mind, she could hear her parents mocking her already. Telling her how they had been right and she had been wrong. Despite the fact that they had still be locked up when she had left for Starfleet Academy, they had still found a way to ventilate their disagreement with her decision. Two letters worth of scolding had been send her way. She had deleted them, but they had still hurt. Finally, the captain's voice came over the intercom.

=^=All personnel involved in the hearing are recalled.=^=

She took a deep breath and walked back into the room. ~Time to get it over with.~ Kelly remembered telling Laredo that she would do whatever it took to fix this mess. ~This is where the spoon stick to the spoon.~ But she had meant it, so now it was time to pay the price for those words.

[illegible][illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Officer's Watch - - 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice and CO, Captain Sekal - 1325)

Sekal stood with his arms crossed as they entered and took their places, his eyes watching them carefully.

When they were in place he spoke. "It is the finding of this hearing that Ensign Long is not fit for duty due to the testimony of Counselor Laredo therefore she is hereby removed from duty and remanded to treatment by Doctor Solice until she is deemed fit to return to active duty. In addition Ensign Long is to be given a full psychological and medical evaluation before treatment begins. Doctor Solice is a certified Counselor and the necessity of changing the giver of treatment was discussed and agreed upon by both myself and the Commander. The schedule for treatment and its duration will be set by her and Ensign Long's return to duty will be at her discretion."

There was not a single face in the room that appeared pleased with the ruling so far which fazed him not in the least but he wasn't finished.

"Ensign Long refused to take full responsibility for the incident but placed the blame on her trainers at the academy. During her time off duty she will begin scheduled meetings twice a week with Lieutenant Commander T'Mur who will ensure that she is completely conversant with StarFleet regulations and officer decorum so that there will not be a repeat of this faulty behavior in the future, if it should then the responsibility will be Ensign Long's alone."

He paused for a moment to let this sink in, his eyes directly on her. "And lastly, if there is a repeated violation in the future under my command by Ensign Long in deserting her post in violation of standing orders she will be taken directly to the nearest starbase or Federation world where she will be set before a full courts martial and tried to the fullest extent of Federation military law and serve the penalties for her breach of conduct."

He picked up the striker and rang the ship's bell. "This hearing is adjourned."

(Reply: All involved)

(Posted by Kris Bailey and Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1. Officer's Watch – SO Kelly Long – 1330)

The Captain's judgement was harsh, but it could have been a lot harsher. ~I abandoned my post, they could have kicked me out of the fleet altogether.~ And the Captain had made it clear that if she broke the rules again, her

career would be over. But that was a problem for later. For now, she had demons to deal with it. Otherwise, she would not make it that far. Captain Sekal finished his verdict.

"This hearing is adjourned."

"Ensign," Doctor Solice began. "the hard part is over, let's meet for coffee in the morning. 1000 hours in my office. We can go from there."

"Yes, ma'am." Kelly said.

"I look forward to seeing you," Solice said.

“Yes, ma’am.”

Solice turned to Laredo, but Kelly walked out. Her meeting with Solice was not until tomorrow and she would need the rest of today to unwind a bit. That and her conversation with Alex, which she was not looking forward to. ~Unwind, Kelly, unwind.~ And she had an idea or two on how to do that.

(Reply None)
(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

"This hearing is adjourned."

Quinna stood and stretched her back. She moved towards Tamas and Ensign Long. She looked at the Ensign, “Ensign, the hard part is over, let's meet for coffee in the morning. 1000 hours in my office. We can go from there.”

(Reply Long)

"I look forward to seeing you." Quinna smiled.

(Reply Long, IYW)

Quinna then turned and shook Temas's hand, "You did a great job."

(Reply Temas, IYW)

(Reply any)

(Posted by Kris Bailey)

[illegible]

The words hit Laredo's brain like a frying pan to the face. "It is the finding of this hearing that Ensign Long is not fit for duty due to the testimony of Counselor Laredo therefore she is hereby removed from duty and remanded to treatment by Doctor Solice until she is deemed fit to return to active duty."

Everything else was background noise as he attempted to decipher the meaning behind those words. It was true that there are times that he still has trouble truly grasping spoken words. Telepathic communication was so much simpler. Nothing could be misconstrued. There were no hidden messages.

He knew that when he had taken the job to defend Kelly that it was an uphill battle. He, himself, offered most of what was handed down by Sekal. But to lose Kelly as a client? Especially due to his own testimony? That just didn't make sense. He wanted to protest, but his voice just wouldn't work. And he was certain that his protestations would fall on deaf ears.

He looked at Kelly, looking crestfallen. He had no words to offer her. Apologies and platitudes would sound hollow right now. He had not done his job. If anything he had made things worse for her. Now she has lost the one person that she actually trusted. He could only imagine the devastation she must be feeling. The urge to reach into her mind was nearly irresistible. But he did not. He needed to talk to Riven.

The next thing he heard was, "This hearing is adjourned." Then a bell rang and the room started to empty. Solice stood up and stretched, then headed towards them.

"Ensign," she said, looking at Kelly, "the hard part is over, let's meet for coffee in the morning. 1000 hours in my office. We can go from there."

Temas wasn't sure that the doctor was correct. He believed that the hardest part was just ahead of them. But it was no longer his place to say so, so he remained silent.

(Reply Long)

"I look forward to seeing you." Quinna smiled.

(Reply Long, IYW)

Quinna then turned and shook Temas's hand, "You did a great job."

Temas gave her a weak smile, but shook her hand. "I wish I could believe that."

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Ready Room - CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur and CO, Captain Sekal-1421)

T'Mur stood in front of her CO and mentor, barely able to contain herself. She wrung her hands behind her back as she forced the rest of her body to remain calm. Her breathing was steady, and she maintained her heart rate, but her mind was working fast and furiously.

"Captain," she began, "I just learned that Sien... Commander Verin has just regained consciousness. I have verification from Admiral Verin. I..." breath, "We need to return to Earth."

He picked up one of the glasses, took a long drink then gave an affirmative nod. "I will of course clear this with command. As soon as we have permission we will divert to Earth with all speed."

T'Mur paused. She wanted to urge him to leave now, but that was not the logical decision. The drive to be with her mate was strong, but logic needed to be maintained. Not for the first time T'Mur envied the captain his emotional control. She had often contemplated asking him for some advice, but these were matters that required a great deal of time, of which she had precious little.

"I understand," she replied, maintaining a calmness that she did not feel. She turned to leave then stopped and turned back. "Perhaps, I could take a leave and head back to Earth on a shuttle?"

T'Mur already knew, logically, that was a bad idea. By the time that they completed their purpose on Archanis the Illuminar would easily overtake her. But how could she just stand around and wait?

Sekal stepped around the desk and motioned her to sit down as he took his own seat. "Lieutenant Commander let me be concise. Illuminar is scheduled for a layover here of less than a day to take aboard new crew and I expect we will receive permission to return for my first officer. Before you could make the trip to Earth in a shuttle, Illuminar would have made the transit and been on the way to her next mission."

T'Mur nodded, and hung her head for a moment. When she looked up she managed a semblance of emotional control. "Of course. Forgive my impatience Captain. It's just..." she took a breath and centered herself. "Never mind. It is difficult sometimes, to maintain my own emotional control when it comes to Commander Verin."

He remembered vividly that moment on the bridge when he had lost control and been near to committing an unforgivable offense over a female. In some manner he understood. "I understand. Impatience can be more difficult to control than other emotional content. I am gratified to hear that she is recovering and will be more so when she is once again on the ship. In the interim I suggest you spend your energy preparing for her return."

He clasped his hands before him on the desk and leaned forward. "But be assured that if there is any deviation from my current plan I will do what is necessary to ensure your arrival on Earth in the shortest possible time frame including leave and a shuttle should it become necessary."

Ever a sea of calmness, T'Mur drew from the strength of her CO and nodded, "I appreciate that Captain. I suppose the surprise of the news and the sudden sensation returning to our bond was unexpected and caught me off guard. I will focus on my work and begin my... nesting when off duty. I do ask that I have a moment to contact the hospital, and perhaps speak with Sienna."

"Of course. Is there anything else?"

T'Mur stood up and found herself more composed than before. "No, Captain. Thank you for your understanding."

"Your thanks are unnecessary." He watched as she left his office then settled back into the chair and raised the glass to his lips again. There had been no official transmission from Sector 001 as of yet so it seemed the logical time to contact them.

His hand reached for the comm. "Mr. William open a channel to StarFleet Command."

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Al Muir
And Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

"Orbit achieved Sir."

"Open a channel to planetary control."

The screen wavered for an instant before coming crisply into focus.

=^=Archanis planetary control. Welcome Illuminar, what can I help you with?"

Sekal noted the Andorian who had given the greeting, an older officer as the remaining Andorians in StarFleet tended to be. During the purge some thirty years ago some few had remained with the Federation while the bulk had returned to their homeworld.

"Captain Sekal here, I understand you have a detachment of marines standing by to board."

=^= Yes Captain... ^= The Andorian's antenna moved about restlessly, ^= ... they are on two hours notice. I'll send out the summons for them to muster. ^=

"Two hours..." The Vulcan tilted his head. "... what equipment is listed on their manifest?"

=^= Some big ticket items including BDU. You can use the cargo transporters if you wish but I'd recommend shuttlecraft. The boarding process will take several hours. ^=^

"Unnecessary. Do you have room at the planetary port for a Pathfinder Class ship? Illuminar can be there in time to pick them up then return to orbit."

The Andorian's antenna stopped and lifted nearly straight from his head in interest. =^= You have planetary landing capability? =^= He gave a huge grin. =^= Bay three is currently empty, I'll plot your course and send it to your navigation. They will be there. Archanis IV out.=^=

The screen blanked and a beeping tone came from Tempest's console. She looked down. "Landing plot recieved Captain."

"Take us down Lieutenant."

Tempest gave a rare smile and hit the blue alert button. "Aye, Aye sir."

Illuminar began her turn toward the course plotted, spiraling down toward planetary entry.

[illegible]

She touched the table and reached out with her mind.

=^= Opening the connection. The subspace weather is being bad, so a few moments. ^= The connection was not instantaneous, and Luma had to reroute to get a clear connection. The receptionist at the hospital appeared.

T'Mur looked at the screen calmly and said, "I need to be put through to Commander Sienna Williams-Verin's room, please."

(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - ICU - Sienna's Room - Illuminar FO Commander Sienna Verin & Strat
 Ops Chief Admiral Sophie Verin & Illuminar CSec/Tac - Lt. Cmdr. T'Mur- 1507)

Admiral Sophie Verin looked up at the chime and smiled at T'Mur, stepping closer to the screen.

T'Mur blinked to hold in her emotions, =^=I have waited this long. I can wait a little longer.=^=

Sophie moved over to Sy and gently touched her shoulder. Sienna came awake hard, startled and as Sophie had warned, very disoriented.

"Where..Where.." Sy looked around the room, shivering. Sophie wrapped a patterned blue shawl around her daughter's shoulders, a doting expression on the Admiral's face.

"Your wife is calling. The Illuminar will be here soon."

"T? T's here?" Sy's eyes focused on the screen and stared into the eyes of her Vulcan mate. "T... I'm ... I'm..." She was so disoriented. Sophie glanced back at the viewscreen.

"I'll step out to leave you two alone." The Admiral exited the room, and through the glass wall, Admiral Duke Williams was there, wrapping an arm around his wife.

T'Mur moved closer to the screen and touched it, feeling the electrical impulses from it, as if she were touching flesh. She managed a single soft word, ^=Sienna.^=

Sy continued to stare into T'Mur's eyes, a hungry expression on her face. "I broke." She said simply, the most coherent thing that she had so far managed to say. As seconds passed, Sienna was visibly becoming more oriented. And then she said something surprising, an entire phrase.

"Parted from me and never parted, never and always touching and touched. I await you." Sienna blushed lightly, a healthy blush. She wanted her mate, so badly. "I need you. Want Quinna. These Doctors don't understand me. Bring Quinna." She blinked her dark betazoid eyes rapidly as if she was trying to get moisture into them.

A single tear fell from T'Mur's eye, ^=Parted from me and never parted, never and always touching and touched. I come for you.^= She stroked the screen gently, ^=We are on our way, beloved. We will be there before long.^= Looking over her shoulder, ^=Sekal is pushing the Illuminar. I am... pushing him.^=

She sat down, without taking her eyes from the screen, ^=Sienna, I have missed you.^=

There was a movement behind her the feel of warm fur on the back of her neck. ^=Someone else had missed you as well.^= She picked up the cat and presented Kenna to the screen.

Sienna brightened at the sight of her fluffy, beloved burmese cat. "You've been brushing her for me? She's all right? Has Ensign Celeste Winters been checking on her? T'Mur... T'Mur I'm so sorry I ruined our wedding." Sienna began to cry soft tears of happiness at the sight of her mate. "Please don't leave me." And there it was, the fear that underlied Sy's psyche. Her last relationship had ended so badly, had ripped Sy open and the emotional wounds still had not healed.

T'Mur reached to the screen again, wanting to hold Sienna and comfort her, well aware of her fears. ^=I could no more cut out my own heart as I could leave you, beloved. And this is not your fault. It

just... happened.=^= She channeled a bit of Sienna's sarcasm, hoping it would comfort her. ^=The timing could have been better. Perhaps it was a sign that we needed to have a smaller wedding.=^=

Then, ruffling the fur on Kenna she set the cat aside, ^=And yes, all of Kenna's needs have been tended to. She and I, apparently, have come to an... understanding.=^=

A soft giggle came from Sy. "Was she a comfort while I was away? You know how much she means to me. " Kenna was Sy's final project in the Academy, and the two had a bond unlike most. Kenna put up with Trip, but the only being she loved was Sy. As Sy and T'Mur spoke, Sy seemed to be focussing better, orienting herself to the now.

"How is my ship? How is Sekal? Saleke stopped in apparently while I was...resting. He arranged for a Vulcan healer to come and attempt to wake me up. Did Saleke tell you?" T'Mur was legally Sienna's next of kin now that their marriage was finalized, but Sophie had been the one able to live at the hospital with her beloved daughter. "Mom said that the kids took me being..sick..hard." Sienna had lived on the Illuminar rather than the Mars residential area, dedicating herself to the ship and the flight trials. In many ways it was equally her ship as well as Sekals. And she missed him. Her relationship with Sekal was much like that of siblings. The love she had for him shone in her face.

"^=The ship is fine,^= T'Mur said. ^=You'll hear it sooner or later but there was a bit of trouble while in orbit of Qo'nos. The shuttlebay received a little damage but everything is fine now. And Sekal... he is himself. And yet he is not. It is hard to explain. He needs you as well. Just not the way I do.=^=

"In many ways he is my brother." She whispered, remembering their first real meeting when she had been kind of cranky with him, trying to ruffle his feathers. They were a team, truly. "What sort of trouble?" She noticed that T'Mur had not answered her question about Saleke. She would have to call him and thank him personally. "And Luma? Quinna?" Sy was not yet capable of getting up to touch the screen the way that T'Mur was, but she wanted to. That was obvious.

=^=Will survive her experience. There was an attempt to sabotage the ship by, what turned out to be, a Tholian plot. However, our crew was more than able to deal with that threat. But she "felt" the damage and the repairs. Mr. Laredo was able to shield her from most of the discomfort, from the explosion and from the repairs. There's no real anesthesia for a being such as Luma.=^= She paused and then, not wanting her to dwell on the bad news and went on. ^=Quinna, on the other hand, is doing well. She is acting very... pregnant. Mr. Weston has gone on some mission with Ensign Dyson to retrieve a child. Between Dr. Kyliee and myself we are managing to keep her occupied.=^=

"Quinna is pregnant? Did I know this before I.. slept? My brain is having issues mapping, and the neuro-surgeon said that it was because of the coma, and that the connections and memories will return. Are you sure that you don't mind that I collapsed at our wedding? My Mother says you won't, that you only care about me. But... T, my love, I need you here."

From behind T'Mur, through the ship's comm system Luma communicated, offering, ^= Luma can jump the ship to Earth but Our Sekal would say no. Luma misses Our Sienna too. Our Sienna is part of the ship, integral just as Luma is. There is no real Illuminar without Our Sienna. Our T'Mur is being sad but hides it well. Our Temas is becoming the bondmate our Vex was, and Luma still misses Our Vex. ^= From the holo-emitters Luma appeared behind T'Mur and leaned in, -looking- at Sienna.

=^= The sickness from jumping is fading. Luma can tell. ^=

T'Mur looked at Sy and they both said at the same time, "No. No jumping the ship" Sy looked at her mate and giggled again, sounding more like herself.

"We'll manage in our own, less efficient but slow manner Luma, but thank you for the offer," T'Mur said. Then she turned back to Sienna and touched the screen again.

=^=The pregnancy was not well known. I have only been aware recently.^= She paused, feeling a little empty inside. ^=I miss you my love. I wish I could be there with you. I should have stayed.^=

"It is the...the..." Sienna frowned, trying to concentrate unable to find the word. "You needed to take care of the ship, of Sekal, in my place. You are my mate. But before that we are..." She sighed, "Fleet. Fleet first."

T'Mur nodded. ^=That is very logical. Why is it that I do not feel very logical right now? ^= She had not realized how much she had not allowed herself to miss Sienna as much as she had. There were moments when she was alone, so she would not allow herself to be alone. She worked more so she had little reason to go back to their quarters. Now, it all seemed to come flowing out all at once. ^=I feel... very emotional.^=

"You don't have..me. Are you ah, near pon far again?"

T'Mur couldn't help but giggle, then she regained her composure. ^=No love. I am not entering pon farr. I just miss you.^=

"I dreamt about that. I dreamt about so much. I felt like I was lost in a vortex of memories, of time."

Luma chimed in, ^= Was the jumping sickness. Being in multiple places at the same time has that effect. The doctors did not understand. Did..the great one come to you? ^= This was how Luma's people referred to the Q.

"I'm not sure, Luma. I remember a male voice speaking to me, telling me it was time to awaken. I thought it was Sekal, it was very comforting. Luma, may I speak to my mate alone for a little bit? I need her."

=^= Our T'Mur is the other half of Our Sienna. One is not complete without the other. Luma will go now and sing the songs of celebration to the ship. ^= Luma faded, sparkly bits in the air and in the background it could be heard that Luma was indeed singing in the language of the Illuminari.

“How soon until you are here?” Sienna needed T’Mur.

=^=We have business to conclude here, then two days. But it will pass quickly. You rest. I will need you well rested when we see each other. I intend on putting you through a vigorous cardio workout.=^=

“I’m not up to that yet, but I’m sure that Quinna can fix me. Did..did you know that Saleke brought Giovanna here to see if she could help? My Mother told me. I don’t remember it. But I am looking forward to resuming my self defense training with both you and Sekal. You are right, it will pass quickly.” She continued to stare into T’Mur’s eyes. “At the appointed place?” A hint of a smile touched her lips.

T'Mur touched the image of Sienna's lips. =^=At the appointed place. My love.=^=

Sienna smiled as the connection was severed. Her mate would be here. Everything would be all right. She would be going home soon.

(reply none)

(posted by Mel and Al)

[illegible]

The last of the pallets were being double checked and tripled checked by his Marines. Not much else for him to do, but transmit the information to the Illuminar's computer and the load manifest to their operations team.

Standing outside, he watched as their ride began to descend. "Well lookie there Master Sergeant, our chariot descends from the sky. Like Helios driving the sun across the sky," he said.

"Yes indeed, sir, quite a sight," Master Sergeant Skipper replied.

"Are we ready to load?" he asked.

"Soon, Kowalski and Gloria are doing a final check of the TO and E," Skipper replied.

The Major nodded. "Lieutenant Temerity, you have everything you need?"

(reply Temerity)

"I know it would have been better to have more time with the men, but Star Fleet waits for no Marine," the major replied.

[illegible]

Charles stood by watching as Marines were checking the last of the pallets to be moved to the Illuminar, he heard the Major and the Master Sergeant talking, but not really paying much attention to the conversation. Then he heard the Major saying, "Lieutenant Temerity, you have everything you need?"

With his hands in his pockets and gave a slight shrug, “Could be better.” Was all he said not realizing that he had mentally began slip back into being a freighter captain. Immediately realized what he had done, Temerity straightened himself out, “Sir, I would have liked to have more time to work with the troops.”

"I know it would have been better to have more time with the men, but Star Fleet waits for no Marine," the major replied.

“Hey Sir, there’s a couple of things I would like to discuss with you, if I may. No need for this to be a private conversation.” Charles said.

(Reply: Murphy iyw)

Charles went straight into what he wanted to discuss “You wanted to assemble and build an elite quality unit, but we don’t have anything that distinguishes us from other units. We need a unique identifier. These Marines have become a well-trained group of ‘Buccaneers’ but with all the various Greek references I was thinking ‘Myrmidons’ after the group of soldiers that Achilles commanded during the Trojan War.”

(Reply: Murphy iyw)

“The other thing is some of the troops are starting to have quarrels with each other. I don’t know if you or the Master Sergeant have been in long enough to remember the weekly boxing matches, we used to refer to as ‘Thursday night dances’ we used to conduct back when I was a young sergeant back in the day when Christ was a Private.” Charles began to explain.

(Reply: Murphy iyw)

“Anyone that places their tags in the box is fair game regardless of rank. And the quarrel is settled and left in the ring until the next week.”

(Reply: Murphy iyw)

[illegible]

“Hey Sir, there’s a couple of things I would like to discuss with you, if I may. No need for this to be a private conversation.” Charles said.

"Shoot Mr. Temerity, What's on your mind?" Murphy asked.

“You wanted to assemble and build an elite quality unit, but we don’t have anything that distinguishes us from other units. We need a unique identifier. These Marines have become a well-trained group of ‘Buccaneers’ but with all the various Greek references I was thinking ‘Myrmidons’ after the group of soldiers that Achilles commanded during the Trojan War.” the lieutenant said.

"Yes indeed, Mr. Temerity, that is an area that I have been giving a lot of thought to. And history provides excellent examples," the major said. "I like your idea, so let's go with that."

“The other thing is some of the troops are starting to have quarrels with each other. I don’t know if you or the Master Sergeant have been in long enough to remember the weekly boxing matches, we used to refer to as ‘Thursday night dances’ we used to conduct back when I was a young sergeant back in the day when Christ was a Private.” Charles began to explain.

"I've heard of those," the major replied. "We do let the ring settle things," he added, "A good way to get out excess energy, as long as no one is hurt so that they would not be mission ready,"

“Anyone that places their tags in the box is fair game regardless of rank. And the quarrel is settled and left in the ring until the next week,” the Lieutenant added.

"You have my permission to implement these dances," the Major said.

(Reply Temerity, IYW)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(Archanis IV - Landing Port - SECO - CPO, Steven Hammons - 1705)

The roar of the ventral impulse exhaust vents vibrated through the air as the ship gently descended, its foot pads extended for landing. Starships were seldom seen from the surface of a planet and this sleek ship was causing a stir.

Port officers and staff not involved in the Landing had clustered at windows or nearby pads to watch its descent. There was whooping and laughter as she settled onto her pads and rocked slightly before coming to rest and the impulse engines were shut down.

Doors in the feet opened shortly thereafter for the marine contingent to board with their gear while Illuminar security spread out from the lifts inside them to oversee the operation and vet those coming aboard.

Steven Hammons had a broad grin on his face as he emerged and stepped onto the synthecrete. "Oh hell yes! Dirtside!" He turned to one following. "And the fresh air! What do you think Boyles?"

"Jared Boyles laughed. "I think this calls for a drink. Smell that fresh air! Helluva lot better that Qo'nos and a blue sky to boot!"

Hammons laughed and began motioning the marine contingent forward. "Step up one and all! Present your ID and cargo manifest and let's get this started. The USS Illuminar waits and her CO isn't a patient man... Vulcan!"

(Reply: Marines, any)

Posted by Charles G

(Archanis IV - Camp Bella Woods - Landing Pad - Marine Major Audie Murphy - 1710)

Their equipment on anti-grav sleds, the stevedores were positioning the pallets for loading. Another load out, away from friends and family. He'd heard the Illuminar had all the latest conveniences. He heard someone call out "Step up one and all! Present your ID and cargo manifest and let's get this started. The USS Illuminar waits and her CO isn't a patient ma... Vulcan!"

The Major raised an eyebrow. No discipline here. This was going to be a fun deployment. The Major turned around, "Marines, you heard the man. Master Sergeant, take 'em aboard. Kowalski, you watch the loading, make sure we don't forget anything."

"Aye, aye Sir," came the call from the two marines.

"You go ahead Lieutenant, check out the quarters for the men," Audie said. "I'll be along once we're loaded."

(Reply Temerity, IYW)

Audie watched the team move forward as they entered the Illuminar. He watched as Kowaloski herding the stevedores and checking off his manifest. Once they were loaded, he's have to go meet this captain and make his assessment of him. As long as he could fly the ship to where they needed to go, he would be happy. That and there was ample room for the Marines to train.

(reply Temerity, Hammons)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

Tegian had been surprised to find out they were landing the Illuminar on Archanis IV, but given the manifest he'd been sent of what the marines were bringing onboard, it made sense. There hadn't been a discussion of where to put their equipment, but he'd received a message and he stood at the entrance to Lower Cargo Bay 2 on Deck 8. He'd been here a few times and noticed it was mostly empty, but hadn't thought of it at the time. Reviewing the manifest on the PADD in front of him, he eyed the space again and shrugged. It should all fit, but he wasn't quite sure what all the pieces were.

He waited for an all clear signal and then opened the cargo bay doors and awaited the equipment.

(Reply: Marines, any)
(Posted by Keith)

(Archanis IV - Camp Bella Woods - Landing Pad - Marine 2LT Charles Temerity - 1712)

"Aye, aye Sir," came the call from the two marines.

"You go ahead Lieutenant, check out the quarters for the men," Audie said. "I'll be along once we're loaded."

“Roger that, Major. I’ll make sure quarters are lined up.” Charles said before turning and stepping onto the Illuminar.

(Reply: Murphy iyw)

(Posted by Chuck)

[illegible]

(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - ICU Ward - Scientific R&D Vice-Admiral Saleke - 1730)

"Yes Admiral, I know you wish to see Ms. Verin but you have to understand that our ICU has limited space for visitors and there are currently two Admirals visiting her who happen to be her parents. I can assure you that StarFleet is well represented here."

The Vulcan, father of Illuminar CO Sekal stood smartly before the desk with his hands cupped at the small of his back and balanced lithely on the balls of his feet. It was the unconscious and habitual posture of someone who was at ease wherever he went and not averse to outwaiting those opposed to him if necessary. And Saleke had no plans of going anywhere until his purpose for coming here had been met.

"And I assure you nurse that hospital protocols aside I will wait here until given entrance or until she is moved to another room that is more amenable to visitation. I have ample time available." His voice was calm and well modulated but laced with the steel of determination countless officers under him had remarked on in the past. The hospital would not dare toss an admiral out forcibly and his feet were firmly planted.

The nurse was getting visibly flustered with the circumstance. "Pardon me for a moment."

He nodded but didn't move an inch as she called a superior for instructions.

The woman ended the conversation after several minutes then looked up at him with a sigh. "They are moving her to a private room in fifteen minutes, can you wait that long?"

"What room?"

"Thirty seven A on the third floor."

He nodded then began walking toward the lift.

"Sir! Where are you going?"

"To wait for her of course. Thank you for your assistance."

The nurse opened her mouth to protest, realized this removed him from her hair then shut it and called ahead instead.

[illegible]

(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - Third floor, Room 37A - Vice-Admiral Saleke & & Strat Ops Admiral Sophie Verin - 1800)

Saleke was leaning against the wall outside the room as though he was a permanent fixture when the gurney rounded the corner.

Sophie was walking beside her daughter, Duke having gone back to the ranch house to take care of their cluster of foster children that they had adopted after the Incident that had devastated Earth and left

so many homeless. Sophie and Duke had land and resources and since Sophie could not have any more children conventionally, they had opened their hearts to several in need.

"Saleke! Duke went back to help our children. Our half vulcan boy is going to need help learning the kohlinar. Do you have a suggestion as to a teacher?" Sophie looked down at her exhausted daughter that was finally on her way towards recovery. "Sienna wants to talk to you, to thank you for all that you did to help her. I just heard that the Illuminar is on it's way back to Earth and due in a few days time. Sienna is looking forward to seeing her mate, and your son." Sophie looked more tired than her daughter, who was now being helped from the gurney into the larger double bed in the private room.

Sophie's voice dropped, "She needs her mate. She says that she needs Sekal as well. Sienna said that she views Sekal as the brother that she never had. The Doctors still don't know what to call what happened. The old woman on the Illuminar told us that it was called the jumping sickness." Even here Sophie was discreet about Luma's name, not wanting to draw attention to the being that lived aboard, considering that Luma was one of Starfleet's most classified secrets. "I'd like to discuss that with you at some point, not so public."

Saleke had weathered the verbal storm with aplomb, hardly even raising an eyebrow. Himself and Sophie Verin had not talked at length before but it was a simple logical extrapolation from where Sienna had inherited her breathless manner of speech. "I highly recommend the monastery on Mount Selaya for his training, as for the rest...", he cast a look inside then turned back to her, "... we have a great deal to discuss it would seem, at a time of your choosing." ~The brother she never had?~ That was a curious statement considering Trip Williams was her twin.

Sophie looked in on her daughter, the emotions clearly on her face. Sophie could be as coldly calculating and logical as any vulcan when needed. Her incredible logistical skills and unwavering dedication to Starfleet had made her the defacto head of Strat Ops, but had trapped her at the rank of Captain for far too long. Having never commanded a ship, her elevation to Admiral had come with the purging of the Roanoke dissenters in Starfleet. "I'd rather not send him to Vulcan. Is there anyone in Sector 001 that would be suitable? I know of the prejudice against half vulcans on your planet. The same prejudices exist on Earth, and my children faced it. Our son," She smiled proudly, though the exhaustion made the woman look older, "Has expressed his wishes in learning the discipline. A suitable family could not be found to adopt him."

"I have an attache' that might be suitable." He noted. "I will look into it after returning to Mars."

"And Giovanna? I understand that you brought her here. Is she settling into this universe and department? I met her once, and she isn't my daughter. So alike yet so different. Where Sienna is gentle and kind, Giovanna is cruel and cold. I don't like her using my name but it is as much hers as it is my Siennas." As Sophie watched, Sy was tucked in.

"Giovanna has been energetic, perhaps even driven...", he noted, "however I watch her closely. There are a number of advances she has been instrumental in pushing. You may rest assured that I will not allow her liberties with the technology that she can misuse." He noted that her attention was no longer on what he was saying and left it at that, her concern with her daughter was evident.

Her fatigue was also noted. "Perhaps you should return home to rest. With Commander Verin out of danger I can remain with her until another of the family arrives."

Sophie turned towards Saleke and reached out to touch the cloth of his shoulder. "Thank you. She has a long way to go, my stubborn daughter." Sophie looked back at Sy and then turned to leave before turning back to him, "I appreciate your mentorship of my daughter. Please, when you have a chance, come by the ranch house. I've learned how to make something that T'Mur likes, called a bean tamale.

It's rather spicy but good. Replicated food might be healthy but real food is much better. Do you ride horses? We have a new stallion called Jasper that I think would be a good fit for you."

"I prefer fresh produce as well, when time permits I will bring T'Kess for a visit." He had some idea of Earth mammals and was aware that horses were tame animals sometimes ridden for pleasure. That appeared illogical on the surface but he had also heard that owners of the animals were said to form a bond with them. "Thank you for the invitation. I would be gratified to observe your horses but doubt they would find me suitable as a rider."

Sophie grinned, “ We have a gentle girl named Haley, the first mount of our adopted children. She’s a little small for you but she’s a good teacher. You could ride her around the indoor ring to get a feel for it. Try it and see if you like it, I hear it’s good for Vulcans to try new things. And thank you for taking care of our girl.” Sophie walked away, the fatigue obvious on her tall frame. Her daughter had obviously not inherited her height. Stepping into the lift, the Admiral headed back downstairs, to catch a transporter back to her ranch and to sleep, now that she knew that her beloved child was going to live.

He shrugged as she walked away while wondering if she was unaware that Vulcans who had gone through Kohlinar did few things for pleasure.

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles and Mel Gatling)

[illegible]

(Earth - Central Texas Hospital - Third floor, Room 37A - Scientific R&D Vice-Admiral Saleke & Illuminar FO Commander Sienna Verin - 1813)

An exhausted Sienna was helped from the gurney onto the larger, double bed. Sy didn't understand why she was here and not in a Starfleet Medical sickbay, but the doctors here had kept her alive through her prolonged coma, and had apparently been patient with her parents. Sienna wasn't used to the kindness of civilians, and missed the discipline of the Fleet.

The nurse had brought her a glass of orange juice and when Sienna had asked for some champagne to celebrate, the nurse had glared at her and said indignantly a decided negative.

Sienna felt the touch of her Mother's mental voice, telling her that Admiral Saleke was here to visit with her and that he would be taking over the watch until older sister Skyler could report in later in the evening. When Sienna had fallen ill, the VDF had granted Skyler the home leave, to help watch over her Sister and protect her during her illness.

Sienna was positive that Admiral Saleke had a hand in that as well. He was a better mentor than she deserved.

The Vulcan rapped on the door frame after Sophie disappeared on the lift, giving the female time to make herself somewhat presentable before bursting in on her.

Sienna was dressed in the normal hospital pajamas, tucked into the warmed blankets, covered sufficiently. Her dark hair however was a mess and Sy had meant to ask her Mother to brush it. She was still too weak to do so.

Sy raised her voice, "Please come in Sir. Thank you for coming." The smile was true, she was genuinely pleased to see him.

Saleke turned and entered, spying an overstuffed easy chair nearby he moved to it and sat down. "Commander, it is gratifying to see you awake. Your mother is extremely pleased as am I."

Sy tucked the blankets more firmly around her, "Could you close the door Sir? I'd like to ask you something, and I know that this isn't a secure place to do so, but I'm not able to go elsewhere yet." The glass was see through, so closing the door would only make the conversation more private.

He did as she asked then returned to his seat. "What is your question?"

"Luma said that it was called jumping sickness that incapacitated me. She told me that the psychic imbalance was caused by Giovanna being in our universe. Luma told us that she feared that T'Mur's bond with me would have broken if I had been drawn into the dark mirror universe. Would that have happened? I don't really understand the metaphysics of what Luma did, or how she did it. Do you Sir? Can you explain how she did it? She tried to explain." Sienna looked down at her hands for a moment.

"Quantum entanglement could be ruled out considering that your mirror counterpart does not have the same energetic charge as yourself and psychic phenomenon do not lend themselves readily to scientific investigation." He crossed his right leg over the left. "As for Luma, she occupies a niche shared by many non-corporeal entities being that time has little meaning for her since her span of consciousness overlaps many time frames simultaneously." This was a subject he could expound on at length having once been a mind bondmate. "And she has the ability to place herself and by extension any in contact or close proximity with her into any timeline to which she has access. Her ability to navigate time could be dangerous to the timelines hence the reason she is prohibited from doing so except in the case of an extreme emergency."

"She didn't mean harm, Sir, I'm positive of that. She cares so much for the crew, and I think she would do anything to help us, and she did what she thought best. She calls us her small ones." Sienna smiled happily, her delight in Luma evident.

"As I surmised. Her action was not in question."

"I wanted to thank you personally for all you did to try and help me. I appreciate it. Sekal is important to me, he's like a sibling. He's a fantastic partner and we make a great team. I can't imagine running a starship without him by my side." So much emotion in her voice. "My twin, Trip, we're very different and Trip doesn't really understand my interest in science. Sekal understands me. He does whatever it takes to help his crew. I am lucky to have him as a mentor and I appreciate the friendship that both of you have extended to me." A soft blush touched her ears. "Sekal's been trying to help me with self-defense training. I barely passed it at the Academy and I'm terrible at it. He's been patient with my inadequacy."

He settled back deeper into the chair. "It is the duty of every commanding officer to see to the safety of their ship first, without it their crew has no hope for survival. And without a crew their command means nothing. Are you aware that the USS Valkyrie I commanded during the civil war in preparation for the final push toward Earth was lost with all hands and I alone survived?"

Sy settled into the pillows, not caring that Saleke was seeing her with her hair a mess. Sekal; she would have asked to help her brush it. His father, not so much. "No Sir. As you know I had a very hard time when the first person under my command died. It wasn't my fault, it wasn't anyone's fault but it haunted me. I still have nightmares about her death."

He looked away for a moment, his face inscrutable. "I have lost others under my command, all have ... or will, but to lose three hundred plus under even the most extreme conditions while one is able to escape the calamity has ... repercussions. It took two years before I was given another command, a return to the Prometheus Class, the USS Furious." He looked back to her. "I always strove to teach that lesson to Sekal in the event he gained a commission and it is satisfying to hear that he has remembered it."

"He often references you, Sir. That his upbringing was slightly different for a Vulcan, more diverse. What happened to cause the destruction? Was it a battle? How did you escape? And why did Starfleet blame you and keep you away from command? Was that why you went to the VDF?"

He gave a slight movement of his head that was impossible to understand for a non Vulcan. "The Valkyrie and two other ships were tasked with taking down five forward positions within Federation space to open a path for the 52nd battle fleet's invasion. We were en route to the last when we were attacked by a larger force. Still, it was enough that they were able to punch through. How did I alone escape?" He paused for an instant. "I am unsure to this day. I called for a full evacuation and waited until the other life pods launched but was the only one found alive, months later on a nearly barren planetoid. When only a commanding officer survives an investigation has to be made to determine if he abandoned his ship and crew. It took time for the evidence to be found and myself exonerated."

He leaned forward a bit. "Why did I leave StarFleet? Luma'lenai among others. We were forcibly separated when I left the Mystique and I spent years attempting to contact her." He grew silent for a moment then shook his head. "But StarFleet was changing, becoming more political. Our orders became more illogical and our every action scrutinized and questioned. When my commission expired I left StarFleet and returned to my homeworld, to my mate. And when the Federation largely collapsed I was approached to serve with the VDF. Accepting the commission was a logical step."

"I'm very glad that you came back, Sir." Sienna's eyes grew heavier, but she was not ready to rest again, even though she ran through her energy so quickly. "Did Doenitz's people take out the life pods? Did they capture your people? Did the investigation ever find out what happened?" She was so interested in the history, and had grown up with fleet stories. Her parents had been part of the end of the Civil War, as had others. Celiste Winters had told her some of the stories that her Mother had told her while the two had tended Luma's precious roses. It was a different starfleet then, a harder, darker place.

"The ships involved in that battle were destroyed shortly thereafter by the 52nd, the disposition of my crew was never determined." He gave her a sideways glance. "The Illuminar is scheduled to arrive in four days, will you be strong enough to rejoin it?" This was the type of questioning he was known for. He crossed his arms and scrutinized her as she spoke.

Sienna looked him in the eye, not challenging but showing that she wasn't afraid. "The Doctors here don't understand what happened, or why I collapsed. I know that the healers who came to assess me said that my soul, my katra was not in my body. I remember the wedding, I remember a spinning sensation." Sienna was rapidly re-orienting herself to the present. "I felt like I was in a vortex of moments that spanned time. Flashes of events that reminded me of the holos from the Guardian of Forever that we studied in my command training. Fast, so that I could not focus on any one thing. It felt like forever, but it was several weeks according to my mother. The neuro-surgeon here did a scan of my brain and said that my brain is re-mapping the connections but that there is no damage. And according to the doctors I have several weeks of physical rehabilitation. There is no reason I have to do it here." She squared her shoulders, "The Illuminar is my home and is as much my ship as it is Sekals. The humm of her drive is a lullabye to me. There is nothing that I need to do here that can not be done aboard the Illuminar." That firm, polite tone was not too unusual for Sy, but speaking so had drained what energy she had left. Her eyes blinked rapidly.

"And my mate is there. I need to be with her. I don't have a great sense of her right now. Maybe it is the neural connections, but I need her." Sy's heavy eyelids closed again, but Sy had been noted that she was afraid to sleep without someone with her. She was afraid of being sucked back into the vortex she had been trapped in.

Before she passed into sleep she heard him speak. "The ship will be undergoing inspection and repair initially. I estimate you have six days to get ready to walk aboard. And you will want to do so "

And somewhere near or far away, who can tell someone was watching and listening.

"Vulcans. Always so stuffy."

He gave a smirk. "But I would be surprised if he isn't right." He chuckled. "This is all on you Sienna, I've already done the heavy lifting, as absurdly simple as it was."

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles and Mel Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Landing Bay - 2LT Charles Temerity - 1830)

(NRPG: I honestly am not sure where we're at. I can repost if need be.)

Temerity was attempting to calm down after his dealings with the ‘individual’ about room assignments for the Marines. But he had managed to get it done and is fairly certain that the petty officer he spoke with will most assuredly file a complaint against one very salty Marine lieutenant. Charles just hoped the yahoo spells his name correctly in the complaint.

As Charles approached the Major in the cargo bay where the Marine's containers were being stored, he held a pad out to Murphy, "Sir, we have rooms and currently a single office space that you and the Master Sergeant will have to share."

(Reply: Murphy, Skipper iyw)

“Well sir, despite having to share an office space, at least for the time being, you will each have your own quarters. Being as you are the commanding officer and he the senior ranking NCO, it is only proper.”

(Reply: Murphy iyw, Skipper iyw)

“We got four bunk staterooms for the junior enlisted, two bunk staterooms for the NCOs.”

(Reply: Murphy iyw, Skipper iyw)

With a sigh, Temerity continued, “There was one hiccup, sir. The petty officer I dealt with claims that he had not received an updated personnel roster for our unit so he can only assign quarters to those on the roster. I confirmed, the last update his section received was two weeks before I got recalled to duty. That was a month ago, sir. However, I did get him to assign us a small barracks bay for those of us not on THEIR latest roster. So, everyone will have a place to sleep tonight, and tomorrow we can figure out changes and whatnot.”

(Reply: Murphy, Skipper iyw)

“For my part sir, regardless of rank, I would not feel right booting someone junior to me out of a stateroom into the barracks bay so I can be in a stateroom. My collar may say Lieutenant, but in most ways, I’m still a Gunny Sergeant.” Temerity then turned to the Master Sergeant, “You remember, ‘I will not use my grade or position to obtain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.’?” He then turned back to the Major, “Sir, my recommendation is that those assigned to rooms keep those rooms, period. The rest of us can filter into rooms as they become available, but make sure you save me for last on the rooms. Hell, if I’m the last and no other rooms available, I’ll be okay crashing in the brig as long as I have a place to sleep, shower, relieve myself, and store my gear.”

Charles began to snicker at himself within the confines of his mind. He always had a difficult time reciting the NCO creed verbatim, but he had no problems living according to its dictates of what a leader should do. And it served him well as an NCO, and as a freighter captain, and he wanted to make sure he still abided by it now. As one Sergeant Major had told him after he was placed in the Reserves the first time, “Rank has absolutely nothing to do with leadership ability, or the quality of leadership provided.” And she was correct.

(Reply: Murphy, Skipper)

As Temerity began to turn and head off, he paused. “One last thing you should know Sir. There will most likely be a complaint filed against me. I told the petty officer that if he didn’t give us the barracks bay, that I would break into the ship captain’s quarters with a forged document with the petty officer’s signature giving me permission to sleep on the captain’s couch.” With that bombshell dropped, Charles just turned and strode off as if he didn’t have a care in the world.

(Reply: Murphy, Skipper)

(Posted by Chuck)

[illegible]

Sleep had been difficult to come by. Even Vulcans were not immune to attacks of sleeplessness where something on your mind continues to hold your attention. It could be easily remedied, it was merely a matter of discipline but sometimes it was best to let your thoughts reach their conclusion and plan for the next step. It had all started in Klingon space during a time of heightened tension and the less disciplined members of the crew seemed to have been affected by it.

Saleke had told him more than once in the past that this was when discipline was most prone to break down. Some officers were unable to extricate themselves from the resultant cycle of negative decision making, these would eventually cycle themselves off the ship. It was those that found a center of equilibrium and control and rose from their failures that would one day stand above the rest.

What would Kelly Long do? Would she sink and eventually cycle out or rise to excel? Her course in either eventuality would be watched by him carefully.

=^= Sorry to wake you Captain, but there is a situation you need to know about and I think it's best to talk face to face. ^=^

He tapped the comm on the desk he was sitting at. "Understood. I am on my way."

=^= Very good sir. ^=

[illegible]

It had been a long day (which The Kronk had spent dealing with a tremendous hangover) but Dano couldn't sleep. After tossing and turning in the back seat of his replicated-and-assembled jalopy from Sigma lotia II, Dano surrendered to sleeplessness and got back out of his car. His quarters looked like the garage he'd spent most of his life in. It wasn't the "family business" and Dad was not the Boss, but it felt the most like home.

He switched on the "radio" — which was a device he'd contrived to read out the shipboard "news" he was cleared to access. The broadcaster's voice was a sultry purr that made Vermyx imagine that if it were that of a real moll such a woman would probably moonlight as a torch songstress.

"M'gonna need t'reprogram dat," he thought out loud, then went to shower and dress.

[illegible]

The lift hissed open and he stepped out. The ship was not supposed to have left Archanis IV yet.

"Commander why have we left orbit?"

(Reply: Gregory)

Posted by Charles G

[illegible]

(USS Edmund Hilary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 2351)

Weston picked up Leeza and carried her to the back. While he was away, Alex scratched his beard. ~This is a fine mess.~ Weston claimed that Leeza might be useful, but he had a hard time believing that. She was a three-year old. ~And yet...~ There was something off about her. He just couldn't put his finger on what. The lieutenant came back from the rear section.

“Dieter was pretty much telling us that we’re on our own now. Let’s get to the border. We’re running out of time.”

“Yes, lieutenant.”

The yacht was already moving at her top speed of warp six. So more speed was not an option. But there was a small nebula that the computer had plotted a course around. He hit several keys and the course was altered to take them through it instead. It bought them two hours at their current speed. Alex hoped it would be enough.

(Reply None)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

"Captain on the bridge," came the call as the Vulcan Captain stepped onto his bridge.

"Commander, why have we left orbit?" he asked.

Gregory nodded. "We are returning to orbit now sir. I received a coded message from Mr. Weston, Sir. The crux of the matter is that Leeza Pel seems to have snuck aboard the Hillary and is now out there with the Lieutenant and Ensign Dyson."

He paused, "We broke orbit on my command, as we worked the problem to intercept the Hillary before she entered Romulan space, but that was not practical, which is why we are returning to Archanis IV now. I have Operations monitoring, as best they can, the Romulan channels to make sure nothing untold happens."

(reply Sekal)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

Sekal was watching the viewscreen as Commander Gregory was speaking which did not mean he wasn't giving him his full attention. A CO routinely was operating on multiple inputs.

"We are returning to orbit now sir. I received a coded message from Mr. Weston, Sir. The crux of the matter is that Leeza Pel seems to have snuck aboard the Hillary and is now out there with the Lieutenant and Ensign Dyson."

That brought the Captain's eyes to his face. It was his understanding that the little girl felt herself unwelcome on the bridge when Gregory wasn't there which was not true and he had worked to dispel that misgiving from the beginning to the consternation of his first officer Sienna Verin.

Emotional beings however, especially young ones as he understood it, once they had formed an opinion were difficult to sway from them despite repeated proofs.

"We broke orbit on my command, as we worked the problem to intercept the Hillary before she entered Romulan space, but that was not practical, which is why we are returning to Archanis IV now. I have Operations monitoring, as best they can, the Romulan channels to make sure nothing untold happens."

Sekal turned his head slightly back toward the viewscreen. "The Romulan Republic has been informed of the reason they are making the journey and made no issue of it, if there are any communications on the matter I expect it will be from vessels on patrol notifying New Romulus of their progress."

(Reply: Gregory)

"Of course, the Republic government appeared eager to be of assistance. Once you are able to establish communications with the Hillary inform them that Republic vessels are to be treated as friendly unless proven otherwise."

(Reply: Gregory)

"Leeza Pel is certainly an added modifier to the situation however Lieutenant Weston according to the reports I received is as familiar at dealing with her as you yourself. Under the circumstances I have little concern over his handling of the matter. I am more concerned with how she slipped off the ship without being noticed and will query Luma about the matter."

(Reply: Gregory)

Posted by Charles G

[illegible]

"The Romulan Republic has been informed of the reason they are making the journey and made no issue of it, if there are any communications on the matter I expect it will be from vessels on patrol notifying New Romulus of their progress," the Captain said.

Gregory nodded, "I was unaware of that communication, Sir, and I am guessing nor does Mr. Weston," Gregory replied,.

"Of course, the Republic government appeared eager to be of assistance. Once you are able to establish communications with the Hillary inform them that Republic vessels are to be treated as friendly unless proven otherwise," Sekal added.

"Very good, Sir," Gregory replied. "I will make sure they know."

"Leeza Pel is certainly an added modifier to the situation however Lieutenant Weston according to the reports I received is as familiar at dealing with her as you yourself. Under the circumstances I have little concern over his handling of the matter. I am more concerned with how she slipped off the ship without being noticed and will query Luma about the matter," Sekal said.

"I have found Leeza has a stubborn streak, and is not to be distracted from her goals, once her mind was made up," he replied. "But Luma may be able to shed some light on the disappearance. I apologize for waking you sir, I didn't have complete information as to the mission parameters. Now I do and we will act accordingly."

Nodding to the captain, he moved to the operations station. Sitting down, he typed out a coded message to Weston, using one of the codes that he and Leeza used to use. "Romulan Republic aware of mission and not standing in the way. Good luck and see you soon. Tell your quest to stay safe."

He hit transmit and stood up before heading back to his quarters.

(reply bridge, any)

(posted by Tim)

Mission: The Greatest Frontier

Stardate: 2446.05.10

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 2309)

"I have found Leeza has a stubborn streak, and is not to be distracted from her goals, once her mind was made up, But Luma may be able to shed some light on the disappearance. I apologize for waking you Sir, I didn't have complete information as to the mission parameters. Now I do and we will act accordingly."

Sekal nodded. "Very good, continue on."

That was his understanding of Leeza Pel as well. As Gregory moved away he returned to the turbolift. "Deck 3."

[illegible]

He had returned to his quarters and settled at his desk, it was only a few moments later when the buzzer for the door to his quarters sounded. He looked toward it wondering who might be desiring an audience at such a late hour.

"Come."

The door opened to reveal Yeoman Whitney standing outside, she stepped inward and it closed behind her.

"Captain."

"Yeoman?" Her golden hair which was normally coiled in a braid around her head and neck hung low upon her back and she was dressed in a diaphanous gown of pink mixed with lavender which reached her ankles. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes bright in the subdued light.

She stepped forward slowly. "Pardon me for disturbing you so late sir but I noticed you returning to your quarters and ..." her voice trailed off as her hands moved nervously.

"Why are you here Yeoman?" His confusion was evident at her state of dress and hesitancy.

She moved closer. "I've been waiting for you to approach me ever since that day but ... it seemed better to speak to you than wait." Her eyes were wide and her voice breathless he noted with clinical detachment.

"What day Yeoman Whitney? And approach you about what in particular?"

"That day on the bridge sir when we were facing the Maelstrom and you ... I could see that you wanted me."

He rose slowly to his feet, his eyes widened. He remembered catching her forearm as she screamed and the inner struggle against his savage nature which had him on the brink of forcibly bonding with her, a beautiful woman. He shook his head as though to dislodge the memory.

She had stepped close, so close that when she reached out her hand was on his chest. "You did want me didn't you?"

"It was the Maelstrom." His voice was hoarse as he backed away. "Stripping away my emotional control and exposing a part of my nature that should never be revealed."

"You are so calm, so logical." Her voice was barely above a whisper. Her lips were scarlet and her eyes deep, blue pools. "But deep down you want me. Don't you?"

This time when he grasped her wrist that was reaching for him it was lightly, without the possessive grip of that day, his mental shields were impenetrable and he was completely under control. "Yeoman, it is not so simple."

Her pert breasts shifted beneath the gown as she moved closer and brushed against his wrist. "You can't deny what I saw, what I felt."

With his hand holding her at bay he shook his head. "I cannot deny it but I cannot allow it to define me. I am the Captain of this vessel and I am betrothed. And that part of my nature which you saw has been dealt with."

Hot tears welled from her eyes and trailed down her cheeks as she backed away humiliated, his fingers released her wrist and she stumbled away.

"I'm sorry Sir, so sorry... I should never have ..."

"Your apologies are unnecessary Yeoman..."

His words were interrupted by her sobs as she turned and ran for the door which opened then closed behind her leaving him once again alone in the room.

He looked down at his left hand, the fingers still holding the memory of her soft skin and his wrist the brush of her body. With an effort he forced them down and turned away, his face drawn rigidly as he considered Commander Solice's warning of that day. He had been teetering on the edge of a precipice and holding himself in check by the slimmest of margins. That fall would have caused today's events to be dwarfed in comparison.

He returned to the seat at his desk, sleep was now no longer an option.

(Reply: None)

Posted by Charles Gatling

[illegible]

Dano had entered the facility where he and the rest of the Fizzbin Five usually worked on their hypothetical propulsion drive, but since the rest of his comrades were (likely) dormant at this hour, Vermyx set to work solo on another project. A different project. One the Captain had actually called for and authorized — working on improving the tactical hard-suits available to away-team personnel.

For research-and-development purposes, he had access to one — and the technical files, of course. He'd made a few minor changes, which addressed (in the lotian's estimation) the fairly minimal requirements the Pointy-Eared Big-Top had expressed. But merely meeting expectations was not the lotian way. One went big or one went home. 'Nothing succeeds like excess' went the maxim, didn't it?

Dano put on the suit after attaching a new backpack to it. The carryall was essentially a mobile and man-portable replicator that Vermyx had designed to draw raw materials from the immediate

environment. The fabrications the device could manage were nowhere near as extensive as those that could be managed typical replicator, but the mechanism had a broader 'menu' of options available than did an exocomp, which could only 'summon up' common tools.

"Ain't never gonna get over how deez Fleeters consider a floatin' toolbox a sentient life-form, but okay..." Vermyx mused as he exited the mechanical workbay and began to walk around the vessel. It was the Graveyard Shift, the time of day when a ship was the least busy, so Dano could move about without encountering too many others. The suit he wore was intended to enhance the capabilities of the wearer, so he could move faster than a normal walking pace without breaking into a run. His stride was augmented. "Almost like wearin' roller skates," the lotian said as he glided through the empty corridors.

The hard-suit contained a superior version of a tricorder, with an enhanced sensor palette. Vermyx brought the HUD display online and scanned his immediate environs, establishing a baseline reading of his surroundings. "Time to test this baby out!" he declared to no one in particular. Dano toggled the controls for the replicator-backpack (or 'repli-pack') to summon up something that an exocomp couldn't manage. In Vermyx's opinion, having a repli-pack would reduce the need for carrying an array of support equipment into the field. When any piece of gear was not needed, it could be converted back into raw materials and re-dispersed back into the environment. Need a phaser? Replicate it. Don't need no more? Dissipate it back to 'ambient resources.' Simple, right?

Dano 'the Kronk' Vermyx conjured up a GNDN-47, a piece of minor equipment that was not in an exocomp's repertoire. He then took tricorder readings again, to see if anything nearby had been compromised by the acquisition of 'ambient resources'. Everything nearby matched the prior baseline scan. Not actually needing the GNDN, Vermyx had the repli-pack return the component molecules back to their points of origin. Another scan indicated that this too had worked as planned. The sampling software had been specifically tailored to being discrete. It wouldn't (or shouldn't, at least) take too much of anything from any one thing. It appeared to have worked.

Bolstered, Vermyx continued to skate through the empty corridors, calling up this doohickey or that thingamajig almost at random.

(Reply anyone, iyw)
(Posted by Frank)

[illegible]

The fact that it took Dieter so long to get back told Michael that Dieter had tried to figure out a way to get Leeza back. The comm channel beeped and Michael tapped it.

=^=Big Daddy to Big Brother, acknowledge. God speed.^=

“He does not sound happy,” Dyson said, stating the obvious. “Glad he’s not mad at me for a change.”

Weston shook his head, “You haven’t seen him unhappy yet.”

Leeza started quizzing Dyson about their purpose of being where they were and he suppressed his amusement as the pilot attempted to placate the girl with vague answers that Michael knew would only drag the conversation out for a long time. To avoid that he chimed in.

“Leeza, we are going rescue a friend of Alex’s,” he said. “And he needs me to help. WE talked about this. It’s not safe for you.”

“You know a two-man surgical strike team may not be the answer,” Leeza said, suddenly sounding very grown up.” Then she yawned, curled into a ball in the seat and fell asleep.

“Time will tell, kid,” Dyson said prphetically. “Time will tell.”

Weston looked at Dyson, “Don’t underestimate her, There’s more to Leeza than meets the eye. She could prove useful.”

He reached down and picked the sleeping girl up, kissing her forehead. “I’d just hoped to spare her this.”

He carried Leeza back to the aft section to put her in a bed. He turned his head back and looked at Alex, “Dieter was pretty much telling us that we’re on our own now. Let’s get to the border. We’re running out of time.”

(reply Dyson)
(posted by Al Muir)

2446.05.11>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
(USS Illuminar -- personal quarters -- Deck 2 -- 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice -- 0200)

Quinna stepped onto the turbolift after a long shift on the Bridge that followed an even longer shift in sickbay. She ached all over that her eyes ached when she blinked. To her surprise, there in the turbolift was Michael.

“Hey there, have you been waiting for me?” Quinna asked.

When the doors close, Michael snaked an arm around Quinna and pulled her into a tight kiss. “I will always be here for you.” He whispered in her ear.

The two made their way to his quarters where he pulled her in and kissed her again. Making their way to his bed, he held her tight. Just then Quinna froze. She turned to look Michael in the eyes and then she turned to look at the form in the bed. Michael dropped his grasp on her. She moved closer to see Michael's body on the bed. His eyes were wide open. His face was ashen and his lips were black. There was no doubt that the Michael in the bed had been poisoned. A glass of water was on the floor next to him.

Quinna looked up to see the disbelief on Michael while shaking his head and then disappearing out of sight.

“Michael?” Quinna first questioned. “Michael, Michael, MICHAEL”

As soon as she screamed his name, Quinna's body suddenly jumped into a seated position. This time, there was no Michael to comforter her. Finding it rather difficult, Quinna dressed and went to the Bridge.

(Reply to any IYW)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

Michael had been with Dyson's flying ability, being able to shave hours off their time to the Romulan border. They'd been fortunate so far, that they hadn't run into any traffic, anywhere, on the sensors. Which was good, as he was going to need every minute of the three hours of cloak time they would have.

He'd sent Dyson back to get some sleep. When they got to the border Michael would need the pilot at his best. Meanwhile, Michael monitored their route and altered course when needed. He was a decent pilot but he would never say that it was his "calling". He had learned to fly out of necessity, much like all of the skills he'd acquired over the years. It was fun, but it didn't give him true joy.

Leeza had been up for a few hours so Michael had given her a task to do. She was compiling data of traffic around the border, looking for a pattern where they could pass through the border's data net, undetected. She'd been looking for spacial displacements and ion trails that would show a traffic flow that might go unnoticed when the ship was cloaked.

His best scenario, so far, was to come in behind the Kazis binary system, using the EM radiation to mask their arrival. From there they'll employ the cloaking device for as much of the three hours that they can. This should get them across the neutral zone and well into Romulan territory, undetected. Emphasis on the the word should.

Michael stepped behind Leeza and looked at what she was doing. From the other side of the room she could have been playing some kind of game on her PADD. But when he saw what on the screen he just shook his head.

“So what do you think?” he asked. “Can we stretch the cloak any longer than the three hour limit?”

“Hmmm, maybe.” Leeza looked up at Mikey with a sly grin. “Say, how important are the replicators and the gravity onboard the illy?” Leeza asked. “We can make a lot of chocolate cake before hand.”

The autopilot beeped twice and Alex made his way to the flight controls. He suspected that he already knew why the system was making a fuss. But he double checked anyway. ~Yep, exactly what I was thinking.~

“Skipper, we’re approaching the Romulan border.” He turned the autopilot off, or it would bring them to a stop. He checked the long-range sensors. “No Romulan ships visible on sensors.” ~Of course, there could be cloaked vessels out there.~ But there was no way to tell until they crossed that imaginary line.

(Reply Weston, Leeza)

“Autopilot has been disengaged. Cloaking device is on stand-by,” Alex said. “Orders ?”

(Reply Weston, Leeza, any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Edmund Hilary - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 0416)

"Skipper, we're approaching the Romulan border," Dyson said. "No Romulan ships visible on sensors."

“Yeah, I was monitoring during your nap,” Weston agreed. “There’s been very little activity at all. It’s kind of strange. I’m not a big fan of luck, but just maybe...”. He let that sentence end there.

“Autopilot has been disengaged. Cloaking device is on stand-by,” Alex said. “Orders?”

Weston reached over and pulled up the data on Dyson's screen. It showed the path that he and Leeza had arranged between the two stars of the Kazus system. The gravitational distortion should be able to mask any trace of their passing.

“I need you to follow this path,” Weston said. “When we’re almost clear of the distortion field we can engage the cloaking device. That’ll give us a little over three hours to get as far into Romulan territory before it fails.”

(reply Dyson)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible][illegible]

(USS Edmund Hilary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 0417)

"I need you to follow this path," Weston began. "When we're almost clear of the distortion field we can engage the cloaking device. That'll give us a little over three hours to get as far into Romulan territory before it fails."

"Aye, skipper," Alex said. "Following the path it is."

(Reply Weston)

“We should be at the right position to engage the cloak in about thirty minutes.” Alex said. “At warp six, there should be plenty of distance between us and the border by the time the cloak goes off-line.”

(Reply Weston, any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Edmund Hilary - Bridge - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston -0419)

“We should be at the right position to engage the cloak in about thirty minutes.” Alex said. “At warp six, there should be plenty of distance between us and the border by the time the cloak goes off-line.”

Michael looked down to see that a communication had come in. The alert had been turns off by Leeza. When opened the message he recognized the code and smiled.

[Romulan Republic aware of mission and not standing in the way. Good luck and see you soon. Tell your guest to stay safe.]

He looked over at Dyson and shrugged. His own intel noted that the border may still be lined with automated defense systems that may, or may not, still be active. His precautions weren't for nothing. However, once inside Romulan territory they should be able to proceed unmolested.

“Looks like the Romulans are expecting us,” Michael announced. “So once we cross the border we may as well relax. Should be a smooth line to New Romulus.”

(reply Dyson)

“Once we pass through the neutral zone territory it will be about 30 hours until we reach the planet. We can switch off for rest periods every six hours.”

(reply Dyson)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Edmund Hilary – Cockpit – ACONN Alex Dyson – 0420)

“Looks like the Romulans are expecting us,” Weston said. “So once we cross the border we may as well relax. Should be a smooth line to New Romulus.”

“That’s good.” The less politics they had to deal with once they got there, the better. “So, how do you want to do this ?” ~It’ll be a while before we get to the system. Even at warp six.~

“Once we pass through the neutral zone territory it will be about 30 hours until we reach the planet. We can switch off for rest periods every six hours.”

“Sounds good to me.” He worked the flight controls. “I’ll see if I can shave some time off that estimate.”

(Reply Weston)

Alex checked the space between them and their destination. It was a straight line with no major obstacles on their course. But then he noticed something interesting. He hit several keys and the image zoomed in. ~That might work.~

“Skipper, if we don’t have to hide, we might be able to get there a bit faster.” He pointed to a white line on the map. “That is a cargo line. And according to the database, the maximum speed on that route is warp seven point five. One of the things I learned from Yenna is that the replicators on Romulan freighters are often outdated junk. She once served on a ship that had units from the 2330’s.”

And the food had tasted like rubber as a result. “Even our MRE’s probably taste better than what those freighter jocks have been eating. We find the right ship and we might be able to buy ourselves a shortcut with a couple of meals. And this shipping route runs all the way to the edge of New Romulus system.”

(Reply Weston)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(Starbase 12 – Personal Guest Quarters – Medic - Ensign (jg) Jason Bell – 0700)

Assigned and booted, Ensign Bell was getting ready for the trip to the Illuminar. He had caught a break and had gained a berth on a shuttle heading where he wanted to go. At least, where Starfleet wanted to go. Starbase 12 was familiar to Jason, he had spent much of his life before

ending up in Starfleet in such places. Most of them needed expertise of one kind or another and his wide skillset had served him well.

Making ends meet hadn't been much of a problem but as the Federation contracted, opportunities had contracted as well. More and more people looking for less and less jobs, less places to work, less places to be where he wanted to be.

The offer to join Starfleet wasn't his first choice, he never was, he wouldn't say his Starfleet-Obsessed Mother had been sad that he didn't choose the service, but she was overjoyed when he had finally relented.

They had an agreement. The Admiral would keep away, not pull strings, and not help him. This was going to be his journey and not hers.

That lasted a month before she visited him at the Academy.

~Sigh~

His experience had fast tracked him through, and everyone knew that the Admiral had helped, just like everyone knew he was on the fast track to Command, and the same way everyone knew his was going to be in a red shirt when he graduated.

He never expected to have a fondness for medicine. Of all the experiences he had over the years, medicine was one that had eluded him but, the state of medicine technology wasn't unlike Engineering. He found he had a knack for the science of medicine, thrown in with his personality, saw him fall naturally into the profession.

The screen flickered into a message that read, "INCOMING TRANSMISSION".

Of course, it had the hallmark of Starfleet Command on the screen, mother was calling...

The viewscreen flicked into an image of Admiral Bell, on a ship, somewhere secretive no doubt.

"What?", he said sharply in his half-dressed state, his medical uniform was fighting him this morning.

=^= I thought I would see if you were up. ^=

She said with a knowing smile. Sure, Jason would sleep till noon if he felt like it but, even he wasn't going to miss the shuttle to his new home.

=^= Besides, I wanted to say good luck on your trip and first assignment, I know you won't want me calling you when you get there, so I won't! ^=

The Admiral was pouting but Jason wasn't going to take the bait, "Good. At least you are going to follow that part of our bargain.", he said finally getting the uniform to stay straight. His smoothed it down.

=^= Much better ^=

"Mum, I'm going. I'll call you in a few weeks.", he said, making clear that he was not expecting any calls until he settled down, but he took a moment to look at the screen properly, "... where are you anyway?", he asked, not being familiar with her background. He knew every inch of the USS Wraith; he didn't recognise it.

She beamed and slowly and deliberately, she hung up and Jason's head dropped down and he sighed again. He put his small bag over his shoulder and left the room in a shambles.

(New Romulus, Eryx – Road – Civilian Mackenzie Dyson – 0700)

When she had first arrived, Yenna had been far from happy to see her. But within a matter of days, they had formed a family. ~Blood is blood.~ The lessons at her new school very different from the way things had been at the Embassy. Still, she had learned a lot the last couple of days.

"Guards, seize that traitor !"

(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Shuttlebay - Pilot Ensign Vic 'Raid' Montero - 0700)

Vic was missing Bebe. She was an excellent co-pilot, but needed to grow and follow her career. Her new posting was perfect for her. Still the show must go on. Not much to do at warp as they headed back to Mars, at least he'd get a chance to check in with Merlin and Jester.

And not that he was possessive or anything, but he hoped that Dyson didn't scratch the paint on the Hillary. He felt it was his ship, for the odd reason that he had been the first to fly it in a mission situation. Still, he had the fighters now to play with.

The door slid open and he walked into the Shuttle bay, hoping to talk to Lieutenant Rager about some extra sim time. One's reaction times got rusty without daily practice, or at least that's what he told the Lieutenant.

He started to cross the deck when he noticed two black colored tear shaped things on the main flight deck. Around them were two people he'd not seen before, but dressed in Marine uniforms. He had heard a rumor that they were getting Marines, but didn't really think about it.

Walking over to the think, he cleared his throat. The Marines looked around and jumped to attention. "At ease fella's," Montero said. "What the heck are these abominations?" he asked.

One of the marines, a Vulcan, spoke up, "Sir, this 'abomination' as you term it, is the Mart, the Marine Boarding Torpedo." he said as if that explained everything.

[illegible]

Vag'Has finished reading the report on the arrest of Mackenzie Dyson. It had been written by the guard who had come through the encounter in one piece. The other one was still in the Embassy infirmary recovering. Of course, you had to add some things with your imagination. He moved on to the charges.

~Abandoning her post, collaborating with a known enemy of the Klingon Empire and causing a diplomatic incident with the Federation.~ These charges had were being brought on orders from a small group of hardliners at Diplomatic Service Headquarters. The High Council set policy, but HQ oversaw the day-to-day running of the Embassies.

As Ernie had told Emile Schofield, the hardliners at HQ had lost a lot of prestige because of the recent restoration of the Imperial House and the House of Mogh. ~Bloody politics.~ They needed a win. Any win. And they had apparently decided that Mackenzie Dyson was going to be it. Which was where Vag'Has entered the picture.

The Ambassador had been yelling at the Romulans and carrying on cranky. But using a fifteen year old as a political pawn, he was not up for that. The problem was that if he pushed back, the hardliners would drop the hammer on him. Fortunately for him, there were not enough lawyers to go around. So, the New Romulus Embassy had gotten seconded a Defense Force lawyer, aka Vag'Has.

~Time to go into battle.~ He reached into his bag and took out a PADD. The first thing he was going to do, was inform the young lady's grandfather. A Klingon officer called Rox, he was stationed aboard the IKS Skral, which was currently in the Home System.

Once he got Vag'Has' message, he would no doubt have a bad attitude...NRPG: @Frank: hint, hint. RPG: ...as he made a fuss at HQ. That might put this thing on the radar of the wrong - or right - people. That was Plan A. Meanwhile, he would write an objection that would make the hardliners life even more miserable. He ordered a drink at the bar and then got to work.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 7 - Marine Camp Peleliu (cargo bay 1) - Major Audie Murphy - 0900)

The welcome by the Illuminar Crew was lukewarm, at best. At least they had a place for their equipment and a semblance of a private planning area. Skipper had the men working all night to get things into shape so that they could get onto the job of making it home.

Murphy walked around to see how things were going. Already the Armory was setup and Kowalski, Mason and Melman were busy checking in weapons and equipment. The big task would be to upcheck the heavy BDUs. Those took a few hours each to uncrate and run through the checklist. Since they were heading back to Mars, it would be a good time for some training with the heavies.

He heard a shuffle behind him, and turned to see the Master Sergeant there, two cups of steaming liquid in his hands. "Good morning, Major," he said as he handed a cup to the major. "What do you think of our little home away from home?"

Audie took a sip of the coffee, extra strong with a dash of salt to dampen the bitterness. "It is, I would say, cosey. Clearly the fleet spared no expense to bring us along."

"Any more word on the mission?" Skipper asked.

"So far, my brief from General Bloom has been vague. From what I can understand, we are to provide a rapid response team as well as diplomatic security as needed. The Illuminar is going on deep patrol soon, and the Command felt a few good Marines could help."

"Not a very well defined mission," Skipper replied.

"Indeed, and when I meet with the Captain, a Vulcan named Sekal, I hope to get a better understanding of what his expectations are for us. As well as figuring out where we can train or any other fleet policies we need to know about."

"A good plan, Sir."

"Make sure to get a list of what we need from the ships Security and Engineering teams," Murphy said. "I'm thinking of having the Lieutenant meet with the security chief. I think he'll provide a nice antagonist." Murphy said.

"Excellent," Skipper replied.

The two headed over to the 'office' to go through the rest of the details of their new deployment. He tapped his Com badge, "Lieutenant Temerity please report to my office," he said.

(reply Temerity)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building-Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0900)

Korak closed the channel of the twelfth complaint in the last day concerning some ludicrous actions of Klingons on the streets of Eryx. What in the name of his ancestors were those idiotic Klingons doing? There was a fire that had burned a storefront down, over which lived Romulan families. Fortunately, that damage was contained to the single building. Now he was hearing about Klingons transporting into the town and dragging off a citizen. This is a Romulan world, not some Klingon settlement, and most assuredly not some kind of frontier settlement.

He sat back in his chair, listening to it creak under his weight. Granted, he was no longer the lean, muscular Romulan from his days in the old senate, but under his layer of... insulation, he still had every one of those muscles. They were just heavily camouflaged under his layers.

He brought his hand down on the communication panel and growled, "I want to speak to whatever moron is in charge of the Klingon embassy, and I want to talk to them now."

=^=Right away Prefect, ^= the frightened voice of his assistant replied.

He stood up from his desk and began to pace. He was much taller than most gave him credit for, due to his girth. A moment later his intercom beeped.

=^=Prefect, the Klingon ambassador says that he is too busy to speak with you. Call him back later.=^=

Korak's eyes narrowed, as he worked to maintain his composure. "Explain to the Klingons that if they do not contact me in five minutes my next call will be to the Klingon home world to launch an official

complaint about their embassy's interference in the everyday lives of the world that they are invited guests in. I know that there have been changes in their hierarchy. I wonder how they will react to the news."

There was a pause ^= I will pass along your message.^=

Korak sat down and leaned his elbows on his desk, “Then get me that imbecile Wavor. I need to speak with him immediately. What is going on in this city? Where is the law and order?”

=^=I will contact him as soon as I've relayed your message to the Klingon ambassador.=^=

Korak sat back and waited for either of the return calls.

(reply Wavor, Klingon Ambassador)

(posted by Al Muir)

=^= Ambassador the prefect is calling.=^=

Gosen slammed his hand on the desk before replying. "Gay'cha! Can't you see I'm busy? Tell that pe'taq I will answer him when I have time!"

Then he shut off the internal comm and shot up from his chair to pace around the room. He was unsettled and nervous already and dealing with the Romulans wasn't going to help his mood right now. The orders he had recieved and was acting on were bound to get him into trouble eventually, especially after learning of the swing within the High Council. Morek's power was waning and he had always been motivated by ambition, rumor had it though that the bloc on the rise were rallying to the cry of returning honor to the Empire. And what was honorable about running an op on the Romulan Republic's homeworld without their permission based on sketchy evidence?

=^=Ambassador I have been told to inform you that if you do not reply quickly he is going to send a formal complaint to Qo'nos.=^=

"Did I not tell you..." he bit off his next words then gave a strangled cry. "... all right! Call the Fek'lor back."

He kicked the desk as he passed then dropped into his chair, when the screen came on he gave the resemblance of a targ that had been backed into a corner and was ready to rend his pursuer. His voice though was carefully controlled.

"Good day prefect, honor on your house. How can I help you?" The smile was forced and made him look as though he was showing his teeth prior to a battle.

(Reply: Korak)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

The welcome by the Illuminar Crew was lukewarm, at best. At least they had a place for their equipment and a semblance of a private planning area. The Master Sergeant had the men working all night to get things into shape so that they could get onto the job of making it home. Temerity stayed up all night working alongside the junior enlisted and junior NCOs. Not as a supervisor either, He had taken the opportunity to get to know the Marines he was expected to trust his life with by getting to know them, trade stories with, and teach them about the workings of the older antiquated pieces of equipment they were still required to have but never used.

As a young sergeant, Charles found that by sharing the burdens of his subordinates with them, it was easier to earn their respect. As a result, he had no reservations about breaking a sweat and lugging boxes and carrying weapons to their designated storage locations. He even managed to start a debate between the benefits of hard manual labor and lifting weights at the gym. A few of the Marines he was working with made some comment about needing to be at the gym lifting to which Temerity popped off with, "I'd much rather work than workout." And the discussion was on from there. The debate regularly backtracked as folks returned from 30-minute breaks slash naps just to catch them up. While no one's stance on the issue was changed, they all enjoyed laughs at each other's expense. And Temerity surprised the Marines by laughing and cracking jokes at his own expense. Even when he started getting referred to as "Old Man", which is not to be confused with "The Ol' Man".

About halfway through the night, Charles had noticed that many of the NCOs were standoffish to him and yet gathered among themselves. Excusing himself, he took a short break to ask the group a question or two because he had also noticed many disapproving glances his way. "Gentlemen, Ladies; how are y'all doing tonight?"

The spokesman for the group replied, "Sir, you don't seem to mind how the juniors speak with you, is the same extended to us?"

Looking each of the NCOs in the eye, Charles indicated a location behind one of the containers, "May I suggest moving this conversation away from prying eyes and ears?" The group agreed and they relocated.

As the group was out of sight the senior NCO of the group spoke up with contempt in his voice, "We've all seen your record. On the carpet five times, busted down to corporal once..."

Charles interrupted with a laugh, "That was my Corporal Punishment. Sorry, please continue."

While one of the females snickered at his joke, no one else seemed to appreciate it, "We've all been on multiple combat deployments and you don't have a single one on your record, what makes you think you're qualified to lead us?" The spokesman demanded.

Temerity nodded his head in understanding before replying, "Well that is easy Sergeant. The Commandant of the Marine Corps basically drafted me out of my military retirement because officers went from being commanders to simple administrators and NCOs went from being leaders to commanders. As the civilian captain of a long-range freighter, I know what it means to command and as

a retired gunny, I know what it means to lead. While it is true that I have never deployed to a quote unquote combat zone, what you didn't get to read was the body count I accumulated killing criminals and looters on humanitarian missions or the number of pirates as a bounty hunter. I was recalled to teach NCOs how to lead and officers how to command, and I intend to do that by being an example of a leader and commander as the situation requires. Trust me on this, it is my Will against yours and you will lose. Is that understood, Sergeant?" The spokesman simply nodded his head as did the others as he locked eyes with each one individually. "Now ladies and gentlemen, if there is nothing further to discuss, I have manual labor to return to because I hate going to the gym." And he walked off.

As the work progressed, Marines began complaining. After a while Temerity spouted off with, “Hey folks, if you’re gonna bitch, you’re gonna work. The moment you stop working, your mouth had best stop also. My rule is, if you are working you are welcome to bitch and complain to your heart’s content, but the moment you stop working, your complaining privileges end. Understood?” He received several agreeing responses, after a while night became morning.

There was a chirp from Temerity's comm badge, "Oh what the hell...I'm workin' here!" he stated sarcastically as a joke but tapped his badge and answered like a Soldier, "Go for Temerity"

=>Lieutenant Temerity please report to my office, => the Major had said.

“Roger that, Sir. On my way.” Came Temerity’s sharp reply.

As Charles stepped into the Major's office with his uniform jacket in hand and t-shirt covered in sweat looking disheveled, "You wanted to see me, Sir?"

(Reply: Murphy)

“I can make that happen, Major. I would like some time to shower and change beforehand, if that’s okay.”

(Reply: Murphy)

(Reply: Murphy, Skipper iyw)

(Posted by Chuck)

[illegible]

Sam Wavor had been really busy for the last couple of hours. After her sister had been snatched by the Klingons, Toni Valerius had called him. He had ordered Erick to stay at the station, while he and Ginara had gone to investigate. They had taken statements, gathered evidence and pulled telemetry from the school's security system.

Right now, Ginara was doing the forensics, while Erick was dealing with a flood of angry calls and complaints. As for Sam, he had been yelling at both the Klingon Embassy and the Capital City Police Force.

Alas, neither the Embassy nor the Police Department was being very helpful. ~Probably too busy yelling at one another.~ He had also tried to contact the Federation Embassy, but they had their hands full trying to stay out of the political crossfire. ~What a mess.~ Just after Sam had finished his latest rant at the Klingon Embassy, Erick handed him a PADD. ~Oh, great.~ Korak, the town's Prefect, had been added to the list of people yelling and complaining at them.

~Better to get it over with.~ Fortunately, there currently was nobody else yelling at him. So he looked up the pre-programmed comm-protocol and activated it. He did his best to look professional as the system connected him.

“Prefect, it’s good to see you again.” ~Yeah, right.~

(Reply Korak)

“So, what can I do for you today, sir ?”

(Reply Korak)

Before he could reply, Yenna Valerius came in. And she was mad. “My daughter gets kidnapped and I have to hear about it from one of Toni’s teachers !? And I don’t care about her being half-Klingon, half-Human, she is my kiddo ! What are you doing about it !? And why are you talking to that old fart Korak, instead of yelling at the Klingons !?”

“Uhm....”

(Reply Korak, any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

“So she is connected to you indirectly.” It was statement more than a question. “Ever the problem solver, eh Ms.Valerius? Let me see what I can do?”

Suddenly his comm unit beeped. =^=Prefect the Klingon ambassador is on another channel.=^=

Korak nodded, “Well it appears that I have been granted an audience. I will contact you shortly, Ms. Valerius.”

With that he closed the channel and opened the one from the Klingon Embassy.

(reply Yena, Wavor)

(posted by Al Muir)

(New Romulus, Eryx - Police Station, Main Office - Civilian Yenna Valerius - 0907)

=^=Ahh, Ms. Valerie. A pleasure to see you again. Pleasant, as always. This... “old fart” might be your best chance of seeing that child again. You claim her as yours, is that correct? ^=^=

"It's Valerius and you bet I do !" She slammed on the desk for dramatic effect. That and because she was angry.

=^=Then she is protected by Romulan law,. Since Wavor can't seem to protect out people in the streets,=^= The Prefect gave Wavor a dirty look and Sam make a face. =^=then perhaps I can do something about this situation. Tell about this child and how she is related to you.=^=

Yenna took Sam's place behind the communications unit and the police officer used the opportunity to get out of the line of fire. She was still mad at him, but she had to admit it wasn't entirely his fault. Two deputies simply wasn't enough to police a town the size of Eryx. And it was a minor miracle that they had received an extra one on his watch. But that was a discussion for another time.

"Her name is Mackenzie Dyson, she is fifteen years old and the daughter of a Human male called Alexander Dyson and Klingon Female called K'Nera."

(Reply Korak iyw)

"My daughter Antonia was also fathered by Alexander Dyson. She is Mackenzie's half-sister. Her biological mother clearly has no interest in getting her back, so I intend to take care of Mac until I can find her biological father and confront him about the mess he has made."

NRPG: I considered adding more, but I decided to keep it short and sweet. RPG:

(Reply Korak)

(Posted by Ruben)

Gosen shut down the communication, his mind chasing his options around its dark corners until a plan came to mind that would cover him on both ends. He then called the front desk.

"Comm the warriors who carried out the snatch and grab and tell them to meet me in the grand reception room at 0940, we have some planning to do."

=^= jay'oj hOd!=^=

(Reply: Kidnappers)

The then commed his guard detail. "The grand reception room in fifteen minutes and don't be late"

~Ah yes, legail council.~ His finger tapped the comm again. "Vah'Gas to the grand reception room in twenty minutes, we are going to need to prepare for a visitor."

(Reply: Vah'Gas)

(Posted by Al Muir and Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(New Romulus – Klingon Embassy, Office – Legal Officer Vag'Has – 0917)

Vag'Has' office was next to the quarters for the security officers. When he had arrived, there had not even been an office for the legal officer. So they had simply chopped a chunk off the security officer quarters by putting up a plaster wall. Said wall had horrible sound isolation.

This was why he heard the intercom yell at the security officers that had taken Mackenzie Dyson to report to the grand reception hall. This was followed by grumbles and footsteps of people walking out of the room. It was then that his console came to life and the voice of Ambassador Gosen came over the line.

=^=Vag'Has to the grand reception room in twenty minutes, we are going to need to prepare for a visitor.^=

"Yes, sir," Vag'Has began. "I will be there, Vag'Has out."

The channel closed and the Vag'Has resumed his work.

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy, Grand Reception Hall - Legal Officer Vag'Has – 0937)

Vag'Has entered the Grand Reception Hall at the time he had been ordered to arrive. ~Today is a good day to die.~ Gosen was already there and offered him a seat. As he sat down, he wished he had a disruptor. Alas, his duties did not require that he wear one. So he was unarmed. ~And the Ambassador is clearly unhappy with me.~ Then again, even if he did have a weapon, the security detail meant that his chances were far from good.

"We are come to a crossroad Vag'Has and you have taken your stance in opposition to the orders I gave which came from Qo'nos did you not?"

“Yes, I have, sir.” There was no point – or honor – in lying. “Attaché Tagock carried out your directives despite my objections, sir.”

"Yes, I'm aware Tagock carried out those directives. At one time he might have been lauded for it."

~At one time...~ Those words made it clear that the change in policy was more dramatic then what he had heard about. It was at this point that Tagock and his cronies entered the room. There was nothing for Vag'Has to do, but to listen and watch as Tagock and Gosen discussed the current situation and its consequences. Those consequences become very obvious when the guards drew their weapons and ended Tagock and company. ~Bloody Gre'thor !~ The smell of the bolts was still clearing when the Ambassador turned his attention back to Vag'Has. And he was angry.

"Now Vag'Has listen closely. The Romulans are sending one shortly to take the girl, you will meet that one and explain to him how I ferreted out this little scheme and put an end to their lawlessness. You will also meet with me later to draft our report to the High Council on how the complete incompetence of the staff that was provided to me jeopardized our presence here and how I had to kill them for it and turn the girl over to the authorities." The Ambassador moved close to him and growled. "And if you do not support me completely you will share their fate."

“Understood, sir.”

(Reply Gosen)

“Am I dismissed to await the arrival of the Romulan representative ?”

(Reply Gosen)

(Posted by Ruben)

(New Romulus, Eryx – Police Station, Main Office – Police Officer Sam Wavor – 0930)

Sam was busy working on reports when his terminal blinked with an incoming hail. ~Round two, here we go.~ Yenna and Ginara were at the latter's desk, talking about the situation. He signaled for silence, then answered he cranked up the volume and answered the call.

=^=Are you alone, Wavor? ^=^=

"Yes, I am, Prefect." He lied.

=^=I have a task for you. I have secured the release of the girl. I want you to park your backside in that Embassy and wait there until the girl is brought to you. Do you think you can handle that? ^=^=

"Yes, sir."

=^=Now listen carefully... Sheriff, ^=^= The Prefect's voice went into dangerous mode. ^=^=When you have the girl you are to bring her to this office, without delay, and without fail. If you release her to Yenna Valerius this will be the last day that you are sheriff... or alive. Is that clear? ^=^=

"Yes, it is, Prefect."

=^=Repeat my directions. ^=^=

"Go to the Embassy, get the girl and bring her to your office. No delays and don't tell Yenna Valerius."

=^=Do you have any questions about those orders?"

"No, Prefect." ~Except, how can you know me so little ?~ He was an officer of the law and not afraid of dying on the job.

=^=Then go. Speak to no one, on the way there, or the way back. Most assuredly, speak to no one while in the embassy. But do let me know when you have the girl. ^=^=

The screen went dark and returned the volume setting to normal. ~Well, it was a good run.~ Yenna and Ginara had overheard the entire conversation. It was Yenna who asked the obvious question.

“What are you doing to do ?” Yenna asked.

"I've got no choice," Sam began. "I have orders to follow. But...", He scratched his face. "...your marine friend doesn't have to follow my orders. Time to see if he's as good with a rifle as he is with a toolbox."

And with that, Sam grabbed his weapon and walked out of the police station. He knew that he was playing with fire, but he was not afraid to do that for the greater good. For now, however, he had a girl to liberate.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(New Romulus, Klingon Embassy - Basement/Brig - Civilian Mac Dyson and Lawyer Vag'Has - 0930)

Vag'Has had spent forty minutes working at the bar. Then he had gone to back to the Klingon Embassy to talk to Mackenzie Dyson to get the missing pieces of the puzzle from the young lady. Which was exactly what he had been doing for the past ten minutes. Now he had enough information to make his next move.

Basically, his plan was to make enough noise that somebody, somewhere higher in the food chain would notice what was going on. With the shift in policy, this would likely result in the hardliners plans getting trampled. He had reached the part where he actually told her the charges.

"The first charge is abandoning your post," He began. "You were an intern for three years, working as a file clerk. This is because the Ambassador wants to keep the amount of civilians at the facility to a minimum. If you had not become an intern, you would have been shipped off to a boarding school on Qo'nos. Is that correct ?"

"Yes, sir." Mac said and Vag'Has made a note.

"But you were never sworn into the service ?" Mac nodded no. Which made sense, Mac was a minor. She could not be sworn in until she became a legal adult in three years. ~That and her status of as a minor is ammo in the fight.~ He was already writing his formal objection in his head.

"In your three years at the Embassy on Farius Prime, did you ever take any of the leave time you are legally entitled to ?"

"No, my mother barely let me leave the building."

~Good.~ Part of the weight of the charge was the time between Mac leaving the Farius Prime and her arrest here. If he could get somebody to sign off on subtracting Dyson's supply of leave time from that time, it would put quite the dent into that charge. He knew that it would be a long shot getting that signature, but he had no intention of not trying it. That done, he moved onto the next charge.

"Charge number two, collaborating with a known enemy of the Klingon Empire..."

"You do know that the Romulan hardliners tried to have me *arrested* ? And what about the Federation ? My dad is was born on Mars, doesn't that....you know, mean things, legally ?"

"Yes, I'm going to ask for a copy of Sheriff Wavor's official report. The hardliners will scoff at it, but once the Federation gets involved, they won't be able to deny it." He made another note. "The hardliners are holding the line that this is an internal matter of the Diplomatic Service. Which brings me to the next point..."

"Custody," Mac said with a sigh.

"There are three people who could claim custody. Your biological mother, your biological father and your grandfather. It is in on the record that your mother has renounced her parental rights."

"Your grandfather is in the Home System, which puts him a considerable period of travel time away. Which leaves your father, Alex Dyson. Until he arrives in-person and makes a scene, the service is saying that the Federation has no business interfering."

"And Yenna and Claudia ?"

"Are not biologically related and therefore have no claim." Another note was added to his PADD. "Which leaves us with the third charge. Causing a diplomatic incident with the Federation."

Mac shrugged at that. "Half the High Council is probably guilty of that one ! And don't get me started on the Klingon Defense Force ! My plan was to life under the radar with my family until we found dad, then go life with him. It was not my fault that this whole thing went political !"

That was up for discussion, which was exactly what he tended to do. His fact gathering mission complete, he left the basement and headed for his office. He sat behind his desk and began writing his paperwork. It was time for him to ruin somebody's day.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building- Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 0930)

Korak sat back behind his desk and opened a channel to the sheriff's office. When the image of Wavor came on he nodded.

"Are you alone, Wavor?" he asked before saying anything else.

(reply Wavor)

“I have a task for you,” the Prefect said. “I have secured the release of the girl. I want you to park your backside in that Embassy and wait there until the girl is brought to you. Do you think you can handle that?”

(reply Wavor)

‘Now listen carefully... Sheriff,” his voice dropped a leel and became dangerous. “When you have the girl you are to bring her to this office, without delay, and without fail. If you release her to Yena Valerius this will be the last day that you are sheriff... or alive. Is that clear?”

(reply Wavor)

"Repeat my directions," the Prefect ordered.

(reply Wavor)

“Do you have any questions about those orders?”

(reply Wavor)

“Then go,” Korak ordered. “Speak to no one, on the way there, or the way back. Most assuredly, speak to no one while in the embassy. But do let me know when you have the girl.”

Without waiting for a response he closed down the channel. Then he called his assistant. “Dormali, I need Gertan Strayer in my office at her earliest convenience.”

=^=Sir? ^= the voice questioned. Then went on. ^=Yes, sir. ^=

(reply Wavor)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - CEO Office - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 0930)

Tegian was sitting at his desk, looking at three PADDs with two ideas for handling Luma's pain while Engineering had to do repairs. He'd done write-ups for them based on theory. This should have been done days ago, but running this department turned out to take more out of him than he'd expected.

His idea to rotate through the shifts during the week so that he could observe their work sounded great until he'd tried to do it more than once. It had played havoc on his sleep cycle and his ability to focus on anything that required deep thought. So, instead, he had shifted his own work habits so that he worked at least a twelve hour day. But, with the Captain forewarning them that they were heading to Earth today, Tegian wanted to make sure he was in Engineering when they went into warp, so he was here two and half hours earlier than his now established working.

He'd had the Alpha shift run diagnostic on the warp engines to make sure everything was fine. The Captain hadn't exactly said when, but at least had given him a time frame. After landing on the planet, Tegian was concerned that there were stresses on the ship that they hadn't seen in a long time and he'd had the shifts running diagnostics on all the systems. There had been a lot of loose power couplings throughout the ship and the Gamma and Alpha shifts had been running around reconnecting things. Tegian, when he'd gone to bed around 0100, was satisfied that the remaining issues were minor and didn't affect crew quarters. He'd have to talk to the Captain about either landing the Illuminar more often or at least giving him more of a warning.

His musings aside, he kept looking at the PADDs. Luma had suggested disconnecting the computer feeds in the area being worked. There were pros and cons with that approach. It would be somewhat easy to accomplish, but it would shut off a lot of preventive measures while doing so and they'd be blind in that area of the ship, potentially leaving them vulnerable. Plus, there were areas where they couldn't do it in small increments. For the most recent accident, he would have had to shut down everything in the Main Shuttlebay and much of Deck 9. And, he wasn't sure if she would still feel some of the pain from Deck 11 still being active or if he would have had to turn off some of the feeds from Engineering, which would have made them blind while trying to do repairs.

He looked at his proposal, the telepathic dampening field. There was much he didn't understand of how this affected those with telepathic abilities. And having these fields set up around an area they were working might affect crew members that had these abilities. So, there were obvious cons about this approach. He knew that Bohb had a lot more experience with Luma than he did. It was probably time to visit the Lieutenant and talk to him about these two ideas and see if he'd had any of his own.

liners which were on the wane and threatened the fragile relations with the Republic over a waif, a slip of a targ of a girl or switch his position in anticipation of a complete change in the stance of the council. That actually wasn't difficult, that change was already occurring.

He sat in a substantial, high-backed chair drumming his fingers on one arm watching the legal counsel come near before motioning him to take a nearby seat.

"We are come to a crossroad Vag'Has and you have taken your stance in opposition to the orders I gave which came from Qo'nos did you not?"

(Reply: Vag'Has)

Gosen's eyes were slits and his lips were pulled back from his teeth as he listened. "Yes, I'm aware Tagock carried out those directives. At one time he might have been lauded for it." He then turned away to allow Vag'Has to stew on those words and consider their meaning.

(Reply: Vag'Has)

The door opened presently and the group of four that had carried out the raid strutted in, his orders had been clear and their leader Tagock was certain that owing to his successful mission he was now being included in deliberations that had formerly been beyond him. He was smiling gleefully matter of fact and walking before those that he had commanded.

Gosen held up his hand for them to stop in the center of the room.

"How may I assist you hOd in your deliberations?" Tagock asked smugly after coming to a halt.

Gosen was silent for a moment, his eyes malignant. "You have already rendered more assistance than I can stomach. You carried out your orders with complete contempt for the delicacy of the situation here. Rampaged around in broad view of the populace like wild targ. Brought the notice of the prefect upon this mission and placed me in an unwinnable situation between the Chancellor and the rising tide of change on the High Council.

"You called, Prefect," she said pleasantly.

"Gertran, I have a little problem I need resolved," Korak said.

"Indeed," Strayer replied, I assumed so. Problem-solving is what I do."

"I have an issue with one of my sheriffs," Korak continued. "And I have a feeling that he is not taking me seriously enough. I gave him a simple task. So obviously he will screw it up. He is to retrieve a girl being held by the Klingons and bring her to me. There is a young woman involved. One Yena..."

"Velarius?" Strayer finished. "Yes, I am aware of her. As I am all non-Romulan citizens."

"of course," Korak said. "She is laying claim to the child in question. I am not... satisfied that she will not involve herself in this matter. However, his orders were clear. Bring the girl to me or he will die."

"So you would like me to ensure that he keeps his end of this bargain, or you do?" the young woman asked.

Korak nodded, "Exactly. If he doesn't bring the girl directly to me you are to dispense of him and you bring this girl to me. I want to know why she is so important. What makes her worth all of this effort, from everyone? Even the Federation is sending an envoy to collect the girl."

"Truly intriguing," Strayner said. "You know my fee."

Korak nodded and tossed the data chip onto his desk. She picked it up and put it in her pocket.

"You don't want to check it?" Korak asked.

"If it is incorrect I will come back to rectify *this* agreement, Prefect," Strayner said softly, sending a shiver down Korak's spine.

"Which is why I wouldn't back out of our agreement, ever," Korak assured. "It is also why I am willing to pay you up front. Please, be discrete."

Gertran chuckled, "As I always am."

She turned and left the office. Korak shook his head. Many of the old ways had been abandoned, but there would always be a need for people like Strayner. You just can't trust anyone, even on New Romulus.

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy, Grand Reception Hall - Ambassador Gosen – 0945)

The words of Vag'Has were short and unquestioning, under the circumstances a highly intelligent and life affirming tack.

“Understood, sir.”

Gosen turned from him contemptuously.

“Am I dismissed to await the arrival of the Romulan representative?”

The Ambassador's reply was not directed at Vag'Has but to the guards near the door who had not yet holstered their disruptors.

"Let him go to carry out my orders."

The hard eyed guards near the door stepped aside as they put away their weapons. Gosen then spun on Vag'Has.

"Well? What are you waiting for? Go!"

(Reply: Vag'Has)

Gosen folded his arms as the legal counsel scurried from the room, his expression thunderous. Everything had gone wrong from the moment orders had come down to snatch up a little girl. Incompetence piled upon incompetence, well he was getting rid of that weight about his neck. Let the Romulans do with her as they wished.

"Geth'hA take another with you and fetch the child then watch her closely. Once you have handed her over notify me..And if you allow her to slip away I will kill the both of you myself."

One of his best warriors, Geth'hA stepped forward and motioned for ChU'ga to follow him, together they hustled through a side door to carry out his order.

"The rest of you are dismissed." Goren snapped as he followed them out, the route through the side hall passed near to his office, he was going to stop at the kitchens first and fetch a small keg of bloodwine and a tankard for breakfast to settle himself down.

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – Kelly Long’s Quarters – SO Kelly Long – 0945)

Kelly had finished catching up on her sleep, which had been followed by a shower. Then she had eaten breakfast and gotten dressed. Since she had been relieved of duty, she didn't feel like putting on her uniform. Instead, she had checked her small collection of civilian clothes. But none of those had felt right either.

And then she had remembered something. Alex had given her an isolinear chip with a replication patterns. So she had stuck that chip into the replicator. It turned out that it held costumes for Alex's Battlestar Galactica program. ~Boys and their toys.~ She had thought. Selecting the clothing that went under the flight-suit, she had put the replicator to work.

~Better~ She thought as she inspected her new look in the mirror. ~Time to go~ Kelly walked out of her quarters and headed for Sickbay.

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Klingon Embassy, Grand Reception Hall - Legal Officer Vag'Has - 0947)

"Let him go to carry out my orders." The guards moved and then Gosen turned to him. "Well? What are you waiting for? Go!"

"Yes, sir."

He got up and walked out. There was work to be done.

(Reply None)

(Posted by Ruben)

"Accelerate to full impulse and notify me when are clear for a jump to warp."

"Accelerating."

The hum of the impulse drive carried by the deckplates through vibration deepened as the ship surged away from Archanis IV.

The officerial contingent had been greatly reduced as a number had left the ship for leave with orders to rendezvous again within this system in two weeks time. Some had personal business such as Alexander Dyson who was in transit to New Romulus accompanied by Michael Weston and the civilian Trill child Leeza Pel.

Thl'Lanista was on a mission for Ariel Trei who was on Qo'nos as was Galk, now head of the Imperial House. And another would be leaving soon, Dr. Riven Mias was due to return to Betazed and resume his duties there.

And then there were the additions to the crew, eleven StarFleet marines who were settling into their new billet on deck 8.

Illuminar was on downtime in the short term but that would be coming to an end with a prolonged exploratory mission into deep space. Before that happened though she needed to rejoin with her first officer, Sienna Verin.

His communication with Command yesterday had confirmed that she was awake and recovering, had Lieutenant Commander T'Mur not expressed her impatience there would have been no difference in the result, as soon as she was clear Illuminar would be going to hyperwarp.

Commander Gregory had filled in well in her absence and Doctor Solice had also stepped up, her input during the hearing had been well reasoned and mirrored his own thoughts.

Yes, he would be gratified to have Commander Verin back.

He caught movement from the corner of his eye as Yeoman Whitney stepped up and offered him a padd. "Interim roster changes and staff reports sir." She kept her eyes averted, looking in the direction of the deck as he checked over the contents then signed his acceptance and handed it back to her. "Thank you Yeoman."

"Yes sir." Her face was flushed as she took it and hesitated, looking up at him for an instant then turned and moved off.

He turned his eyes back to the viewscreen as he leaned back in the command chair. Would issues arise in the future from the meeting of last night? There was no way to make a logical extrapolation as of yet but it occurred to him that events rippling from what had transpired only months ago would not be cut off so easily. Where they ended was impossible to foresee.

"Warp drive available Captain."

"Best speed Lieutenant."

"Going to warp factor five."

Illuminar leapt into warp, its bearing taking it out of the system. Back to the Sol system for the last time before an extended deployment. It's heading ... into an uncertain future.

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

(USS Illuminar -- CMO Office -- Deck 5 -- CM/3XO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1001)

“Like a giant weight has been lifted,” Kelly began. “I’m glad that the hearing is over. And that I am still here. The captain could just as easily have sent me packing.”

“I miss Joy, she was a good friend,” She sighed. “If it hadn’t been for me, she would be on her way to her new posting now.”

(Reply Long)

(Reply Long)

(reply Long)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – SO Kelly Long – 1002)

“It is not easy having to make the hard decisions. Sometimes we make those decisions before we are ready.” Solice said. “The question is, where do we go from here?”

“I don’t know, ma’am.”

“I believe I read in the transcripts... And Correct me if I am wrong...That you feel that Starfleet did not prepare you adequately to handle this situation.”

“Yes, ma’am. My instructor was far from a completionist, ma’am.”

“Tell me more,” Solice said.

“My instructor was a Tellarite called Zavos. He called us grunts and was very aggressive towards his trainees. His training focused on physical fitness, marksmanship and hand-to-hand combat. Everything else, he considered ‘red tape nonsense’, His favorite word was something old. It was...,” She paused as she searched for the word. “...Humbug. Yes, it was humbug. Some of the other instructors called him Ebenezer. I never got the reference, ma’am.”

(Reply Solice)

Kelly looked a sip of her chocolate. “Anyway, there were rumors that he was a marine drill sergeant before his service at the Academy. But none of us had the clearance to check. And the instructors had the clearance, but weren’t telling. Once I graduated, I was simply so glad to be away from there that I didn’t even want to think about that man.”

(Reply Solice)

She nodded. “Mom and dad weren’t very helpful. I told Mister Laredo about how they threw me out when I was fourteen. What I didn’t get around to telling him, was how they were sentenced for child abuse. They were sentenced to jail time and were still in there when I left for the Academy,” She took another sip of her chocolate. “When they finally send letters, it was to tell me how much a fool I was for joining Starfleet. And how they were right and I was oh, so wrong.”

(Reply Solice)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1005)

Tegian stepped out of the turbolift onto the bridge. He'd been on the bridge for only repairs and he felt a bit like he didn't belong here. He saw the Captain sitting in his chair and circled around the bridge to approach from his front. "Captain, may I have a few moments of your time?"

(Reply Sekal)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(New Romulus, Capital City - Square - Police Officer Sam Wavor - 1007)

Eryx had two Public Transporter Rooms, one in town and one at the spaceport. The one in town was getting some long overdue maintenance, so he had been forced to walk to the spaceport.

After that, it had been a simple case of beaming over and walking to Little Qo'nos. Getting through the security checkpoint at the edge of the neighborhood had taken several minutes, which was why he was only here now. He walked into the lobby to find Mac waiting for him. She was accompanied by the two guards and a man who was clearly not a soldier.

"I'm here to collect Mackenzie Dyson."

(Reply Guards iyw)

The non-soldier Klingon, who turned out to be the Embassy lawyer, launched into a long and boring political speech, which Sam tuned out. Instead, he gave Mackenzie his best reassuring smile. Finally, the Klingon finished his speech and offered him a PADD that he need to sign. So he pressed down his thumb on the square and that was it.

"Let's go, Mac."

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 1008)

Illuminar was at the edge of the Archanis system and the Vulcan was monitoring the pop-up screen on the chair arm closely. The background of interstellar radiation had crested and would be falling off within seconds as the ship sliced through it. Such phenomenon were expected and easily handled by the ships systems but having a scientific bent assured that he would always investigate, consider and

compare readings when crossing them even though the turbulence they caused was minimal. He heard and felt movement and looked up to see his CEO partially blocking his view of the main screen and looking at him intently.

"Yes Mr. Pex."

"Captain, may I have a few moments of your time?"

He pressed the button to retract the small screen then gave him his full attention.

"Affirmative. What is it you wish to discuss?"

(Reply: Pex)

"Captain we have cleared the gravitational eddies at the edge of the system. Full power available. On course for sector 001."

"Initiate hyperwarp Lieutenant, full power."

"Aye sir."

There was a rising hum from the warp drive engines and the whirling vortex of blue energy appeared before the ship as Sekal returned his attention to the engineer. Illuminar felt for an instant as though it were elongating before being sucked into the subspace tunnel which spun in constantly shifting patterns around it.

"Please continue Mr. Pex."

(Reply: Pex)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

When Tegian approached the Captain, he hadn't realized that he was watching the Illuminar's progress on the mini-screen at his chair. Now, he felt even more uncomfortable being here.

"Yes Mr. Pex."

"Captain, may I have a few moments of your time?"

The Captain pressed a button to retract the small screen then gave Tegian his full attention.

"Affirmative. What is it you wish to discuss?"

"My apologies for interrupting, but I would like to request that we dock at Starbase 1 and have them examine our repair job of the shuttlebay doors as well as repaint the hull." Tegian was going to say more when he was interrupted himself.

"Captain we have cleared the gravitational eddies at the edge of the system. Full power available. On course for sector 001."

"Initiate hyperwarp Lieutenant, full power."

"Aye sir."

There was a rising hum from the warp drive engines and the whirling vortex of blue energy appeared before the ship as Sekal returned his attention to the engineer. Illuminar felt for an instant as though it were elongating before being sucked into the subspace tunnel which spun in constantly shifting patterns around it.

"Please continue Mr. Pex."

Tegian had closed his eyes and had listened to the ship as it slipped into hyperwarp. There had been a sound that didn't feel right, but it wasn't an emergency, so he opened his eyes and continued speaking. "My team did a great job doing an emergency repair. But before we head out for an extended period, I would like the opportunity to have the track and doors looked at while we don't have to be in EVA. If we have the time in our schedule, Captain."

(Reply Sekal)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(New Romulus, Capital City – Roof – Gunnery Sergeant Emile Schofield – 1011)

Joker smiled as he looked through the scope. ~Still got it.~ Back in the day, when he and Alex had been doing their Mass Effect sessions, Joker had played...well, Joker...during the sections of the program set aboard the Normandy SR-2. But for the planet-side parts of the program, he had needed another persona. There had been several options, but Emile had picked an alien character called Garrus.

And Garrus Vakarian's favorite weapon had been a sniper rifle. When they had entered the Freighter School, he had gotten a program that allowed him to keep his skills up. Alas, he had not been able to do that during his time as a freighter engineer. But when he had joined the marines, he had set to dusting his skills off. Which had come in very handy today.

After Wavor had left, Yenna had called him and brought him up to speed. Ginara had then used another of Sam's secrets. As part of its emergency systems, the apartment building above the police station had a short-range transporter. Officially, this unit was locked away in a corner of the basement and run by computer. But the sheriff before Sam had cut the lock to that room.

And Erick had jury-rigged manual controls to the transporter. The unit only had a range of a couple of kilometers, so it was useless for travelling to the capital city. That, and they wanted to keep this secret up his sleeve for as long as possible. Ginara had used the emergency transporter to beam Emile to the police station.

Once there, she had provide him with a tranquilizer rifle called Jango Fett. Eryx was surrounded by wooded areas, which resulted in there being plenty of animals in the fields. And sometimes they could be a problem. Hence, the rifle. It was high powered rifle with a long range. Ginara had also provided him with the biggest dart Jango could hold. This size was normally used to knock out livestock. ~Horses, cows, etc.~ He had then been beamed to the

Public Transporter Room in town, which he had used to travel to the capital. And that was where things had come together.

He figured that if he were Sam, he would go to Public Transporter Room 12. So he had beamed to *almost* the same coordinates. He had beamed to roof of the building that had Public Transporter Room 12 on the ground floor. Then he had set up and waited. Much to his relief, his gamble had turned out to be right. Looking through the scope, he had searched for anything off. And then Sam Wavor had sprung his trap for Strayner.

Joker had not known what exactly was going on, but his instincts had told him that something was off about Strayner. So he had shot her. The shot taken, he made his way down the building's fire escape. He was now on his way to Public Transporter Room 11. Located three doors further down the street that was home to the Dive, it would be a short walk. ~Especially at marine speed.~ He reached the transporter room and stepped onto the platform. The transporter operator gave him a look.

“Don’t ask, classified, cannot confirm or deny. You know the spiel.”

“Yes, Gunnery Sergeant.”

The operator nodded and then energized.

[illegible]

"My team did a great job doing an emergency repair. But before we head out for an extended period, I would like the opportunity to have the track and doors looked at while we don't have to be in EVA. If we have the time in our schedule, Captain."

The Vulcan did a quick, rudimentary calculation, between hyperwarp alternated by maximum cruising speed Illuminar would reach Earth in four days and the same returning to Archanis IV left them a margin of five days to rendezvous in the system with the Edmund Hillary. The request was logical and reasonable.

"I will notify Earth Spacedock we require a hull and hanger inspection and possible repair. Is there anything else you require besides a megnetic surface polymer coat?"

(Reply: Pex)

He consulted a small padd screen built into the other chair arm then looked back to the engineer. "Has cargo bay 3 been fully converted for marine use yet? According to the latest report they were waiting for a replicator installation and a monitor for the Major's office."

The mass replicator for the marine quarters was not priority due to the Explorer's Lounge on deck 4 and the aft lounge on deck 11, the small marine contingent was close to either but ensuring they had a ready supply of liquids near at hand was a necessity.

(Reply: Pex)

He brought his hands together and interlaced his fingers. "One other thing, while the ship is in dock I'd prefer you pull the injectors and give them the utmost scrutiny due to the load pulled during hyperwarp. This is one of my primary concerns before deep space deployment."

(Reply: Pex)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1015)

The Captain's request was as Tegan had hoped. "I will notify Earth Spacedock we require a hull and hanger inspection and possible repair. Is there anything else you require besides a magnetic surface polymer coat?"

"As long as we put those tracks in correctly, no. If we didn't, then we'll need the tracks redone. But, they'll be able to do them quicker than we were able to do. And, we'll be on hand to lend assistance, if that's needed."

The Captain asked about the Marine's berth in Cargo Bay 3 and a request for a replicator and monitor for the Major.

Tegian looked confused. "I didn't see any request for a replicator or a monitor, Captain. I was there to personally get their equipment loaded, but nothing was said at the time. In fact, they ignored me. We've spent our time since we've landed replacing loose power couplings., but I'll make sure we take care of this right away."

"That actually brings up an interesting topic. I don't know the last time we landed the Illuminar, but we might want to consider doing it more often. We shook loose a lot of power couplings, throughout the ship that the Gamma and Alpha shifts have been all out reconnecting systems. Luckily, nothing serious, but minor systems from the ship going through the atmosphere and the shock of landing."

He brought his hands together and interlaced his fingers. "One other thing, while the ship is in dock I'd prefer you pull the injectors and give them the utmost scrutiny due to the load pulled during hyperwarp. This is one of my primary concerns before deep space deployment."

Tegian nodded. "Something sounded a tiny bit off when we went into hyperwarp. Diagnostics passed or I wouldn't have let us go into warp, but obviously something is within tolerance for the computer, but not our ears."

"Thank you, Captain. I'll take care of the Marines' needs now."

Tegian paused and when the Captain didn't say anything further, Tegian left the bridge and headed for Cargo Bay 3 to talk to the Major of the marines to figure out what was needed by his ... squad? Tegian nodded to himself. Or contingent. One of those terms.

(Reply Sekal, iyw)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(New Romulus, Klingon Embassy - Lobby - Civilian Mackenzie Dyson - 1015)

"Let's go, Mac."

(Reply Guards iyw)

Mac took Sam's arm and he led her out of the Embassy. As they made their way to the nearest transporter room, she pondered this whole situation. Why was everybody so interested in her ? She wasn't anybody near the top of the food chain. She didn't have access to any classified files at the Embassy. They reached the transporter and stepped onto the platform. Sam gave the operator the necessary directions and seconds later he energized.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1015)

“My instructor was a Tellarite called Zavos. He called us grunts and was very aggressive towards his trainees. His training focused on physical fitness, marksmanship, and hand-to-hand combat. Everything else, he considered ‘red tape nonsense’, His favorite word was something old. It was...,” She paused as she searched for the word. “...Humbug. Yes, it was humbug. Some of the other instructors called him Ebenezer. I never got the reference, ma’am.”

“Oh yes, I remember rumors of him. My class was so relieved that we had Major Burns as our PT and combat instructor. He made sure to remind us he is a Starfleet Marine.” Quinna added.

“Anyway, there were rumors that he was a marine drill sergeant before his service at the Academy. But none of us had the clearance to check. And the instructors had the clearance but weren’t telling. Once I graduated, I was simply so glad to be away from there that I didn’t even want to think about that man.”

“We all had one of those professors. Many cadets found support in their families.”

She nodded. “Mom and dad weren’t very helpful. I told Mister Laredo about how they threw me out when I was fourteen. What I didn’t get around to telling him, was how they were sentenced for child abuse. They were sentenced to jail time and were still in there when I left for the Academy,” She took another sip of her chocolate. “When they finally sent letters, it was to tell me how much a fool I was for joining Starfleet. And how they were right and I was oh, so wrong.”

“I also did not have a family support system when going through the academy. The question is how you use that. Some people, Use that as a reason to excel, while others use that as a reason to fail. But there is so much of a gray area. Can I ask what happened in the past that caused all the discord within the family?

(Reply Long)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office, Deck 5 – SO Kelly Long - 1017)

"I also did not have a family support system when going through the academy. The question is how you use that. Some people, Use that as a reason to excel, while others use that as a reason to fail. But there is so much of a gray area. Can I ask what happened in the past that caused all the discord within the family?"

"Well, mom and dad were demanding, controlling." Kelly began. "And I never met my grandparents. So I always suspected there was some kind of major row between them and my parents before I was born."

She took another sip of her coco. "Which is why mom and dad might have been the way they were. They were trying to prove themselves to their own parents. But that's just my theory. Whenever I tried to talk to them about it, they always shut me down immediately."

(Reply Solice)

"This might be a total cliché, but....Mom and dad really wanted a boy. Of course, they never had the backbone to come out and say it. But I read between the lines."

(Reply Solice, any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(New Romulus, Eryx Clinic – Emergency Room – Gunnery Sergeant Emile Schofield – 1020)

It had been a short walk from the Transporter Room to the clinic. He arrived to find Mackenzie in one of the beds, while Yenna was arguing with Sam. The Sheriff had disobeyed his orders from the Prefect and she figured there would be major fallout. But then again, there were rules that even the Prefect had to follow. He could scream, rage and yell. But until her doctor gave her a clean bill of health, she was not going anywhere. And if the Prefect tried to force the issue... Well, the rules were on Sam's side, so he and his deputies were free to use their sidearms. That and they had back-up in the form of two private guards working for the clinic.

“If he wants to interrogate Mac, he can either do it right here or forget it.” Sam said. “And I have a law book, plus five disruptors and a tranquilizer rifle to enforce that.” He handed Joker a container full of fresh darts, which Emile used to reload the weapon with four shots. “This is not his bailiwick. And there are plenty of witness and cameras watching.”

"I just hope you're right. Or this is going to get messy fast."

Emile nodded. Alas, only time would tell how this would go down.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

The Major was deep in discussion with the Master Sergeant when the Trill in a Starfleet Uniform approached them.

Without any ceremony, the Trill spoke, "Major, I'm Lieutenant Tegian Pex, the Chief Engineer of the Illuminar. The Captain mentioned you needed a few things. My department hadn't received a request, so I thought I'd come down and find out in person what you needed so that we could make sure you and your team weren't inconvenienced any longer than necessary."

The Major looked up to see the Lieutenant standing there. Turning to his Master Sergeant, "Seems the fleet is more lax than I remember," he said. Turning back to the engineer, "We are well used to the fleet inconveniencing us, as if there was some competition between fleet and the Marines," he said as he took a PADD and handed to the engineer, "Well Lieutenant Tegian Pex," he said, "I think you will find the current list of items we are in need of. If you can supply these, my team would be appreciative."

He paused, "So tell me Lieutenant, what does someone do for fun on a starship like this? My men could use some downtime after building out little home away from home."

(reply Pex)

"Thank you Lieutenant. One last question, is discipline that lax on this ship? Lack discipline is a hallmark. Well, I'm sure you know."

(reply Pex)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

"This might be a total cliché, but....Mom and dad really wanted a boy. Of course, they never had the backbone to come out and say it. But I read between the lines."

"It is not Cliche if it is true. So tell me about the positive influences in your life."

“Besides Alex, there was the Jones family. They took me in after my parents threw me out. I lived with them until I left for Starfleet Academy. It was the first time I experienced normal family life,” She smiled at the memories.

“And there was Mister McKinley, who was the headmaster at our school. He made learning fun. And he was not afraid to go above and beyond for his students. For example, we had this one student, Caesar Wallace, who was really good at writing. But he couldn’t find a job. So Mister McKinley revived the

school newspaper and made Caesar the editor. These days, Caesar is the editor of The Sowetan, a major South African newspaper. And it's all because Mister McKinley go his career going."

(Reply Solice)

“I think you’d like Mister McKinley,” She paused. “But I did sort of make a mistake regarding to Mr. Kinley once. Before I left for the Academy, I took an aptitude test and the top score was in lab work. Mister Kinley said that I should apply for the Science Department. But I didn’t listen to him and went for security instead.”

(Reply Solice)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 7 - Upper Cargo Bay 1 - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1025)

Tegian walked out of the Turbolift and headed for Cargo Bay 1. Since it was a Cargo Bay, there wasn't a chime for the door, something that Tegian added to the list. And knocking wasn't going to work on something this thick, so he let himself in.

Walking in, he looked around and saw that much of the equipment that he'd helped get loaded had already been unpacked and moved around. He stopped the first person he found and asked for the major and got an escort.

The marine disappeared as soon as he was handed off and Tegian didn't have the opportunity to thank them. "Major, I'm Lieutenant Tegian Pex, the Chief Engineer of the Illuminar. The Captain mentioned you needed a few things. My department hadn't received a request, so I thought I'd come down and find out in person what you needed so that we could make sure you and your team weren't inconvenienced any longer than necessary."

(Reply Murphy)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office -- Deck 5 –CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice – 1025)

Quinna watched Kelley as she talked about her positive influences. Ending on a positive note. She hoped that would keep Kelley in a positive mode while she goes throughout the day. “Sounds like you have been surrounded by positive influences.”

“I think you’d like Mister McKinley,” She paused. “But I did sort of make a mistake regarding to Mr. McKinley once. Before I left for the Academy, I took an aptitude test and the top score was in lab work.

Mister McKinley said that I should apply for the Science Department. But I didn't listen to him and went for security instead."

“Can I ask why you did not follow your strengths?” Quinna asked.

(Reply Long)

“Your decisions are not ever wrong if you make them for the right reasons.” Quinna supported.

(Reply Long)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

“Can I ask why you did not follow your strengths?” Solice asked.

"I thought that I could help more people by joining the Security department," Kelly said. "I was wrong." ~And got Joy killed.~

“Your decisions are not ever wrong if you make them for the right reasons.”

"Thank you, ma'am."

(Reply Solice)

Kelly nodded and sipped her drink. "I'll be glad when Alex is back. From what he told me, his daughter Mackenzie is half-Klingon and quite the character."

(Reply Solice)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 Cargo Bay 1 (Camp Peleliu) - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1029)

The Major was deep in discussion with the Master Sergeant when the Trill in a Starfleet Uniform approached them.

Without any ceremony, the Trill spoke, "Major, I'm Lieutenant Tegian

Pex, the Chief Engineer of the Illuminar. The Captain mentioned you needed a few things. My department hadn't received a request, so I thought I'd come down and find out in person what you needed so that we could make sure you and your team weren't inconvenienced any longer than necessary."

The Major looked up to see the Lieutenant standing there. Turning to his Master Sergeant, "Seems the fleet is more lax than I remember," he said. Turning back to the engineer, "We are well used to the fleet inconveniencing us, as if there was some competition between fleet and the Marines," he said as he took a PADD and handed it to the engineer, "Well Lieutenant Tegian Pex," he said, "I think you will find the current list of items we are in need of. If you can supply these, my team would be appreciative."

Tegian took the PADD. "Thank you, Major. I will review this when I get back to my office and provide you with a schedule of when we're able to provide these items. And, if anything else comes up, please feel free to reach out. Engineering is responsible for all systems on the ship and we don't discriminate. If any of my department does so, they will find themselves scrubbing the hull of the ship the next time we're in orbit."

He paused, "So tell me Lieutenant, what does someone do for fun on a starship like this? My men could use some downtime after building out little home away from home."

Tegian tried to imagine what someone might consider fun. "There's the Explorer's Lounge, also known as the Prancing Pony on Deck 4. There are two holodecks on Deck 5 and the firing range is on Deck 14.

"Thank you Lieutenant. One last question, is discipline that lax on this ship? Lack discipline is a hallmark. Well, I'm sure you know."

Tegian decided not to get insulted by the obvious ploy, so he replied in a relaxed tone. "Major, I saluted my superiors when I first came aboard and that behavior was corrected fairly quickly. While the marines might wish that, Starfleet doesn't require that of its personnel. If we're supposed to salute you, the Captain hadn't notified us. If that's something you expect, you might want to speak to him, so that he can let the crew know."

"If there's anything else I can do for you today, please let me know. Otherwise, I'll get my department to fulfill your list. And welcome to the Illuminar."

(Reply Murphy)

(Posted by Keith)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

Vag'Has had finished his paperwork and had send it. He had submitted five pages worth of arguments on why the charges against Mackenzie Dyson were more political then legal. This had been followed by a full page that basically came down to him yelling at Tagock, son of Wayis. Tagock was the Embassy's agricultural attaché. He was considered a joke by many on the Embassy staff.

It had been him who had led the arrest of Mrs. Dyson. When Vag'Has had growled at the security team whose brilliant idea that was, he had been pleasantly surprised. It turned out that everybody else they had asked, had agreed with Vag'Has that arresting Dyson was a stupid idea.

So they had refused to do lead the expedition. Tagock – being an ambitious little toad – had been the only one who had agreed to execute the order. ~He probably figured that HQ would clean house at the Farius Prime Embassy next. And that he could somehow get a promotion out of that. That spineless PetaQ.~

But Vag'Has was pretty sure he had just destroyed those prospects. He had sent one copy of his report to the Ambassador, one to his superiors in the Klingon Defense Force's JAG , and one to of Mackenzie Dyson's grandfather Rox. It was the second copy that he figured would do the most damage.

The hardliners were trying to keep this whole thing off the High Council's radar. Vag'Has believed that if the hardliners had their way, the Council would not find out what was happening here until Dyson's punishment was....what was that Terran term ?....a fact accompli. ~Yes, a fact accompli.~

It would be a footnote in some monthly update. But if the JAG and Rox began yelling at the Diplomatic Service, it would no doubt lead to somebody higher up in the food chain showing up and dropping the hammer on whoever was behind this.

~Of course, the Ambassador might yell at me soon.~ In the meantime, he grabbed a book and began reading. If the Ambassador wanted to yell at him, he knew where to find him.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

Kowalski saw the Star Fleet officer come in to their 'Camp'. He engaged Corporal Mason, who pointed him in the direction of the Major's office.

Cornering Mason, he learned that the officer was a Lieutenant from engineering. Kowalski nodded. This was the fellow he needed to meet. The major could be gruff to non-Marines, and with them in foreign territory, they were dependent on the Engineering and Operations department to ensure that they had what they needed.

Taking leave of Mason and the others he was working with, he headed out to the hall, where he leaned against the bulkhead as nonchalantly as he could. As the Lieutenant walked out of the cargo bay, Kowalski fell in step with him. "Hi there, Lieutenant, Sir. I'm Kowalski," he said as an opening. "Saw you with the Major, he's a real hard-ass, sorry. Did he give you a list of our needs?"

(Reply Pex)

"Well Sir, if I can suggest that you ask for me in the future, I'm the unofficial quarter master for our merry band of marines. We're too small a unit to have an official quartermaster, but Gunny Gloria, she's the Cardassian, and Sergeant Melman tend to run everything to me first. Mind if I see what he asked for, Sir?"

(Reply Pex)

He looked at the PADD that the Lieutenant handed him and chuckled. "Yes indeed," he said, "Quite a list here. Tell you what we really need, Sir. A second personal replicator, and an industrial replicator. We also need a place to recharge our powerpacks," he said.

(reply Pex)

"What can you tell me about the holodecks here? We need a place to train and unless you think we can get another cargo deck, the holodecks will be what we need. Unless, of course, we can use the ship to run scenarios. Take over Engineering, for example. Would your people be game?"

(Reply Pex)

Kowalski shrugged, "I'm only a gunnery sergeant, so the ideas have to run up the flagpole. Tell you what though, I bet you'd get on the Major's good side if you had some ideas on what and where we could practice. Maybe even get the Captain's permission even."

(Reply Pex)

"Thanks, Lieutenant. I look forward to working with you," he said. "I better get back, we're checking out our heavy BDUs, and that's a bear."

(Reply Pex)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – CMO Office - Deck 5 – CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice - 1030)

Quinna looked at Kelly, "You have some thinking to do. It is never too late to change your assignments. Starfleet can no longer be your escape but make it what you really want. If you cannot do it for yourself, do it for Joy. Just think about it.."

Kelly nodded and sipped her drink. "I'll be glad when Alex is back. From what he told me, his daughter Mackenzie is half-Klingon and quite the character."

"I am with you on that one. Michael is with him. I am a bit uneasy with him gone." Quinna said and then changed the thought process. "If you do not mind me asking, how is your relationship with Mr. Dyson?"

(Reply Long)

"Are you up for the challenge of his daughter in the relationship? Dynamics always change."

(Reply Long)

"Something to talk about next time. Let's meet again at the same time in 3 days. What do you think?" Quinna was curious about what Ms. Long was thinking about her therapy.

(Reply Long)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

Quinna looked at Kelly, "You have some thinking to do. It is never too late to change your assignments. Starfleet can no longer be your escape but make it what you really want. If you cannot do it for yourself, do it for Joy. Just think about it.."

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(Reply Long)

"Are you up for the challenge of his daughter in the relationship? Dynamics always change."

(Reply Long)

"Something to talk about next time. Let's meet again at the same time in 3 days. What do you think?" Quinna was curious about what Ms. Long was thinking about her therapy.

(Reply Long)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

"I am with you on that one. Michael is with him. I am a bit uneasy with him gone." Solice said.

"If you do not mind me asking, how is your relationship with Mr. Dyson?"

"We're good." She loved Alex and she knew he loved her.

"Are you up for the challenge of his daughter in the relationship? Dynamics always change."

"I...." She paused. "I honestly don't know. I have to think about it."

"Something to talk about next time. Let's meet again at the same time in 3 days. What do you think?"

"That sounds good to me." Kelly said with a nod, before finishing her hot chocolate. "Thanks for the talk, doctor."

(Reply Solice)

She got up and headed for the door. "Don't work too hard."

(Reply Solice)

Kelly walked out and headed for her quarters. Like the doctor had said, she had some thinking to do.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Ruben)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8, hallway - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1037)

Taking leave of Mason and the others he was working with, he headed out to the hall, where he leaned against the bulkhead as nonchalantly as he could. As the Lieutenant walked out of the cargo bay, Kowalski fell in step with him. "Hi there, Lieutenant, Sir. I'm Kowalski," he said as an opening. "Saw you with the Major, he's a real hard-ass, sorry. Did he give you a list of our needs?"

Tegian stopped walking and faced a man whom he realized was a Sergeant. "Hello, Sergeant Kowalski. Yes, your Major gave me a list of what you folks need. I'm headed back to Engineering to get my department to figure out what we can get you immediately and what will take a little longer."

"Well Sir, if I can suggest that you ask for me in the future, I'm the unofficial quarter master for our merry band of marines. We're too small a unit to have an official quartermaster, but Gunny Gloria, she's the Cardassian, and Sergeant Melman tend to run everything to me first. Mind if I see what he asked for, Sir?"

Tegian hesitated a moment before handing Kowalski the PADD. "As long as your Major has no objections, I don't. Do I need to clear that with him? He seems to be a very command and control, by the books, kind of person."

He looked at the PADD that the Lieutenant handed him and chuckled. "Yes indeed," he said, "Quite a list here. Tell you what we really need, Sir. A second personal replicator, and an industrial replicator. We also need a place to recharge our power packs," he said.

"Another personal replicator isn't a problem. We have extras. An industrial replicator, however, is something we're going to have to build. Not a bad project for some of the cadets. As far as a place to recharge your power packs, do you want a bank of chargers mounted on a wall? Honestly, I didn't take a good look at what you folks did to the cargo bay to see if there's a spot for that. Also, I know the cargo bay isn't all that roomy, but I want you to consider that to consider the z-axis. We often get locked into x and y axis's and forget to look up. There's a lot of space in that cargo bay if you look up. We can mount ladders and netting to help you make more use of that space, if it'll help."

The Sergeant went continued. "What can you tell me about the holodecks here? We need a place to train and unless you think we can get another cargo deck, the holodecks will be what we need. Unless, of course, we can use the ship to run scenarios. Take over Engineering, for example. Would your people be game?"

Tegian leaned against the hallway wall, stifling a yawn. He was up too early, again. "There are two holodecks, for the entire ship. You can reserve hourly slots, although accommodations can be made. You can talk to Commander Dieter if you need longer blocks of time. He's the head of Operations onboard the Illuminar. As far as using another space for training, I'd start by talking with Commander Dieter or the Captain. I can't recommend using Engineering. My department is staffed at all hours and we monitor all functions of the ship there."

Kowalski shrugged, "I'm only a gunnery sergeant, so the ideas have to run up the flagpole. Tell you what though, I bet you'd get on the Major's good side if you had some ideas on what and where we could practice. Maybe even get the Captain's permission even."

Tegian chuckled. "Is there something going on between the Major and the Captain that the Major can't ask either Commander Dieter or the Captain himself? I honestly don't understand why there's a belief we don't want you folks aboard. You're only in the cargo hold because we don't have the room to put you elsewhere and only learned that we were taking you aboard very recently. I told your Major this and I meant it. My department will treat you just like we treat everyone else on this ship. If any of my people treat any marine differently, they will find themselves scrubbing the hull."

"Thanks, Lieutenant. I look forward to working with you," he said. "I better get back, we're checking out our heavy BDUs, and that's a bear."

Tegian pushed himself off from the wall. "And why do you compare your BDUs to a large Earth mammal, Sergeant? I don't understand."

(Reply Kowalski)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 - Hallway - Marine Gunny Kowalski - 1040)

The conversation with the Lieutenant was going well.

"Do you need to clear that with him? He seems to be a very command and control, by the books, kind of person," the Lieutenant said.

"Only with non-Marines," he replied, "For us, we adopt, adapt and overcome. It's an unofficial Marine motto," Kowalski replied.

They turned to replicators and power charging stations. "Also, I know the cargo bay isn't all that roomy, but I want you to consider that to consider the z-axis. We often get locked into x and y axis's and forget to look up. There's a lot of space in that cargo bay if you look up. We can mount ladders and netting to help you make more use of that space, if it'll help." Teigan said.

"That is an excellent idea," replied Kowalski, "That should do the trick. I wonder if we can setup some sleeping units like that as well."

The Lieutenant kept suggesting the Major talk to someone named Commander Dieter. "I don't know all the Major's history, but there is always a tension between fleeters and Marines. Usually a friendly rivalry. I think the Major is disappointed that we are on a science ship, and not a true warship. We're

hear, as near as we can tell, because your security forces were not up to the task of protecting VIPs, so that will be one of our jobs. Put on the dress uniform and stand at attention. Don't get me wrong, we are very good at what we do, but we're a mobile response team, rapid deployment to assess and control a situation. We're first in and last out, used to operating on our own."

He paused, "That's why we train, train, train. As the Major says, "drills are bloodless battles and battles bloody drills."

As the conversation continued, Kowalski chuckled when the Lieutenant said, "And why do you compare your BDUs to a large Earth mammal, Sergeant?"

"It's a figure of speech, means they are hard, difficult. Takes about 20 hours to bring a suit up from ice cold, like these were. Hopefully you have their schematics in your secure datafiles somewhere, just in case. Thanks Lieutenant, I better head back and get to work, I'll be in touch."

(reply Teigan, IYW)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 - Hallway - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 1042)

"Only with non-Marines," he replied, "For us, we adopt, adapt and overcome. It's an unofficial Marine motto," Kowalski replied.

"Fair enough, but I don't want Major Murphy to feel like I'm avoiding him after our encounter. If he directs me to work with you, going forward, that is fine with me, but I'd want him to tell me that, not you. I hope you understand," replied Tegian.

(Reply Kowalski)

"That is an excellent idea," replied Kowalski, "That should do the trick. I wonder if we can set up some sleeping units like that as well."

Tegian looked thoughtful. "We can certainly come up with something, I'm sure, to utilize the space. I would want to make sure we secure everything so that any maneuvers by the Illuminar don't shift anything or dump anyone to the floor. I don't need Commander Solice's ire."

(Reply Kowalski)

The Lieutenant kept suggesting the Major talk to someone named Commander Dieter. "I don't know all the Major's history, but there is always a tension between fleeters and Marines. Usually a friendly rivalry. I think the Major is disappointed that we are on a science ship, and not a true warship. We're hear, as near as we can tell, because your security forces were not up to the task of protecting VIPs, so that will be one of our jobs. Put on the dress uniform and stand at attention. Don't get me wrong, we are very good at what we do, but we're a mobile response team, rapid deployment to assess and control a situation. We're first in and last out, used to operating on our own."

Tegian saw the blank look when he mentioned Dieter's name. "Commander Dieter Gregory is currently the second-in-command of the Illuminar and the head of Operations for the ship. He'd likely be the best one to arrange for space in some place other than the holodeck, if the Captain isn't already taking a personal interest."

(Reply Kowalski)

He paused, "That's why we train, train, train. As the Major says, "drills are bloodless battles and battles bloody drills."

Tegian nodded. "I understand. In a previous host, my symbiont was a soldier. One of the changes of the Joining was an obsession of practicing everything I do. It's made me a better engineer. You train so that you don't make costly mistakes when others are relying on you to do your job correctly."

(Reply Kowalski)

"It's a figure of speech, means they are hard, difficult. Takes about 20 hours to bring a suit up from ice cold, like these were. Hopefully you have their schematics in your secure datafiles somewhere, just in case. Thanks Lieutenant, I better head back and get to work, I'll be in touch."

"I studied the schematics last night after I helped load them. I was curious as to what they were. As I said, my department is responsible for all systems on board and that includes your equipment as well, Sergeant. If you want any help, we can assist."

(Reply Kowalski)

"Now, what else on this list from your Major is important? The Captain mentioned a monitor for the Major."

(Reply Kowalski)
(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

Charles was walking through the passageway on his way to the Chief Security Officer's Office with his briefcase in hand. He was actually kind of glad that Major Murphy sent him to coordinate some things with Lieutenant Commander T'Mur if for no other reason than it gave him a chance to 'register' his personal weapons. One thing he never managed to forget about during his retirement was the rivalry between Fleet and Corps. He never truly understood it, but he remembered how it was with the Marines being treated like the Federation's bastard child. And Temerity was considered a bastard among bastards.

As a civilian captain, he learned the value of a sincere peace offering and he also had one of those in the case as well. He had managed to purchase a 50 year-old bottle of Scotch. Charles knew that the alcohol itself had no effect on Vulcans, but he had taken note on more than several occasions that they did find the immediate physical sensations of actual consumption of the drink... 'fascinating'.

He was part of the one-quarter of one percent of Marines that learned Starfleet skills and became a ship's captain on the "outside". Charles still snickered to himself whenever he thought about the security interview he had to go through when he reported in. The Intell officer read through his military and civilian files along with the joint summary before stating with an air of disgust, "Charles Temerity, oh

yes, the recalled Marine retiree; qualified to be a ‘pirate captain’. How exactly does that happen?” At the time, Charles automatically responded with a smirk and a shrug, “Just lucky, I guess.” The rest of the interview did not go smoothly after that.

He entered the office and approached the front desk and patiently waited for the young female behind the desk to address him. Once she did, he simply stated, “My name is Charles Temerity, I was sent to speak with Commander T’Mur to discuss matters involving the Marine detachment that came aboard last night, and a single matter that involves a couple of items of my personal property.”

(Reply: any iyw)

Before he had the chance to respond, he heard a voice behind him. When he turned to see the source of the voice he was mentally taken aback for the briefest of moments. A very striking Vulcan female that looked to be 20 years his junior. But if Vulcans and Romulans aged about the same, for all he knew he could be 20 years her junior. Hell, T'Lela was old enough to be his great-grandmother but looked like she could pass for ten years younger than he was, but at 49, he was no spring chicken by any stretch of the imagination. With a slight shake of his head to bring himself back into the moment "Sorry ma'am; I'm Lieutenant Charles Temerity of the Marine detachment that came aboard last night. Major Murphy sent me over to discuss coordinating our services of a rapid response team and additional diplomatic security as needed to support your department." He then raised up the briefcase and continued, "And a small matter involving personal property. If I may inquire, which would you prefer to discuss first?"

(Reply: T'Mur)

As she responded, he observed how she moved and conducted herself. Her piercing eyes almost offset the realization that she didn't move quite like a typical Vulcan. In his experience, Vulcans were smooth in their movements, but in a more biomechanical and measured way, T'Mur moved more with the fluidic grace of a dancer or a martial artist. While his curiosity was peaked, he had no intention of asking until invited to do so. But in the back of his mind, he was praying to all that was holy that she couldn't read his mind. Charles was hitting a stage in life in which the only females that found him attractive were the ones with 'daddy issues'; oh, he still found them physically attractive, but refused to have any personal involvement with them what-so-ever.

(Reply: T'Mur)

(Posted by Chuck)

[illegible]

TMur watched from her office as an older human male entered the Security Office. He was dressed in a marine uniform. The Chief of Security had planned to go down to the cargo bay later today, but now the marines seem to have come to her. All the better. She watched as he approached the administration desk. Ensign Charlene, the Bolian administration assistant looked up him questioningly.

“My name is Charles Temerity," he said, "I was sent to speak with Commander T'Mur to discuss matters involving the Marine detachment that came aboard last night, and a single matter that involves a couple of items of my personal property.”

Charlene looked up at the man questioningly, "Do you have an appointment... Lieutenant?"

T'Mur was already out of her office and moving towards the marine, "I have this Charlene. How may I help you Lieutenant Temerity?"

"Sorry ma'am," Temerity said, "I'm Lieutenant Charles Temerity of the Marine detachment that came aboard last night. Major Murphy sent me over to discuss coordinating our services of a rapid response team and additional diplomatic security as needed to support your department. And a small matter involving personal property. If I may inquire, which would you prefer to discuss first?"

T'Mur raised an eyebrow at the statements and was already considering her response to it. "Lt. Temerity, please, join me in my office."

She led the way across the foyer and sat down in her chair, offering the one on the other side of her desk to the marine.

"Please, sit," she said. It was more of a directive than a request.

(reply Temerity)

"Let us address your first point first," T'Mur started. "You wish to discuss your services as a rapid response team? Please, tell me what your CO has in mind."

(reply Temerity)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

Charles watched as T'Mur raised an eyebrow at his statements "Lt. Temerity, please, join me in my office." To which he simply bowed his head and gestured for her to lead the way and he fell in behind her as she led the way across the foyer and sat down in her chair, offering the one on the other side of her desk to the marine.

"Please, sit," she said. It was more of a directive than a request.

“Thank you, Ma’am.” He graciously says as he sits in the proffered chair and sets the case on the deck next to him.

"Let us address your first point first," T'Mur started. "You wish to discuss your services as a rapid response team? Please, tell me what your CO has in mind."

Temerity was grateful that he had given some serious thought to this question, after all it was the same question, he would have asked were he in her position. So, with little to no guidance from Major Murphy, Temerity cooked up a plan he hoped would be acceptable to both the Marine commander and the Security commander. “Well Ma’am, the way I understand it, the Major would maintain direct control of two-thirds of the detachment as a rapid response force to train and remain ready until called upon by you, the ship’s XO, or CO. Or to utilize as mission parameters dictate.”

(Reply: T’Mur iyw)

He watched her as he spoke and figured he would be a fool if he did not think she was mentally taking notes if not actually jotting them down. But he continued just the same, “Myself and the remaining third, with your acceptance and approval, would assist and augment your security forces with day-to-day functions.”

(Reply: T’Mur iyw)

“I have no intention of taking over security, that is why I intend to make sure that the senior most NCO I intend to bring would be a Staff Sergeant and have one Marine teamed up or paired with one of your people in such a way as someone with less experience paired with someone with more experience that way, they will be able to learn from each other to become a more balanced team and hopefully better partners. I would report to you but keep the major in the loop.”

(Reply: T’Mur)

“I have no intention of taking over security, that is why I intend to make sure that as much as possible, rank wise, Marines will be no more than equal to your personnel. Personally, I would like to see enough cross-training that, in time, the single biggest difference between security and marine forces is the color on the uniform.”

(Reply: T’Mur)

(NRPG: Room for more if desired.)

Charles nodded, “Roger that, Ma’am, I’ll pass your message on to Major Murphy.” then reached down and opened the top of the briefcase. Reaching in he pulled out an old leather dual shoulder holster with double sheaths on the back. In each sheath was a razor-sharp Bowie style knife and in each holster was a custom disruptor pistol that resembled an 1857 Colt Navy from the American Civil War from Earth’s history, also referred to as a Cavalry pistol. Charles spread the rig out and held it out to T’Mur by the leather straps making a point not to touch any of the weapons, “This is the subject of the second topic. These are my personal weapons. Please feel free to examine and inspect them but be careful. The knives are sharp, and the power packs are charged.”

(Reply: T’Mur)

(Posted by Chuck)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 - CSec Office - CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1055)

As Temerity began to speak T'Mur sat back in her seat and listened.

“Well Ma’am, the way I understand it, the Major would maintain direct control of two-thirds of the detachment as a rapid response force to train and remain ready until called upon by you, the ship’s XO, or CO. Or to utilize as mission parameters dictate.”

T'Mur raised an eyebrow at the proposal, "I am uncertain that I have the same appreciation for the numbers that you and the major have. Nor am I certain that I want any of my security officers to be under anyone else's "direct control" as you worded it. However, I have wanted to implement a rapid response team for some time and this might be an opportune moment. I would, of course, participate and oversee this training. Please continue."

Temerity did as he was bade, “Myself and the remaining third, with your acceptance and approval, would assist and augment your security forces with day-to-day functions.”

She leaned forward and placed her elbows on the desk, then steepled her fingers on her chin. A move she'd seen Sekal do many times before. She found it interesting that she would choose this moment to mimic her commander. "And how would your resource add the performance of my department?"

“I have no intention of taking over security,” Termity assured her, “that is why I intend to make sure that the senior most NCO I intend to bring would be a Staff Sergeant and have one Marine teamed up or paired with one of your people in such a way as someone with less experience paired with someone with more experience that way, they will be able to learn from each other to become a more balanced team and hopefully better partners. I would report to you but keep the major in the loop.”

T'Mur was intrigued by the man's words. Humans often had ulterior motives for many things that they did. Military personnel were especially known for having such a mindset. "I do not understand the need for a military presence in the security forces of the Illuminar."

“I have no intention of taking over security, that is why I intend to make sure that as much as possible, rank wise, Marines will be no more than equal to your personnel. Personally, I would like to see enough cross-training that, in time, the single biggest difference between security and marine forces is the color on the uniform.”

The Vulcan shrugged, “I am unconcerned about any attejjpt to “take over security,” T’Mur said, equally assuring. “You have mentioned that assurance twice. If you are concerned about damaging my ego then you may put that aside. I have no ego to bruise. But as I said, I also do not understand the need for a military presence. This is primariily a vessel of exploration. My people are trained to keep this ship safe under those conditions. If your marines are of a similar mindset then I welcome them to my team. That would mean, however, that we all wear the same uniform. They may wear a marine insignia if they feel they must, but I would insist that they were a fleet uniform, if, for no other reason, than to present a united force to the crew of this ship. Do you find that acceptable?”

(reply Temerity)

“Also,” she added, “I want it clear that reports may be made to your major, but I am in charge of the security of this ship, and not him. All of my decisions are final. I do not want a...” ~ What would Sienna call it? ~ “... ah yes... a pissing match. If that is the correct use of the phrase.”

(reply Temerity)

(posted by Al Muir)

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building- Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak – 1100)

Korak had been pouring through the data package he had requested about this girl MacKenzie Dyson. He was surprised, to say the least, at what he found. He sat back in his seat and blew his breath through pursed lips.

When the door to his office opened, Wavor entered with a Klingon looking girl. She was clearly the hybrid child that he'd been hearing, and reading about.

“Good work , Sheriff,” Korak said. “Now get out.”

“Wha.. what?!” Wavor protested weekly.

“Your devices in this matter are complete,” Korak continued. “You’re a good law enforcement official. Go and save the province of Eryx from the criminal element you are sworn to protect them from.”

Before Wavor could protest further, Korak took hold of his elbow and ushered him out the door. He came back to his desk and offered a chair to the girl. Then he sat down at his own chair.

"So you're MacKenzie Dyson?" he asked.

"That last name is in question," the girl replied. "But that's the name I'm going by for the moment."

"You certainly have caused a raucous, haven't you?" Korak continues his questioning.

"Have I?" MacKenzie returned. "I can't understand why."

Korak smiled, "I imagine. But the Klingons certainly held an interest in you. And so does the Federation since they're sending an envoy for you."

MacKenzie looked even more confused, "The Federation? Why would they..."

Then it dawned on her exactly why the Federation would come, and who they would send.

"No!" she said emphatically. "No, no, no."

"No what?" Korak asked.

"No, that better not be who I think it is," she said defiantly.

"And who's that?"

"My... father," she could barely get the word out. "Or my suspected father. It was never confirmed. But my mother said a great deal of negative things about him. So I'll probably like him."

Korak snorted in amusement. "I see. Let's talk about why they're all after you shall we?"

"I already said I don't know why," MacKenzie whined.

"Indeed you did," Korak agreed. Let me ask you this. Do you recognize any of these names?"

He turned his computer screen around to show a list of a dozen names. MacKenzie glanced over them and stiffened. She did recognize many of them. "Many of them worked in the office that I "interned" with." ~Yeah, if you call slave labor an internship.~

Then she noticed a red dot next to each of the name. Finally she saw the last two names. Hers was last and her mother's was just above it. It had a red dot as well.

"What does the red dot mean?" she asked.

Korak turned the screen back around and leaned his elbows on his desk. “The red dots show that each of those people are dead.”

Mackenzie caught her breath, “My mother!?”

“Indeed,” Korak looked at the screen. “It says here that she was found three days ago in her apartment. She literally drowned in alcohol.”

“She what?” Mackenzie couldn’t believe her ears. Her mother had been a blackout drunk almost the entirety of the girl’s life. But to drown in the stuff? And it wasn’t as if there had been any love lost. But still, she felt sad by the news

“So we’re going to keep you here, under protective supervision for a while,” Korak said.

“For how long?” the girl asked.

“Until we’re sure you’re safe,” Korak said with an air of finality.

~Why SFI I get the feeling that's gonna be a long time? From one prison to another.~

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

"Commander, sensors have picked up a federation ship, traveling at warp 6. Current course appears to be heading towards New Romulus," Centurion Oldat called.

Sub-Commander Rurok walked over to Oldat's station, and looked at the readings. "He is correct Commander. It appears the information from the spy is indeed correct," she said.

Sitting in the command chair, the commander, Sikan, nodded. "He better be, for what we pay him," she said. "Signal homeworld that we have acquired the target."

"Yes Commander," came the reply from Rurok, who set to work.

Sub-commander Rurok approached her commander, "What are our orders?" she asked.

Commander Sikan, who's hate of the Federation was well known, brushed her blond hair to the side and smiled, "To each the weaklings in the Republic to not negotiate with the Federation. My mother, my grandmother would have never allowed such an open transgression of our space," she said. "We will either capture or destroy the ship, making sure that they send a distress call. We will sew the seeds of hostility between the Republic and the Federation so that s'Radaik will rise to prominence among the clans, and under our leadership, we will punish those who call themselves the leaders of the so called

'Romulan Republic'. Our ancestors must be rolling in their graves to see how far Romulan blood has fallen."

The sub-commander nodded. This was a mission she could get behind. "Commander," called Centurion Oldat, "We have a response," he said, "Vesh ta'jot."

Rurok looked at Sikan. The two women nodded, "The die is cast, we will destroy that ship. Centurion Dilit, plot an intercept course, best speed under cloak."

"Yes Commander," came the response. "Course is plotted."

"Execute," Sikan said.

(Reply None)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- CMO Office -- Deck 5 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinna Solice -- 13:13)

Quinna had enough of the pain in the lower back. She was not sure what could be done, but something had to be. Not willing to move from the comfort of her chair, she called for Dr. Kylvie.

“Solice to Kyllée.” She called after tapping her commbadge.

(Reply Kyllee)

“When you have a minute, can you join me in my office?” Quinna asked.

(Reply Kyllee)

“Thank you,” Quinna tapped the badge again to close the communication and then leaned over the arm of the chair.

Quinna rested her eyes hoping for relief soon.

(Posted by Kris B)

.....

((USS Illuminar - Deck 5 - Sickbay - MO - Dr. Kylee Stev -- 1314))

With Quinna occupied with her command duties, Stev and Aggie had managed to keep a handle on sickbay. But it was always good to have the CMO in sickbay, for various reasons. He had spent more time in the sickbay as a result, but it wasn't as if he had a life outside of medicine. Since his return from the Rhyne he had yet to develop any form of a personal life. The scars of the death of his family were still too fresh.

He had been going through the daily medic logs when his comm badge chirped. =^=Solice to Kylan.=^=

It was odd that she would call him rather than just come into the main sickbay. He tapped his comm badge automatically, "Go ahead Doctor."

=^=When you have a minute can you join me in my office? ^=^=

"I'll be right there," he replied and put his PADD down.

=^=Thank you.^=

He smiled, having a feeling he knew what it was regarding. He walked over to the office where the door was closed, which was unusual to begin with. It opened to his presence and he stepped in, allowing it to close behind him before anything else. He knew how Quinna valued her privacy.

When he saw her he could see the distress on her face. He pulled out his medical scanner and stepped over to her. “Ok, Quinna, tell me what’s going on.”

(reply Solice)
(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

“Ok, Quinna, tell me what’s going on.”

Quinna had felt a momentary relief when Stev entered. “Thanks for coming quickly. This kid is very active, I hate to ask this but I need some relief. Baby has been kicking my back that right now I cannot even get up.”

(Reply Kylee)

“I have heard of babies kicking and this is the right time, but not to this extreme,” Quinna added. “Is the baby ok?”

(Reply Kylee)
(posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

Stev listened as Quinna complained about the the kicking child growing in her, and the back pain she was experiencing. He ran his probe over her belly and around her and hummed.

"I cannot even get up," she finally said.

"Do you want to get up," Kyllee said, looking whimsically at her.

“I have heard of babies kicking and this is the right time, but not to this extreme,” Quinna said. “Is the baby ok?”

He looked at the probe and then he pulled out his PADD. “Well the baby is healthy. How long have you been pregnant?”

(reply Quinna)

"It's growing like a weed in a field," he said. "Very healthy. But the rate of growth is a little... faster than I would have expected." He showed her the readout.

“As for the back pain,” he continued, “I can give you some exercises you can do. You should move your feet a little before turning, wear flat shoes, and lots of rest.”

(reply Solice)

He tapped something into the PADD, “I’ve just ordered you a mandatory rest break, every four hours. And a hot bath and a massage every couple of days. I have a holo-spa program that I think you’d love. Finally, you may want to consider a firmer mattress on your bed.”

(reply Solice)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

“As for the back pain,” he continued, “I can give you some exercises you can do. You should move your feet a little before turning, wear flat shoes, and lots of rest.”

“Rest?” Quinna asked. She did not have time to rest.

He tapped something into the PADD, “I’ve just ordered you a mandatory rest break, every four hours. And a hot bath and a massage every couple of days. I have a holo-spa program that I think you’d love. Finally, you may want to consider a firmer mattress on your bed.”

“Mandatory Rest?” Quinna looked at Stev, “Are you kidding me? Have you met me? I cannot rest. I do not have the time. Every four hours is too much.” Quinna took a deep breath.

(Reply Kylee)

“I promised that this baby would not interfere with my duty and I am seated most of the time.” Quinna plead.

(Reply Kylee)

[illegible][illegible]

“What I need from you is a promise,” he finally said. “You will spend an hour in my spa program today and tomorrow. I will track you down every six hours for the next three days, just to check-in. If I think you are putting yourself, or the child at risk then I *will* relieve you of duty. Is that clear?”

Quinna stared at Stev and thought about what he had to say. Obviously, it was not what she wanted. But if she thought about it, If Michael was here, he would have made her do the first option. At least this gave her more freedom. And a Watchdog.

“I know that you don’t want this,” he pointed to her belly, “to affect the performance of your duties, but you have to be realistic. It will. But if you can still work then I would also recommend that. We need you mentally healthy as well. Can you accept that?”

“Ok, I will take the rest of the day off. And I will use the program today and tomorrow.” Quinna conceded. “You don’t play fair.”

(Reply Kylee)

“Ok back to work with you. But one more thing. I would kill for some coffee.” Quinna said.

(Reply Kylee)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

The table was set for 20 but only 10 were present at the moment. Ariel sat at the head of the table. Her father Detron sat to her right. Lanista sat to her left. Pe"tah and others filled in the seats around them. The turkey looked and smelled fantastic. All the traditional fixings lay on the table as well. There was a large bowl of Gagh and Stuffing mixed with these nutty tasting beetles for the Klingons. She tried the stuffing before and it tasted amazing even if you are not Klingon. Before the staff served the salad, Ariel said a traditional Catholic grace that will cover all religions present. She added some words in Klingon as well. When she was done with grace, she motioned for the staff to start serving. When everyone present at the table was served the first course of salad, she raised a glass of iced tea spiked with a good amount of vodka. Others had the same drink in front of them. She intended to feel loose today and encouraged others to do the same.

"To friends and family nay we prosper, be heathy, and be grateful for the bounty before us. Lets eat."

(Reply any)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

(Shuttle – Front Cabin - Medic - Ensign (jg) Jason Bell – 2215)

It was an uneventful trip... it had been long as the Illuminar wasn't the shuttles only stop but it was it's last. Easily and skilfully, the pilot flew the shuttle into the shuttlebay. Jason was interested but

He hoped he wasn't the oldest Ensign onboard.

(USS Illuminar – Shuttlebay – Medic – Ensign (jg) Jason Bell – 2230)

Jason looked around to see if anyone was here to meet him.

(Posted by Anthony Keen)

(USS Illuminar – Shuttlebay – Medic – 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice – 2231)

(Reply Bell)

(Reply Bell)

(Qo'nos - The Imperial House - Portico - Lieutenant Galk and Jos of the Imperial House - 0900)

The Klingon's mane and beard were streaked with grey but he was still vital, still strong though his joints were stiffening from overly heavy use. He had already settled on a regimen of exercise that would see him through to his goal.

Galk was perched on a chair with an empty bowl and a nearby flagon, when he saw his father nearing he bellowed for a second setting.

Jos stopped short and eyed him closely, Galk had been large and strong when he had first seen him but had put on a lot of muscle and looked formidable which made him quite proud. He continued to the other side of the table and seated himself.

"You are looking stronger this morning."

"Phaah!" Jos growled. "My head hurts and my joints ache but that will work itself out in time. You look restless. Why are you not on your ship?"

"Hmmm." Galk leaned forward. "I had to make sure you were ready before I left. When I am not here you will run the House."

Jos threw back his head and roared in laughter. "You are joking! The Imperial House is yours."

"I am not joking." Galk's face was intent. "There must be someone here to provide leadership when I am not, especially this early in the process of change from Eshag to me. You are my father and your word will carry my weight behind it. Any who will not heed your word will be the fool that the wind despises."

Jos sobered up at that and replied sourly. "And you expect me to tell them that they will be punished when you return? What kind of life is that for a Klingon?"

"Hah! No! I have already invoked the joH cha'Dich for you. You will run the House and I will be your weapon while I am here."

Jos was stunned and silent for a moment, after he had considered the news he spoke. "While you are here? What do you mean by that?" A bowl and tankard were set before him but he was going to let his stomach settle a bit first.

"Once the House is under control I intend to return to the Federation."

Jos half rose from the bench and a closed fist slammed down on the table causing the pottery to dance alarmingly and bloodwine sloshed from his tankard. "You are what? You have just won your birthright through combat! Why will you turn from it?"

Galk had been prepared for this and motioned for his father to sit down. "I turn from nothing. When I came to Rura Pente I was a soldier who knew nothing but to follow orders from my superiors, whether they were truly honorable or not I did not question though I was honorable in my dealings. From you I learned that I had to be better, to question and challenge what I had been told, to think beyond and see to the core of things. The Imperial House is the arbiter of honor for the High Council and it steers the Empire. To run the House I had to learn what it truly meant to lead in honor."

"Yet you went to the Federation!" Jos exclaimed.

"I did. The Empire had lost its way and it was necessary to learn how to bring it back. The Federation is not warlike as our people are but they know honor, how to lead without sacrificing who you are, how to minimize losses which only makes you stronger and how to gain respect while putting your strength to its best use. I have learned. But there will come a time when I will have to run this House alone and when that time comes I will have the knowledge and honor to do it the way it should be done."

"Ha! And you expect me to carry such a lofty standard while you serve with the Federation?" Jos had leaned forward intently.

"I expect you to be a check to the Chancellor and his ambitions and hold the Council to the terms of alliance with the Federation to which they agreed. Pe'tah of Nogga is an ally who will be of assistance and we will recruit others. For now I must bring discipline and order to the House, it's warriors must learn the price of disobedience. I do not believe this will be the last time but it is a start. When I leave for a time they will listen or be subject to your punishment."

"Hmmm." Jos sat back and pulled his food and drink close, he was starting to get hungry. "When do you leave to administer this lesson?"

"Soon." Galk took a last drink and set the flagon aside. "A few hours. The ship is already in orbit and the rest of them wait outside the system."

Jos chewed thoughtfully, swallowed then gave him a penetrating look. "Then make sure the lesson is one they will not forget quickly, those that survive."

"You have my word of honor on that." Galk stood to his feet. "I will see to it personally."

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

The Neg'Var class battle cruiser which was the flagship of the newly reconstituted Imperial House had left orbit around Qo'nos at Galk's order. The meeting with his father that morning had settled his mind and catapulted him into the operation that he anticipated would be only the first of its kind. Eshag might not have been the best and strongest of those that sat on the council but his support of the Chancellor and Imperial expansion had been absolute and a number of his commanders had been like-minded. Galk had been highly spoken of in some quarters before his plans led him to the Federation but those years spent away from the Empire had caused some to question his loyalty and despite his defeat of Eshag, his strength.

This expedition and show of strength should prove conclusively to the doubters that their commander, the head of the Imperial House demanded and would accept nothing less than absolute obedience under penalty of death. Those ships that set themselves in opposition would have to be destroyed. Eshag had commanded the largest house fleet in the Empire at 153 which had been essential in support of the KDF in gobbling up formerly Romulan held territory and while the loss of any was regrettable replacing them with the dakhars and resources from newly held worlds would take little time. Plans had already been made for expansion though they were still in the beginning stages.

The oGh'Shu might not have been the newest and best in the Imperial fleet but the battle cruiser was in prime condition and only recently repaired, Eshag may have had his faults but one could not claim that he did not take care of his ships. They had just left their home planetary system.

"hOd! The support ships have hailed us."

"Jay'aj." Five birds of prey and two Vor'cha class were joining his small fleet to wreak justice upon the recalcitrant ship commanders in newly acquired Klingon territory. "The he'gev, kha'sha and Mal'kesh are to be in the vanguard, the rest to our flanks."

"Jay'aj hOd!"

While the officer relayed the orders Galk settled comfortably into the command chair with his eyes on the viewscreen which showed the ships beginning to break formation and move to their assigned positions. It is generally recognized that a Klingon commander led by strength and it was not uncommon for lesser officers to move up in the ranks through assassination however that rarely happened and was a misconception borne of assigning the traits of mirror universe alternates to what most Federation citizens thought of as a barbaric and savage race. Truth be told Klingon honor maintained discipline far more readily than force. That did NOT preclude fights and disputes breaking out on KDF or House ships however, his people could be quick tempered and it was not unheard of for less honorable commanders to show cruelty to their subordinates. These tended to meet an untimely end at the hands of those they commanded and their cruelty was then perpetuated through their example. But this happened only on ships of the lesser houses overall, outlying worlds tended to show far less restraint and less discipline.

Not that he intended to let down his guard during this period of transition, he had brought those few aboard in whom he trusted but the rest of the crew was as yet untested. And what of the rest of those he had once commanded? Most still lived but were unavailable, having been either among the elements of expansion or in postings not easily accessible. Over time he intended to bring what remained of his old crew together but that would take time.

"All is in readiness hOd and our course has been set."

He leaned forward with a smile upon his lips which bared his teeth, the gesture had two meanings amongst the thlngen which often were interlocked.

"Ghos!"

The ships accelerated to warp, their destination... battle most glorious.

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building- Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak, Michael Weston – 1600)

There had been no humming or hawing when Michael and Alex announced their arrival at New Romulus. They were given coordinates to land their vehicle and then coordinates to transport to the Prefects office. Once they arrived at the administration building they were quickly ushered to the Prefect's office.

“Ah, gentlemen,” the portly Romulan Prefect said as he stepped towards them. “Welcome to New Romulus. Your arrival has been expected.”

“So we noticed,” Michael said warily. There was no enmity between the new Romulan admin island the Federation, but there was still a certain level of skepticism. “We are here for...”

Dyson interrupted, "We're here for my daughter. Mackenzie Dyson."

"Indeed," the Prefect said as he turned back his desk and lowered himself into his seat. "And there appears to be some question of that ver matter, Mr. Dyson. You have proof of your paternity, of course."

Dyson was stumped. As many times as Weston had told him that there was no proof and that he had only accepted the mother's word on the matter, it was still unproven.

"Ummmm... no," he admitted. "But K'Neara said..."

"Yes, yes, I'm sure that's all true, but surely you don't expect me to release a child to two strangers, especially two male strangers, based on hearsay?"

Michael put a hand in Dyson's shoulder, "No, of course not. But we were helping that you could help with genetic matching. And in the meantime, we would like to see the child."

"I would be happy to comply, to keep open lines of friendship with our Federation neighbors," Korak said. He hit the button on his comm station. "Send in the doctor,"

Another Romulan came in and moved to them. He carried a small bag of medical supplies. Without a word the medic pulled out a device, walked behind Dyson and with a swift motion touched the side of his neck.

"Ouch!" Dyson cried out.

"Apologies," Korak said. "Doctor Raynar is taking a DNA sample for the comparative assessment."

"You really we're ready for us," Michael quipped.

"I was," Korak said. "In anticipation I have been ready for most situations. Including this one."

The door opened again and MacKenzie walked in. Dyson stiffened a little but smiled. "Hi MacKenzie."

The girl's eyes narrowed as she glared at him. "Don't hi MacKenzie me. You're probably not even my father. Just some idiot as well as hundreds of others that used my mother for a ...Klingon experience."

"The genetics match," Raynar announced.

"Excellent," Michael said. "Then we can collect her stuff and be on our way."

"Not exactly," Korak said. "Please, everyone, have a seat."

There were three chairs conveniently placed at his desk. They all sat down.

"Miss Dyson," the Prefect began, "has a problem. She is on a list of names, of which all but her are dead. Many under, shall we say, dubious circumstances."

“And...” Michael coaxed.

“And they all have one other connection,” Korak added. “MacKenzie, do you remember a document that had been entitled ‘The Tholian Brief’?”

MacKenzie shrugged, "Maybe. I dunno. I filed a lot of stuff."

“We'll it appears that every that has ever touched that brief is dead. Well, except you.” He turned the screen around and pointed to the first name. “This is the fellow who wrote it. This showed it to his superior in the justice departs of the Klingons. This is that same official. And so on.”

“So what is this brief?” Michael asked.

“I have no idea,” Korak admitted. “It’s disappeared. Nobody knows what’s in it. There are only limited resources that prove it actually existed. And through these records we find that your daughter was the last person to touch it.”

"And the only one still alive," Michael said.

“Indeed,” the Romulan said. “And we’re trying to keep her that way. So you see, we’re a bit reluctant to send her back to the Federation with you. We don’t believe that she’s safe anywhere, except maybe here.”

"No," Dyson said, "she'll be safe with me."

Michael held up his hand, “Easy Alex. We need to think about this.”

"I don't need to think about squat," Dyson said, defiantly. "We need to go. I need to keep her safe."

He grabbed the girl's hand and dragged her out the door. Michael looked at Korak with a shrug.

“He can be impetuous that way. Since she’s not a criminal I guess we’ll taken our leave of you. Thanks for your help Prefect.”

With that he ran to catch up to Dyson.

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Eryx - Administration Building- Prefect's Office - Prefect Korak, Michael Weston – 1615)

By the time Michael caught up to Alex they were moving quickly through the streets.

"Where are you going?" Michael asked.

"I've got to find a place to keep her safe," Dyson said, indicating to Mackenzie.

Michael reached out and grabbed Dyson's arm. "That's what I'm saying. Let's take her back with us. She'll be safe in Federation space."

"No," Dyson pulled himself free, "she won't. We don't know who's after her or why. But they've killed all those others already. Do you really think she'll be safe?"

"Yes," Michael replied, "I do. You're not thinking this through."

Dyson looked at the girl again, "Well, apparently that is not new for me."

"Don't be stupid," Michael said. "You won't be able to keep her safe by yourself."

"Don't you get it!" Dyson cried out. The people in the street stopped then walked around them, trying to avoid the drama unfolding. "It's not just her. It's everyone around her. Yeva. Sweet God, Yeva too. And her daughter, which is mine as well. We're all going to have to disappear. All of us. We can't do that in Federation space. And I already have a plan. I had a contact with an old friend before we left. He'll give us a lift into more... uncharted territories. We'll find a place."

"Yeah, great plan. Somewhere, sometime, living on the run with a brood of kids with you. I'm telling you, you're safer with us."

"No, I don't think so," Alex was insistent.

"What about your career?" Michael asked. "You just going to walk away. Desert the fleet and the Illuminar?"

"I see no other option," Alex said with determination.

"Then you are short sighted," Michael said.

"Mr. Weston," Dyson started, then tried again, "Michael, I appreciate your concern, but I did not ask for your opinion. I am not coming back with you. Go back to the Hillary and take Leeza home. I have my own family to take care of."

Michael shook his head, "No."

Suddenly a weapon appeared in Dyson's hand. "I'm not giving you an option here. Go, or I'll shoot you and go my own way anyway, only you'll be unconscious and nobody will be able to protect Leeza."

He began to press the sequence for a lift off, and the ship rumbled as it pushed away from the planet. He spun it on it's axis and the ship slowly lifted off the planet and headed out to space. Once out of New Romulus' atmosphere Michael entered the coordinates back to the neutral zone. The ship shot forward, heading home.

(reply none)

(posted by Al and Kris)

[illegible]

(New Romulus - Eryx - Freighter Partek- Cargo Hold - Alex Dyson – 1820)

It hadn't taken as long as he had thought to collect Yeva and the others and secure a passage on a freight off planet. They were all now sitting in the empty cargo hold, except for what belongings they could have gathered in the hours they had.

Yeva sat across from him, glaring and loving at the same time. After all, they had all just left everything they had and knew behind on his word to keep them all safe. He could feel the engines roar as the ship lifted off and headed into space. There was a moment of discomfort as they left the gravitational pull and the artificial gravity of the hold kicking in. Once everything settle a voice came over the comm system.

=^=Hello Mr. Dyson, and Mackenze Dyson. I appreciate you making this easier for me than I could have hoped. Now I don't have to hunt you down throughout the unknown.=^=

Looks of confusion and the sudden realization of fear crossed over everyone's face.

=^=This should end quickly.=^=

There was an alert claxon and Dyson heard the clank of the mechanics of an opening door. Suddenly the airlock of the cargo hold opened and the chamber suddenly decompressed. The air that had been trapped inside the bodies of the passengers escaped through the quickest route possible. Their bodies exploded in a mist of blood and gore.

In the cockpit the only noise was that of the pilot. “G’Kat to control, the list is complete.”

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Persona Quarters -- Deck 5 -- 3XO/CMO Commander Quinna Solice -- 0200)

“Quinna, Sweetie, are you ok? Come on Quinna, wake up.” She hear as her eyes started to slowly flutter open.

"I would not worry about when he got back," the voice was familiar.

“You see, you killed me. I got off lucky compared to you.” She said as she pulled at a micro flame thrower and set Michael into an instant fireball. “You will have to live with that.” Then Fiona disappears.

Quinna lifted the blanket to see a pile of ash where his body once was. “MICHAEL!!!!”

(reply none)

[illegible]

"Great Doctor, I'll see you then," he said to the screen before breaking the connection.

(Reply Snoopy)

(reply Snoopy)

"Well come on down and lets talk," Montero said.

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal - 0813)

The curving horizon of the home planet of the Federation took up a full third of the left side of the main viewscreen. The atmosphere was azure fading to a light (sky) blue at its edge. The preponderance of seawater was on display as the Illuminar passed over the Pacific ocean with a riot of green and hues of brown scrolling closer.

Ahead of the ship was arguably the largest starbase in Sector 001 and the ship was slowly gaining ground on it. Utopia Planitia in geosynchronous orbit around Mars was of roughly the same size, larger in diameter at its circumference but not as long in the vertical plane.

Sekal was so still he appeared carved in stone as the continual chatter between navigation and dock control began and Tempest initiated the approach maneuver.

It began slowly at first, a line appearing laterally across the upper, largest platform of the station at its lower point as the immense docking bay door began to open. Even from their current position the sight of it had been known to bring tears to the eyes of crew returning from deployment.

Behind the curve of the planet brilliant light began to spill as the sun rose toward the horizon. The Captain heard several indrawn breaths around the bridge at the sight but his complete attention was on the docking procedure.

The hangar door was at its midpoint when Tempest addressed him. "Impulse engines down, maneuvering thrusters only sir."

"Acknowledged. Power down the warp drive engines."

(Reply: Engineering)

The speed had been closely matched for a gradual and controlled approach, as they neared the still opening door Tempest fired forward thrusters to bleed off speed, ventral thrusters aligned them precisely with the bay.

The station continued to grow with the immense upper pod engulfing the screen as the ship slid smoothly inside. Two other ships were currently docked within, both to their starboard side. Illuminar pivoted on its axis to move to docking bay 2 to port as the warp drive nacelles cleared the doors. Tempest was following a very precise course relayed by docking control.

He leaned back in the chair as the ship continued to slow until it came to a stop at its appointed berth.

"Sir, docking control is extending the boarding tube." William from operations announced.

"Prepare to switch to dock power once the umbilical is engaged."

"Yes sir."

"Well done." The Vulcan spoke to the bridge crew. "Commander Solice you may make the announcement to the crew." He stood to his feet.

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - CEO, Lieutenant Tegian Pex - 0813)

Tegian stood at the Engineering station watching the approach to Earth. It was beautiful, but it didn't stir him like he observed that it did to some of the humans on the bridge. That seemed understandable. For some, it was their homeworld. He might feel the same way if this was Trillius Prime.

Tegian did hold his breath as the ship started to head for the station and the open doors, feeling like they were moving too fast. In fact, he was so transfixed, that he his heartbeat twice before he realized that the Captain had issued him an order, "Acknowledged. Power down the warp drive engines."

Tegian pushed a few buttons on his console. "Warp drive engines have been powered down, Captain."

Tegian stood at his station. He messaged Ensign Zh'Firre to get a crew to the warp injectors to begin taking them apart. He'd already approved requests for some of his department to disembark, but some had chosen to stay behind. Tegian was one of them.

"Well done." The Vulcan spoke to the bridge crew. "Commander Solice you may make the announcement to the crew." He stood to his feet.

Tegian summoned a Cadet from Engineering to take his station and then he headed for Main Engineering.

[illegible]

(Earth Spacedock - Docking Bay 2 -- FO Sienna Verin & Stat Ops Admiral Sophie Verin - 0930)

The last few days had been long and exhausting for Sy Verin. She had gone from in a coma and less than a week later was standing at Earth SpaceDock, watching her ship come home, leaning lightly against her Mother, the Admiral. Her Father had business at the Academy or he would have come to see her off as well.

"The Illuminar is a beautiful ship." Sophie murmured, kissing the top of her daughter's much shorter head. Sy's eyes were glued to the ship coming in. It was her home, her love and her ship. She now understood why some Commanders did not move onto a command, preferring to stay with the ship they loved over furthering their careers. She could only stand there, hands on the glass, watching the ship. People gave Sienna and her Mother dirty looks, but the Admiral's tabs on Sophie's uniform made it clear that they were not to be messed with.

The ship smoothly came to a stop, and the bay repressurized. Sienna wanted to run to the Illuminar, to stroke the scars on the ship's hull that were still present. Sy's shields were tight, but not tight enough to block her T'Mur from sensing her...or Luma for that matter.

"I should go now that you can get aboard her. Are you sure that you are allright?" Sophie held her beloved child at arms length, looking her over one more time.

"Yes Mother." Sienna wasn't being a brat, her Mother had earned the right to fuss.

"And you'll report to Quinna immediately?" Sophie searched her daughter's black Betazoid eyes.

"Absolutely. I trust Quinna. It's..." She laughed as her Mother chimed in, "Weston you don't trust."

Sy nodded. "Are you -sure- that you don't want me to wait here until T'Mur meets you?"

"Moo-om. I'm a Commander now. You can trust me." Sophie kissed her daughter's head again, "Fine, fine. I'll head back home. Comm your brother. he misses you."

Sy watched eagerly as people dis-embarked. Where was T'Mur? She saw Sekal. Making her way through the crowd, Pex was near the Captain and had grabbed his attention. When Sy was in range, she heard Pex speak - "Please give my best to Commander Verin. And, if we should have a ceremony when she returns, I'll be staying aboard and can help arrange something, Captain."

A silvery laughter could be heard, "Thank you for the best wishes, Lt. Captain, it is good to be back. Both in this reality and with the Illuminar. I have missed my home." Sienna wanted to hug Sekal but knew better. Her hugs would come from her mate. But where -was- she? The impatience in Sy's body language was easy to read.

(reply Pex, Sekal and T'Mur, any)
(posted by Mel)

[illegible]

The Vulcan followed a number of crew disembarking into the docking bay ring lined with floor to ceiling windows that looked out into the cavernous bay which dwarfed the ships it contained. The two other ships were older classes, a Miranda class and a Sovereign and he took a moment to glance over them before continuing. As he walked the surface damage to his ships aft section came into view, when they left dock in three days time, according to initial estimates, the scarring would be rectified.

The hub was busy with many walking by in both directions, he stood there for several minutes, turning his head when he heard himself addressed.

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

The days passed at an interminable rate. Each evening she called Sienna to explain the loss of another day. There was a palpable pain to their being apart now. It... tested her patience. Still, she focused and worked days in a row, until ordered to rest by Quinna. She would rest a few hours, but the emptiness of their room did not provide her any rest.

Finally, she did find solace in the gymnasium. Most of her off time was spent in exercise. It gave her mental clarity and allowed her to simply pass time in a more productive manner. The days passed and the ship remained secure. Training occurred, and the ships days tended to blend together. T'Mur remained quiet and introspective, only speaking when being asked direct questions.

As the ship got closer to Earth T'Mur could start to sense Sienna more and more. At first, it was just her general feelings of impatience and fatigue. As they got closer she could start to catch her surface thoughts. Now that they were docked she could feel their bond again. In the dark corner

of the entryway, she smiled. It was... cute the way she tried to shield her mind from T'Mur, yet knowing that she couldn't. She could even feel the impatience to see her.

T'Mur composed herself and stepped out onto spacedock. A crowd of people separated them from each other. She could feel her laughter at thought of a celebration of her return. Her desire to hug the captain. Then the crowd parted and there was a clean line of sight to each other.

T'Mur reached out with her mind first and stroked Sienna gently. ::Beloved::

(reply Verin)

She began to walk towards her, her mind a mixture of emotion and control. In her mind she was running, so she forced her body to move slowly. Her desire was to grab Sienna and hold her, but her awareness of others around them forced her to hold back.

Finally her emotions won. T'Mur ran the final distance to her mate and wrapped her arms around her, holding to her tightly. She could feel Sienna's body start to squeeze and release her. Her left hand came up and touched her cheek, and her mind dove into Sienna's as their lips came together. Images flowed between them of T'Mur's feeling of loss and emptiness, and now feeling reconnected with the woman she loved.

::I have missed you my sweet Sienna::

Suddenly they parted. T'Mur straightened her uniform and stepped back. "Welcome home Commander."

(reply Verin)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

Tegian had been one of the first off the ship, heading directly to his counterparts on the station to talk about the damage to the Illuminar and what he wanted them to do. After the Captain had sent messages gaining the berth, there had been follow up communications and Tegian had sent them detailed descriptions of the damage, including pictures. He'd also sent them the reports of the repairs and what he wanted checked. Still, he found that nothing was better than talking to them in person. He'd spent fifteen minutes confirming their plans and pointing at the visible scarring before heading back to the ship to join his crew working on the warp drive injectors.

The hub was busy with many walking by in both directions, he stood there for several minutes, turning his head when he heard himself addressed.

As he was walking back through the crowd, he spotted the Captain. "Captain!" he called. He waded over. "Captain, the crew assigned to work on the Illuminar will begin soon. I've gone over with them again what we want done and I've been assured they will contact me if anything is found that is unexpected."

"Please give my best to Commander Verin. And, if we should have a ceremony when she returns, I'll be staying aboard and can help arrange something, Captain."

(Reply Sekal)

(Posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(Earth Spacedock - Docking Bay 2 - CEO, Lieutenant Tegan Pex - 1027)

A silvery laughter could be heard, "Thank you for the best wishes, Lt. Captain, it is good to be back. Both in this reality and with the Illuminar. I have missed my home."

Tegian heard the Commander behind him and blushed a crimson red while Pex locked down his instinct to whirl around. Instead Pex had Tegian take a step back from the Captain, pivoting and smartly saluting the Commander. Tegian ruined it by breaking into a grin. "Commander, welcome back to the Illuminar."

(reply Verin, Sekal and T'Mur, any)

(posted by Keith)

[illegible]

(Earth Spacedock - Docking Ring -- CO, Captain Sekal- 1027)

"Captain, Captain!"

Sekal turned to see Lieutenant Pex approaching.

"The crew assigned to work on the Illuminar will begin soon. I've gone over with them again what we want done and I've been assured they will contact me if anything is found that is unexpected."

The Vulcan approved.

"Please give my best to Commander Verin. And, if we should have a ceremony when she returns, I'll be staying aboard and can help arrange something, Captain."

"I..." But what he was about to say was interrupted by a familiar voice.

"Thank you for the best wishes, Lt. Captain, it is good to be back. Both in this reality and with the Illuminar. I have missed my home."

He turned to see Sienna Williams-Verin step out of the throng with a smile on her face, she was what is colloquially known as 'painfully thin' and her step was unsteady, he reached out a hand to support her as she stumbled at the last instant and swayed toward him, his other hand reached out and he held her by her shoulders with her head in his chest until she was steady. Her approach had been oblique and some turned their heads as they passed, surprise evident on their faces at the sight. To them it no doubt appeared that the Vulcan had pulled her into an embrace.

(Reply: Sienna, T'Mur)

"Thank you Lieutenant. I am certain that the Commander is appreciative of your well wishes. If you have any concerns at the findings of the repair crew contact me immediately, otherwise you may pass along any issues corrected along with the final inspection report."

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

(Earth Spacedock - Docking Ring -- CEO, Lieutenant Tegan Pex - 1029)

"Thank you Lieutenant. I am certain that the Commander is appreciative of your well wishes. If you have any concerns at the findings of the repair crew contact me immediately, otherwise you may pass along any issues corrected along with the final inspection report."

(Reply Sekal, iyw)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2 - COps Office - a1/O and COps CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1030)

CPO Ywan sat there quietly as she waited for Gregory to finish his review.

"There you go," he said. "Good job putting together the list. Any word on crew changes"

"Funny you should mention that," she replied. "Seems we are getting a few more cadets and some ensigns."

Gregory rolled his eyes. He knew it was actually an important part of the training of future officers. "OK, send me their bio's so we can figure out what to do with them. I think it's also time to setup daily Ops meeting. I am thinking 8 am for breakfast, and a noon lunch meeting with Beta bridge crew."

"I will set it up, Sir," she replied. "Anything else?"

"Not at this time, Ms. Ywan. Make sure you get some shore leave before we head out to the great unknown," he said.

Gregory watched the door close. "Computer, begin recording. Stardate 2446.05.15, acting first officers log. We got the news that Commander Verin had recovered, and we are back at Earth to pick her up. It will good to have her back and a full complement of command staff back. This will be my last log as acting first officer. I know that Commander Verin and I have not always seen eye to eye, and I hope we can come to an understanding when she is back.

The com chimed. "Computer, End Recording."

"Mr. Gregory. This is Sandypoint Beach Resort. We are calling to confirm your arrival tomorrow. We have you staying with us for three nights."

"Indeed, it did take some doing, but we have been able to accommodate all your requests."

The connection ended. Gregory stood up and headed out towards sick bay to tell Aggie the good news.

(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 - Medical - a1/O&COps CMDR Dieter Gregory - 1045)

"Sir, she is in the back office," the nurse said with a sly smile.

"Thank you," he replied.

He headed to the back of sickbay and saw Aggie bent over her desk, deep in thought. He sat down and placed the PADD on the desk. "Hi Aggie," he said, "We didn't get to take that little trip last time we were on Earth, so I thought it might be nice to sneak away now," he said. "We're all confirmed for the next three nights here."

"Well, we're going to be at spacedock for three or four days, depending on how well they do the repairs, and if they are up to our chief engineers standard. We both have leave accumulated, and we'll be going on a deep space mission, so let's make the most of it."

"Pack light," he said with a smile as he leaned over and kissed her.

(reply Aggie)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 - Cargo bay 1 'Camp Peleliu' - Marine Major Audie Murphy - 1100)

The Illuminar had pulled into space dock around Earth. Nothing like getting on the ship and coming straight here. At least he would give everyone a 48 hour pass so they could prepare for the extended deployment.

His computer beeped and a message came in. He looked at the header, it was from Major General Bloom. Short on details, it indicated they would be getting assigned a medic to the unit. Murphy shook his head. Wasn't his team already trained in field first aid? What more could it be? Well, he's learn when the General decided to tell him. "Skipper, have the team prepare another berth. Looks like the General is sending us a going away present."

"Aye, aye, Sir," Master Sergeant Skipper replied and slipped out of the office.

in the days since they had come aboard, his Marines had transformed the empty cargo space into a usable space for now. Marines were used to discomfort, and well, they were crowded in here. At least their daily runs were getting done, even if some of the crew disapproved. They had begun to use the Jeffries tubes as a way to get from deck to deck during their runs. Their other practice had been in the holodeck. Once they were firmly underway, he was going to see if the security department would like to play against his marines in a little friendly competitions. Real targets thought differently than holograms, and he needed his team to deal with that unpredictability. Of course, they still had to smooth over some misunderstandings with the security commander after his marines barged into one of the security NCO training sessions. That ended poorly.

"Lieutenant, a word."

(reply Temerity)

"Well, it seems, Lieutenant, we are back where you started. Could have saved you a trip if I had known we would be coming back here. I've given the team 48 hours liberty. You should take time out as well. I don't know how long this extended deployment the Illuminar is going on will be."

(reply Temerity)

"One other thing, I want you to take over the training program. You have a unique perspective and experience that I believe will be good for the team."

(Reply Temerity)

"No, don't share your plans with me. I want to be surprised as well, and see how well they respond."

(reply Temerity)

"Anything else?"

(reply Temerity)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 - Cargo bay 1 - Marine 2LT Charles Temerity - 1103)

Temerity was standing over by the makeshift quarters the Marines had put together and was working on a padd and checking out power connections. He had spoken with T'Lela and she had confirmed that she was willing to have Impetuous Industries be a 'corporate sponsor' for the Myrmidons, and by extension the Illuminar if necessary. She finished in her message to him by saying "As VP of shipping, you can authorize anything you need, and I'll see that it is covered. Any wants will be pulled from your personal accounts." Charles just smiled at that last. His reply was two simple words, "Thanks, Mom."

"Lieutenant, a word."

Temerity just looked at the Major and responded, "Yes Sir on my way." and briskly walked over to his commander. "Sir?"

"Well, it seems, Lieutenant, we are back where you started. Could have saved you a trip if I had known we would be coming back here. I've given the team 48 hours liberty. You should take time out as well. I don't know how long this extended deployment the Illuminar is going on will be."

Charles just smiled as he heard the news

"One other thing, I want you to take over the training program. You have a unique perspective and experience that I believe will be good for the team."

"Roger that sir and thank you. I'll get something together after liberty and I will brief you daily." Charles replied.

"No, don't share your plans with me. I want to be surprised as well and see how well they respond."

"Copy that, Sir."

"Anything else?"

"Actually, a couple of things sir." And Charles held the padd out to the major, "I've made arrangements with Impetuous Industries for some special designed barracks modules that can be stacked in any configuration we desire, and the system comes with a power distribution module that will plug into the ship using the same connections we are currently using. There will also be an office module that has two individual offices in it. I just need the troops to pull all their gear out of their cubbies and stack it on the far wall, so when they return, they can all move into their individual rooms. I've got things set up so everything else will be settled. These modules will not be coming out of the unit budget. I can get them delivered and installed inside the next 12 to 18 hours while everyone is gone. I will stay behind and oversee the work. What I want to do I can do after the contractors are done."

(Reply: Murphy)

"I do have a question Sir. It is a point of curiosity, and you don't have to answer, but I do need to get the question out of my system at the very least."

(Reply: Murphy iyw)

“Well sir, for a detachment this size, you and the Master Sergeant are over ranked for your position. Did you two recently get promoted and are awaiting reassignment to a battalion or brigade level position?” Temerity asked full well knowing he had just crossed several lines, but a detachment commander for a unit the size of the Myrmidons should have been a First Lieutenant or a Lieutenant Major with the detachment sergeant being a Gunnery Sergeant. Then he continued, “Or does it have something to do with our upcoming mission?”

(Reply: Murphy)

(Reply: Murphy)

(Posted by Chuck)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar Deck 8 - Cargo Bay 1 - 'Camp Peleliu' - Marine Major Audie Murphy - 1105)

The Lieutenant was sharp. It was clear why he got promoted to an officer.

“I’ve made arrangements with Impetuous Industries for some special designed barracks modules that can be stacked in any configuration we desire, and the system comes with a power distribution module that will plug into the ship using the same connections we are currently using. There will also be an office module that has two individual offices in it. I just need the troops to pull all their gear out of their cubbies and stack it on the far wall, so when they return, they can all move into their individual rooms. I’ve got things set up so everything else will be settled. These modules will not be coming out of the unit budget. I can get them delivered and installed inside the next 12 to 18 hours while everyone is gone. I will stay behind and oversee the work. What I want to do I can do after the contractors are done,” he said.

"Good work. That will be a welcome relief for everyone. Thank you for making that arrangement. Check with the Master Sergeant and he'll make sure everything is taken care of," the Major replied.

"I do have a question Sir. It is a point of curiosity, and you don't have to answer, but I do need to get the question out of my system at the very least," Temerity asked.

"Go ahead Lieutenant. Better lay it out than let it eat away," the Major replied.

“Well sir, for a detachment this size, you and the Master Sergeant are over ranked for your position. Did you two recently get promoted and are awaiting reassignment to a battalion or brigade level position?” Temerity asked full well knowing he had just crossed several lines, but a detachment commander for a unit the size of the Myrmidons should have been a First Lieutenant or a Lieutenant Major with the detachment sergeant being a Gunnery Sergeant. Then he continued, “Or does it have something to do with our upcoming mission?”

"This is the Marines, Lieutenant. No good deed goes unpunished," the major replied, chuckling. "I wrote a position paper that caught the attention of Major General Bloom. It described the limitations of

the current Marine structure and how smaller units could be a way for force projection and force amplification. More to the point, a small unit could have a broader mandate than a standard MEF. So I got called into the General's office, where found myself briefing Operations on the idea and with the speed of light, I found myself appointed to assemble such a team, build a training doctrine and more to the point, prove that it could work."

He paused, "I made it a condition that I could choose the team, regardless of the standard TO and E. We are the size of a rifle squad, but top heavy with experts in their areas. When you read the jackets of the troops, you will see that. Some have had trouble with other units, but they have a unique potential. We can do anything from infiltration and extraction, to assassination, to hostage rescue, in addition to the usual duties. We are to be a force multiplier. I had anticipated an assignment on a true warship, but here we are on a science vessel about to go out on a deep space mission. If we can prove the value here, we can do it anywhere."

"So there you have it, Lieutenant. Less is don't put your thoughts to paper and send them up the chain cause you never know what'll happen."

(reply Murphy)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible][illegible]

(KIH oGh'Shu - Deck 1 - Bridge - Lieutenant Galk of the Imperial House- 1640)

The task force made a tempting target as it swung wide of the debris field, the old border that once stood between the empires was long behind them and their target was still a day ahead. The Kirash system was one of those acquired during initial military operations and had been gifted to Eshag along with bordering systems. The infrastructure there was then more complete than the rest which had been carved out and served to the other houses. This meant that the defenses were also more solid and to reduce them militarily would take time and more ships than he currently had at hand. The plan was not to conduct a full military operation to retake these systems but to deal a debilitating blow to those ships under the command of General Bardok who had refused to turn them over to Galk. Pacifying these ships would rob him of means to move about, support and resupply his outlying bases and defend them.

This was also a show of force and power by the new head of the Imperial House, once bereft of those ships Bardok would be isolated and forced to capitulate or be completely destroyed. Of course one who had proven to be such an early irritant could hardly be trusted and his punishment was foreordained.

The Mal'Kesh led the way, the Vor'cha's sister ship Kem'Pek was on the og'Shu's right flank. The three ships were large, well armed and formidable but to Bardok it would appear merely a challenge and he would anticipate the presence of support ships, once those were in play Galk had an additional surprise in store. But enough on that for now.

Galk's eyes were narrowed as he watched the screen, the challenge would be answered soon and this was the spot from which Bardok would launch an attack, of this he had no doubt.

He didn't have long to wait.

"hOd! Birds of prey decloaking!"

Two of the small, heavily armed craft swept in on the Mal'Kesh, strafing it. Commander pA'shU had anticipated it well and the Vor'cha's shields were raised in time which minimized the damage. In reply he'gev and kha'sha dropped their cloak and engaged the enemy. This was a game of kling-za and Bardok would not expose all of his assets quickly, neither would Galk.

"Shields up hOd! Disruptor cannons charged and torpedoes ready."

"Stand ready."

Galk leaned forward.

"Five more decloaking."

"DoH!"

Disruptor cannon fire slammed into oGh'Shu's shields, as his ship replied in kind. Bardok was attempting to soften up the capitol ships prior to bringing in his attack cruisers. The Birds of Prey on his left flank appeared behind the swarm and began firing on the attackers. Caught between them and weapons fire from the ogh'Shu two enemy erupted as their shields were overloaded and failed spectacularly. With the ships on his left flank exposed the way was now open.

"Kem'Pek is under fire."

His ship shuddering from more hits Galk saw one of his ships destroy another. Weapons fire crisscrossed and exploded in brilliant flashes.

"Three Vor'cha on our left flank!"

The entire enemy force was now committed. "Concentrate fire on the cruisers."

"Jay'aj hOd!"

Mal'Kesh and its wing had already turned their fire on the cruisers and the enemy Birds of Prey were being dismantled by the Kem'Pek and the Birds of Prey from the oG'Shu's left flank. Bardok's opening gambit to harass the cruisers with a superior number of assault ships had been his only option and though numbers favored him his gambit relied on surprise.

Not that Galk's force had not sustained losses, report of another Bird of Prey falling punctuated the reports.

"Mal'Kesh is damaged."

As the report came through one of the enemy ships was vaporized.

Og'Shu itself was taking fire from the remaining ships and lurched from another barrage.

The ship to the right turned about as the other accelerated inward.

Galk hit the control button which opened a communication to his small fleet. "Kem'Pek and all attack craft are to break off and engage the fleeing ship. Disable it only."

=^=Ja'yaj! ^= Was the reply of the remaining ships as the og'Shu pounded the final combatant mercilessly. The ship's shields soon buckled but not before they dealt a blow that caused the bridge lighting to dim momentarily.

"Auxiliary power!"

Their opponent took a disruptor cannon blast that set it drifting aimlessly.

"Cease fire and report!"

"It is on emergency life support hOd! Their engines are heavily damaged."

He hit the comm again. "Mal'Kesh board and seize the vessel."

"=^= As you wish hOd! =^="

The viewscreen returned to the view of the battlefield carnage. "Pursue the remaining enemy."

"Kem'Pek is engaging."

Og'Shu turned to its heading and accelerated. In the distance green flashes ravaged across space.

His ship arrived too late, before it could engage the enemy's shields were down and its engines and weapons offline due to damage sustained from the Kem'Pek and remaining attack craft.

=^=Shall we destroy it hOd? ^=^=

"No. Capture it and bring its commander to me alive if possible."

=^= Ja'yaj! ^=^

The screen returned to space as Galk waited for the result of the boarding actions.

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible][illegible]