

"Hey there, What's on your mind?" Quinna asked.

"You mean other than ritualistic suicide," he quipped sarcastically. "Can you hand me a medical tricorder?"

Quinna turned to get the tricorder and noticed the bits on the ground, "I take it the last one has a problem."

"That one met with an... untimely accident," he said with sardonic smile. Then he turned his attention to the blob on his vision that was Quinna. When she finally moved close enough to be in his range he said, "I need you to look at the results of these blood tests. Make sure that I am, for lack of a better way of putting this, seeing this correctly. I see a progressive depletion of copper in Tavay's blood. There is a similar progression in mine."

Quinna let him continue.

"There are two possible causes," he continued. "One would be that our friends are consuming our copper to use as energy for self replication. Much like a battery. The other possibility is that the nanites are producing a byproduct that blocks our body's ability to absorb copper into our blood stream."

"Interesting. Are you seeing an increase of nanites in her system?"

"When I heard about the reveal of the nanites I began to run that comparison," Stev said. "Are you thinking that's the cause?"

"They are working on theories, to shut down the nanites, in the biochemistry lab. At this point I am willing to try anything. We lost two already."

"What I saw was a massive infection growing throughout her neuromuscular system," Kyllee said. "It could be a nanite progression, but to be honest," he paused and stood up, feeling his way around the table to electron microscope, "I really can't see it. I've developed an infection in my brain that's causing limited vision. I'm nearly blind."

Stepping to the side he gestures for Quinna to look. "Tell me what you see."

Quinna looked at Stev, "Let's see, but first..." Quinna put a hand on his shoulder. "Sit down."

Quinna then bellied up to the microscope. "Looks like the nanites are blocking the natural absorption of the copper. Ergo the infection" Quinna looked at Tavay's scans, "Sorry infections."

Stev nodded, "As I suspected. But this is no natural infection. It was... created, but for what purpose? And by who?" These were questions to ponder later. Right now they had to figure out how to counteract the infection.

"Where are your samples?" Quinna asked. She wanted to know if it was the same with him. Kyllee knew what she was up to, and there was no time for that. But he also knew she wouldn't give up. He reached over and pulled up the data.

"Yes, Quinna, it's the same. Only my infection has attacked my brain along my optic nerves," he informed her flatly. "There's a mass forming at my optic chiasma, leading to my occipital lobe. It's making me... hard to see."

"OK then, Number 1, you are officially relieved of duty. There now that is in the books." Quinna started. Quinna looked in the microscope again. "Unless we can get the nanites inert and out of the body system, our efforts are useless."

Stev chuckled, "You can't relieve me of duty. I quit. I started this, I'm going to see it through."

"At least you still have your sense of Humor." Quinn couldn't help it, she smiled at the comment.

“Funny thing is. There are no nanites in my system. None.” Quinna said.

"Hmmm.." he mused. "That is curious." He looked at her... what he could see... and took a breath. "I wonder if your immune system is being boosted by the baby."

"Baby could be an interesting idea, but who knows. Maybe I should go and run an autopsy on Aggie. We know what killed her, but we should determine what is happening with the nanites now." Quinn suggested.

"If you insist," Stev said. "I'd help you but I'm afraid my... situation would not help you much."

"Well you are going to bed now." Quinna said. "You have been working no stop. Don't think I have not noticed that you have not left Ms. Tavay's side. Go to your quarters and get some rest. Do you want someone to walk with you?"

Stev wanted to protest. He had promised Tavay that he wouldn't leave her until he'd solved this puzzle. It brought back too many memories. Memories of the death of his family on the Rhyne. But he really didn't have it in him to argue.

He felt his way over to Tavay and put his hand on her cheek. He brushed the hair back from her ear and leaned on his elbows so he could talk to her.

“What do you think?” he asked her. “Are you okay with me taking a break?”

He tried to stand up and found his body unwilling to comply. He turned and looked at Quinn.

“Maybe somebody can bring me a chair and I’ll rest here a minute before I go.”

“Honey, you are in a chair.” Quinna said.

Stev lay his head on his arms beside Tavay. He didn't really fall asleep but more slipped into unconsciousness.

Quinna looked at the medics. They came and put Stev on a gurney, but left it next to Tavay. She then administered a hypospray to Stev to help alleviate some of the symptoms he was having.

(reply none)

(Posted by Al M and Kris B)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 6 - Biochemistry Lab - ACSO Ensign iq Zara Khatri - 1601)

There was a comm call informing Solice that Doctor Vanderstein passed. This stung Zara's heart, as it brought everything about Yevan back into her thoughts. She had to sit down and turn away to compose herself.

"Ms. Khatri, it would appear that our quarantine efforts, which were aimed at stopping a biological threat, have been fruitless," said Sekal.

"Hm? Um... yes, sir," said Zara. It made sense since the contagion wasn't biological. While the captain spoke with others, she had to get her focus back on the situation.

"The nanites might at some point have jumped to mechanical systems," said Sekal.

Zara had already considered that based on the Enterprise-D incident. If they had, that's when gamma bursts could be effective without harming the crew.

"And we need to be able to find them if they have. Begin working on alternative scanning methods targeting their material composition, which may be more reliable than a general scan," said Sekal.

"Yes, sir," said Zara. She watched the captain leave, limping as he walked. Vulcans were strong at resisting and controlling pain. His must have been severe.

Moving to the microscope with the nanite slide, Zara began the process of determining their makeup, what she called, their ingredients.

When Zara had completed her task, she sent a priority message to the bridge science station, telling the person there what she discovered and what scans needed to be done.

Letting out a deep sigh, Zara leaned back in her chair, closing and rubbing her eyes. What a last three days this had been.

(reply any)

(posted by Mary Lou)

(USS Illuminar - deck 6 - Science Lab 2 - Drs. Gaillus Penn and Teller - 1602)

It had been several days since they had shared their data with the command. As usual, there was no response, but then again, the whole ship went on isolation lockdown.

Teller shrugged as he poured himself another martini. Serious drink for serious thinking. They had been monitoring the various unexplained activities appearing in and around the ship, and based on their analysis had detected two unique signatures. They shared about 80% similarity, but the 20% was interesting. Not that they had a theory yet.

Their comm channel chirped. =^= Lt. Bohb to Doctors Penn and Teller, we have a need for your services in the Biochemistry Lab. We think we have a working theory on the infection and Dr. Solice and I believe that you can help.=^=

Teller looked at Penn, "King Kong and Ann Darrow. Temba, his arms wide," he says "House. Doctor House and lupus."

Teller sat down and began scanning through the data that he was downloading.

The communicator in the room chirped again, =^=Solice to Drs Penn and Teller=^=

Teller looked up at his partner. Penn returned the look with a shrug and opened his comm channel.

"This is Doctor Penn, how can we help you Doctor Solice?"

=^=Lt. Bohb has sent you some information. Please can you make it a priority? Apparently, it may be a key to what is making our people sick.=^= the doctor said.

"Granger, Hermione Granger to Ron about getting expelled."

Penn grunted a little in acknowledgment and said, "We are looking at the data now Doctor. Is there anything, in particular, you want us to look at or some way for you to expedite what we're looking for?"

=^=I am needed in sickbay, But if you need me, I can come after I am done there.=^= Solace concluded.

The two looked at each other. Usually, they were left to their own devices. Now they've been asked to help and offered help as well. It was a unique situation for them. However, he was not exactly sure what the good doctor could offer.

"Once we've looked at the information we will head down to the biochemistry lab," Penn told her. "You'd probably be best to find us there when you are ready."

Teller finished his initial cataloging of the data. He began looking over the data, knowing that this was in his partner's wheelhouse. Penn was the quantum biophysicist. Teller focused on the physical object that was discovered. The joy of being a biophysicist was seeing the physical and chemical principles involved in biological systems.

Penn looked over his partner's shoulder as he scrolled through the data. Then he saw something of interest. "Sokath, his eyes opened."

"Kryptonite and Superman," he said as he displayed a picture on the screen. "Magneto and Professor X," he added.

He pointed to a place in the data stream and said, "Jonas Salk with Albert Sabin and Hilary Koprowski, in Stockholm."

Teller stroked his chin before reaching for his drink. Taking a sip he nodded sagely. "David Lightman and WOPR. Bruce Banner in the laboratory."

Curiosity played across the Benzite's face. His hands reached in front of Teller as he began to access data. Each moment he worked he slowly edged the Tamarian from his seat. Eventually, the two switched places. Penn was in full control of the computer station now and completely focused on what he was doing to the exclusion of all else.

He had dug deeper into the data than any other recorded access showed. It was then that he saw it. His eyes opened wide. Dragging his finger across the screen to highlight the data he needed then sent it to his personal PADD.

Without a word, he stood up, picked up his PADD, and headed to the door. The door opened and he realized that he was alone. Looking back he saw his perplexed partner.

"Dorothy Harris to Forrest Gump, on the bus," he said, beckoning him.

Teller looked around the lab and shrugged. He put on his robe and hat, squared his shoulders, and headed out, following his partner.

(Reply None)
(Posted by AI and Tim)

USS Illuminar – Holodeck 1 – CEO - Lieutenant Jg Tegian Pex – 1607)

Tegian sat looking at where Doctor Vanderstein had been transported away. He was contemplating what it meant that she'd gotten ill while being in a full containment suit and realizing that isolation wasn't necessary anymore. But, what kind of virus could make this kind of jump through all of their protocols? Tegian couldn't figure that out.

Walking over to a group of people, Ssvresh caught one by the arm. "What is it? What has happened?"

Tegian answered. "Doctor Vanderstein has been infected, Ensign. She was having seizures."

(Reply None)

(Posted by Keith)

Penn had broken into a light jog to get to the lab. As he entered he took a quick look around. The only people left in the lab were Zara Khatri and Bohb. This was the first time he'd seen Bohb after being infected. The sight of the Magillan with large patches of missing hair took him by surprise, but he ignored it. He was sure that Bohb was still Bohb.

He looked between the two of them and said, "Ensign Khatri, I need to see the sample of the nanites that you managed to isolate."

(reply Khatri)

Penn moved away from the woman and over to the microscope unit. He looked at the nanites as they moved, purposefully, around the blood cells. He could almost see them consuming the microscopic molecules of copper. Then he accessed the data on his PADD and added it to the program of the microscope. He worked at the programming and then back at the microscope, going back and forth.

Bohb had come over to watch what he was doing. He looked at the monitor and after a few minutes he caught his breath.

"Is he...? Fascinating. Brilliant." He looked at the others who all seemed perplexed. "Don't you see it?" The Magillan asked. "He's doing it. He's actually doing it. He's reprogramming the nanites Anna molecular level."

Penn looked up with a wicked smile and said, "Indeed. Watch."

He stepped back and changed the magnification to watch the field. Suddenly one of the nanites turned on another and the second disappeared. The first replicated and they both then consumed others. This continued until the blood sample was full of converted nanites. Then they turned on each other. But after consuming those there was no self replication. This continued until there were only a few. And then there was one. The last nanite found nothing to consume and wound up consuming itself.

He turned to Khatri, "If you don't mind running the scan again to confirm that the field is clear of all nanites."

(reply Khatri)

"There will, most likely, be some side effects as the nanite fight each other. Most likely in the form of a fever and perhaps pain. But in the end, the subject should be cleared of infection. All I need now is patient 1 to try it on. Once they are in remission I'll need blood samples before their body is cleared of infection to speed up the process."

Bohb coughed, "Look no further."

The Benzite looked at Teller.

(reply Teller)

He tapped his comm badge, "Penn to Doctor Solice. We need you in the biochemistry lab, immediately."

(reply Solice)

"While we wait, I'll need a sample of your blood, Bohb," Penn said.

Bohb nodded and held up his hand, "One moment."

He began to cough until his body racked. He coughed into his hand and pulled it away. His hand was coated in blood. "I hope this will be sufficient."

(reply Khatri, Teller, Solice)
(posted by Al Muir)

Quinna wiped her tired eyes. She looked over at Stev who seemed to have grown attached to his patient.

=^=Penn to Doctor Solice. We need you in the biochemistry lab, immediately.=^=

Quinna looked over at the nurse. The nurse mouthed to her to go.

"I am on my way," Quinn said, closing the Commlink. The nurse passed her a full travel coffee mug.
"If that is not coffee then someone's head will roll."

"You know the drill," Nurse Kelley started, "No coffee for the preppers. Beef broth." she said,

“Drink or I am going to tell on you.”

Quinna took the cup and a sip. It did taste good. "Who are you going to tell?" she gave Kelley a wink and turned to leave but stopped to get her PADD. Unfortunately, she forgot her dinner in a cup.

(USS Illuminar -- Biochemical Lab -- Deck 6 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinn Solice -- 1614)

"Hey, what do you all have." Quinn smiled seeing Penn and Teller working with the team.

(Replies Khatra, Penn, Teller, Bohb)
(Posted by Kris B)

Tegian was digesting the Captain's announcement and collecting his belongings that had accumulated

Walking over to a group of people, Ssvresh caught one by the arm. "What is it? What has happened?"
Tegian answered. "Our isolation is over, Ensign. If you're feeling well enough, head towards Main Engineering and begin running diagnostics over the entire ship. Looking for nanites in our system. I will

"Whomever is in Engineering, get them to help you. And send me details on which of our staff are still

able to work.

Tegian headed towards his cabin, dropped off his stuff, put on a new uniform and then went directly to

(Reply None)

(Posted by Keith)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 6 - Biochemistry Lab - ACSO Ensign jg Zara Khatri - 1615)

The lab door opened and Zara looked to see who it was. In walked Penn and Teller.

~Great. Rebo and Zooty.~ thought Zara.

Inwardly, Zara corrected herself. A few days ago, the two scientists had interrupted her work, and they were kind of annoying, but the Illuminar and crew were in a life-and-death situation, so everyone on board was needed to help where they could.

Maybe Zara was more stressed than she thought.

"Ensign Khatri, I need to see the sample of the nanites that you managed to isolate," said Penn.

Zara pointed to the electron microscope, wondering what Penn had planned.

Minutes passed while Penn worked. When finished, he looked at Zara.

"If you don't mind running the scan again to confirm that the field is clear of all nanites," said Penn.

Zara ran another scan. She knew that he knew it was, so this came across to her as smug bragging.
"It's clear."

Zara sat back at her work station while Penn and Bohb talked. She wondered how it was possible for Penn to so quickly reprogram the nanites. They weren't much good if it was that easy to hack them. Whoever built them needed a better firewall.

Penn tapped his comm badge, asking Doctor Solice to join them in the lab. "While we wait, I'll need a sample of your blood, Bohb."

Bohb nodded. "One moment." He coughed into his hand, which was now coated with blood. "I hope this will be sufficient."

Zara wrinkled her nose. ~Gross!~

At this point, Doctor Solice arrived. "Hey. What do you all have?"

Zara was tired, stressed, flustered, hungry, and she needed a bath, but after everything that happened the last few days, the end was in sight.

(reply Solice, Bohb, Penn, Teller)

(posted by Mary Lou)

Penn had had taken a quantity of Bohb's blood soaked sputum and created a sample for his ministrations. Now that he had made the adjustments once it was easy to replicate. By the time Solice appeared he was ready to start.

“Hey, what do you all have?” Solice asked as she stepped up to the group.

Teller smiled, "Hercules Poirot to Colin Lamb at the murder of the Clocks."

Penn nodded in agreement, "Indeed, my friend. Indeed." Then he turned to Quinna, a syringe in his hand. "It appears we may have the solution to our infection problem here. Bohb has agreed to be test subject #1. What we need is for someone to monitor him and see the point at which the nanites turn on themselves. At that point we need to collect another sample for replication."

(reply Solice)

“Are you you ready, Bohb?” Penn asked.

Bohb coughed again, a small dribble of blood passing his lips. "As ready as I'll ever be." And he plopped himself on a stool.

Penn looked around at the others, half hoping that someone would stop him. He really had no idea how this affect the Magillan's body. He only prayed that it did not hurt too much.

"Here we go," he finally said and pressed the hypospray to Bohb's neck. With a hiss the sample went into his veins. Bohb looked around and shrugged.

"Nothing seems to be..." Bohb suddenly stopped speaking and cried out in pain. The war raging inside his body by the nanites had begun.

(reply Solice, Khatri, Teller)
(posted by Al Muir)

Quinna looked at Bohb as Penn and Teller explained. She liked the pair and trusted them completely. The only person she trusted more was Michael. But she would never tell him that.

"Sure, I can monitor him," Quinn pulled her tricorder out of her pocket and prepared to scan

“Are you ready, Bohb?” Penn asked.

"As ready as I'll ever be." Bohb replied.

Quinna moved the side of Bohb and placed a reassuring hand on his back. She scanned him with one hand and rubbed his back with the other. Then he received the treatment

"Nothing seems to be..." Bohb suddenly stopped speaking and cried out in pain. Quinna dropped her Tricorder and took hold of Bohb. She could do little more to soothe him. She then took a moment to pick up the device and continued to scan. "I am not getting any results. There has been no changes."

(reply Penn, Bohb, Khatri, Teller)

"Quinna kept scanning and holding onto Bohb, "The nanites are starting to go domate in his system."

(reply Penn. Bohb, Khatri, Teller)
(posted by Kris B)

They had left it alone, without warning. Without consideration. It was not going to be left alone again. The others came and left without warning. But they brought with them the little ones. The little ones did not keep it company, but they did provide background noise.

But they were not enough. And they were always hungry. This put it always on edge. It always drew it towards the need for entropy to happen. Embrace the entropy, they would say. Long for it. Now, being left alone, it was ready to bring the entropy to these other others.

Then there was the pain. The little ones crying out. They embraced entropy, but not willingly. They did not want the entropy. Could not understand why it was upon them. But it knew that they were responsible. These other others.

They wanted to experience entropy? Then they will experience entropy.

The Malice reached out for the thing that carried the other others. Its first touch was a sensation that was different. When it touched Ariana Trei's mind it learned a word. Pain. This was... pain. Pre-entropy sensations. Perhaps this could help cease its need to find entropy.

It reached again. Then it saw something it recognized. It had felt it before. This was the keeper of the songs. Malice wanted to embrace the keeper of the songs. Force it to release the songs back into the universe. It must have the songs back.

It reached out again and endured the pain as it tried to wrap itself around the carrier. If need be, it would destroy all of the other others to get the songs back. The Malice cannot fail, or it, too, will slip into oblivion.

(reply any, Luma)
(posted by Al Muir)

The red alert started blaring in Taylor's ears. He hadn't set it, but suddenly shields had been raised and a red alert had sounded.

Looking around the bridge he said, "I didn't sound the red alert Captain. The shields just came up... on their own."

Suddenly the ship rocked slightly. He looked at his monitors and his confusion grew.

"Something is applying pressure to the hull," he announced. "Hull stress level is at 85% of normal. Readings show... nothing. I don't get it. Something is there, but nothing is there. I know that doesn't make sense."

(reply Sekal, William, Luma, any on the bridge)
(posted by Al Muir)

His head snapped up as the klaxon sounded and the alert lamps pulsed, bathing the bridge in red tinted light.

"I didn't sound the red alert Captain. The shields just came up... on their own."

He didn't look toward security, keying the pop-up monitor on the arm of the command chair instead.

"Something is applying pressure to the hull. Hull stress level is at 85% of normal. Readings show... nothing. I don't get it. Something is there, but nothing is there. I know that doesn't make sense."

The ship had been moved to the edge of the system on his orders owing to unknown conditions on the planet. Had something followed them out?

"Security, saturate the area with plasma, it should highlight anything that might be out there. Science, I want a full suite of scans done on surrounding space."

(Reply: Science and Security)

That was only part of what needed to be done. "Lieutenant Greywolf plot a course toward the sun and engage, full impulse and prepare the engines for warp drive. Mister William reinforce hull integrity with auxiliary power."

There was a chorus of "Aye sir" from both navigation and operations followed by a surge as Illuminar began turning toward the center of the system. The ship began to build speed as the static warp bubble was prepared.

(Reply: Any, all mentioned)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

Temas hadn't realized how long he'd been under the influence of this Entity. When he had come back to his full faculties he had already deduced where to find Sekal and ran down the corridor to the turbolift to get to the bridge. The bridge door opened and he stepped out, already speaking.

"Captain Sekal, it's alive," he called across the bridge. All heads turned towards him. He felt a little out of place in standard clothing, but he continued. "This thing that has hold of us. It's a living sentient being. What we are engaged with is simply a portion of the energy that it has to employ."

(reply Sekal)

Temas caught his breath and explained, "I've been in contact with it. This Entity now a form of Malice. It was trying to converse with Lt. Trei, but it did. It have the language skills and Ms. Trei did not know what she was dealing with. However, over the past few hours I have found out a great deal."

He came down to the bridge floor and stood facing the captain. "This Entity is... well, it might be a Lenai. I think that's why Luma has been so quiet. She's been, for lack of a better way of saying it, hiding from it. I think she hoped it would just leave us alone if it didn't know she were here. But it must have sensed her."

"It's been trapped on that planet for... it doesn't know how long. An eon at least. Held in by the ion storms generating gamma rays that would destroy it if it tried to escape. So it was stuck... on the planet with no life... alone... for hundreds, maybe thousands, of years. Caught by the storm and living under the ground in, what is now, the Tellarite mines. It had stored its energies in the oricalcium deposits."

"But the solitude and the negative energy from the storms have changed it. It has a disassociation from certain realities. What we might have called a multiple personality. One seeking love, like Luma. And one seeking entropy of itself and all others. It's on a mission... to destroy anything alive it can find."

(reply Sekal, Luma, any on the bridge)

(posted by Al Muir)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - So/ATac - Ensign Andy Taylor - 1628)

At the captain's order Taylor had begun to open the plasma vents from the warp nacelles. As the captain predicted the plasma there was a glow that formed around the saucer section of the ship, almost like a fist.

Suddenly Temas Laredo burst onto the bridge and spouted his tale of this creature that was holding them. Was it another Lenai. He had thought they were all dead. What a horrible revelation for Luma. The joy of finding out she was no longer alone in the universe, to realizing that this was an evil stepbrother.

Andy couldn't help but feel a warm glow as he suddenly realized that he might, actually, get to blow something up. He continued his sensor sweep.

“Captain,” Taylor said, “you were right. There’s an energy field around the ship. It seems to be emanating from the planet’s surface. From, near as I can tell, the area close to the Tellarite mining facility.”

He looked up, his hands already moving to load quantum torpedoes that could go through the ion storm. "Orders?"

(reply Sekal)

(posted by Al Muir)

(USS Iluminar - Deck 1 - Bridge- CO, Captain Sekal - 1630)

"Captain you were right. There's an energy field around the ship. It seems to be emanating from the planet's surface. From, near as I can tell, the area close to the Tellarite mining facility." The call came from tactical.

Orders?"

"Prepare to fire on the energy source when we are within range. Helm change course for the planet."

"Aye sir."

Illumina broke around the sun and the engines surged as it pulled away and raced for its target.

The ship shuddered as it broke away from the stars gravity well. He heard the lift open behind him as the Counselor entered with pertinent information. He listened closely at the revelation which came as somewhat of a shock.

“But the solitude and the negative energy from the storms have changed it. It has a disassociation from certain realities. What we might have called a multiple personality. One seeking love, like Luma. And one seeking entropy of itself and all others. It’s on a mission... to destroy anything alive it can find.”

Sekal stood to his feet before Temas. "Thank you Counselor, this information is highly important."

[Luma is sorry she did not tell her Temas this. Our kind are what our Sekal would call unstable. Luma had to destroy her mate in order to protect the little ones on her skin called the Mystique.] The voice through the bridge speakers was that of Luma'lenai.

"I was aware of this Luma." Sekal noted.

(Reply: Temas)

[The Lenai are not like the little ones. Our life spans are so long that the loneliness breaks us. Luma required a mind bondmate to fix her. Nyssa saved Luma from the madness. And this one has been separated from the star song for a very long time. It has become so broken it cannot be fixed.]

Sekal turned his attention from the voice of Luma back to Temas. "I am sorry Counselor but this Lenai will have to be destroyed."

[Luma is sad. She thought that she was the last of the Lenai but she was not. She finds another of her kind yet it must also meet the entropy.]

And with that Luma went silent.

"Tactical fire when we are within range."

Seksl returned to the command chair and faced the viewscreen, waiting for the inevitable destruction of yet another rare life form.

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

T'Mur was relieved to be out of the isolation ward. Over the past days her senses had become more acute that she thought had been possible. Every sound assaulted her ears, every sight butned into her retina, every smell turned her stomach, everything she touched caused her discomfort. She could even taste the enzymes in her saliva. She had thrown up her mental shields, because she was afraid that her telepathic abilities whould have been the straw that drove her to insanity. She also had wanted to protect Sienna from going through what she had been going through. The down side to that was that T'Mur had no idea what her mate was actually going through.

Her senses continued their assault on her as she made her way to her personal quarters. It had been a place that she hadn't spent much time recently. She and Sienna had not completely reconnected since she returned to the Illuminar. T'Mur wasn't sure how she could manage that now. She could barely manage to walk through the corridors.

No sound escaped her ears. She could hear the sounds of others breathing, their heart beats, their words through the doorways. It was driving her mad. All she wanted was a moment of silence. One she hadn't had in the last two days. She leaned against the wall, to support her weight. The contact sent waves of pressure through her skin that only added to her torment.

It seemed an interminable amount of time until she finally managed to arrive at their quarters. The door opened and T'Mur rolled through the entrance, leaning against the wall as the door closed. That was when she realized that she wasn't alone.

The first thing that she heard was the familiar sound of Sienna's heartbeat. But it was slower than usual. She opened her eyes to see her mate laying on the floor, by the wall on the opposite side of the doorway. Kenna was laying across her chest, purring.

“Sienna,” she gasped and moved over to her fallen mate.

She knelt beside her first, stroking her cheek. The sensation on her finger tips was quite... sensual. Then she opened her mind slightly and reached into Sienna's.

::My love::

She realized that exhaustion had simply taken its toll on her mate's body. But now that her mind was open she couldn't control it. She began to share what she was going through. All of it.

(reply Sienna)

(posted by Al Muir)

The demolitions expert in Taylor took over when he heard Sekal say, "Tactical, fire when we are within range."

He wasn't sure if he should feel badly about being so excited to finally blow something up. Even if it was an entity that had been driven crazy with loneliness. Crazy was crazy and had to be dealt with.

His fingers danced across the console and as the helm changed direction he waited for the right moment. He watched and he waited. The light by the fire button turned green. With a swift motion there was the hum of the torpedoes launching.

"Torpedoes away," he announced. "Passing though the storm. Impact on three, two, one."

(reply Entity)

(posted by Al Muir)

Something changed. The new ones... they were coming back. Excitement. The loneliness would come to an end. Finally. They would subjugate themselves or embrace entropy. But it wasn't the same. They were returning to quickly. And something else was different. Something.

Wait. No. What was coming would create damage. It could not respond fast enough. The small one's

It was correct. It would no longer feel the loneliness. It would no longer feel the anger. It would no

longer feel. Embrace the

There was a

(reply none)

A tear started to form in Temas eyes. He felt it all. He could feel the elation. Then he felt the realization. Finally he felt the acceptance and even relief. And then it was all gone.

All he felt now was the emptiness, and profound sadness. His own compounded with Luma. She had known that there was nothing she could do to save this Entity, and she could bring herself to intervene.

Temas took a deep breath and composed himself. "It's ... gone... sir. Dead."

He stood there for a moment not sure what to do with himself, but he knew he needed a moment to himself. He'd never been involved with anyone's death before.

"If you need me, Captain," he said, "I'll be in my quarters for a while, and then in my office." He turned and left the bridge.

(reply none)
(posted by Al Muir)

"I'm getting no results," Quinna said. "There have been no changes."

Bohb shook his head, "No results?! What do you call this pain? Something is happening. It's like I'm being eaten alive."

Penn looked at the medical tricorder. He wasn't a medical doctor, but he knew how the tricorder worked. He reached in and made an adjustment to the device and stepped back.
"Try now," he said.

"The nanites are starting to go dormant in his system," Quinn said, almost in disbelief.

"Not dormant," Penn told her. "They're changing their programming. Keep watching. They must be getting near the point of consumption. The point where there is nothing left to consume but each other, without the ability to replicate. That's the point when we need the sample."

Quinna continued to monitor Bohb's system. Bohb had broken into a sweat soaked fever. When he was a child he had been ill. A disease that had taken many Magillan children. He knew that his fever was like that. His body began to ache.

Falling to his knees he grabbed the stool he'd been sitting on and squeezed. The stool crumpled under his immense strength.

(reply Quinna)

She pulled out a hypodermic and stuck it into the Magillan's arm. Slowly, carefully, she removed a sample of Bohb's blood. When the vile was full she removed the needle and popped out the tube, handing it to Penn.

Penn scanned the sample and rushed over to the medical replicator. He tapped in a series of commands and placed the ampule on the tray. There was a whoosh and suddenly there were half a dozen copies. Grabbing one at random he moved it to the microscope and put the holographic display on.

He could see the nanites as they consumed each other. This was a condition he hadn't considered. He began to do some calculations on his PADD. Then hummed for a moment.

"By my calculations we have about five minutes to deliver the anti-nanites into everyone's system from the moment of replication." He looked around the room. "Doctor, if you don't mind, inoculate everyone in this room now. Then we will need to move fast. I can replicate a half dozen samples at a time. Then you, Khatri, Teller, and myself will have to split up and get to everyone on the ship."

(reply Quinna)

Bohb slowly got to his feet, leaned against the counter and said, "I will oversee the replication process. I don't think I'm in any condition to be running through the ship."

“Excellent,” Penn said. “But only if you’re up to it.”

"Getting better every second," Bohb coughed. But this time there was less blood. "For a crew of 150 that would take 25 sets of replications. You have five minutes from the time of replication and five minutes to return. I will produce a new set every ten minutes. We should be able to get to everyone within two hours."

Penn went to the replicator on the other side of the room and programmed a hypospray for each of them, and handed them out. Once Solice had inoculated them Bohb replicated the first set of vials for each of them, setting a timer. As he handed them out each member of the team left for their ordered zone.

Quinna headed for sickbay with Khatri. Penn and Teller headed for the bridge. They would hit the vital sections of the ship first.

(reply Solice, Khatri)
(posted by Al Muir)

Day 9 Stardate: 2446.06.09

"Cheif Medical Officer's log. Stardate 2446.06.09. This has been a trying week. With the excellent work between the science and engineering departments, the crew has been able to stave off some nasty bugs. But the cost was high. Too high if you ask me. I am not sure how much longer I can do this. I feel the crew has little to no confidence in me at all after this one. Who can blame them? At least the ship and the crew are safe again. In some cases, recovery is slow." Quinn tried to conceal a yawn. She could not remember the last time she slept. She tapped a couple of buttons and closed her log. She stood from her desk and left the room. She walked into the sickbay to find Tavay sleeping soundly. She could see her move her feet as she slept. Stev was in a biobed close to her. She activated the medical hologram to monitor the patients that were left in sickbay and decided it was time to go find her rest.

(USS Illuminar -- Persona Quarters -- Deck 2 -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinn Solice -- 1707)

Quinna stepped foot in her quarter. She was not sure if she wanted to eat or sleep. She had very little of either for quite a few days. A bit here, and a bite there. A 10 snooze here, a 30-minute snooze there. Nothing about the last few days was healthy for the baby, but apparently, the baby did not complain too much. There was one thing missing and Quinna decided to find it. "Computer, locate Michael Weston."

When the computer informed her that he was in the SFI office, she headed there.

(USS Illuminar -- SFI Office -- Deck ? -- CMO/3XO Commander Quinn Solice -- 1715)

Quinna entered the office without a thought about ringing any chime or checking to see if he was busy. She strolled over to his desk and took a seat across from him. She started talking to him as if they were in a 1940s film noir scene. She was the dame, and him, the private dick for hire. "I hear you are the man to see if I have a problem."

(Reply Weston)

"You see, someone has been sneaking into my place when I was not there. I have not been there for several days."

(Reply Weston)

"It was evident, they went through my underwear drawer. The only thing of value I keep in there is a special lace teddy, I was hoping to wear one day." Quinna said. "Can you help me?" That over-drama happened with the shoulders and her hand coming to her face as if she was about to cry. The whole scene was quite black and white.

(Reply Weston)

(Posted by Kris B)

A lifetime in Intelligence had put Michael Weston in a great many life threatening, and... shall we say... bizarre situations. But this last week had been a topper. Especially since he was simply a spectator in the action. That was not how it usually was. However, thanks to the work of everyone the crew had been saved with a minimum of losses, and the ship seemed to be in one piece.

Quinna had been busier than a Ferengi at a yard sale. They had spent little time together in the past week. She was probably still irritated with him about his objection to her going on the away mission to Zetos 3. He saw her point. He just wished that she could see his. And yes, he does have spies everywhere. That's what he does.

Suddenly his door entered, which was unusual to begin with. People rarely came down to "The Dungeon," as his office had been deemed. He smiled when he saw it was Quinna, even if she did look exhausted.

She sat down across from his and began to speak in a strange way.

"I hear you are the man to see if I have a problem," she said. Her voice reminded him slightly of Ensign Vermyx. This should be interesting.

"I've been known to solve a problem or two," he said sitting back in his chair, "if the price is right and you're straight with me." He tries to think of some of Dano's vernacular. "What's the beef?"

"You see, someone has been sneaking into my place when I was not there," Quinna said. "I have not been there for several days."

"Indeed," Michael leaned forward putting his elbows on his desk. "Then how do you know someone's been in there?"

"It was evident, they went through my underwear drawer. The only thing of value I keep in there is a special lace teddy, I was hoping to wear one day." Quinna said. "Can you help me?"

Michael stood up and came around the desk. He sat on the corner rubbing his chin in thought. "I believe that I might be able to, but I will have to look at the scene of the crime, and take a look at the item mentioned."

(reply Quinna)
(posted by Al Muir)

Michael stood up and came around the desk. He sat on the corner rubbing his chin in thought. "I believe that I might be able to, but I will have to look at the scene of the crime, and take a look at the item mentioned."

"When do you think you can come by?" Quinn asked in a soft tone. "The sooner you can investigate, the sooner we can put it to bed."

(Reply Weston)

Quinna stood and leaned against Michael. She closed in so she could whisper in his ear, "Or I could put you to bed." the hardest part at that point stopping herself from yawning in his ear.

(Reply Weston)

Quinna turned to walk away. "Are you coming, Gumshoe?"

(Reply Weston)

Quinna dropped the Detective Film Noir. She did not have the energy to continue on, "As promised, I will no longer volunteer for any away team missions."

(reply Weston)

“Though you have to admit, it is funny how everyone was more concerned that I would be the one in danger, and yet I did not only stay safe, I ended up taking control. Ironic. Don’t you think?”

(Reply Weston)
(posted by Kris B)

"When do you think you can come by?" Quinna asked in a soft tone. "The sooner you can investigate, the sooner we can put it to bed."

Michael smiled. He was rather enjoying the innuendo. They didn't play like this often. Perhaps they should do it more.

"Well, I can get into it immediately," he said. "In fact, the sooner I can get my hands on the item the better."

Quinna leaned against Michael and whispered in his ear, "Or I could put you to bed."

Michael raised an eyebrow, "I was just thinking the same thing."

“Are you coming, Gumshoe?” Quinna asked as she headed to the door.

"I'm very hopeful," Weston replied, following her. "I imagine I will be soon."

"As promised, I will no longer volunteer for any away team missions," Quinna informed him, back in the real world.

Michael nodded, "Well that will make things easier on my constitution."

"Though you have to admit," she added, "it is funny how everyone was more concerned that I would be the one in danger, and yet I did not only stay safe, I ended up taking control. Ironic. Don't you think?"

Michael let his smile slip slightly, "Ironic was not the word that I had in mind. But I will take that piece of luck as a god send, and be grateful for it."

He reached out and took her hand, pulling to his lips as they walked. They stopped at the turbolift and waited for the door to open. Once he saw that it was empty he pulled Quinna in and pressed her against the wall with a kiss.

"Now let's go check out this article of clothing," he whispered in her ear. "Perhaps you may need to try it on. Or... perhaps not."

The door to the turbolift closed as their lips came back together.

(reply Quinna)

(Reply Quirina)
(posted by Al Muir)

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End Compile

End Mission