









one point, Genesse had connected herself to T'Murs nervous system and brought a form of peace that drugs could not. This woman she could not ignore. However, she kept her eyes closed and focused on her breathing.

Genesse was clearly pleased to see T'Mur sitting up and still. She moved over to the biobed with her new toy, the medical scanner, in hand and began to pass it around her patient. T'Mur could not hold back the smile.

"Oh sweet child," Genesse said, "I am so pleased to see you sitting up. I won't insult you by asking how you are feeling. I can see how your body is reacting with this device. I will ask, however, how you are holding up?"

T'Mur dropped her chin, turned her head and slowly opened her eyes. "I am ... in control ... meanwhile."

She could already feel the emotions start to well up. Breath in. Breath out. Force the heart rate down. Feel the blood pressure drop.

Genesse watched her readings as T'Mur went through her routine to stay calm. "That is amazing. You have a remarkable control over your body functions. I can also see that it is taking a lot of strain on you to maintain it. I won't stay long, so you can go back your meditation."

Panic struck T'Mur, "No! Please... stay. For some reason you bring me calm. I am uncertain as to why, but I ... appreciate your presence."

Genesse nodded and moved to sit on the side of the biobed. "Of course child. I will stay and give you what ever you need."

T'Mur shook her head, "I don't know what I need. What I need is to get myself under control. To repair the damage to neural system that is the actual cause of my current condition. Do you have the ability to repair damage to synaptic pathways in the brain?"

"No, sweetness," Genesse shook her head, "I do not. I can share what I have, but cannot give you what you really need. That is far beyond my skills, Do you need calming now."

T'Mur smiled again and shook her head, "I am ... currently in control. Thank you."

Genesse looked at the readings from the scans and looked perplexed. "Your device is still a little complicated for me. Can you tell me what these readings say?"

T'Mur took the scanner from the Healer and perused the readings. She was curious as well. "That is odd. The radiation effect on my body has almost completely dissipated. I'm not sure how that is possible. I don't recall receiving any medication that could have done that. How are the rest of the away team doing. Are their readings the same."



attacker. But those who fought did not do so from emotion, they used no greater force than necessary and they valued peace and the advancement of their species and the Federation above all else.

Logic in its own way could be limited though by circumstance. A Vulcans incredible insight due to ephemeral clues and penetrating intellect passed over. It wasn't a "gut feeling" at which humanity seemed to excel, a near paranormal instinct that often led them to an answer. No it was their honed minds piecing together those variables, permutations and variations and constructing a conclusion that others could not see.

Such as the logic that had led him to conclude early in the investigation that Dean Vedek Horavei had attempted to assassinate his superior and religious leader Kai Hetel Krevi. He studied the pieces carefully as he looked them over noting their lengths, nodes and spatial reference. He didn't look up when he heard the voice seemingly absorbed in the study.

"In rank as well as in fact. Quite a step up mon capitan. Was it due to your bumbling success at Bajor or a dearth of properly qualified candidates to fill the role?" The faux warmth of it was completely scuttled by the sly undertone. There was no comederie here, no meeting of friends. It was sarcasm and mockery disguised as conversation.

Sekal picked up one of the holographic rods and studied it for a moment before setting it aside, it would do. He then turned his chair to regard the interloper sitting in the couch on the far wall. His brown hair was immaculately trimmed, his eyes bright with intelligence. His mouth was turned up at the edges in a sly smile. His uniform now had the bars of an Admiral but he wasn't Starfleet, far from it in fact.

Q was lounging at ease with his left arm on the sofa back, his right resting upon the arm of the furniture.

Sekal said nothing but studied him silently for a moment.

"What? Cat got your tongue?" The beings eyes twinkled.

"What do you wish me to say Q? Why are you here? The question would be counter-productive. You may come and go as you please for no other reason than your own capricious nature according to a whim. Without logic, with out reason and without purpose. Your very existence and aims are chaotic and illogical."

Q smirked at that. "Yet because of my warning you and your crew were able to save your universe and restore things to normalcy."

Sekal folded his arms. "Do not pretend that you did it for selfless reasons. It suited your purpose and freed you to interfere in Starfleet affairs. Because of our efforts you may now come and go as you wish once again." He leaned back in his chair. "The question becomes why you have chosen this ship."

Q rose to his feet with a twinkle in his eye. "I have to admit you are perceptive. But then again you aren't like many of your peers as we have already discussed. So why have I taken an interest in your ship Mon Capitan?"



enough of the hard liners to push her through to the position of Kai. An illogical choice to be sure. He placed the rod on the board, the first part of the support structure.

The next part of the base was crucial, a survey of the pieces had noted the probable finished product of a sphere. Simple, elegant and at the same time difficult. The second rod would go atop the first. In questioning Hetel he had learned of threats made against her, not specific or overt but vague enough to ensure she would not forget that she had opposition and her failure to support their position guaranteed she would have enemies. She had not however identified the source of the threat. He placed the second rod atop the first after insuring the nodes were perfectly aligned with the base.

Midway into the lower base rod were four nodes, they would be shorter than those in the center. He laid them out carefully before choosing one. The nodes at the end had to be placed with two horizontal and two vertical, the two vertical nodes were offset and had to be aligned correctly. Four rods, all of them carefully set.

When the Illuminar arrived at Bajor he had noted schisms in the governing authorities. The civilian representatives at a time of crisis had been stymied by the Vedek Council who were resisting what needed to be done to save those inside the temple. First of all the edict against removing any of the affected. He placed the first lower limb of the holographic model.

Refusing to allow them to be removed guaranteed a lack of proper treatment. The Bajoran medical staff were stretched thin and had to manage their exposure time carefully. More sensitive equipment could not be brought to bear on the malady. He placed the second limb.

When speaking with Dean Vedek Horavei the man at his urging had offered to release the edict on everyone except the Kai, they could be removed but she would not. His mouthed platitudes of waiting for miraculous intervention notwithstanding, a death sentence. Sekal placed the third limb.

Counselor Ravenstone at his order had been monitoring the Dean of Vedeks and had made his stance clear... his mind was set, Kai Hetel was to die. It was his goal, his plan. Of this she had been sure. He placed the final lower limb and sat back. The logic had been obvious, Horavei was using the incident to get rid of an enemy, perhaps even meaning to take her place. He had been prepared to arrest Horavei then and there but the standoff had been interrupted because of a firefright instituted by armed elements within the Vedeks own guard who had been loyal to the pagh wraith cultists and he and his team had been forced to withdraw. Horavei had unwittingly been relieved by forces bent on his capture.

The central limbs were longer being the circumference of the sphere and attached at the point where the upper and lower base met thus drawing on both. They were easily located and set aside.

Sekal had been on the ship when the trace of poison had been found in the Kai's system. She had been attacked after she had fallen ill, her protection could not be assured and the evidence of a criminal act had been what he needed to break the edict. She could be brought aboard as could his medical staff who were also in harms way. He placed the first of the central limbs.

He had of course contacted Horavei about the matter. Counselor Trei had been monitoring the man at his instruction and her findings were the same as Counselor Ravenstones. He placed the second limb.

Horavei had insisted on having an observer aboard which was a logical action, Sekal had acquiesced to the request. The observer sent aboard at Horavei's request had been found with a vial of poison on her person. He placed the third limb.

Questioning of the Vedek had indicated she was unaware of the vial and Sienna's reading of the vial indicated it was placed on her person by Horavei. The only chink in his well planned assassination attempt which was due to him attempting to divert suspicion. The psychic lead was inadmissible as evidence. Sekal placed the final circumferential limb.

There remained four limbs at the top. Having spoken with Kai Hetel after her recovery he could now fill them in logically. Dean Vedek Horavei had been one of those hard liners who had pressured the Kai to roll back the reforms and was the logical one to have made the threat as he was optimally placed at the head of the council and sure of his power. He placed the first upper limb.

When the omicron radiation had felled those in the temple he had attempted to insure her death by poison. Not just any poison either, a Cardassian poison. If it ever came to light Cardassia would be blamed. The poisoner whom Horavei had given the deed had failed and taken his own life after causing yet more chaos. All of his moves had fortunately failed owing to the perception of the ship's crew. He placed the second upper limb.

As the Dean if Vedeks Horavei was in the unparalleled political position of being the front runner as the next Kai. There was little doubt what his next move would be if he had the needed support to take the office. Sekal placed the third upper limb.

The Cardassian poison which was known to leave long standing traces would have been found, the reforms rolled back due to a traitor in their midst and Horavei would have had the perfect platform upon which to ostracize the Oralian Way. He placed the last limb, the framework was complete. The rest of the pieces would be used to fill in the surface of the sphere.

According to reports Horavei had so far been able to avoid suspicion. His plans had been well laid and the only witness to them had committed suicide. Sekal however would not allow him to go unpunished, if there was anything he could do to prove his guilt he would do so.

One other question remained. The Prophets had shown their hand during the crisis. It had been less than a month since the conflagration had been defused.

What if anything did THEY intend to do about the Dean of Vedeks?

He sat back in the chair. His concentration was broken only when T'Lah hopped into his lap. He scratched her head idly as she purred. Everything reported about the inhabitants of the wormhole had proven that their interest in Bajoran affairs would at some point cause them to act.

What form would it take?

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles G)







Hollowing out the asteroid and outfitting it would probably have taken decades considering their technological level and was not a spur of the moment effort to save a few of their race. However had they had enough warning perhaps they had decided on this step? It it was catastrophic it hadn't been sudden however. Perhaps, just perhaps the parent civilization still existed and if so Riven would love to meet them and see how far that civilization had progressed.

Two Sharlayans had met them here and been resistant at first to his security team carrying weapons beyond. Riven held up his hands in surrender as he smiled and gave a short laugh. "Fair enough. I will ask your Admiral when I meet him about this. Federation diplomatic security is considered essential but I don't want this to become an issue between our peoples."

He turned to Devers and Hammons. "Gentlemen I understand your concerns but leave your weapons here at this time. It's a matter of trust you see and once the leadership sees we are here for their benefit I'm sure it will be rescinded."

Hammons kept the grin on his face though he wanted to glower at the Sharlayans. Diplomatic security was no joke but at the same time it was the same situation the Captain had encountered and he wasn't going to attract the CO's notice by kicking up a fuss here. Or was he? He considered refusing to allow the Ambassador to move forward until the situation was resolved. He was also the senior security officer present.

The situation was unusual certainly. The Sharlayans were in dire straits and openly friendly though on the suspicious side to which they had every right to be since their group were strangers here. On the other hand desperate people were sometimes driven to desperate lengths. There was some room for compromise though.

"We will continue unarmed at this time Ambassador but..." he turned his attention to the Sharlayans. "... I would like to speak with whoever is in charge of security for your people."

"The Protectors." One of the natives said with agreement. "I will notify Rhyssa that you wish to speak with her. You do not need to worry about your weapons while they are here."

"I'm not concerned about my weapons." His grin had faded but returned. "And hope to become acquainted with them soon."

"She will be told."

Hammons placed his sidearm on the table and stepped away.

(Reply: Devers, Michaella)

"It's not the safety of my weapons I'm concerned about." He noted to the Sharlayans before they began moving out.

(Reply: Devers, Michaella)



people who had lifted their eyes and stretched out their arms to the stars. Their glory had faded somewhat, been tarnished and obscured as their descendants had lost much of that to which they had once attained but no matter the fate of their home planet the spark still burned among the vastness of the aether.

His empathic senses had been tasting the emotional state of those encountered along the way. In them he sensed a deep sadness for what had been lost and those who had fallen along the way. The Keepers were a proud remnant with a great burden who wore their depression like a weight about their necks. Despair was a cruel master with spurs of failure and anxiety for the future. Tasks that were once simple had become difficult or impossible without the proper tools, materials and knowledge of their lost clan.

That had made him wonder what had happened to the knowledge the computers had once no doubt contained. Had it drifted into the void of ignorance due to failed equipment or had they lost the ability to access it? Had logins and passwords become cryptic puzzles of legend? Lost through a failure to communicate them to their descendants? Or had the Sharlayans turned their backs on old knowledge? Had they become so regimented in a caste like system that knowledge outside their own strictures had become forbidden? Or had they over time become complacent? Unwilling to give the effort needed to fight through to the answer? Had they become so wearied by the long years and despondent that ennui had shackled them to despair?

He looked down the long table toward the one called the Admiral and sensed those same emotions but pride was present there, resolve, determination. Riven had also sensed something in them as well that was beginning to flicker to life. It was promise of a future, a yearning for what lay beyond, a determination to move forward at long last.

It was a brightness of being reaching to the light. It was hope. And when fortified with hope the past in time could fade, failure could diminish in strength, despair could fall, depression could disperse like mist. Because without hope how could one know joy?

His sandals whispered along the floor to the accompaniment of silver chimes, his white hair in its braids reaching to his waist behind him swayed light to the accompaniment of the tinkle of the charms as he stopped and made a deep bow to the commander of the Keepers.

He rose from the bow with a smile that threatened to light up the room then spoke. "I am Riven Mias, ambassador from the Federation and it is with great pleasure that I present myself to Admiral Skeese, commander of the Sharlayan Keepers of Kal'Shar."

(Reply: Skeese)

Riven extended his hand as he presented the rest of the group. "I present to you my wife Michaella Kirien Mias, Cadet Lia Mirandez who is a linguist and my security retinue who I believe you have already met, Petty Officers Devers and Hammons."

(Reply: Skeese, Devers, Michaella, Mirandez)







"I beg your pardon, have we come at a bad time? I waited the twelve hours the Captain passed to me before coming down. He said you had asked for that but our units of time measurement must be decidedly different. If so I apologize for disturbing you."

Fatigue had made Skeese careless in his choice of words. Did it make him seem weak? He straightened himself up in his seated stretched his back, stifling a yawn.

Shaking his head he said, "No, no, no, it is quite all right. My sleep cycles have been erratic as of late," ~The last three cycles at least. Not that I had a regular cycles sleep since since the incident in engineering. ~

"We can continue this at a time of your choosing and there is much to talk about," Mias said sitting back. "First though I have some good news to impart from Captain Sekal. Our ship does not have unlimited resources but they are preparing as much food as can be spared to be shared among your people."

Skeese could feel some of his fatigue lift and sat forward leaning his arms on the table, "This is good news indeed. But how is that possible? Will it not cause a problem with your own supplies? But if you can help solve the one issue... it might give me a better nights sleep tonight."

He chuckled a little at the irony of his statement. It was one issue of many. The propulsion system was broken, the numbers of the silent death was growing, there was unrest amongst the other castes because of the diminishing food supplies... the list went on. Fixing the food problem seemed like an easy task for these people, but Skeese feared that the unrest that had been stirred would not be so easily dispelled. However that was not these people's problem.

Rivens smile broadened. "Ah but that is only the tip of the iceberg. Kal'Shar is currently within Federation space and one of our outermost planetary systems is not far away. The people of that system are prosperous and are sending aid. Four ships filled with foodstuffs. The first two are expected to arrive within six days if there are no issues."

Skeese stood up and walked behind his chair, showing his back to his guests. The breach of protocol was almost inexcusable but he needed a moment to collect his thoughts and his emotions. When he turned he could not control the smile on his face. "That is incredible. Such cooperation between worlds exists. I suppose the immediate fear is if that cooperation is voluntary or through subjugation, but I must ... trust that is through a more altruistic reason. It is amazing news. Six days. How much...?"

"Each freighter holds approximately twenty five thousand metric tons, or fifty five thousand pounds of grain and vegetables. We need to take a census of the number of people aboard to say for sure but that should be enough to extend the colonists food supply for a short time. The other two should be about three days behind them."

Skeese dropped back into his seat and leaned back. A small wave of relief ran through his body. However he had to ask himself the question of would it be enough. How long would they have to make it last? How much longer did they need to travel. He knew that their captain had already promised to help correct the engineering problems if they could.



"You will have what you need Riven Mias, and our eternal gratitude." He shook his head in wonder. "Six days. We are in habitable space. How far are we from our new home? Captain Sekal said we were off course. How far? Can we get back on course? How long will that take? I apologize, I am certain that these are not questions you have answers to yet. I thank you for what you have already done. But I sense that we are not out of danger yet. Life tends to hold a balance. For every positive there is a negative. What is the cost Riven Mias?"

Riven sat back with a smile. The Sharlayan was cautious with good reason, not every civilization could be trusted. Within the galaxy there were those whose aims were malevolent and the Admiral no doubt was wondering if he was making a deal with the devil to help his people.

"Your technical questions will take time to answer and you will know as soon as we do. I have a general timeline but it's not absolute so pardon me if I withhold it for now. As soon as I have updated information I will pass it along."

(Reply: Skeese)

"As for your other question...", Riven smiled warmly, "... let me tell you something about ourselves." He took a long drink then set the glass down. "The United Federation of Planets was not formed by subjugation or conquest. All of its member worlds and species have a voice in its governance and coexist peacefully. All disputes between member worlds are handled diplomatically or through the government. We help each other in time of need and through the ships and people of Starfleet maintain the peace both internally and from outside forces. The Federation was formed in peace and its aims are peaceful. When we see a friend in need we mobilize the resources needed to help. Our payment..." he lifted both hands slightly outward, "...our payment is in friendship and mutual self interest. Captain Sekal contacted a friend on nearby Bajor who is in a position to help and she has done so with no strings attached. And if there is need she will continue to supply as much as she is able. There are also other member worlds who are farther away. Some of them may also be able to help though the resources will take longer to reach you but if needed they will be called upon as well."

(Reply: Skeese)

Riven chuckled then took another bite of the excellent cake. "If you believe payment is in order then consider it payment for you sharing what little food you have with your visitors along with our gratitude."

(Reply: Skeese)

Riven shook his head. "I understand your concern and would no doubt feel the same in your situation but consider this. Through cooperation in science and technology along with enlightened thinking the only ones who go hungry within the Federation are those that choose to do so or ones hit by sudden calamity and those that are victims of such are helped as quickly as possible. We will not allow any to suffer when we have the means to alleviate it. Lifespans have been lengthened by medical science and every need is met. In turn individuals give back to society their best efforts to grow and strengthen the whole. We aren't perfect yet but as a whole we strive toward it."

(Reply: Skeese)



"Your technical questions will take time to answer and you will know as soon as we do. I have a general timeline but it's not absolute so pardon me if I withhold it for now. As soon as I have updated information I will pass it along."

Skeese nodded at Mais understanding why he needed to withhold any information with regards to the repairs to Kal'Shar.

"Any information you can get to me would be greatly appreciated," Skeese said, thinking he would need all pertinent information before his meeting with the Gatherers and the Colonists.

"As for your other question...", Riven smiled warmly, "... let me tell you something about ourselves."

The smile was very disarming, Skeese noted. Riven Mias oozed with a likability that he had never seen before. He listened as Mias explained about the Federation and was amazed that such an organization existed. Then he thought of the nightmare that administering such an organization would be. Having to compromise with the casts of Kal'Shar was hard enough, but so many different worlds with so many cultural needs all willing to put themselves out to help others on the chance that they may need help themselves. An astounding accomplishment.

"When we see a friend in need we mobilize the resources needed to help. Our payment..." he lifted both hands slightly outward, "...our payment is in friendship and mutual self interest."

Skeese wondered how they managed to keep their peaceful ambitions. Whole cultures that had, seemingly, unlimited resources. How do they manage to not have problems with other cultures that do not. Support is a call away but it still takes time to arrive. Mais explained that other worlds, further away, were willing to help as well.

"Let's hope that we don't need that," Skeese said, "I would hate to wear out our welcome before we even go to where we are going."

Riven chuckled then took another bite of the excellent cake. "If you believe payment is in order then consider it payment for you sharing what little food you have with your visitors along with our gratitude."

Skeese smile, "In our culture the kindness we show as hosts come back to us from the kindness we are given. Apparently that is coming to fruition now. However there is a Sharlayan saying that says all things have a cost. You just don't always see it."

Riven shook his head. "I understand your concern and would no doubt feel the same in your situation but consider this. Through cooperation in science and technology along with enlightened thinking the only ones who go hungry within the Federation are those that choose to do so or ones hit by sudden calamity and those that are victims of such are helped as quickly as possible. We will not allow any to suffer when we have the means to alleviate it. Lifespans have been lengthened by medical science and every need is met. In turn individuals give back to society their best efforts to grow and strengthen the whole. We aren't perfect yet but as a whole we strive toward it."

Skeese chuckled himself, thinking about “enlightened thinking” and how he could use some of that later on with his meeting with the Gathers and the Colonists.

"Not all the news I bring is good unfortunately," Mais admitted after a long sigh.

And here was the other side of fortune that Skeese had been talking about. His heart sunk as Mias pulled out a device and showed the holographic image of the planet that they had supposed to have been traveling to. It was definitely not the paradise that they had been envisioning traveling to.

"Several years ago a survey ship was sent out to find the end point of your journey. They found this planet."

A rock grew in the pit of Skeese's stomach as the image showed a desolate world, surrounded by poisonous gases and volcanic activity. He sat back wanting to cry. Of all the bad news he had prepared himself to take, this was not even on the list. What if they got there and the destination was a death trap.

"What happened?" was all he could get out.

"An exhaustive survey of the planet was made and it has been concluded that within the last several hundred years a large asteroid struck your destination rendering it uninhabitable," Mias explained. "It is tectonically unstable and the atmosphere is poisonous."

Skeese ran both of his hands through his hair and then across his mouth. He took a breath before speaking, but had to voice his concern. "Andy had come to warn us that our new home was uninhabitable. I see."

Riven shut off the device and produced another and set it beside the first. When activated it showed a far different scene, a world of green, blue and tan with an atmosphere of wispy clouds.

"Seeing that the world you were journeying to was uninhabitable as were the nearby systems the United Federation of Planets set out to find another world you could colonize and found this. "Alpha Sorianis five. It's well within its stars habitable zone with plentiful water and large land masses. It is also what was once called a super earth. Larger by several times than the usual habitable planet it has already been sparsely settled by the Eridani."

"Eridani?" Skeese working the word across his lips. "So this world is already inhabited? And would they be willing to allow our settlement?"

"My government has been in talks with the Eridani about you sharing the world with them. They are amenable but would like to know about you, your culture, how you will adapt to your new home, if you can be trusted and can live with them in peace. This is why we have come. To speak with you and your people and learn about you." He picked up the deactivated disk but left the active one on the table. "Consider this a gift to you from the Federation."





























From medical, Gregory headed to deck 6 to catch up with the CSO Lieutenant Alyl. His team was going to be very useful in this effort, especially trying to figure out more about the radiation, and if they got a look inside the habitat in more detail, the science teams could really help get a leg up before the work on the cultural survey would be done, especially the nutritional needs of both the Sharlayans and their foodstuffs.

Gregory knocked on the CSO's door. When it opened, he entered.

"Morning Lieutenant," he started, "Today is the day we begin this rescue operation and I wanted to check in with you and share my ideas as to how Science can help."

(Reply Alyl)

"Well, with the engineering teams tied up on the work to repair the ship, I think it'll be important that we get a better understanding of the effects of the radiation. I'm concerned it may have a corrosive effect on the systems. I have asked Ensign Mendoza to interface with you to look at analyzing the power structure of the Sharlayan ship to make sure we have the correct power interface."

(Reply Alyl)

"I know, I know," he replied, "But how did the accident happen in the first place. What else was impacted by exposure to the radiation. Are we setting them up for failure only 5 years from a possible target," Gregory said.

"It also had an unknown effect on the tricorders, and I don't want to lose another crewman because of something unknown impacting our equipment. I'm trusting the doctor is being extra cautious with setting exposure limits and pre inoculating the teams, but the more we know."

(Reply Alyl)

"Yea, we have been synthesizing emergency rations as quickly as we can. I have to check in that next. Its going to be a tough balance to make sure we don't over deplete our stores but provide the Sharlayan's with enough while their biosphere gets stabilized. Not that we saw it. Once we find it, and get access, it would be great if you could send a team to survey their flora and fauna."

(Reply Alyl)

"Yea, I know, I'm stating the obvious. It is just a lot of moving parts and I want to make sure I have not missed any."

(Reply Alyl)

"Of course, anything you find send to me. We probably should plan for regular briefings while we solve these problems."

(Reply Alyl)



enough time to look over the overnight reports as he enjoyed his tea before leaping back into action. That is, until he heard a knock at the door.

"It's open," he said without even looking up.

"Morning Lieutenant," came Gregory's voice. "Today is the day we begin this rescue operation and I wanted to check in with you and share my ideas as to how Science can help."

"Ah, good timing. I was just looking over the preparation reports from the night shift before we ramp up to get ready for the mission. What did you have in mind?"

"Well, with the engineering teams tied up on the work to repair the ship, I think it'll be important that we get a better understanding of the effects of the radiation. I'm concerned it may have a corrosive effect on the systems. I have asked Ensign Mendoza to interface with you to look at analyzing the power structure of the Sharlayan ship to make sure we have the correct power interface."

Jaton put the cup down, trying not to let his eyes go wide. ~Does he know?~ He thought to himself, trying not to let the look of dread spread over his face. He hadn't seen or heard from Rodrigo since their rendezvous on Mars.

"Ensign Mendoza," he said, maybe a little slower and more solemn than he probably should've. But he hoped he could brush it off. "Understood. But I think we should be all set. I've had science poring over what scans we have ever since I was released from Sickbay. I'm sure we'll be fine."

"I know, I know," he replied, "But how did the accident happen in the first place. What else was impacted by exposure to the radiation. Are we setting them up for failure only 5 years from a possible target," Gregory said.

"Understood," Jaton said. "That makes sense. And I can assure you we'll do everything we can not to let them fail."

"It also had an unknown effect on the tricorders, and I don't want to lose another crewman because of something unknown impacting our equipment. I'm trusting the doctor is being extra cautious with setting exposure limits and pre inoculating the teams, but the more we know."

The mention of Hendricks' death brought back the darkness of last night back to Jaton in spates.

"Indeed. I may not have been in command of the team, but I don't want to go through that turmoil again any time soon." He shook it off, and turned back to the task at hand. "In any case, this isn't about us. It's about what we can do for the Sharlayans. We've been working on methods to screen out and clear up the radiation, but that's not going to solve their immediate problem. We might need to bring emergency supplies for them."

"Yea, we have been synthesizing emergency rations as quickly as we can. I have to check in that next. Its going to be a tough balance to make sure we don't over deplete our stores but provide the Sharlayan's with enough while their biosphere gets stabilized. Not that we saw it. Once we find it, and get access, it would be great if you could send a team to survey their flora and fauna."





and despite all of the questions by the authorities their investigation was going nowhere. That should have pleased him but he knew where it had started. That damned Vulcan had done everything in his power to show him in a bad light since the aborted attempt to arrest him. Horavei had pleaded, nearly groveled before the captain of the Illuminar to throw off suspicion but at no point had the Vulcan backed off.

Even when apologizing through the communication the Vulcans words had been so deftly chosen that the apology itself had seemed to be a test, he had been watching, measuring and with another of his telepaths to watch him. Krevi knew nothing, suspected nothing and could prove nothing. Neither could Sekal but that hadn't prevented him from trying. The investigation had been mounted at his insistence.

Telesi had outmaneuvered every attempt to bring him down which the opposition was using to usurp his place. There was still more shoring up of his position to be done. He needed time to think and plan. Who was intent on interrupting him?

He stood to his feet. "Who the hell is in here? I said no visitors!"

The man who walked through the door was unexpected. Telesi almost laughed as he sat down. "Prylar Tekan what are you doing here? I told my guards no visitors." He remembered him clearly from the commotion in the plaza. His face had been in nearly every newscast broadcast around the planet

"Your guards are asleep Telesi."

"What?" He jumped up in a froth. "What do you mean asleep?"

"They tried to stop me from seeing you. They are now sleeping."

Telesi opened his mouth but shut it again as he looked into the Prylars eyes. They showed sadness, pain and resolve. He opened his mouth again. "What do you mean? How did you?"

"I did nothing. The Prophets opened the way."

Telesi bit back the retort, something was wrong here. He opened the drawer and took out a phaser. "I don't know how you got in here but you are leaving now." His eyes met Herlas and the phaser dropped from nerveless fingers. The Prylars eyes had changed. They seemed to look inside him, through him. A bolt of fear shot down his spine as he looked into those eyes.

"The time has come for your judgment."

"What judgment?" He choked out. "I've done nothing, nothing!" Fear was squeezing his heart like strong fingers.

"You can hide nothing from the Prophets Vedek Horavei. All your sins are laid bare before them. They have seen your mind, your heart and your pagh. You have manipulated and plotted, caused pain and death. You have chosen your path and your end."

From behind the Prylar three ghostly figures stepped outlined in a glow of azure.



Gregory looked at the data. The asteroid had a habitable living space of just under 100 square kilometers. About half of it was given over to raising food and such, with another 20 kilometers of aquatic space – lakes, rivers and such. The remaining space was left over to living space, with what appeared to be little towns scattered around. In almost the center of the space was what appeared to be a gathering grounds.

“I’ve been running the numbers Sir, and based on these dimensions and the time they have been traveling, assuming that everything else was optimal, they should be able to support a population of about 20,000. However, the numbers are much less, from what we have been told, and we know that at least for the last few years there has been issues with their power, which suggests the lighting to power the plants was not efficient. Good thing we got here when we did, otherwise, in about 18 months, the continued famine would have left them with less than 1000 souls.”

The door chimed, “Enter,” Gregory called.

(Reply Lee)

“Ah, Chief Lee. Grab a refreshment and sit down. We have a lot to do and not enough people to do it with.”

While the chief was getting settled, Gregory continued, “Our best information, such as it is, is that there are about 10,000 colonists in the habitable space, and probably another 500 or so ‘Keepers’, the ones responsible for the ship operations.”

“Ensign Chifukukku was reviewing the data with me, and has constructed a map,” Gregory displayed the map on the screen. “We’re talking about 100 square kilometers in total. These yellow dots mark what appear to be settlements, and they have this central square as well.”

“What we need to do is figure out a way to distribute the supplies we have available to the people, in an orderly manner, and in so doing, have things setup for the next wave of relieve that will be coming soon. Last thing we want to do is create a black market for food and supplies.”

“It may be good to have some sort of medical station as well in case we need to treat people. Who knows what we will find.” He paused, “and of course, we can’t transport into the asteroid, there is too much interference for us to get in there directly, so we’ll need to figure out a way to do this all through these access spaces,” Gregory pointed to 8 green dots that were scattered, at all glance, randomly.

(Reply Lee)

“You will have the full support of operations and anyone I can draft into helping you. This is all hands-on deck, and other than the engineering teams working on the reactor, getting this food distributed is our first priority. Ensign Chifukukku here will be your direct liaison to request what you need. ”

(Reply Lee)

“And we have no idea what we will actually find down there, so we are working blind.”















"That's a good start, Mr. Sklar," Jatón nodded, looking over the crewman's work. "Keep it up, and I'll be back to help out after checking in on Beta Team."

"Thank you sir," the crewman said in reply.

Jatón smiled and nodded before heading off towards the other side of the lab. It was then he saw Gregory back again, waiting for him outside his office.

"Lieutenant Gregory to Lieutenant Alyl," his commbadge chirped, followed almost immediately by the sound of the man's real voice. He then started to turn around and their eyes met. Jatón walked over to him, smiling.

Gregory chuckled, "Next time I'll call first," he said.

"Just can't stay away, can you, lieutenant?" Jatón teased. "What can I do for you?"

"I have an idea to run by you, that could be potentially very beneficial for the Sharlayan."

"Once we get the power restored, the Sharlayan are still going to have to address the issue of getting their food growing again. I don't know what trick is up the Captain's sleeve yet, but feeding ten thousand people for months at a time is a huge task, especially out in the middle of nowhere. Heavy haul supply ships don't have transwarp capabilities, so it'll take them time to get here," Gregory said. "I was wondering if some of the rapid cycling plants that the Federation has developed, like the Brassica rapa variants or Quadrotriticale, which have a fast seed to harvest timeline might be something to help get them back on the road to sustainability. "

Jatón nodded. "That's a good idea. We would have to take some time to teach the Sharlayans how to cultivate these crops. Quadrotriticale especially can be tricky because of its penchant to turn invasive. We can't just leave them with some crops that will just overrun their current agricultural endeavours and leave them with a monoculture that's even more vulnerable."

"I agree. There are a lot of obstacles in the way and I still need to get the Captains permission to see if the Federation would approve of such a transfer of technology. I'm not sure if they would feel providing new seeds and plants would violate General Order 1. It's not like we're giving them warp drives or phasers. However, I don't want to approach the Captain if the seeds won't grow or it won't provide the nutrients the Sharlayan's need."

"Absolutely. I doubt the Prime Directive would really apply here since we're actively engaged in aid operations with a spacefaring race. And it's not like quadrotriticale is some great Federation state secret," Jatón chuckled. "I'll get my team on it immediately and see what we can come up with."

"This would be huge. I have to run to check on the pilots and engineers. Let me know what you find."

"Absolutely, Dieter," Jatón said. It seemed a bit... intimate to use his first name, and for a moment Jatón seemed a little taken aback that it had slipped out. But he was taking a shine to the man, so maybe it would be alright?













with all the necessary beds and equipment. Chief of Security Keung Lee inspected the site feeling satisfied that at least the frame work was already finally done. He arranged that the patrol of the food distribution centre should be organised in three shifts. For each shift, there should be ten Security officers armed with hand phasers and batons who will patrol the site. There were volunteers who would be involved in the actual distribution of food but it was clear if there were huge numbers, they would need help from somewhere. Hopefully the relief ships should arrive with more help. There was still the logistical challenge of getting to the other settlements and issue food supplies/medical aid. The last thing that Keung wanted was ending up with large numbers of colonists overwhelming the main distribution centre. Keung would await the 'go ahead' from the Captain and the Keepers authorities to open the centre.

Keung entered the modules that have designated as admin offices and reception unit. Using the computer, he entered the following instructions for display on the monitors throughout the site.

"Food distribution centre

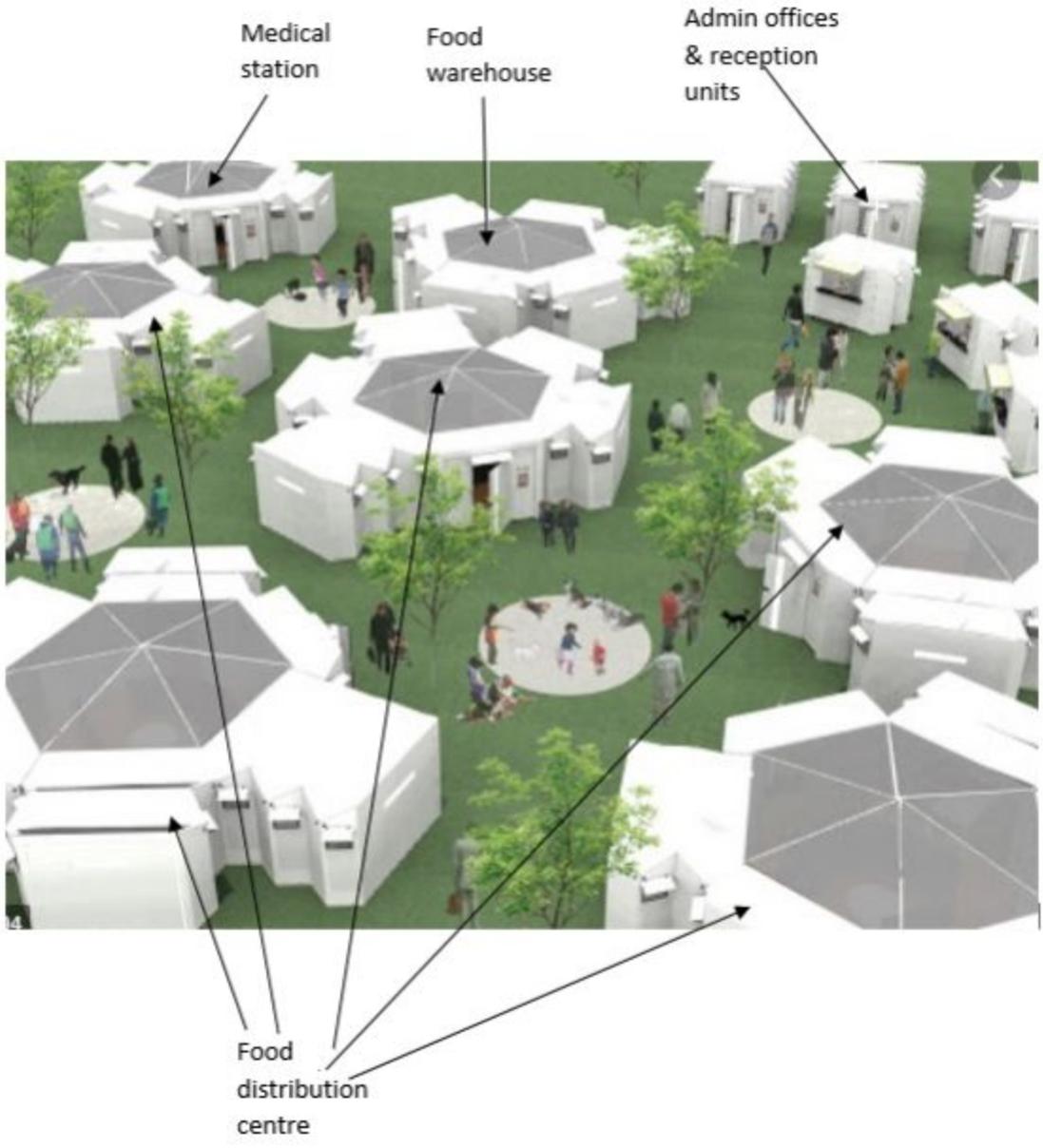
The layout of a distribution site should enable quick and efficient distribution of food. It should ensure that colonists go through the distribution in a minimum of time. Of importance, the ones receiving food are separated from as much as possible from onlookers. Last, the food should be separated from the colonists and "on-lookers".

Four General Rules for Distribution

- Do not allow crowding around the distribution point.
- Ensure an entrance and exit point in distribution area.
- Do not allow passing through the distribution point more than once.
- Separate clients from the commodities and the distributor
- Ensure that beneficiaries who already received their commodities leave without passing in front of those who have not yet received theirs.
- Where possible, store the commodities out of sight of the clients

In the distribution centres

- there should be a barrier between the client and the distribution assistant.
- Different commodities should be distributed from different bins.
- Allow for sufficient space between the different commodities to enable a constant flow of people through the centre.
- If one commodity takes longer to distribute than another, two bins can be used for that commodity.
- Ensure that all entrances and exits to the centre are easily secured"





(reply any whoever is on site)

(posted by John)

-----END TRANSMISSION-----