

She moved over to near the mats and took out a jump rope. Turning to face the windows, she started skipping the rope, alternating between a fast and slow pace, working up a sweat.

After about 10 minutes, she stopped, and shook out her arms, rolled her neck and moved over to the heavy bag, where she started into a routine for another ten minutes, getting her aggression and anger out.

Completing her routine, she did 10 minutes of quick lunge motions, making sure she was nimble and reactive. Finally, covered in sweat, she headed over to the sauna to sweat some more.

(USS Raptor – Officers lounge – Pilot Ensign Pihi ‘Kestral’ Piripi – 0800)

Dressed in her uniform, she sat alone at a table, tea in her cup. Her plate had fresh fruit and some sweet breads. As she sipped her tea, she reviewed protocols on a PADD, occasionally staring out the window. She had simulation time in two hours for her to prepare the Illuminar. She knew simulations were not the same, but she needed to try to dial in her reactions.

(Reply, any, if wished)

(Posted by Pippa)

[illegible]

(USS Raptor - Deck 4 - Officer's Lounge (The Prancing Pony) - Pilot - Lt. Arthur 'Snoopy' Corday - 0805)

Arthur stepped into the lounge stretching his shoulders. He hated being inactive. The action with the Xenolithe still had his blood boiling a little. All they did now was fly recon patterns around the base.

The lounge was fairly empty. It reminded him of how much he missed Vic. He still had been given no reason for his flight partner's relocation. Or even where he had gone, for that matter. Corday was young but had lost pilots in battle, but for someone to simply leave without a word... it made him feel like a child again.

He looked around the room and saw Piripi sitting at a window side table eating. There hadn't really been time for a proper introduction before they had to fly with one another. He figured that now was as good a time as any.

He went over to the bar and ordered two eggs, sunny side up, bacon, fried tomatoes, and toast. He also ordered a small pot of English Breakfast tea. Even though he'd been raised in south London he'd never really gotten a taste for a full English Breakfast.

He asked them to bring his food to the table that Piripi was sitting at when it was ready. Then he stepped over to the table.

"Good morning, Ensign Piripi. Might I join you for breakfast?" he asked politely, his London accent rather thick.

(reply Piripi).

He sat down, "I was hoping we'd get a chance to chat." Then he noticed the bruise on her face. "My goodness. You seem to have had a good time last night, but not at the Landing Bay."

(reply Piripi)

(posted by Al Muir)

Looking up from her PADD, she noticed that Snoopy, another pilot, stepping over to her table. Standing up, she waited till he spoke.

"Hello Sir," she said, "yes, of course, I would be delighted," she replied.

She sighed, "I had planned to go to the Hard Deck, but the good doctor dragged me to a 'Ladies' night out. A few Star Drifts later, and we moved to the Karaoke Bar. I tripped and hit a table," she said.

(Reply Corday)
(Posted by Pippa)

Arthur chuckled at Pihi's explanation of her injuries. He'd seen enough "falls on a table" to recognize a nice jab to the face. But he didn't want to draw out her embarrassment any more than necessary. He wondered if the rest of the girls from the outing had similar souvenirs.

He smiled at the new pilot and said, "I don't really have anything to talk about. I just like to get to know the pilots I fly with, who I'm putting my kid in the hands of and what kind of flying experience they have. I mean, you're a pretty decent fighter jockey, but I don't believe for a second that that is where your heart truly lies."

“Don’t get me wrong,” Arthur started to defend himself. “I helped design the new Void Sphynxes we flew, but note how I never took a shift in the big seat of the Raptor. I might of broken her.”

“So tell me about your flight experience,” he said. “Who did you train with for your fighter training?”

[illegible]

"I don't really have anything to talk about. I just like to get to know the pilots I fly with, who I'm putting my kid in the hands of and what kind of flying experience they have. I mean, you're a pretty decent fighter jockey, but I don't believe for a second that that is where your heart truly lies," Lieutenant Corday said.

"I am not sure where you get that impression. My heart lies in being free and being in control. Like the Kestral, I'm small, agile and deadly. I also tend to trust myself and my skills. I've been flying since I was a teenager. I'll fly anything Star Fleet has to offer," she replies, a bit annoyed at his comment.

“Don’t get me wrong,” he said defensively. “I helped design the new Void Sphynxes we flew, but note how I never took a shift in the big seat of the Raptor. I might of broken her.”

"If you helped design the Sphinx, I have some notes to share on how it performed," she said with a sly smile. "Perhaps a private conversation is in order," she added.

“So tell me about your flight experience. Who did you train with for your fighter training?”

"Cyclone, Hammer, and Warlock, were the lead instructors. Coyote, Lieutenant Cavagnaro said it best, I think, 'She has an intuitive ability with her flying which can lead to her being a bit...' he looked up, "reckless. However, that recklessness always seems to have a purpose. If she can manage that ego then she will, most likely, become the best pilot I've trained. Better than me.'"

(reply Corday)

(posted by Pippa)

[illegible]

(USS Raptor - Deck 4 - Officer's Lounge (The Prancing Pony) - Pilot - Lt. Arthur 'Snoopy' Corday - 0810)

Arthur nodded at the list of names that Piripi rattled off. But one caught his attention more than the others.

“Warlock?!” he almost chuckled. “That old reprobate. He put me through the wringer. But he’s also the reason I’m the pilot I am now.” He considered the words she used. “Reckless, eh? I think I saw some of that with the Xenos. And Cavanaugh actually said he thought you be better than him?”

(reply Piripi)

He shook his head, "Never thought I'd hear that. I beat him in a dog fight but he insisted I cheated. He had a hard with the fact that I was so young. What got you into flying?"

(reply Piripi)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Raptor.- Deck 4 – Officers lounge – Pilot Ensign Pihi ‘Kestral’ Piripi – 0811)

Pihi sipped her tea as she listened to Snoopy talk about beating Warlock. It was true he was an excellent pilot and very difficult to beat in combat, but she found that he was a fair instructor and took his lumps when he lost, which was very rare.

“Reckless, eh?,” he said. “I think I saw some of that with the Xenos. And Cavanaugh actually thought you were better than him?”

Pihi shrugged, "Its not reckless if you are in control. I remember hearing a quote from a 20th century pilot, a John Cook who once said, 'In order to have the freedom of flight, you must have the discipline. Discipline prevents crashes.'" She paused and looked around before continuing, "It may not seem like it, Sir, but when I fly, I fly with discipline, even though others may see it as reckless, I know my limits and try to push them every day."

(reply Corday)

“What got you into flying?” the man asked her.

“Shortly after I got my VISOR, my grandfather would take me with him. He was an old-school, seat of the pants, fixed wing pilot. He started me on gliders, you know fixed wing aircraft with no engine. Soaring over the New Zealand countryside was my first taste of freedom. I caught the bug then and there. Been flying ever since. I did my first solo when I was 11. The freedom of flight, for a blind woman, was liberating. Yes, I can interpret the EM spectrum with my VISOR, but most people show pity for someone wearing one, especially since there are newer models available.”

She paused, moving closer to Corday, "So what is a pilot like you, a designer, doing on a ship like this?" she asked.

(reply Corday)

(Posted by Pippa)

[illegible]

(USS Raptor - Deck 4 - Officer's Lounge (The Prancing Pony) - Pilot - Lt. Arthur 'Snoopy'

Corday - 0812)

"It's not reckless if you are in control. I remember hearing a quote from a 20th century pilot, a John Cook who once said, 'In order to have the freedom of flight, you must have the discipline. Discipline prevents crashes.'" She paused and looked around before continuing, "It may not seem like it, Sir, but when I fly, I fly with discipline, even though others may see it as reckless, I know my limits and try to push them every day. "

Corday nodded, "I'm familiar with the quote. My Uncle had the last part up in his hanger deck. Pushing your limits is what a fighter pilot, especially a test pilot, does every day."

She told him about getting started flying in a glider. He'd never really gotten interested in no engine aircraft. He liked the control and power of the swifter moving vehicles. She went on to explain how others reacted to a pilot wearing a visor. He could only imagine what it was like to be felt less than you are simply because of a physical challenge. He was often thought less of because of how he looked.

"So what is a pilot like you, a designer, doing on a ship like this?" she asked.

Corday sat back, “I’ve been a test pilot for years. When we redesigned to Sphynx I had the best understanding of the systems so got elected to deliver and train pilots on them. That brought me to the Illuminar. The duty was supposed to be temporary.”

He sat forward, leaning on the table and took a drink. “However the Illuminar ran into a ship and Sekal thought that my experience would come in handy getting the systems running again. We got pulled into an alternate dimension where time ran differently. In the course of a week in this dimension we lived a year. A year of flying an Akita class starship.”

He shuddered at the memory of that trip. “I know the transition from fighter pilot to the big chair. It’s why I asked. However, since then one thing or another has kept me here. But I have a feeling that with Lt. White Wolf being trained, my time with the Illuminar will be short.”

He looked at Piripi quizzically, "Is it odd that I think I'm going to miss it?"

(reply Piripi)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Raptor – Temporary Personal Quarters – CMO Commander Quinna Solice and SFI Lt. Michael Weston -- 0830)

Quinna sat at the edge of her bunk. When she left DS4, she returned to the Raptor and stayed there. She wished that she could be back on the Illuminar. There was a place where she liked to go. It was quiet and the perfect place to be alone.

Quinna spent the better part of the night thinking, crying, recalling memories that made her laugh and the central theme was Michael. She knew she could not put this off and needed to talk to him before things got out of hand.

“Solice to Weston” Quinna called out. “We need to talk. Can we meet sooner than dinner?”

There was a pause before Michael spoke. He had hoped to hear from Quinna but he hadn't expected it to be so soon. However, the time of her voice made him wonder.

=^=I can meet with you whenever you want. I only have plans to meet with Ariel. When?=?=

“As soon as you want.” Quinna left it open, “Where you want.” Quinna took a deep breath.

That sounded better to him. =^= Let me rearrange my plans. I can meet with Trei later. I'm sitting in a little cafe on level 2 of the promenade if you're up to some breakfast.=^=

“Sounds great. I am on my way.” Quinna tugged on her cardigan. She was in her civilian clothing. She wanted comfortable clothes. She was not sure about the comfort level of the conversation.

(DS4 – Small Cafe – Level 2 Promenade – CMO Commander Quinna Solice and SFI Lt. Michael Weston – 0845)

Michael tapped his comm badge, =^= Weston to Trei, I need to postpone our get-together. Something pressing has come up. I'll contact you when I'm free. Sorry, =^=

(reply Trei)

Quinna entered. She wrapped her sweater and arms around herself as a sudden chill came upon her. As Quinnna reached the table, a warm cup of coffee awaited her.

"Hey," Quinnna said as she took a seat next to Michael. "Is this for me?" Quinnna pointed to the coffee.

Michael had never really been a big fan of coffee. It was mostly the flavor. He found that most people who provided "fresh" coffee made it from lower-quality beans that made the coffee taste sour or bitter. Neither flavor he enjoyed. On the Illuminar he would only drink his own coffee, which he made from a private stash of Excelsa beans, which had a much fruitier flavor to it. Unfortunately, it was a rare commodity in the universe, so he kept that under wraps. He had only introduced them to Quinnna who, apparently, had some kind of a coffee problem.

This cafe did not have his precious beans, but it did have a Romulan blend that he found palatable and had ordered some for himself and for Quinnna.

"Indeed," Michael said, half standing as she sat, "it's not my private stash but I think you'll find it will do the trick."

"Last night was a bit crazy. Not sure I would be back to ladies' night again." Quinnna said.

Michael nodded and took a sip of his coffee, "Crazy doesn't begin to describe it. You're "friend" has an interesting way of introducing herself. I am sorry that you only caught the tail end of her performance, but I only acted to show her how uncomfortable she was making me feel, by returning the favor."

"That does not excuse the fact that you still pulled another woman into your lap and passionately kissed her." Quinnna took a deep breath, of course, his reply made Quinnna feel like she was wrong and he was right. It seemed like she felt that a lot of the time. "But this conversation is about us." Quinnna looked directly at Michael, "I love you, Michael."

"We'll that's convenient," Michael replied trying to bring things back to normal, "because I feel the same way about you."

"Last night showed me how much I love you. I did not realize how deep down my feelings for you are rooted." Quinnna said, "And last night, I realized that I broke my promise. I was not supposed to deeply love you."

Michael let a surprised look come across his face. If there was one thing he'd learned over the past few months it was that you can't really plan how and how someone falls in love. It certainly hadn't been his life plan. In fact, he had believed that he was immune to actual feelings of love. He'd had to be.

"I'm not sure how that's a problem," Michael admitted.

"I think in a way, it was my wake-up call. I admit that I was fuming when I saw you with another woman, Even though it was an attempt to teach her a lesson. You also did not come after me to try and explain. I am sure you did that to respect the fact I told you not to." Quinnna took a deep breath, she was going somewhere with this but she was not sure about the words anymore. "I feel like we are on different levels on how we feel about each other. I broke our promise. I fell

deeply in love with you. I am sorry.” Quinna wanted to give Michael a chance to tell her how wrong she was.

Michael looked at Quinna very seriously for a moment. Then he leaned forward onto his elbows. He finally smiled, “I believe this relationship went way further than we had expected. I never expected to feel the way I do about you. The closest I ever came to an emotional attachment was feeling bad about sending a ... mark to a rehabilitation colony. But rest assured...” he reached over to put a hand on Quinna’s, “I have an attachment to you. There are times I wish I didn’t. But if I’m honest with myself, I can’t see myself without you.”

Quinna’s eyes widen in surprise. It was completely different from what she was thinking. She squeezed Michael’s hand “I...I was not expecting that,” Quinna said. Quinna was not sure where to go from there. She didn’t realize that he was fighting the same feeling as she was. “Life can be funny.”

Michael lifted her hands to his lips and kissed them, “Hilarious, in a sick and twisted kind of way. I’ve had my days where I’ve considered giving up my life as an SFI Operative,” he admitted. “But I still have unfinished business. And I refuse to be run out of town, as it were. If and when I choose a different life, it’ll be on my terms, not somebody else’s.”

He realized what he was telling her. He wanted to be with her, perhaps even on a permanent basis. But right now, it was not the right time. He had to clear his name. In the end, it was all he had to himself. And he needed to find the answers to this damned Tholian Brief. He also knew that both of those items put Quinna in danger. He didn’t want to be responsible for that. All he could do was hope that it would all be over soon and that he could give Quinna the commitment she was looking for.

“I would never ask you to give up anything. I never thought I would have to go to the extent I did last night for anyone.” Quinna had expected that they would be ending things but things were more complicated than she thought on both sides. Quinna’s heart was beating hard. She was at a crossroads. She was not sure if she could keep going the way it was between them. She also knew that she was now the biggest liability that Michael had. “Where do you think we can go from here?”

Michael shrugged. He could see that Quinna was on the precipice of a decision. A decision that would affect the rest of her life. But it had to be her decision.

“You know me,” he said. “I believe that we are keepers of our own fate. We have had a rough time over the past month. We’ve both lost and had to find ourselves and find ourselves back to each other. It’s been a... trial. I will say this. I love you. I will love you no matter what. If you’re finding yourself in a position that is making you uncomfortable I will abide by any decision you make. But it won’t change how I feel. If we stay together we still have a road to travel before we are on a path that both of us might be looking for. I, for one, am willing to travel that road.”

“I came to this, today, feeling that maybe I went too far and ready to respect what you decided. There is much that you have to deal with that I know that you are not going to bring me into.” Quinna took a deep breath because she was no longer going to protect herself. “As long as we are together, we are together.” Quinna then pulled Michael’s hand and kissed it.

“Yes ma’am,” Michael said, holding Quinna’s chin with his thumb and forefinger.

"I also think that you, as you put it, teaching someone a lesson, should not happen like that again."

Michael nodded, "Message received." He leaned over the table and kissed Quinna's lips.

(Reply none)

(Posted by Kris B and Al M.)

[illegible]

Michael had spent the rest of the morning with some “quality time” with Quinna, but he new that there had been work to do, so he kissed her as he walked away, tapping his comm badge. He knew how Ariel liked to travel on her stomach, so starting with a meal was probably a good idea. It also gave them an opportunity to see if there was any victims in other venues. It seeme to be their best option. There was a restaurant on the same level that looked like as good a place to start as any.

“Weston to Trei, I apologize for the delay, let’s meet at the Expanse Restaurant on Promenade Level 2. I’m there already. I’ll be waiting for you to arrive.”

(reply Trei)

(posted by Al Muir)

(DS 4 - Promenade Level 2 - The Expanse Restaurant SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1102)

She walked into the restaurant and saw Weston sitting at a table. She made her way over and took a seat. She wore a gold security uniform dress as she felt more comfortable wearing uniform dresses for no reason other than it made her feel free to move. She ordered a pot of Earl Gray for her. If Michael wanted to have some, he was welcome to it. She also ordered some waffles with strawberries, some bacon, some scrambled eggs, and some hash browned potatoes. She got right to business.

"So what do you know of the strange behavior on the station?"

She held back her observances until she heard what Weston had to say.

(Reply Weston)

(Posted by Edward)

(DS 4 - Promenade Level 2 - The Expanse Restaurant - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1103)

Weston watched as Trei came into the restaurant. Unsurprisingly she ordered what he considered to be a large breakfast... brunch?... before she joined him. He was always amazed at how she managed to put away so much food and still maintain her figure. She sat down and dug in.

After swallowing her first bites she said, "So what do you know of the strange behavior on the station?"

Michael shook his head to refocus as she took in another mouthful of food. He took a drink from his iced tea and cleared his mind.

(reply Trei)
(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

Ariel watched the couple enter the restaurant and observed the behavior. She did this it was odd behavior and not what she has been observing. She thought it might be progression of the bee behavior like they relayed specific orders to do certain tasks when contact is made. That would explain the exchange when entering the restaurant .She relayed her theory.

"You may have not observed what I have observed but my theory is that couple entering the restaurant exchanged task orders on contact just as bees would have. I don't think it is telepathic like Betazoids might communicate. I can try to talk with them telepathically if I have permission, but I think it is not conversational telepathy."

(Reply Weston)
(Posted by Edward)

(DS 4 - Promenade Level 2 - The Expanse Restaurant - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1107)

"You may have not observed what I have observed but my theory is that couple entering the restaurant exchanged task orders on contact just as bees would have. I don't think it is telepathic like Betazoids might communicate. I can try to talk with them telepathically if I have permission, but I think it is not conversational telepathy."

Michael still wasn't sure about this whole connection with bees Trei was making, or how it was significant to their investigation. However, one thing he was clear on was that snooping in on people's minds was frowned heavily upon, even in his profession.

"I'd rather not take that risk," he said. "Even if it were ethical, which I doubt, there would be no way of knowing if someone is monitoring their thoughts until it was too late, and we've exposed ourselves. No, we do this the old fashioned way. We wait and watch."

They didn't have to wait very long. A figure showed up, as if it were beamed in, but there had been no noticeable transport evidence. The girl at the table looked at him, tired. More than that, she looked bone weary. The figure moved to the table and sat for a moment. There was a minor exchange.

“Can you get a feel for whoever that is?” he asked Trei.

(reply Trei)

The figure stood up and suddenly notice that it was being watched. It stepped back into a shadow and disappeared. Michael jumped to his feet and ran to the girl quickly. She had been holding what she had been given. Before she could do anything more Michael grabbed her hand.

“No!” the girl screamed. “I have to have it. I’ll... I’ll... die without it. That’s what he said.”

Michael shook his head, “No. We’ll figure this out.”

The medical team all looked at her as if she'd lost her mind. Perhaps she had. He knew that she'd been telepathically probing the girl before she collapsed. Michael went into action and pulled the empath away from the girl.

(DS 4 - Level 4 - Main Medical - SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1115)

She still didn't trust Weston fully but was willing to work with him. The request to scan the emotions of the man distributing the drug was a valid one. Initially she didn't get much from the first scan but she can scan deeper now that permission has been given. She didn't like Weston's attitude and demeanor but can work with him.

"My initial scan of the man you requested me to scan detected very little. I detected guarded emotions like he has something to hide but nothing specific to report however I can go deeper now that you requested me to."

She opened herself to scan deep into the emotions of the station. She felt a lot of fear and high anxiety. She also felt manic emotions connected to the drug. Finding the target man in the mass of emotions was a difficult task. She found him near the Rusty Gold Tavern.

"I sense him near the Rusty Gold Tavern."

She sat down in a chair to recover from the deep scan.

(Reply Weston)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

(DS 4 - Level 4 - Main Medical - SFI - Lt. Michael Weston - 1116)

Weston watched as Trei closed her eyes. He could see the strain and focus in her face. In his last assignment before joining the Illuminar he had spent several months in the company of a telepath. Who was he kidding, they had had a torrid affair. Unfortunately she was a bad guy, and hopefully he was the good guy. He had spent that time learning to conceal his own thoughts without making it look like he was concealing his thoughts, and recognizing the signs of her use of telepathy.

When she opened her eyes trei looked exhausted. She sat down and breathed slowly. “I sense him near the Rusty Gold Tavern.”

That news did not surprise the operative. It was clear that the lounge was a favored spot to offer the stranger's wares. He gave Trei a minute to recover then held out his hand to help her stand up.

"What are we waiting for," he said with a light one, "we're not gonna catch him down here. If you've got a telepathic bead on him let's capitalize on that."

(reply Trei)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(DS 4 - Level 4 - Main Medical - SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1117)

Weston helped her to her feet and prompted her with a light tone for them to catch the guy. She sighed and complied with the action. She is reminded of an old expression "no rest for the weary." In this case it might be more no rest for the wicked. The judgement of that will have to play out in the end. She slipped into a light focus to track the guy. She sensed a room just feet from the tavern. The guy was in that room alone. She didn't believe he would operate alone so she told Weston to be on alert.

(Reply Weston)
(Posted by Edward)

(reply Trei)
(posted by Al Muir)

(Reply Weston)
(Posted by Edward)

"There is a corridor we can use to sneak up on the guy and contain him for capture. I will keep the tracking scan on for as long as I can."

Michael nodded and led Trei in the direction she indicated. It was a service corridor with three doors. Trei indicated to the door she sensed the trouble in. He tapped his comm badge and spoke softly.

"Lt. Michael Weston to base security. Send a team up the Promenade Level 1. Also. start scanning for a ship that may be cloaked, near the station. A transporter might start to be activate when I make my move."

There was a moment of silence before the reply.

=^=Roger that Lt. Weston. Team is en route. We are beginning our scans.=^=

Fortunately he had spent time with the security people the previous day. They knew who he was and what he was up to. He pulled out a small device, the size of his palm and put it against the wall.

"A small scattering field," he told Ariel. "It's not strong but should prevent a quick and easy escape.

Ariel focused on the room to get a better reading. She sensed that the guy had two others with him. She relayed that to Weston.

"The target is not alone. They are unaware that we are closing in so we still have the element of surprise."

She held her position and waited for the order to act.

Weston nodded to her and stepped up to the door. He pulled out his gold data card and scanned it to the door mechanism. The door opened and he stepped inside. The room was a fairly bare storage room. However there were three figures inside. One he recognized. It was the Cardassian, Gurvek. The others wore a hooded cloak, and Michael couldn't make out what they looked like.

"Weston," Gurvek called out, "what are you doing here?"

"I was about to ask you the same thing," Weston replied.

At that moment the two cloaked figures made a movement then looked at each other. Clearly they had just attempted to transport out and found it a little difficult. They turned and looked at Weston and Trei with red eyes from within the depths of their hoods. Their hands suddenly produced weapons. As they fired Weston rolled to his left and brought out a small palm phaser. It wasn't going to disintegrate anyone, but it still packed a whallop, and had been known to stun a Klingon and Nausican. He fired back.

Ariel saw the two cloaked figures looking at her and Weston. She saw the cloaked figures fire their weapons. Ariel rolled to her right. She saw Weston roll to his left and pop back to fire his hand phaser. She would do the same but decided to try some unexpected tactics. She had two mett'leffs designed to her hand and threw them at the two cloaked figures. She also had a hand phaser to follow up on when she had the upper hand to do so. She advanced cautiously on the two cloaked figures. As far as Gurvek, She will deal with him in good time. She grumbled under her breath That Cardassians have no honor.

Michael looked over at Ariel with a warning glance, "We need at least one of them alive. Remember our agreement. Keep the Klingon in check."

He looked for some kind of cover but the room was bare, except for the occupants. The hooded figures were circling towards the door. Gurvek appeared frozen in place. He didn't try to escape, nor to engage in battle. Weston knew the Cardassian well enough to not be lulled into a fall sense of security, nor was he immediately concerned. Keep an eye on the Cardassian, but don't worry about him, unless he moved.

His attention returned to the two who were firing at him. He dove towards the center of the room and fired at the floor in front of the two, forcing them to step back. He fired again and hit one of them in the leg. There was a slight glow as their personal force field absorbed the energy. He sighed realizing that Trei might have had the right idea. This was going to come to a hand to hand fight.

The figure he shot may not have been injured but it had stopped. Weston capitalized on the moment and put himself between the inactive figure and the active one. He moved forward and threw a punch to the midsection of the figure. He left the other one to Ariel's tender mercies.

Ariel saw Weston fire and hit one of the hooded figures. The one he hit slowed down for a bit. Weston punched the inactive one. She saw that Weston had the inactive one taken care of. She pursued the active one. She figured that the two hooded figures had a personal force field to protect them. She gathered her mett'leffs from the floor. She proceeded to use the mett'leffs as a binding pinning the hooded figure to the floor by the bulky clothes he wore. She waited at the hooded figure in the midsection and worked on his face a bit. She watched for any movement from Gurvek.

The fight had been short, much shorter than Weston had expected. Clearly, whoever they were they had relied a little too heavily on their technology. Having no escape available, and their physical prowess was not as great as he had expected. For criminal types they were actually quite underwhelming. Before either he or Trei could do anything else base security arrived.

They grabbed the two hooded figures and dragged them out of the room, assuring Weston that he could question them in the brig. With that he turned his attention back to Gurvek.

"Gurvek, you care to explain what you were doing here?" he asked, danger in his voice.

"I was finally able to contact one of the dealers, and we had planned to meet and talk about the situation here. It was my hope to get them to commit to letting me take their business here, and I could find out more information about them from inside the organization."

Michael looked at Gurvek suspiciously and looked at Trei, hoping that she might be able to sense if he was being duplicitous or not. Ariel sensed the normal amount of deception from a Cardassian but believed Gurvek was telling the truth in this case. She relayed that to Weston and her feeling on what was said.

Michael turned his back and tapped his comm badge, "Weston to Starbase Security, how'd our fishing expedition go?"

=^=You were right Lt. Weston. A ship suddenly appeared on our sensors. They tried to warp out but we were able to net them with our tractors. Apparently they are a species called the Tzenkethi. Little is known about them other than their alignment with the Tholians.^=

"Intersting," Weston said. "Thanks for the assist."

=^=We thank you for your help. Security out.=^=

With that done Garvek started bid them a fond farewell. Weston shook his head, “Hold on there one moment. I took care of your problem. You have something for me.”

Garvek smiled and pulled something from inside his tunic. He handed a pad over to Weston. "Everything you need is on there. But don't say I didn't warn you. You won't like it. And it may cost you."

Michael took the padd and nodded, "I stand so advised."

Garvek nodded and left. Michael turned his attention back to Ariel. “Well, Ms. Trei, it looks like this adventure has come to a conclusion. Can I buy you a drink?”

(reply none)

(posted by Al and Edward)

[illegible][illegible]

End Compile