

(USS Illuminar -- Sickbay Iso room-- Deck 5 – Sickbay - CMO, 3/0 Lieutenant Quinna Solice and Dr. Riven Mias- 1330)

Riven sighed as the last of the crew left sickbay leaving him alone with the medical staff which reminded him he had been remiss in his duties. He had been acting as an Ambassador for a number of years now and hadn't been active in the fleet for decades so the fact he had forgotten to check in with the chief medical officer was now a source of embarrassment. Since it was no longer needed he withdrew his empathic sending and placed it firmly back into the center of his being. Keeping his nature from being broadcast continually required that, it wasn't as though he was sending it out, merely lowering the barriers that kept it in.

His searching eyes found who he was looking for walking out of the general population and he began following her. "Excuse me Doctor Solice but it appears I am late in reporting in, I hope you will forgive the oversight."

Quinna had been picking up medical equipment as started to collect the stray items. She turned to face Mias, "Ahh, Dr. Mias. Please don't worry about it. I am grateful you came in. Things were getting a bit crazy around here. Welcome back. It has been a while."

"Indeed it has been several months hasn't it." He mused. "I was being careful at that time trying not to step on the toes of counseling but my mind healing abilities were called on in a professional capacity."

"I actually was not aware that you were coming onboard." Quinna moved to grab more equipment. "I don't suppose you would be willing to give me a hand. I hate to have these things sitting out." Quinna was a little OCD when it came to sickbay. She preferred to take care of the equipment herself.

"Absolutely." He began by picking up a medical tricorder followed by several padds. "It was a spur of the moment thing I believe as your mission was drawing to a close. As it turns out there were some complications arising from it and since you lost your counselor I was asked to come aboard in that capacity while plying my 'trade' I suppose you would call it. My calling actually." He had accumulated a stack of padds in one arm and was holding the tricorder in his right hand. "I assume you will want to know something about my experience in the counseling arena."

Quinna had pulled open the cabinet and started to sort and load the tricorders and PADDs back, "Well, actually I was wondering that." Quinna turned her head and smiled, "you were not reading my mind, were you?"

"Absolutely not." He shook his head and gave her a warm smile in return then put away the items he was carrying. "I just know how things work on starships, protocols and all." He stood to his feet slowly, the left knee balked a bit about getting up. "I was a Counselor aboard several ships from 2408 to 2416. The Nimitz, Mystique, Hades and Spectre. I rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander while on the Hades and have retained it."

Quinna smiled, "No need to tell me more. I appreciate verbal resume." Quinna paused for a moment, "So tell me something that I would not find in your Service record." Quinna had shut the full cabinet.

She was satisfied that things were clean. She gestured they move along to the medical station to have a seat. "I want to know how I can trust you in case I ever need to talk."

"Ah!" The Betazoid chuckled at that one. "Well first of all I can assure you that I am held to the same standards of confidentiality as a mind healer as any member of the medical profession and in many instances more. An assistant is often required to verify both impartiality and that no meddling is done with the patient beyond the treatment. As for more personal details I can tell you that I have maintained contact and friendship with several members of the Admiralty and..." He gave her a grin. "... and the high priestess in the temple of the goddess on Betazed does not look with fondness upon me traipsing about the galaxy on starships. She prefers me in the temple seeing to my duties there. I had many run-ins with the council when I was in the fleet because of being unavailable so often and almost lost my position."

His face took on a more somber look. "However there is a good reason beyond wanderlust for my repeated absences. I detest not being available when someone is in need of my services and will not hesitate to go off planet to treat them. When the Spectre took me on I had just treated a little girl on Marmuk III and they needed a counselor." His eyes grew distant. "Now that was a sad ship, her CO was distrustful and antagonistic. And her crew had mostly given up. One of the few not in that category was Doctor Trommashere. I had last seen her aboard the Hades."

His eyes snapped back to her face. "The Spectre is also where I met my lovely and delightful wife Michaella and she completes me. Is there anything else you'd like to know? I'm full of stories." His smile had returned full force.

"I bet you do." Quinna replied with a smile. "I for one am happy to have you back. We have been lacking an adequate counseling team for a while. Alayna is great but she is only one person. She cannot be expected to do it all. And I am not sure if I can handle the additional duties." Quinna admitted. She, lately, has become more aware of her capabilities and limitations.

"Oh I think Alaya might surprise you but traditional counseling is not her strong suit I'm afraid. I'll be happy to handle that end of the department." A thought occurred to him. "And if you need a hand from time to time I'm certain Michaella might be cajoled to step in, she's an experienced medical doctor as well."

"I do try to run a more informal sickbay. I like to work together. Though sometimes I do pull rank and tell people 'because I said so'. What are you thinking?" Quinna asked.

He gave a deep throated laugh before speaking. "You have no idea of the spectrum of commands I've been exposed to. I've already set up some appointments, I'll take a counseling suite and set it up to my specifications. There may also be some mind healing on the side. In the case of mind healing I have and will pull Alaya into it as assistant and observer. And I'll have daily reports ready for your perusal. They won't be detailed dossiers unless requested because of doctor/patient confidentiality but at least you will know who I have seen along with some general observations."

Quinna thought about how formal he was ready to conduct things, but this will be his domain. Quinna herself was more of an unorthodox counselor/Doctor. She thought that people would be receptive to

Michael's gift. He had new and inventive ways to inflict pain on others. How else could he have tamed the Lanai.

But Weston didn't have time for their usual games. He had business to conduct and lives to destroy, and he needed an early start this morning. He also knew that delaying her pleasure this morning would only heighten her anticipation for their next session.

He grabbed the hair on the back of her head and held her face into the pillow.

"I'm sorry my darling Quinna but I have things to take care of this morning," he said releasing her head. "We can play more later."

Quinna rolled her eyes. Michael seemed to have forgotten his place. Quinna turned him, and straddled Michael at the waist. "You seem to forget, my love, who is really in charge here." Quinna leaned over and roughly kisses Michael. "Never, forget."

Quinna got up and headed to the shower. "Who do you have to deal with today?" Quinna turned unashamed of her exposed body, "Is it her again?"

Michael laughed, taking in the view of her body, almost changing his mind. "Her? I have no idea who you are talking about. You know that I have eyes for not her than you, love."

He forced his way into the shower with Quinna, and began to lather them both up.

"Today promises to be a special day," he said playfully. "Perhaps one worthy of notice of the empire."

"And just what are you planning, My Love?" Quinna winced as he rubbed her back. It hurt when he touched, but she dared not show him any weakness with pain.

"Ahhhh," he crowed, "it's a surprise. But it will be the culminating event of my latest trials."

His fingers traced the risen lines on her shoulders and back in the water, knowing that minutes after she arrives at sickbay they will all but disappear through the magic of the dermal regenerator. Her skin will once again be the perfect, alabaster surface that it was before.

"There will be no spoilers on this one, dear heart," he said, knowing that he could not truly trust anyone. No even Quinna. Such was the consequence for accepting a post with the Imperial Intelligence branch.

Once the soap had rinsed away Weston turned Quinna around and gave her a long, passionate kiss, allowing his hands to roam where they wanted. Then, as he felt her begin to melt, he stopped and stepped out of the shower. "To be continued," was all he said.

He stepped into the chamber and dressed in his uniform, adorned with a nasty looking knife, and a small hand weapon. It also had a lesser known item, a personal defensive field, that would absorb or deflect most energy type weapons.

Before he left his quarters he turned and smiled at Quinna with a wink. The smile might have sent shivers down the spine of most women.

(ISS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Holodeck 2 - Imperial Intelligence Operative Michael Weston- 0700)

Michael stepped into the holodeck, feeling good about his day so far. This would be the final tests of all the work he's done with the subject. Waiting for him was Bohb, the Magillan engineer standing in the middle of the room. Weston walked up to him and looked carefully at his neck. There was still a trace of where the restraining collar had been for the last six months, but the hair was finally starting to grow back.

"Well good morning Mr. Bohb," Weston said jovially, "how are we doing today?"

The Magillan did not reply. He just looked down with a blank expression. Michael made a face and humphed. He reached up and touched the scar behind the simian's ear. It had healed perfectly. The implant was a far superior tool than the training collar had been. The Magillan had proved too strong, and had too strong of a will for it to have been a meaningful way of getting the engineer's cooperation. The implant, however, was able to circumnavigate his natural will, and made him a great deal more open to suggestion. And he had needed his cooperation for what they had been doing.

"Well, I guess I can't be too upset," Weston said to himself. "I got you to do what I want, but apparently you are no longer the conversationalist that you used to be."

Weston moved away from Bohb and over to the control panel for the holodeck. He tapped on the comm channel and spoke.

"Okay Luma," he said, "let's have a look at you."

Weston frowned at the lack of response. He pulled out a small box that fit in the palm of his hand, and changed the settings slightly. Then he pressed the red button.

There was a squeal that ran through the walls of the ship until Weston removed his thumb from the button.

"Don't make me ask you again Luma," he said in a stern, fatherly manner.

Luma cried in pain as she shimmered in front of him. She was in her crystalline form. "What do you wish, that Weston?" Her tone was subservient but also full of hate. She was frightened. Luma did not like SFI. "There was no need to cause Luma pain. Luma was observing as she was bid to do." Luma did not say who or what she had been observing. Luma had learned that giving too much information was not a good way to survive. And surviving was all that the Lenai could do.

"Yes," Weston replied, satisfied by her presence, if not by the form. He knew she maintained that form as a sign of defiance. But that will change. He was sure that his methods would... convince her to be more friendly. "However, I also know that Luma requires some reminding who is in dominance. And your appearance was a bit more delayed than necessary. I know you can continue your observations and report to me at the same time."

He paused for a moment thumbing the trigger of the device that disrupted the harmonic balance between the Lenai and the universe. "Now tell me, is Sekal aware of our plan? Does he know that you are reporting to me?"

Luma stayed quiet for a moment, =^=That Sekal is unaware of that Weston's plans. That Sekal has his gaze on Alaya's Hammons.=^= Obviously there was more that Luma was not saying. Luma kept that crystalline gaze on Weston. Luma hated that box and the resulting pain that threw her into complete sensory disruption until the device stopped harming her.

That was just fine for Michael for right now. Although Alaya was a Betazoid she did not have all of the Betazoid instincts to wantonly read the minds of everyone around her. The fact that she was keeping Sekal's attention was gratifying. But what was it Luma wasn't telling him.

"There's more to this, Luma, than you're telling me," Michael said with a frown.

Luma liked Sekal but she was more afraid of Weston. =^= Luma is unsure of what that Weston desires. Alaya and her Hammons are going to kill the klingon that protects that Sekal.=^=

Weston shook his head and took a step closer to Luma, "You know exactly what this Weston desires." His voice took on a dangerous tone. "First of all I have told you what I desire. Secondly you know what almost everyone desires. I'm good at hiding my thoughts and intentions from most telepaths, but from you. And not from that son of a bitch Riven Mias. That's why I needed Bohb here to kill him. You know what everyone is thinking but you have some misguided sense of morality keeping you from doing it."

His eyes narrowed and his thumb rubbed the red button repeatedly. "What is their game? I will put you back in that damned crystal and leave you there."

Luma whimpered in fear, =^= Luma does that Weston no good in the crystal.=^= Someone had already locked Luma out of the power connections so that she was as skillfully trapped. She was helpless against Weston, there were things she could never allow him to find out. =^= Luma thinks that Alaya and her Hammons will strike in the next day or two.=^= Luma had of course already warned Sekal, since she had a misguided loyalty to the vulcan.

Weston turned his back on Luma and stroked his chin, thinking. Luma has been getting better at omitting details. The next thing you know she may even try lying.

"And, of course, Sekal is aware? What am I saying. You felt morally obligated." He turned back around. "What does Sekal have planned for the pair?" The question was rhetorical but he wondered if Luma would answer it. His response would, no doubt, be logical and make a clear statement to the rest of the crew. Weston was happy that he had no designs on a ship's captaincy. Sekal never would see him as a direct threat.

However, he was always concerned about the one person who was the most direct threat, Sienna Williams-Verin. "Where does Commander Verin stand with the captain?"

“Yes, and thanks,” Corday said, managing his composure. “And the convoy flights are part of the punishment for being on the R&D team for the last year. I helped develop the neural interface with the fighters so I’ve been on the demo tour. This is my last stop. In fact I should be here for a while, even after the instructional period for the Mark 3 interface.”

“Well, well, well,” Raid said. “This might be fortuitous indeed. You have no idea how perfect your timing is coming to the Illuminar.”

“So tell me more about this interface? The earlier ones were kludgy and caused more issues than solutions.”

Corday’s eyes lit up with excitement, “This is so great.” He pulled out his PADD and opened the suit specs to display the whole set up. “So the original neural interface from the turn of the century wasn’t really a “neural” interface. The helmets read minute input from the pilot’s facial muscles and eye movements. It was fantastic but yeah, a little unreliable. Mark 2 required a neural patch installed on the pilot on the pilot’s neck. Much more reliable, but you can imagine how the pilots felt about it. Now Mark 3, that’s a different game. The interface is designed into the flight suit.”

He showed the image of the suit, which highlighted areas that were interfaced with the ship. “The controls can be manipulated virtually if necessary. But the helmet... that’s where the true interface is.”

He pulled up an interior image of the helmet. A series of disks lit up around the cap of the helmet. “These sensor disk electrodes attach themselves to the pilot’s head in key neural activity areas. It literally reads your mind and can perform any maneuver you think of. The ship can move, quite literally, with the speed of thought.”

He looked at the faces of the two pilots, “Well it does take a bit of getting used to. The HUD display can be a bit intense, but a blind man can practically fly in combat with this interface. Of course we haven’t tested that theory yet. It relays information directly to your visual cortex.”

Vic and Bebe listened as Arthur explained the new interface. He was clearly excited about the technology and interface. If it worked as well as he described it, it would give the quick witted pilot an edge.

“Does the system store routines?” Vic asked, “You know if a pilot has a favorite attack or evasion pattern we typically do them by muscle memory. How does that work with a neural interface?”

Arthur nodded, “We considered that, but then our research showed that we store memories much more effectively than a computer stores data. It turned out that reaction time slowed down when a pilot thought about evasive maneuver alpha 7, then the computer had to access that information to perform the task. Meanwhile, as I think evasive maneuver alpha 7, my mind is already thinking about what it wants and the ship is already responding.”

“And these sensor disks, how reliable are they? I mean, what is their failure rate?” Vic said, “And how much redundancy is built into them. I’d hate to see pilots exclusively rely on the neural interface and

“That’s not going to work,” he said, shaking his head. “The smell of the coffee. It won’t wake her up. She needs more... stimulation than that.”

He stepped around the Orion and leaned over to give Quinna a kiss on the lips.

Quinna's eyes fluttered as she was trying to fight in her sleep. As she dreamed, she went all rambo on the air in front of her. She was actually having hand to hand combat with a worthy opponent in her sleep. “Stay away.” Quinna said in her sleep. “That’s my son.”

Michael backed up just in time to miss her assault of the air between them. Michael looked at Hezuela and shrugged.

“First time that’s ever happened,” he said confused. “And this is the first mention of a son.”

Mason saw the door opened to Quinna’s office. He strolled over to see his wife and Michael standing there with a look of confusion. He crossed over and gave Hezuela a kiss. “G.

ood Morning, Sweetie.”

(Reply Hezuela)

“Everything ok??” Mason turned to see Quinna sleep. Quinna lunged. “Oh.” Mason went to the replicator and made popcorn. “Has she talked yet?”

Michael looked at the ME, even more lost, “Only something about her son.”

Mason passed out the popcorn and took a seat across the couch from Quinna. “Oh good, the show is just beginning.” Mason pulled Hezuela onto his lap. He then suggested that Michael sit in the best seat.

Still uncertain, Michael sat down, looking at Mason, then at Quinna, and back at Mason.

“Okay, Doc,” he questioned, “what am I missing.”

“On many occasions, I would spend the night with Quinna’s brother when one night we heard something coming from her room. She had been up for a few days studying for school exams. She fell asleep and she started acting out. Dude, it was great. Oh course we were much younger. Well, I said it could be funny if she was a duck. She started Quacking” Mason had done this a few times in his life. He thought she had gotten past this part.

“No way,” Michael replied, “she has not done this for me. Of course I’ve only known her a few weeks.”

(Reply Hezuela)

He reached over and grabbed a handful of popcorn feeling a little guilty, but his fascination with what he was seeing took over.

Quinna flared what looked like to be a slap. "Don't kiss me. You are not allowed anymore."

"Oh, yeah, now is the fun part. Her bother and I got an hour or so of entertainments," Mason said. He looked over at Michael, "Shall we change the channel?" He then shoved a handful of popcorn in his mouth.

(Reply Hezuela)

"Change the channel?" Michael asked. "What do you mean? You can alter her inner narrative?"

Mason turned, "Watch this," He moved closer to Quinna's ear. "The 100 is up next." The he stepped back in his seat.

Quinna reached up as she was tucking her hair in a swim cap. She had stood up as if she was stepping up to the platform getting ready to dive. She was in position in front of the couch. She stretched, "Good Luck, Emily." Quinna said. She stretched her back one more time and the cracking of the joints were audible. She stood over the couch ready to make the dive into the water.

As entertained as he was Michael was a little concerned about her diving "into the pool."

"Dude, Try it." Mason encouraged Michael.

Partially to have her not injure herself, partiality for entertainment, and partially seeing an opportunity, he stepped over to Quinna and said softly, "Who is that guy coming towards you?"

Quinna turned on her toes, she wondered who the guy was that was coming. Quinna's arms flared as she fell back on the couch. Her left arm reached up and touched Michael. She was holding her breath as if she was under water. After 30 seconds, She took a deep breath as she gasped for air. It seemed that she just came out of the water. She clung to the side of the pool in her dream, but in reality she clung to Michael. She stood still holding onto Michael. "Michael?" She asked but was she awake or asleep at this point?

Michael reached out instinctively and caressed her cheek. "I'm here," he said. "You're okay."

(Reply Hezuela)

Mason jumped up, "Dude you are going to wake her up." Mason was not done with the show.

Michael looked up and shrugged, "That may be, but I'm not going to mentally torture her if I can help it. The show is... interesting, but how I feel about Quinna is not part of it. It feels... kind of intrusive. I have to wonder if this is the dilemma telepaths go through. I guess it's a little thing called respect."

"I guess there is a difference between a teen and an adult." Mason turned to leave. "She won't sleep, I would expect this for the next couple of nights". Mason then leaned in to Quinna. "Just kiss the man." And exited the room.

Temas sat up, his eyes shining, "Jucier details? Oh yes please. Definitely more jucier details."

"The next time I go you should come," Quinna offered. "And that is an open invite."

Temas was as excited as he had ever been. He'd actually been invited somewhere by another person other than Riven and Michaela. He was having a bit of trouble containing his feelings, checking to make sure he wasn't projecting himself outwards.

"I would love to come," he said. "Luma has shared some wonderful memories of the Prancing Pony. She especially enjoys the ...," he closed his eyes to find the right word, "karaoke nights. Have you ever shared your talent?"

Before Quinna could answer they were joined by an intriguing-looking woman. She clearly had some Klingon heritage, and he could sense her Betazoid abilities. It was interesting that they seemed stronger than the typical Betazoid hybrids he'd met. Searching Luma's memory he pulled out the name Ariel Trei. She clearly knew about him as her first question was about how he and Luma were adjusting.

"Good Morning Ms. Trei," he said. "We are adjusting very well. I must say that it is intriguing to have her in my mind all of the time. Please join us,"

(reply Trei)

Once Ariel was seated Quinna began to ask her about her new position. Temas was vaguely aware of what everyone's position was but he really was sure what it was that Trei did. The woman replied that seemed be able to stay active in her role as a Security Analyst. Then she followed it up with an interesting statement.

"You know I am preparing for the Rite of Ascension. I would like you to be there when I do it."

Temas was curious. He had read about the rite, and knew that it was a deeply personal ritual, but he did not have any data on Klingon hybrids performing such a ritual, or the reasoning behind the ritual to begin with.

"May I ask a question?" he interjected. "Why are you performing the ritual? If you excuse me for saying, you are clearly not a pure Klingon bloodline. Have you taken into account how your body will react to the strain, and how that will affect your telepathic abilities? I don't mean to speak out of turn, as clearly your invitation was for Dr. Solice. But I am curious."

Before Trei could respond a rather serious-looking man with Lt. Commander bars walked over to the table. Temas pulled out the name of Deiter Gregory. Then he began to sense that there was a serious amount of playfulness behind that serious-looking facade.

"Dr. Solice," he said, "I'm surprised you are not on the bridge, things are a bit exciting at the moment as we're following a ship into the Altair system, and there has been some coded transmissions between the ship, the Valiant, and Defense Station 7."

