

(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Main Shuttlebay - Mysterious shuttle - EngO, Ensign Tegian Pex -- 0946)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Main Shuttlebay - EngO, Ensign Tegian Pex -- 0950)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - EngO, Ensign Tegian Palk -- 0952)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - SecO, Ensign Galk, Son of Jos of the House of Kor -- 0952.5)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO- Lt. Bohb -- 0954)
USS Illuminar - Deck 8 - SecO, Ensign Galk, Son of Jos of the House of Kor -- 0958)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 8 - EngO, Ensign Tegian Pex -- 0958.5)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 8 – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1000)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 8 – EngO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1001)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 8 – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1002)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 8 – EngO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1003)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1005)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1007)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2- Personal Quarters – CTO - Lt. T'Mur - 1015)

(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1030)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1032)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1034)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1036)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1037)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1039)
(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1040)

(USS Illuminar – Starboard Warp Nacelle – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1043)
(USS Illuminar – Engineering – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1050)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 11- Main Engineering – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1051)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 11- Main Engineering – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1052)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2- Personal Quarters – CTO - Lt. T'Mur - 1445)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 2- Personal Quarters – CTO - Lt. T'Mur - 1450)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 15.05)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 15.10)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - CTO - Lt. T'Mur - 1511)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 15.13)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - CTO - Lt. T'Mur - 1514)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 15.15)
(USS Illuminar - The Prancing Pony - CTO - Lt. T'Mur - 1516)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 - Security Staging - SC/Tac – Lt. T'Mur - 1600)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 - SO PO3 Alex Collier - 1603)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 - Chief of Security Office - SecO – PO2 Carol Lannis - 1605)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 – Chief of Security Office - SC/Tac – Lt. T'Mur - 1607)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 13 - SO PO3 Alex Collier - 1615)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Ready Room - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 16.30)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 Sickbay - CMO/3XO Lt. Commander Quinna Solice - 1635)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 Sickbay - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 16.40)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 Sickbay - CMO/3XO Lt. Commander Quinna Solice - 1645)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 13 - SO PO3 Alex Collier - 1655)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 13 - SO PO3 Alex Collier - 1656)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 11- Main Engineering – EO - Ensign Tegian Pex, Lt. Bohb - 1700)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 - CSec Office- CSec– Lt. T'Mur - 1701)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 13 - CSec– Lt. T'Mur - 1702)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 Sickbay - CMO/3XO Lt. Commander Quinna Solice - 1710)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 11- Main Engineering – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1713)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 13- EO - Lt. Bohb - 1715)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 12 - Corridor - EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1716)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 13 - EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1717)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 12 - Corridor - CSec– Lt. T'Mur - 1720)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 12 - Corridor - EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1722)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - EO - Lt. Bohb - 1735)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - EO - Ensign Tegian Pex - 1738)

2446.03.03

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge -- CO, Captain Sekal - 0600)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge – CSec/Tac- Lt. T'Mur - 0604)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge – CMO/3XO Lt. Commander Quinna Solice- 0612)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Ready Room -- CO, Captain Sekal & AU Sienna Verin - 0620)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 14 - Security Control Center – SecO, Ensign Galk, Son of Jos of the House of Kor - 0625)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 5 - Sickbay -- ACSO Ensign T'shalaith - 0631)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge – CSec/Tac- Lt. T'Mur - 0634)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Ready Room – CO Captain Sekal, Alter- Sienna Verin, CSec- Lt. T'Mur - 0636)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge --ACSO Ensign T'shalaith - 0650)
(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge --3XO/CMO Lt. Commander Quinna Solice- 0653)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Briefing Room -- CO, Captain Sekal , 3/0 Lieutenant Commander Quinna Solice, ACSO Ensign T'Shalaith, CSec T'Mur, Scientists Extraordinaire, the Drs.Gailus Penn and Teller & AU Sienna Verin - 0800)

(USS Illuminar -- Bridge -- Deck 1 -- 3XO/CMO Lt. Commander Quinna Solice -- 0923)
(USS Illuminar -- Deck 1 -- Ready Room - CO, Captain Sekal -- 0925)
(USS Illuminar -- Deck 1 -- Bridge - CO, Captain Sekal -- 0928)
(USS Illuminar -- Deck 1 -- Bridge - ACSO Ensign T'shalaith-- 0929)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Ready Room - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 16.30)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 11- Main Engineering – EO - Lt. Bohb - 1800)
(USS Illuminar – Deck 4 - Explorers Lounge– - CO, Captain Sekal - 1801)

The meditative trance he had entered was not as deep as the healing one he had used months ago in a similar room, this time however he was not the patient. Within its tranquility a memory formed.

(Vulcan- Mount Selaya Foothills - Shibu Monastery - Stardate 2430.11.13)

Himself and the aged master were facing one another and sitting cross-legged upon the tiles to the left of the doorway leading to the portico, beyond it was the wide, stone stair that descended to the courtyard. Sekal had been eleven years old at the time and only recently come from his father's ship which had returned to Vulcan after a mission relating to the 'Project'. His eyes were closed, his hands loosely set upon his knees.

"What do you feel, young Sekal?"

"I feel the breeze upon my face and the sand and grit it brings, the stone beneath me and the suns upon me master. They warm my robe."

"Yes. And what do you hear?"

"The sounds of initiates doing their chores, the chimes set at the gate rustling in the breeze, the sparring of those in the courtyard, their blows and exhalations. And in the distance the cry of a hunting Sehlat."

"Good, and what do you see?"

"I see only darkness master, my eyes are turned toward the doorway and away from the light."

"No, young Sekal look inward, beyond what your eyes see. What do you find there?"

The young Vulcan considered for a moment. "I see memories, I am upon Earth with the delegation, my mother is speaking with the diplomats from Tellar. They at first appear rude, attacking until she explains to me in private that they are merely speaking their mind, holding nothing back lest they be misunderstood and accused of hiding their intent."

"And what else?"

"I am upon the Sinya watching my father, I see his decisiveness, his authority, the way he carries himself yet he seeks information from others upon which to form his decisions."

"Again, what else?"

"I am much younger, my father has returned home early, I have entered his study and am watching the crystal he left there turning slowly in the air above its base, it is throwing off bluish glints of light like sparks."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, some I can name, memories of anger, fear, embarrassment, others are faded, until I cannot grasp them."

"Good. The mind is a deep pool, when it is still as glass, unmoving, it is at peace. From such a pool one can draw out more than memories. When still, emotionless, we think with clarity, every decision made with logical, flawless execution. Everything we have learned can be drawn upon, calculated and measured..

But when the pool is roiling, turbulent we see only dimly, emotion clouds our judgement, it controls our actions and co-opts our attention. It causes conflict, chaos and indecision."

"I understand master, this is why I am here, to learn control."

"Yes, you may open your eyes."

His eyes opened to dazzling light and he blinked them until the monk became clear. The master was sitting in shadow just beyond him, the awning above and wall to Sekal's right blocked direct sunlight from reaching him. Master Sheu was wearing his dark yellow robe tied at the waist with a red sash.

"Why did you blink your eyes?"

"They have been in darkness master and I opened them to the light, they needed time to adjust and you were sitting in shadow."

"Yes." The aged monk nodded and leaned toward him. "Returning to the light of logic from chaos is not instantaneous young Sekal. Keep your emotions tightly controlled lest you be forced to strive to quell them. Meditate daily, exercise control and do not let down your guard."

"I understand master."

"Good. You will learn much here but it all is based upon this. Without control you will never master them."

"Thank you master, I will learn."

Within the monastery a gong tolled and the sounds in the courtyard ceased. Sekal waited for the master to rise but he did not.

"It is the time for meditation master, the others go to their chambers."

"Indeed it is but meditation need not be performed only in private. One who has mastered it may do so anywhere, even on the stones of the portico. You will find the truth of this and sometimes its necessity."

Sekal drew in a deep breath in response, closed his eyes and began to clear his mind as the last of Vulcan's trinary suns cleared the awning and he was left in shadow. He tried to push out the other

Sekal gave a sharp nod, "Logical."

"I take it she means more to you than just your XO. One day you will have to let me know the story." Quinna adjusted some of the settings on the biobed and then inputted them into her PADD.

An eyebrow quirked at her comment. "Commander Verin has been a compatriot since the revival of Mars, a renowned scientist in her field and a friend. It is not necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of our relationship, Doctor."

"Of course, My apologies." Quinna did not imply anything. She was curious and giving him an opening to talk.

"Captain," T'Mur said, looking at Sekal, " Doctor Solice," she said looking at Quinna, "how is Sienna... Commander Williams-Verin?" Just saying her full name gave the Vulcan a more personal sense of her mate.

The Captain nodded but remained silent so the Doctor could answer her query.

Quinna turned to see Lt. T'Mur walking in. "She is getting better than she was before, but it is going to take time. She is going to be ok." Quinna tried to assure T'Mur. She then moved closer to T'Mur. "I think I will take my leave." Then she looked directly at T'Mur, "one hour only."

T'Muir raised an eyebrow in near defiance, almost challenging the doctor to remove her from the room. However she remained silent. Suddenly she felt a shift in the Sienna's consciousness and turned to the biobed.

Sienna's biobed monitors showed her continual and steady climb towards wakefulness. A low, breathy moan of pain came from Sienna's cracked lips. It was the first sound she had made since her collapse on the bridge. Her eyes felt gritty to her, and she was too tired to really open her eyes. Her head turned a fraction towards T'Mur but she was too exhausted to do more than that.

"Qui...nna." Sienna's voice was gravelly and rough. "Meds." She was asking for something to help her energy levels, to wake up enough to communicate. T'Mur could feel her resolute need to report through their bond, which while not exactly stable, was recovering as her body did.

Quinna turned and went back to the biobed. She moved to Sienna's side and looked at her. A spot of brightness in the darkness had just occurred. "Hey there. Let's get you sitting up." She pushed a button to slightly elevate the bed. "Are you in any pain?" Quinna asked. She was not wanting to administer any meds if at all possible.

Sienna whimpered as the bed was tilted. "Meds." She asked again. "Pain." She agreed with Quinna. Everything hurt and she was not going to be opening her eyes without a lot more help to do so. She wasn't going to be staying awake either without the help and it was imperative that she be able to talk to the people in the room with her.

Sekal had been planning to leave but remained near the door, his hands cupped behind his back as he looked on impassively. Interfering in the Doctor's work was unthinkable and had resulted in his being expelled from sickbay in the past, this was an event that he had no interest in repeating.

T'Mur fought the urge to go to the bed and hold her mate. She understood that Solice needed to perform her craft on Sienna. And the Vulcan wanted to be certain that her mate got the best of Solice's attention.

Quinna reached over with a hypospray and administered some Ketoprofen with a bit of stimulant. "This should help. You will still feel tired but not as drowsy. You will be able to sleep and wake naturally later." Quinnna turned and picked up her PADD and started inputting the information. "You should start feeling something, but it will take some time to be fully effective."

"Commander Verin, it is gratifying to have you back among us." The Captain spoke simply.

Sienna groaned again, her eyes opening slowly and with a lot of effort. "Quinna. I know you have better meds." She complained, lightly. "You can make me sleep again but I either need a monstrosity," She was referring to the sugar/chocolate/coffee drink she loved so much, "Or more energy." Her lips twitched a little bit, but the light hearted banter seemed pretty heavy. "I wouldn't say I'm among us, Captain." She needed to talk to the Captain about what had occurred, not her friend. "Did you find her?" She looked at Sekal intently. "We have to find her."

"Who, Commander, is her? I do not know who you are referring to." He gave her a curious look. Her penchant for cryptic statements and oblique references appeared to be exacerbated by her current condition.

Sienna stared at him, "The other Sienna. She came through when Luma pulled me over. From where I think..." She shook her pounding head. "I can't feel her right now. Maybe it's distance, or maybe she died. I really hope she's dead." Sienna didn't have the energy to rub her arms, her skin prickling and burning. "How much time did I lose? It felt like forever. I am never doing that again." As the meds worked she began to get more coherent. She still longed for coffee.

He cocked his head in interest. "You were returned to the ship approximately six hours and thirty eight minutes ago. As for this other Sienna of which you speak, we have had no knowledge of any other Sienna Williams-Verin within this timeline, are you certain of her existence?" Perhaps the shock of being relocated by Luma to the Illuminar had caused a dissociative break, otherwise known as an hallucination.

Sienna frowned, "I don't know. The last time I felt her, she was hiding inside a comet tail. Her shuttlecraft had a cloaking device, but the shuttle had taken a great deal of damage. She's being hunted. She's not a nice person, Captain. She's..well she is the opposite of me." Sienna knew that the medication induced energy was running out, quickly.

"I will have Mr. Winters check on this as soon as I leave." He noted she wasn't finished and allowed her to continue without interruption for the remainder of her report.

“When we arrived on the Rhyne, we lost communications almost immediately, including within the ship. Systems were down across the board, energy readings were flatlined. We had not found anyone alive when I left the ship. We all felt something was on the ship with us. Some of us felt physical touches, or the wind that is displaced when someone passes. We all felt eyes on us. We ascertained that whatever was causing this was already affecting us, so many of us took off our isolation suits. I...” She had no energy to reach up to where she had put the chip, “I copied the logs, and put them inside my uniform pocket. The command codes had been changed recently.” She was trying to make this report but it was visibly exhausting her. “We began to get control of the ship with the help of Mr. Weston. When the battle began, I ordered everyone to the TIC since it was near a shuttlebay, transporters, the battle bridge and was appropriately shielded. I thought if I got everyone into one place, it would be easier to protect our people.”

Her eyes drifted closed again, and they could see her trying to stay awake. “Then Luma did her thing. And the pain, the pain was horrible. I felt like I was being burned alive, from the inside out. It felt like it lasted forever and... I knew that I had broken my promise.”

That was it. Her eyes closed again and she collapsed in on herself, out again like a light. She was indeed still in pain. But she was back asleep.

T’Mur pushed past the doctor and the captain, repressing the irritation at having Sienna conscious for a moment and not being able to speak with her. She took hold of her hand and knelt beside the bed. She sent thoughts of her love through their connection.

::Rest my love. I am here with you.::

Sienna seemed to relax some when T’Mur took her hand and held it, giving her an anchor.

Sekal stepped back and away toward the door, giving Quinna and T’Mur room as he located her uniform draped over another chair in the room, his searching fingers found the chip and he removed it from the pocket carefully, inspected it then placed it in his own shirt pocket. “I will take my leave.” He told the others then stepped through the doorway as his right hand tapped the combadge on the left side of his chest.

T’Mur watched the captain as she maintained her vigil over Sienna. They would still have to reconcile their actions on the bridge. And she was interested in the information on the chip. But that would have to come later. Right now she had more important things to do.

She continued to reach down through their bond, holding her hand and touching her gaunt face. Her mind searched for this other Sienna.

“She should rest. She will feel more comfortable when she wakes.” Quinna moved to leave, “If you need me, I will be on duty in sickbay. Remember, you need your rest as well.” Quinna then stepped out and back into main sickbay.

(posted by Al Muir,
Kris Bailey
Charles Gatling

officer then assistant to the Chief of Security. Between the two she rarely got out of the control center and into the field. Steven hadn't seen much of his buddy Boyles either since Lee had set him up to run security during gamma shift though they traded jokes on occasion along with some backslaps when he came on tour. Hammons normally worked with the mountain of Klingon muscle known as Ensign Galk now.

"You look like three miles of bad road."

Carol snorted. "While you were napping the Captain called a full stand down and a return to normal shift rotation, I've been up finalizing daily and readiness reports."

"Good! That means I can sleep in a comfortable bed."

"Not yet, I need you to do me a favor."

His legs dropped to the deck and he rubbed his eyes as he sat up. "And what does said favor entail?"

Carol sat on a corner of the desk and stifled a yawn. "I just got a call from the bridge and they want a thorough inspection of the Shuttlebay, there's a concern a cloaked shuttle may have slipped aboard when we picked up the others."

"A thorough inspec... do you realize how long that might take?"

"Hammons..." She gave him a steely-eyed look. "The Captain wants this done quietly and you and I both know you are the best man we have for the job. Anyone else I send is going to go in with a hammer and anvil and make a lot of racket but I know I can trust you to do this on the sly."

He grinned. "Yes, you do know me very well." Steven Hammons, Petty Officer 3rd class at the time had been instrumental in ferreting out and taking down the Roanoke cell on Mars. He was considered a throwback to an earlier era, a man who didn't rely blindly on technology to do his work for him but used guile, solid techniques and gut instinct to get the job done.

Carol rolled her eyes. "Don't get a big head about it..." followed immediately by a sigh, "... never mind, too late."

"Correct as always." He got up from the chair. "No getting in a few hours of sleep eh?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Nuts! All right, let me get a cup or two of coffee in me and I'll rustle up Galk from wherever he's roosting. We'll get right on it."

"Thanks, Boyles will be glad to hear you're on it. Now I'm going to go to my cabin and crash."

"Don't use up the ship's sleep allotment, I'm going to want some later. I'll stop by and check on Boyles before I go."

USS Illuminar - Deck 10 - Main Shuttlebay – SecO, PO1 Steven Hammons and SecO, Ensign Galk, Son of Jos of the House of Kor -- 0903)

As soon as the hatch had cycled closed Hammons sobered up instantly and made his way to the pilot cabin. The viewport was polarized which screened out Most light and radiation under most circumstances though the polarization could be changed making it easier to view stellar phenomena. If you were close to a star you certainly didn't want to view it full force! The result was the the port was opaque from the outside and hard to see into.

Hammons sat in the pilot seat and pulled out his tricorder.

"I do not see the necessity for such a display upon entering the bay." The Klingon said sourly.

"We want to look as harmless and inoffensive as possible in case anyone is hiding in here and two drunk officers are highly inoffensive." Hammons explained.

Galk watched him set the tricorder. "You could use the shuttle's sensors... or the ship's for that matter."

Hammons sighed. "We are supposed to be partying in here, not taking the shuttle out for a joyride and I'd have to activate the power supply. As for the ship, when a Vulcan says to do things quietly he means with as few people knowing as possible. Plus a sensor sweep of the bay would be a big tell. Hey We know someone is in here, come out, come out wherever you are!"

The Klingon hmphed. "And why this shuttle then?"

Hammons chuckled. "It gives me the best view of the bay. Look Galk..." he turned, "... logs showed the secondary bay hasn't been opened so if a cloaked shuttle is hiding in here it isn't going to be there but here. I got a look around when we came in but the Erikson is situated where I can look into the other nooks and crannies like those..." he pointed to the empty spaces left by the shuttles that had gone to the Rhyne and remained, "... they're perfect and near the bay doors."

"I do not see how another vessel could have gotten aboard in the short time the shield emitter was down. I was on the bridge when it happened."

Hammons sighed. "The shield emitter was offline for ten seconds, yes?"

"Yes."

"And the shuttles were butted up against the shielding before that and cycling their shields, yes?"

"Yes."

The purpose for the move was well known, while the shields were being cycled they resisted the push of the Illuminar's shields away from the ship and kept the shuttles pretty stably in place.

"Think about it. The shuttles were already there against the shields, how long would it have taken them to accelerate beyond the 30 meter zone where the shields are located?"

"Hmmm. Not long, three to four seconds perhaps."

"And how long from then until the Captain ordered the shuttlebay closed?"

Galk thought about it for a second. "He ordered it closed after the Bird of Prey was destroyed, perhaps twenty seconds."

"Plenty of time for the shuttles to make it a mere thirty meters right?"

"Yes, more than necessary."

"And there you go. The timing would have been fine and it would have taken a damn good pilot but they could have managed to slip into the bay before the doors closed, picked an open spot and hunkered down to wait it out."

The Klingon scratched his beard. "Perhaps. But we still don't know if one got aboard."

"I was working on that before you started asking so many questions." Hammons chuckled and turned on the tricorder.

"Will they not see they are being scanned?"

Steven let out an explosive breath. "I've keyed it for passive scans, it's just reading what it sees, not making an intrusive scan and the power signature will be almost unnoticeable outside the hull."

Hammons started whistling a tune as the tricorder powered up and began scanning the area, as he waited he propped his feet upon the console away from any controls.

"I would prefer to challenge the enemy to show themselves and do combat." The Klingon growled.

"Of course you do, that's why they picked ME to run this sting." Hammons chortled, then dropped his feet to the floor and leaned forward as the tricorder let out a tone indicating it had picked up something outside of normal parameters. "Well I'll be damned!"

"What is it?"

Galk leaned forward.

"A small radiation leak has been detected here in the shuttlebay." Hammons picked up the device. "I'm going to have to open the hatch so I can get a location, you know what to do." They moved back to the ramp and Hammons poised with his hand over the control as he looked at Galk expectantly.

The Klingon gave a grimace, pulled in a deep breath and began his song again. Hammons grinned and popped the hatch. A few seconds later. There was a long moment while the device read the area then he slapped the hatch control again. The portal slid shut and Hammons crowed. "Got it!"

Galk moved to the other side giving Hammons access to it. He tapped the control which didn't respond. ~Locked of course.~ How to override it? Hammons had come prepared, he pulled a small disc out of his pocket and it sealed to the control, a touch activated it and the device began cycling through command codes, searching for the correct sequence. As it hit on a match it would lock it in. The process took about twenty seconds as Steven perspired nervously. Finally there was a beep from the device and the hatch began cycling open. Hammons and Galk both pulled their sidearms as it slid aside.

Galk was through first with a leap and Hammons right on his heels.

There was no stowaway immediately available, Hammons first thought was that the interior was off-colored with red much more evident than blue but it didn't register at first. Galk slipped to the pilot cabin like a stalking predator and looked inside. "Empty." He growled.

Hammons searched quickly for any nooks or crannies anyone might be hiding in then seeing none pulled off the tricorder and began scanning. The device whirred as he swept it around. Finally... "Our bird has flown the coop."

The Klingon snarled at that as Steven slid back out of the hatch and through the cloak before tapping his combadge, he was looking around as he tapped his combadge. "Hammons to Boyles."

=^= Boyles here, what do you have to report buddy? ^=^=

"We found the shuttle but our stowaway isn't here, he, she or they are on the ship."

There was an expletive. "...damn it all. Security breach it is then."

Yellow lights began to flash across the ship as Jared initiated the protocol and his voice boomed through the speakers as it also came through the combadge. ^=^= This is a Security alert code zebra. The ship is now on lockdown. All non-essential personnel remain in your quarters. Security personnel to your assigned stations. Any personnel seen outside of established duties will be held for questioning. I repeat this is a security alert code zebra. All security personnel to your assigned checkpoints. ^=^=

After the announcement his combadge activated again. ^=^= All right Hammons, get your butt back here for a full report, is the cloak down? ^=^=

"No, which means Galk hasn't been able to override it. Send an engineer or three to take care of it. The power supply needs to be taken offline as well, it's causing a small radiation leak which we were able to detect through the cloak. So the cloak is apparently damaged and so is the engine."

=^= On it, have Galk stand by there in case someone returns and to guard the engineers when they arrive. ^=^=

"Got it."

Hammons ducked inside to relay the message to Galk then headed out of the shuttlebay to Deck 14.

Mason exited the CMO office. He left Quinna be asleep on the couch but put a blanket over her and put up the 'Do Not Disturb' so she would sleep.

He went back into the main sickbay. He was taking charge until things went back to normal. He went to check on T'shalaith. He could hear her muttering and then looked down at her. Her eyes were wide open.

"Hey, Ensign. Are you with me?" Mason asked trying to get her to focus.

"It is welcome to see the inside of a starship once more...and not the corners of my mind."

"We are happy you are awake as well. So can you tell me what you remember?" Mason started with that to determine if there was any damage from the swelling on the brain.

(Reply T'shalaith)

"Please tell me that you remember me?" Mason said lightheartedly.

(reply T'shalaith)

"I need to run more scans but things are looking much better than was it looked like last night." Mason commented

(reply T'shalaith)

Quinna strolled out of her office. Despite her effort, Quinna could not sleep. She was worried about the missing crew. She worried for Michael. Now she was strolling into sickbay to get something to help her sleep.

“My informal diagnosis is that I am stable and within parameters to return to duty.” She looked to him, “What is your evaluation of my condition, Doctor?”

Quinna followed the voice. She did know one of her medical staff was in a biobed.

“I need to run more scans but things are looking much better than was it looked like last night.”

T'shalaith considered for a moment before asking, “How did...as you say, it look last night?”

“I thought I heard someone up in here.”

“Ensign, last night you were unconscious and had swelling on the brain.” Mason said.

“But you knew that. I was not aware you were a doctor, Ensign T'Shalaith.” Quinna said. Quinna let Mason continue with the medical tests. “Did I hear you say you were stable and cleared to return to duty?” Quinna asked the Vulcan woman. Quinna took a deep breath, “Ensign, Please let Mason do his job.” Quinna then walked away. Surprisingly, Quinna did not go off on the ensign like she normally would. She hated it when non medical personelle thgout they knew more than the doctors.

“Sorry, she needs some rest.” Mason said aplogizing for Quinna, “But she is right, you are not stable enough to go back on duty.”

“Then I am thankful for the medical staff who kept my life in their hands. Life is meant to be lived.”

“That is indeed true. Right now, you need to rest.” Mason said.

“What is our current situation, Doctor? I suspect my chief will need to discuss matters with me.”

“You can talk to your Chief when they return from the Rhyne.” He supplied.

She frowned deeper now, “They did not return?” T'shalaith felt an echo of sadness play across her heart for but a moment before she returned her attention to the doctor, “What has happened to them?”

“The only one that has returned is Commander Verin and she is in no condition. You my dear are not in any position to leave either. I want to keep you under observation a little while. You just woke.”

(Reply T'shalaith)

“And those are my final orders, of course if you want to talk to Dr. Solice”

(Reply T'shalaith)

"Good." He growled and stood to his feet as he activated his combadge. "Galk reporting in, the shuttle cloak has been deactivated.."

=^= Roger that Galk, I'm sending two down to seal it up and keep watch. Please escort Pex back to his duty station.. ^=

"Acknowledged." He stood and waited for Pex to join him aft. He wasn't fresh and this manhunt aboard wasn't going to help matters, personnel aboard the ship needed sleep.

(Reply: Pex)

Galk didn't let down his guard yet, he preceded the Trill as they stepped out of the hatch. "Something is ... off ... about this shuttle." He stepped through and turned after a few steps before finding out why.

The scorch marks and damage now visible were expected, he had seen some evidence of them while himself and Hammons had been creeping around within the embrace of the cloaking field but the shield emblazoned on the aft side of the craft was jarring and unfamiliar. There was a planet of blue and green depicted there and piercing it from the top and with its tip protruding through the bottom a stylized dagger. The Klingon walked up and studied it closely, this was a very warlike, martial symbol which someone like himself could appreciate. Whoever had been flying the craft could be considered an enemy.

"I am not familiar with this device."

(Reply: Pex)

A growl rumbled from his throat. "Whoever came from this craft shall be approached with the utmost care." He tapped his combadge again. "Galk here, the shuttle has an unfamiliar design on it. A planet which appears to be Earth pierced by a dagger."

There was a moment of shocked silence. ^= Damn! Is that security detail there yet? ^= It was the voice of Steven Hammons.

"Yes." Galk heard the sound of approaching footsteps and familiar voices.

=^= Tell them to trust no one, to shoot first and ask questions later if necessary. ^=

The Klingon gave a pleased growl, this sounded interesting. "For what reason?"

=^= I'll brief you when you get here. Hammons out. ^=

Galk turned to Pex. "Are you returning to Engineering or the warp nacelles? I've been ordered to escort you."

(Reply: Pex)

(Posted by Charles G)

T'Mur sat across from the captain and watched as the chef preened over the captain. She couldn't help but find it mildly humorous. He gave T'Mur a smile and a wink as he closed the door. She looked at the two meals. Both were quite simple yet his more elegant, while hers more functional.

~It must be good to be captain,~ she thought to herself.

She pulled her plate towards herself and found that the chef had brought her a large glass of iced Vulcan spice tea. Taking a sip, she allowed herself to appreciate its flavor.

He watched her for a moment, there was a small welt remaining on her jaw from the blow he had given her earlier. His food was as yet untouched though he had taken a drink of the beverage. He set the glass aside and broached the subject. "An apology and explanation are in order. How much of what happened on the bridge do you remember?"

T'Mur took a breath as she took a bite of her vegetables, then replied, "To be honest, what is most vivid is what I felt. The sensation was similar to the night I was raped. There was fear and a need to save Sienna. The actual actions of the moment are a bit vague. However, apologies are unnecessary. I was behaving... inappropriately and needed to be stopped."

He cocked his head at her reply. "Then an explanation is forthcoming. I was affected as well though not all were. Doctor Solice for one was in apparent agreement with you that I was somehow delusional. What affected us however was not the same, my emotional controls were broken down though I was in complete control of the input I was receiving from the sensors and they showed that the other ship was not powering up weapons, neither had they raised their shields while you were convinced they were. Under the circumstances I could not allow the Rhyne to be fired upon. Are you in agreement with this?"

T'Mur stopped for a moment and looked at her captain. An instant of guilt washed over her with the thought that she could have been the cause of the death of the others, and Sienna. Then she pushed it back with the logic that she was not in total control of her actions.

"We are in agreement," she replied. "Allowing me to destroy the Rhyne would have been unfortunate."

"What happened next was unwise on my part, I approached the tactical station, you perceived it as a threatening gesture and locked in an automated firing sequence. Your actions were a direct result of mine and my actions were fueled by emotion. In short then I hold myself responsible. This led directly to me striking you in order to override that sequence as quickly as possible. The action was effective but would not have been necessary had I remained in control. If you wish to file charges I will see personally that they are relayed to command."

Once again T'Mur considered her options for a minute before replying, "I believe that will not be necessary. However, I do submit myself for disciplinary action for disobeying a direct order. It was unacceptable, even under the circumstances."

Sekal used his fork to take a bite of the souffle before it became cold, he found it... stimulating. "As you were not in your right mind like myself I see no logical reason for doing so." He took a sip of the tea and set it aside once again. "It is understood that during exploratory missions we might encounter circumstances that are beyond our control or comprehension. I will not condone or countenance

disobedience to orders under normal circumstances however due to the anomalous region of space we are returning to I understand it.” He found himself suddenly, incredibly hungry, having not eaten in the last 24 hours. “I will say that it is my hope in the future that my officers will trust me to make the right decisions despite what they may believe. If I abridge that trust then that quite logically nullifies my authority.”

He gave her a long look. “I also believe in this instance I shall refrain from.... What is it that Terrans call it?... calling the kettle black I believe.”

T’Mur took a bite of the protein substitute. It did not have a flavor to it that would entice someone to eat it. Sienna had likened it to a substance called tofu.

She nodded, “I am uncertain how the color of a pot nor a kettle could sway the beliefs of authority, but I would like to assure you that I do hold your authority in high regard. I do, as you put it, trust your decisions. Even if I did not have my own experiences, those that I have gleaned from Sienna have given me more than enough evidence to warrant such trust. Under normal circumstances I could not believe I was capable of such a breach. It is MY hope that they will learn to trust me as well. And also my hope that this experience has not damaged, not just my position on the ship, but any trust that you may have already had in me.”

“Negative. This matter has been settled to my satisfaction and I see no reason to belabor it. Had I an issue or lack of confidence I would not have set you in charge of Security as well as Tactical. It is to be hoped that Lieutenant Lee along with the rest will be found in short order and returned to the ship. Until then I have every confidence that you will run the department to my satisfaction.” He then turned his attention to the souffle which according to the chef had been prepared without animal proteins as per his own secret recipe.

Between forkfuls he spoke. “The next time Commander Verin awakens, please thank her for returning the isolinear chip. I have not had an opportunity to review its contents but I’m sure the information will be ... fascinating.”

T’Mur nodded, “Indeed. I will pass along your appreciation. I would also appreciate an opportunity to review the information as well.”

She took a long drink from her iced tea, then found herself stretching the muscles in her neck.

He took another sip of the tea, not sure how to broach the next subject. “ Doctor Solice asked me about my relationship with the Commander and I was unsure how to answer her. I don’t believe she was implying anything ... and as you are no doubt aware we have never had a ... relationship. She is a friend only and I am not in any way a threat to your bond nor do I wish to be.” His voice trailed off as he turned his head.

T’Mur raised her eyebrow, “Your concern is not necessary nor logical. What lever the doctor may have been implying, is not important. I am aware of your past with Sienna. She highly respects you, and appreciates you as a friend, and perhaps more. I might go as far as to say she loves you. But it is a love of value rather than of her heart. Beings of emotions use the word love in so many different ways.

“It is late for one so young as yourself to be out so late.”

“Perhaps she is expressing a sense of rebellion from her parents that often occurs at this age.”

“Perhaps she is looking for some... entertainment?”

“Then we should entertain her in the manner in which she desires.”

One of the men reached for her. She was afraid. It was a logical emotion for the moment. She pulled away and swatted at the next approaching hand.

“She has spirit.”

“Then we should hone that spirit.”

Suddenly arms wrapped around T’Mur from behind. She tried to fight back but she was small, and untrained for combat. She was powerless as the men held her down and began to tear the clothes from her. Then something changed.

The weight of the assailants lessened. There was a light shining through the night, emanating from one place, like the light of a sun. T’Mur blinked to see the source of the light. It was Sienna. She was dressed in a leather tunic and pants, wielding two long blades.

With a series of swift movements the first assailant fell with a spray of green blood. Then she struck again and the blade in her right hand drove through the middle of the second man’s chest. He dropped like a heavy stone. With her left hand she slashed out and dropped to a knee. The angle she created sliced through the leg of the third man, who had been attempting to remove himself from the conflict. The final assailant began to run away. Sienna threw one of the blades impaling the Vulcan to a wall.

The light came towards T’Mur and picked the girl off the ground. “Don’t be afraid little one, I am always here for you.”

“But will I always deserve you?” the girl asked.

Sienna smile, a blinding smile, “You will.”

She leaned down and gently kissed the girl on the lips. Young T’Mur responded with a burning that grew in her. She closed her eyes, until their lips separated.

When she opened her eyes the scene had changed. Smoke filled the air of the bridge of a strange ship. T’Mur looked around seeing the bodies of the away team. Michael Weston was at the helm, which had exploded and ripped through his body. Lee’s body was laying on the ground behind the tactical station, his left arm gone and a pool of blood around him. And then she saw Sienna.

T'Mur had gotten up early to see Sienna before her shift. The truth was that she had barely slept. Between the work she was doing to prepare Security for her take over, and the fact that she was having difficulty sleeping without her mate beside her, she found that the late night and waking ever hour, was more of a distraction than restful. She had wound up just setting the environmental controls of their quarters to a higher temperature and gravity setting to give it more of a Vulcan climate, and then meditating. That wound up being more beneficial than sleep.

However, by 0430 she had decided to get up and dress, then visit with Sienna in sickbay. Unsurprisingly, Sienna was still asleep at such an early hour. However, her mind was more typical in its thought patterns, with the exception of something that was playing at the corner of her consciousness. Every time T'Mur attempted to identify it, it disappeared.

Not wanting to wake her, T'Mur sat in a chair and watched her mates chest rise and fall with the near musical pattern it usually did. Oddly enough she had an urge to sit at they piano and play right now. Perhaps later.

Eventually she was shoed out by a nurse quoting Solice's orders of only an hour long visit. Before leaving she stood beside the bed, took Sienna's hand and kissed it gently. Then turned and headed for the bridge.

Along the way she had run into Quinna who seemed lost. Together they rode the turbo lift to the bridge. The captain took note of their entrance. Quinna had made her apologies for being tardy and T'Mur felt no need to make such an excuse. She was certain knew where she had been.

"Lt. T'Mur, please verify this sector is clear of enemy activity."

T'Mur relieved Tavay at the tactical station and ran scans of the sector looking for any sign of activity or gravitational displacements. Then she compared her readings to those takes for the last hour.

"There is no sign of Klingon activity, Captain," she reported. "By the sensor readings it appears they maintained their heading to Qonos with no deviations."

Sekal ordered the launch of the probe and T'Mur monitored its progress until it disappeared from sensors into the Maelstrom. All that remained was the telemetry information being transmitted to the science station.

With that task complete and the ship withdrawing from the sector before the effects of the space hit them again Sekal excused himself to the Ready Room, leaving Quinna in charge.

The ship came to a full stop just out of range of the Maelstrom and T'Mur continued to monitor the space around it. After five minutes of monitoring she stepped away from the station and approached the 3rd Officer.

"Lt. Commander," she said softly, "I wish to speak with as the CMO rather than the 3rd Officer, if it is not inconvenient."

Sekal stepped into the Ready Room intending to send the morning report to StarFleet Command. Illuminar would be hobbled significantly with the warp drive down but he intended to make the time count efficiently. While repairs were ongoing the science department would be working hard to determine what had happened to the USS Rhyne. If it still existed they would need the ship at full capability to catch up to it and bring the crew back. Two of his senior officers were aboard as well as his 2/O and many more besides. To the Vulcan the situation bordered on irritating and it took a lot to irritate one at the worst of times.

To say that she was ticked off was an understatement. Yes, the directions given to her had worked. Yes, the cloak on the shuttle mostly worked. She had accomplished her goal to get away from the AU T'Mur and the impending bond between the two women that would seal the treaty between Vulcan and Earth. She had monitored the situation as best she could, choosing her place to hide out easily. The Ready Room. Getting around the psychic entity known as Luma was more difficult, but Sienna had injected herself with a psi-nullifier that would keep her presence blanked from those psionics aboard for at least 10 more hours. Finding out that the high inquisitor was aboard did not please her, either.

What would the High Inquisitor of Betazed be like in this peace loving universe? Sienna didn't intend to find out.. But Sekal, she knew Sekal. At least she knew her Sekal. This Sekal? She was about to find out. Moving to stand before his desk, she tapped the device on her upper right shoulder, revealing herself. The mobile holo-emitter had been modified to be a moveable cloak. It would take maybe one, perhaps two more uses before the components burned out. She couldn't keep it going for the days it would take to get away.

She looked nothing like this universe's Sienna. Black leather combat armor that was tight fitting to her body and hid nothing. High heeled black knee-length boots. Her long hair crowned in a braid, the gaudy gold of her uniform sash holding the dagger that she had killed with in order to advance.

"You found my shuttle almost an entire day ago, Sekal. MY Sekal would have trawled the ship looking for the traitorous first officer. And yet, you didn't look for me. I have to wonder...why." She took a seat across from him and put her feet up on the desk, the boot daggers visible from this angle.

He inclined his head at her appearance and watched her take a seat as he reached for the pitcher and poured water into the second glass that occupied his desk. The first had already been filled. He picked it up as he took a drink then leaned back in his chair. "Curious. Had you wished to meet with me you could have announced yourself. As it turns out I had already ordered Alpha shift off duty for the day and rest was required. According to my understanding a manhunt has taken place on this ship during that interval, had there been any developments I would have been informed."

He studied this alternate version of Sienna closely, there was nothing about her dress or bearing that would have fooled any of the crew aboard and certainly not with the general knowledge that his first officer was in medical and would be there for a defined period. Her mere appearance moving about would have caused suspicion. "Where are the others you brought in aboard the shuttle?"

She gave him a contemptuous look, "You call that a manhunt? They never even looked in the right spot. A spot that I knew from my time aboard this ship when she was being put together. I'm shocked your enslaved entity didn't notice the shuttle, but I suppose she was ... distracted." She was not directly

answering the question. "As for why I'm making contact, my resources are not unlimited. That shuttle isn't going to survive the trip to a starbase, and I don't fancy trying out the new-ev suit that was based on the borg tech. Can't trust a borg." She reached up and detached the holo-emitter from her uniform, sliding it across the table.

"A peace... offering." Her lips quirked up.

He looked at it but made no move to pick it up as of yet. "Then I extend my appreciation. As for a detailed and thorough search..." his right eyebrow quirked slightly, "... it would be difficult for anyone other than myself or Sienna to find every nook and cranny aboard this ship, while she was aboard from the beginning I, myself designed it. As for our methods." He leaned forward slightly in the chair. "Perhaps we do not do things in the manner to which you are accustomed. This is a peaceful ship of exploration that uses force only when necessary." His eyes flicked to her martial attire then back to her face. "Which is not how your people go about their affairs I assume."

He indicated the glass. "You must be thirsty unless you made use of the replicator in my absence." While she was playing some cards close to her vest he kept some of his in reserve as well, making no mention of Luma, her term 'enslaved entity' summed up what he already knew about the environment she had come from.

She eyed the water but did not partake of it. Poison was a common way to kill someone and she wasn't going to be baited into drinking. "The couch was comfortable to nap on. The food replicators are better than what we have. I had never partaken of 'swedish meatballs' before, I have to say they were a delight. So. You have questions I bet, I have demands. Let's negotiate."

He noted her look toward the glass and picked it up, refilled his own glass from it, took a long drink then returned it to the desktop. "Before negotiations begin it would be advantageous to know your demands"

She leaned forward slightly, "I do not want to live in the brig, and I do not want to live on my damaged shuttlecraft. Sending me back to that place would be a death sentence for me. So if the choices are to kill me or send me back, well. Killing me would be the better choice." She looked into the distance the way this Sienna did, and unlike the true Sy, she sneered rather than smiled. "I can give you the harmonics that got me through the Anomaly. I can advise you on what has happened to the Rhyne's crew. And how to close the Anomaly. How to detect them at distance. And if our history propaganda is to be believed, you will venture into my reality and will need an advisor to guide you through the politics. To be fair, if I were in your position, I wouldn't trust me. I would also abandon those crew as a lost cause."

The Vulcan's face grew tight. "Do not think me gullible Commander Verin, and have no concerns about misplaced trust. For all I am aware your offer to guide us through your political intrigues could be setting up the Illuminar and crew as a way to reinsert yourself into the good graces of your superiors. Sienna's warning about dealing with you is sufficient to ensure I will monitor your actions carefully. As for your demands, I find your offer to be sufficient. You have done nothing yet to warrant incarceration outside of stealing aboard my ship without clearance and I can overlook that if the circumstances warrant it. Background therefore would be helpful, why are they hunting and trying to kill you?"

She leaned back in the chair, "Our families are prominent members of the alter-fleet. It was decided that I would be bonded and wed to a vulcan female in order to cement the treaty between Vulcan and Earth. I am being hunted because I ran away rather than be forced into a bonding with that woman. When I am caught, if I am caught, then I will be interrogated by the High Inquisitor and likely bonded to her anyway. My Resistance contacts will have hopefully had the time to scatter, to fade away. I am not fond of the way my universe has acted towards aliens. So when I entered the academy at the age of 16, while my dearly beloved twin," And she said those words with rancor, "Fought for the glory of our family, I quietly slipped information to the Resistance. And don't get me wrong, Sekal. My universe is not a nice place. And I'm not a nice person. But I don't believe in destroying entire cultures because a leader resisted the conquest of the Empire." She sighed and leaned back, closing her eyes, "I knew they were on to me. When we poisoned the symbiont pools on Trill, trying to kill off the symbionts... I slipped the antidote to a trill scientist through a courier. Courier was killed, antidote was maybe, maybe not traced back to me. That's why this bonding was announced. Can't have the heir to Strategic Operations a traitor to the Empire." She sighed again. "I should be thrilled to feel the destruction of a planet - other betazoids certainly are. For me... it's a sickening thing to witness and I've witnessed too many to count."

"Such should not be countenanced." He studied her as he considered the evidence, the damage to the shuttle would seem to back up her narrative and such placed her in a desperate situation. Her motives would continue to be analyzed until further evidence became available. "You are seeking asylum then with this ship and I grant it based on your offer of information which could be instrumental in regaining the personnel lost with the Rhyne. Let me be quite clear however." He placed his elbows upon the desk and leaned on them. "You have no standing aboard this ship beyond that of a civilian, you will not be able to use any command codes to which you may be privy and I will see to it personally that there are no back doors or work arounds you might use to defeat the safeguards. In addition you do not have permission to carry a weapon aboard this ship. I will assign you one of the VIP rooms and a security officer to see to your safety wherever you may go. If this is unacceptable then we are perfectly capable of finding our own way through the anomaly and your quarters will be in the brig. Do we have an agreement?"

She quirked an eyebrow at him, "Fair. Do I get to pick the security officer that is my guard?" She was well acquainted with having personal bodyguards, and was perfectly capable of taking care of herself. She reached forward to pluck a padd off his desk, and began to type in it. A few minutes passed as she typed, then she slid the padd back over. There was a screen of equations on it now - the key to the Anomaly. "My universe discovered an unending supply of slaves, weapons and supplies could be taken easily. The moment of a starship's destruction is fairly powerful, fairly disruptive. By tweaking the subspace strings, you can open a rift..almost a wormhole...through realities. It was based on something that Kirk's time did. But those equations will collapse the Anomaly from this end. It takes a lot of energy to open one though, so if you really mean to go through it, collapsing it would be a bad idea." She put her feet back on the carpet and stood fluidly, moving in a martial way that this universe's Sy could not.

"What is Riven Mias' position in this universe?" She asked curiously.

"I believe the correct term for Doctor Mias would be that he wears many hats." Sekal stated. In answer

T'Mur's vision seared into the woman across from her, as if trying to reach into her brain and pull out the truth. This was not her Sienna. They were not connected. And the only other alternative would have been unthinkable under these circumstances. If she forced a mind meld now, how would she be any different than those who had attacked her as a child.

Sekal couldn't help but notice the tense body language being exchanged by the two.

"Why did you come here?" T'Mur's first question was direct and obvious. The answer would not tell her much. She doubted that she would hear the absolute truth. But she asked anyway.

Galk hadn't lowered his phaser and kept a close watch, if there was any injury done here it would be him applying it and the alter Commander was visibly carrying knives upon her person.

Sienna looked at Galk, then at Sekal. "Let's start this off right." She stood up and moved as far away from the three as she could, taking off her sashed belt knife, still in its leather hilt. "I would ask that you keep this safe." She placed the dagger on a table, then took the blades from her boot sheathes and placed them beside it. "The boot blades are not heirlooms, but my uniform dagger is an heirloom, and has been passed down in my Mother's family from her House on Betazed. It's considered one of our holy relics." She left her blades there, and went back to her seat. She stayed as far from T'Mur as she could, however. It was obvious that she didn't trust the Vulcan any more than T trusted this version of Sy.

"And for the record, I'm not a Williams-Verin. My brother is the Williams, our father's heir; just as I am my Mother's heir, the Verin." The first of many differences.

"Believe me when I say that you are not Sienna Williams-Verin," T'Mur said coldly. She reached out and brought the blades closer to her. Withdrawing one of the blades from their sheaths she examined the blade carefully. She felt the weight of the blade from the handle and balanced it on her middle finger. It was well balanced. However she avoided the blade. For all she knew it was tainted. Spinning the blade around her hand skillfully she thrust it back into its sheath.

"These are all the weapons you have on your person?" T'Mur asked.

A look of disgust crossed her features. "-I- am a weapon." She replies. "And I'd rather you didn't touch that blade. Unless you plan on bleeding on it. Then you are more than welcome to come close enough that I can ram it into your cold, stone heart. But knowing as much about you as I do, I'd likely break the blade. I suppose I could just carve it out of your chest." Said conversationally.

T'Mur raised an eyebrow, "Indeed. It would be illogical for you to test that weapon on me." However she returned the blade to its place on the table. "Now answer my question. Are these all of the weapons you have on your person?"

"I suggest you have me scanned. We're..." She sighed, "Implanted with chips that contain data, our records and the implants are used to punish with pain." She shrugged. "I only carry the 3 blades, and I left my phaser pistol on the shuttle. I'm not here to make trouble, I'm here to avoid getting my people killed."

Sekal spoke up then. "I have not yet had an opportunity to verify her story though damage to her shuttle is outwardly compatible with it. Ms. Verin claims to be on the run from her own forces due to being in league with dissident elements. They are attempting to find and/or eliminate her and she has sought sanctuary on this ship. I am not making these claims to defend her but to add clarity to the proceedings and the steps I have taken are in harmony with that. A scan would be a logical step, I would suggest medical since there may be pain inducing elements. We are not savages here."

Galk gave a scowl and lowered the phaser but didn't let down his guard.

T'Mur sat back in her seat and thought. The information from Sekal was consistent with what her Sienna would do under similar circumstances. An act of compassion or a selfless act was not what she was seeing in the eyes of this woman. All she could see was fear.

"What are you afraid of?" T'Mur asked. "I see it every time you look at me. Fear."

The AU Sienna looked away, "The figment of my nightmares in flesh. I was suspected due to leaking the trill antidote for the symbiont virus. Since I was a large part of its creation, not really understanding what I was helping to create. It was decided by my mother that the best way to deal with me would be to barter me in a treaty marriage to a vulcan whose family was in their ruling council. There is a schism between the pro-human element and the vulcan faction and it was thought that my being subjugated by a strong vulcan would solve all the problems. Sophie Verin's heir can't be a traitor after all. When the bonding takes place, she will be able to find my resistance activities and dismantle it. I warned those I could, to go into hiding, but... she is pursuing me. My personal bodyguard Tavay helped me escape and stayed behind to muddy the waters. She's most likely dead now." A hint of pain on her features. She cared about Tavay.

T'Mur listened carefully, and suddenly the flashes of fear made sense. "I am to presume that your... intended is me, from your universe? And that I, the alter me, would not approve of your activities with this resistance?"

Sienna stared at T'Mur and then laughed. "To say she wouldn't approve would be an understatement. To say that she is hunting me is not a strong enough term. She is coming for me and she will destroy anything to get to me. I don't particularly want to be bartered, and certainly not to Her." She shrugged a bit.

The Vulcan looked at Sekal and understood his position now. Still, there was something in her posture that didn't seem right. Perhaps it was the way she watched Sekal. Perhaps she was always that way, like she was looking for a weakness. Was his acceptance that weakness? T'Mur still didn't trust this woman.

There were hints, slight traces of the woman she loved there, but they were covered by anger, pain and fear. Perhaps her lack of trust hit a chord closer to home than T'Mur would care to admit. But logic had to dictate that she face that possibility. Is this who she could have been, left to the streets of Vulcan after her rape.

She tore her eyes from the woman and looked at Sekal. "I accept your logic." She looked over at the woman and said, "I accept your offer of peace."

remembered explaining to her parents that her curiosity was not an emotional response. She just had more curiosity than her parents had experience with, or knew how to deal with.

She noted the device sitting next to Sekal's PADD. With curiosity. But patience prevented her from reaching out and picking it up.

The alternate Sienna Verin strode in. Dressed still in her leather combat uniform, with the high heeled boots making a soft clicking sound as she confidently walked in. "You summoned me?" She asked Sekal, ignoring everyone else in the room as insignificant, although if someone were to bet, she would know where everyone was and had a plan to kill them all if necessary. She moved around the table and sat opposite of T'Mur, staring hard at the woman who carried the visage of her nightmares.

T'Mur sat looking back at the woman who had, for the most part, the same appearance of her mate and watched with dispassionate and watching eyes. She noted a hint of something when that woman looked at her. Was it fear?

Quinna sat higher in her chair with the entrance of Sienna. The What-the-f look was no secret. She noticed that this was not their Sienna but what was she?

Alter- Sienna's shadow was visible near the door where he had taken up residence with his arms crossed and a scowl on his face as he watched her closely.

The Captain glanced at her. "Affirmative. I am waiting for two other individuals to arrive." He activated the holographic interface and what they had been calling "The Maelstrom" without affection appeared over the table. It was translucent and he could see everyone clearly through it. "While we wait Ensign T'shalaith can report on what we have been able to ascertain about this anomaly."

The ACSO slipped out a PADD of her own, tapping the screen as she gave her report, "The variables we are aware of - instability in the space and time continuum, the significant interdimensional fracture and the hypothesis that it could lead to an alternate reality of some type." She clicked to the next part of her report, "What follows is less of the known and more of...an educated guess or theory. Several instances of madness have been observed with long term exposure to the Maelstrom. Using reports from medical and cross examining with the science department there is no consistent measure of who it affects in what context or to what length." She paused for a moment.

"However, would you agree that the effect should be able to be observed through Neuro monitors." Quinna added.

"You are correct. The effect is observed and quantified. Which leads us to the next theory. The phenomenon is emitting an unusual amount of anti-matter. We know that in time dilation or time disruptions anti-matter is present. In most cases we can identify them via sensor readings which allows us to classify the type of anti-matter present."

T'shalaith turned the page on her PADD, "It leads me to hypothesize something I've considered since we encountered it. There were several reports and observations quantifying this phenomena as possibly a living thing or a creature of some kind. I investigated further with the ongoing results from the probe we sent earlier and I'm mildly confident we are dealing with a living...thing."

Quinna's head popped up more. She was curious on the bases on the claim. "Have you going through the Daystom's criteria defining what constitutes a lifeform?"

The ACSO shook her head slightly, "I do not think that qualifies in this situation. Parsing out the anti-matter readings together with the observations and information the more like comparison would be to flora...essentially a plant." She tapped a key on her PADD, "I've sent my preliminary report to each of you for review. Whatever data we examine from the...retrieved PADD will be essential in exploring the hypothesis. The connection with the reported and observed madness could be a defense mechanism of the plant and perhaps certain genetics make some more vulnerable to its effects. Within that, a vaccine against it may indeed be possible." She sat back in her chair, "That is the current evaluation of our situation from what I've been able to gather and examine."

The door to the room opened and Penn and Teller walked in. They were still wearing their lab coats over shorts and floral print shirts. Penn was also wearing a cowboy hat.

"Excuse our tardiness," Penn said, "we had to shut down our current experiment lest we have a similar incident as we had the last time we were dragged out of our lab."

The Tamarian nodded, "Malcolm and Jayne to Badger, on Persephone."

They walked around the table and found the pair of seats that had been set aside for them. Penn was the first to notice Sienna sitting at the other side of the table. He nudged Teller with his elbow, leaned over and whispered, "Marcellus to Horacio about Denmark."

The Tamarian nodded, "Oda Mae Brown, to Sam Wheat. Zima and Bakor at Anzo?"

Penn looked at Sekal, "Did we miss anything important?"

"Negative. Ms. T'shalaiith was discussing what we know of the Anomaly of which you have already been apprised." Sekal looked about the table. "Now that everyone is available I will make the introduction after which we will continue the discussion. You all will have noticed that the Alter- Universe Commander Verin has put in an appearance and she has given me something that may be of value to us. Let it be noted that she has no rank here but is on this ship for the purpose of sanctuary and has valuable information." He then sat back. "Please continue your hypothesis."

Teller looked at the science officer, motioning with his hands, "House. Gregory House to Foreman regarding the ANA. Kira at Bashi. "

Penn got a glint in his eyes and nodded, "Me too."

Quinna sat there making notes. She wondered if there was a way to countermand the effects of the antimatter. She wondered if they could set up some sort of relay of probes to communicate. She noted there was some sort of time dilation, most of all, Alternate universe? Quinna waited for more before she started asking for more clarification. She also needed the raw data for the biomedical side to help with a countermain to the effects of the Malstrom.

T'shalaith sat forward in her chair, "An additional theory on the anti-matter is that somehow the Maelstrom plant has been injured." She activated her PADD once more, "The question is how it created the connection to the alternate universe in the first place...and how we can seek to have that event occur again." She tapped her PADD, "Without further study of sensor records, the ongoing probe reports, and the information there..." she nodded at Sekal's desk, "It would be unwise to speculate further." T'shalaith tapped the PADD one more time, "One last hypothesis - communication."

"Within most flora in the universe there is traditionally a manner of communication that occurs from plant to plant or even animal to plant." She put up examples on the viewscreen in the room, "It is often used to diffuse defenses or convince the plant that no harm will come." She returned her attention to the table, "More investigation would be needed to validate any and all hypotheses presented here, but it is the best approximation of the scenario we find ourselves in. It does bear consideration that if we are able to cross through and over using the Maelstrom we'll need to ensure a way back or at minimum an open path allowing a return." She turned to Penn, Teller, Quinna, and the rest, "Your thoughts and contemplations are most welcome in order to discover the validity of the theories."

Teller laughs after the science officer finishes and invites commentary. "Audry II, to Seymour at Mushnik. Wanda and Otto. Wanda's dresses. Jessup, the Colonel to Kaffee. The code red. Buzz Lightyear and Sheriff Woody, when they met." He turned to his partner and shrugged.

Penn shifted in his seat and cleared his throat. He removed the cowboy hat and put it on the table. "Perhaps," he said, "that Dr. Teller and I can shed some light onto the situation as well. He pulled his PADD out of his lab coat, which seemed speckled with red dots, and put it on the table. He tapped a few icons on the device and a holographic image appeared above it. The image was a hologram of the two scientists, heads together, with large, cheesy grins on their faces. Clearly an image that they had taken by themselves in their lab.

Penn looked at his partner and smiled a guilty smile, "Sorry. Let me..."

He played with the device for a moment and an image of Teller holding a brain in his hands came up. Penn explained, "We had theorized that the radiation had affected the brain as well, but in order to find out what area of the brain was affected we actually need to have access to an actual brain. Fortunately, for lack of a better way of putting it, the Rhyne graciously provided us with samples."

He tapped the screen and showed the scans of the brains.

"The first brain is of one of the crewmen from the Rhyne," Penn began to explain. "The second is of a typical human brain. Note the size difference and deep indentations in the tissue between neural ridges. Then we wanted to see what caused those changes." He tapped the screen again.

"Again, the first is a typical brain. See these White markers," he pointed to the second image, "these irregular protein sequences. Prion sequences. Prions are misfolded proteins with the ability to transmit their misfolded into normal variants of the same protein."

Another tap changed the image, "We dig deeper to see what may have caused the folding miscue."

“Those white protein sequences are being bombarded by the radiation from the Maelstrom causing the nucleus of the brains cells to send out the messages to fold the proteins incorrectly.”

Teller nodded, “Marie Curie and the Marigolds. Wilhelmina Roentgen at Wurzburg.”

He looked over at the Vulcan science officer and shrugged, “Sorry ma’am, no plant in the universe, known or unknown, could send out those messages.”

“Mister Ed to Wilbur, in the barnyard.” Teller added.

He looked at the group, “How are we doing so far?”

Teller looked around as well and back to his partner in crime, “Kadir beneath Mo Moteh. Kiteo, his eyes closed. Chenza at court. The court of silence.” He shrugs and looks at the Chief Medical Officer, “Shacka, when the walls fell.”

He sat back and waited.

“So,” Quinna started, “You are looking similar to Creutzfeldt-Jakob-Disease.” Quinna shook her head. “Sorry, A neurodegenerative disorder. It is fatal. Most races are susceptible to the effects. Ferengi not so much.”

Quinna turned to Penn and Teller, “Can the personal shields, you two were working on, help countermand the effects of the Malestrom?”

Teller looked over Quinna as he thought, “Brant, in the limo, to the Dude. Yoda, to Luke on Degobah” ”

“I have a hard time believing that the Maelstrom is a lifeform. It seems to be more of a rift in time and space. If the PSD’s, sorry, Personal Shielding Devices would work, we should take a shuttle and go back there.”

Penn shook his head, “The Maelstrom itself is not alive, it is energy though. Directed energy, created from a source outside of this universe. Like all energy it has some qualities of life. But it is not alive. The PSD, as you call it, may or may not protect us, but we don’t really have time to test it. However, I think we can develop a protein resequencer that will counteract the effect of the radiation.”

Quinna then turned to the Alternate Sienna, “You came through here through the Maelstrom, right?”

Sienna had sat quietly through their talking. The science was top notch, but she was used to action, adrenaline and constantly being on the go, “I did. My shuttle used the equations I gave to -your- Sekal to navigate it. But it was damaged. When we started creating the energy fissures, we used the energy dispersal at the time of destruction to fuel the theft of the ship and personnel. The good news is that once we use my equations and close the rift, the after-eff`ects should disperse. On my Illuminar we used psionic inhibitors to deliberately cripple the boarding crew so that they won’t continue to be affected by the distortion.”

"In the shuttle we can take a ship in and then back out again. Take more intense reading." Quinna suggested.

Sekal considered it. "We have already inserted a probe which should give us those readings and I see no logical reason to expose more crewmen to it at this time. If the temporal flux being generated by the anomaly causes a drastic change in the temporal state of someone going into it we could lose them entirely."

Sekal placed the Padd within reach of his ACSO. "These are the equations she gave me that may close the rift. I would like it checked thoroughly and a recommendation made as to its utility."

T'shalaith accepted the PADD and examined the equations and notes contained on the device. There was enough there to start working on but she found some of the results that she had worked out in her head to be found wanting. There was the wildcard of trust in the dynamic with the data they'd been given by the officer from the other universe. "Surface level view sir, they are functional. I'll start the simulation and scenario work immediately."

Teller looked at Penn, then at the Vulcan. Putting on his best smile, he nodded to the PADD, "Temba, his arms wide," he said

He passed the altered holo-unit to the Civilian scientists. "Something you both may be interested in studying."

Teller remained focused on the PADD, turning to Penn, "Rockford and Richie, saving Brockelman. The curse of King Tut. Coombs in ruins."

Penn nodded, "Captain, if we might have a copy of those calculations as well. We are quite well versed with Quantum Field Theories and energy transference."

"Of course, I expect you may be of assistance in this matter." Sekal answered.

He looked about the table before standing to his feet. "Your reports were fascinating. Lieutenant Commander Solice, do you have anything to add?"

"No, Sir." Quinna sat back.

"Thank you, dismissed. Mr. Galk you may escort Ms. Verin back to her quarters."

Quinna left and marched herself back on the bridge.

T'Mur narrowed her eyes and watched as Galk escorted the woman out of the room. She was up to something. Sienna would have told her it was a gut feeling, but it was really an extrapolation of data, based on past reports of personnel from the alternate universe, and the fact that every time they locked eyes she turned away.

T'shalaith considered the captain for a moment, but determined that T'Mur was waiting to speak to him. She wasn't sure who to reveal or if to reveal the complication that had developed recently. She knew

T'Mur entered the sickbay carrying a covered tray. She hadn't heard that her Sienna had been on a restricted diet so she managed to gather some of her favorite foods so they could have lunch together. The food she had prepared may not have gotten the approval of the medical staff, but she was fairly certain they wouldn't ask to look. But to be sure she simply made a straight line to Sienna's isolated room.

She stood in the doorway, just looking at her for a minute, as she rested peacefully, but she could tell that she was awake. She knocked on the door jam with her free hand.

"May I come in?"

Sy looked towards the door and nodded, sitting up, shakily. "Still pretty weak." She chose the words carefully. No one was telling her anything and Luma was being oddly silent. Sy patted the edge of her biobed, inviting T closer. "Why are things so odd between us?" She asked, not realizing the true extent of her physical changes. "They shouldn't be odd. Luma did us a favor, right? Keeping us together rather than whatever happened? I should be grateful, but I'm exhausted, and I don't feel like me. And I keep getting the oddest flashes..." She didn't even know about the alter-Sy being present on the ship.

::Have I told you how beautiful you are?::: Sy floated the thought to T, trying to get that closeness back with her mate.

T'Mur walked over to a counter and deposited the tray of food, then sat on the edge of the bed. She looked down at Sienna and quirked, what Sienna had realized was, an amusing eyebrow.

"It has been two days, eight hours and twenty-seven minutes since you last commented on my appearance. So yes, you have." She paused for a moment and then added, "You are pleasing to look at as well. I am... happy to see you."

Sienna tried to smile, but the exhaustion put a lie to the attempt. She was so exhausted. But T was here, and Sy tried to muster the enthusiasm she felt for her mate. Stuck in her room, alone for so long, had caused Sienna to be stuck in her head. The psychic insulation on the ICU room was protecting her from the thoughts of the crew. She's had far too long to think.

T'Mur looked on with concern. She stood up and retrieved the tray she had brought.

"I was fairly certain that the medical staff would not provide you with the foods that you require for... sustenance, so I brought a selection, with the proposal that we could have lunch together."

She pulled the cloth off the tray to reveal some of Sienna's favorite foods. She had often commented that Sienna's veins contain a substantial amount of chocolate in them, and she would have some form of anemic reaction if she were deprived.

Sienna smiled a real smile of delight when T'Mur revealed the foods she had chosen. Of course it wasn't just all chocolate but there was a good portion of chocolate included. One of her favorite stress treats - milk chocolate covered bacon - was there and she reached for a piece weakly. It felt like forever since she had landed back on the Illuminar when in reality it had only been a few days at most.

“One of the nurses came in and was thinking about the alter-me. She’s here on the ship? And Sekal hasn’t restrained her at all?” Sienna’s dark eyes showed the pain that she had been sensing from her alter-counterpart before they had moved her into a shielded room to let her recover in peace. Her shields were non-existent currently and she had been sensing far too much, impeding her restoration to her duties. Her dark eyes looked at T almost accusingly.

“So..what’s she like?” Sy asked curiously.

T’Mur looked at her mate, eyes narrowing slightly. She didn’t know how much she should tell her, but would not be untruthful. She picked up a piece of fruit, that had managed to avoid being drenched in chocolate sauce and took a bite of the sweet morsel.

“She is like you, in some ways, but very different,” the Vulcan admitted. “She does not have the same sense of caring for others that you do. She claims to be part of a resistance, and is running from an enforced marriage to... me. Which I find an intriguing proposal. However, I do not trust her. The captain wants to give her some latitude until she has done something that reflects my level of lack of trust.”

She paused for a moment, looking at the fruit in her hand. “It is not very logical why I have this... feeling towards her. I refuse to trust her.”

Sienna took another piece of the chocolate covered bacon then reached out to encircle T’Mur’s wrist with her hand and draw the fruit in T’s hand to her lips, eating it from her mate’s hand. The skin to skin contact meant that T’Mur could easily hear Sienna’s thoughts. And Sienna did not trust this alter-version of herself at all.

::I’m worried she’s going to do something that will damage the ship, get us trapped in the mirror universe. When Luma pulled me back to the ship from the Rhyne a time dilation event occurred and it was like I was viewing her life from the outside. Like watching a vid.:: Sienna sent the memories that she had of the event in a burst of thought. ::Nothing in those memories discount what the other Sy is saying. We need a better name for her. Giovanna?:: Sy picked the earth middle name that she had been given by her father. ::Does that suit her?:: Her betazoid family had a habit of using names that began with S traditionally, so her Father had insisted on a human name for her to reflect the human side of her heritage.

T’Mur sighed, taking a moment to enjoy the sudden connection with her mate. She see each image as Sienna had seen them. There were images within the images, but it would take some time to separate them out.

::A different name would make things easier for us, but I doubt that she would accept the change. Perhaps just between us.:: She sent Sienna the image of a wink, which she had learned was a gesture of a friendly secret. ::I do not trust Giovanna...:: she drew an image of herself throwing the other Sienna, Giovanna, as far as she could, which was a fair distance. ::Maybe not that far.:: The tone of the thought, though serious, was also playful.

She reached up and stroked Sienna’s cheek, “I miss you my love. I want you to come home.”

Sienna leaned into the touch of her mate. "I need to come home. I don't think Quinna is going to release me until I can walk from here to the door without collapsing. You could always sneak me out." She began to tease as she would have in the past. "You are the chief security officer. I need to be more secure. Only you can guard me." She says this solemnly, the playfulness behind the words. But the truth was there too, Sy was scared of Giovanna.

T'Mur nodded, "And the doctor tells me if I can get you walking then you can leave sickbay, so I say it is time to get your..." she thought hard for the next phrase and nodded approvingly at her next choice of words, "lazy butt out of that bed and stand up."

She looked at her mate with curiosity, "That is the correct phrase is it not? Although I do not understand how just your derrière is lazy."

Sy eyed T'Mur, "I wish it as laziness, love. It's exhaustion. I'm willing to try as long as you are willing to catch me." Her weakness frightened her.

"I am here for you," T'Mur looked into her eyes, "for whatever you need. I believe you have consumed enough chocolate to give you some energy. We can start with a stand, and see where it leads from there."

She reached out and took hold of Sienna's hand, using her strength to bolster her mate's muscles.

Sienna curled her fingers trustingly into T'Mur's hand. Her mate was more than strong enough to carry her if needed. She swung her legs to the side of the biobed and sat fully up. Her head swam, she was dizzy. Her breath came faster from the unusual sensations. She felt ashamed, weak.

Still she put her hands on T'Mur's shoulders and slid to the ground, leaning heavily into the other woman's body before her knees began to shake with the effort of holding her up. Fear spiked between the bond, the fear that Sy was about to fall.

T'Mur shot a thought through their connection. ::Sienna Williams-Verin, you will not fall. I have you. Just straighten your legs and stand::

She put her hand on the small of her back and lifted a majority of her weight. The problem was more mental than physical. She was in a weakened condition, but her lack of belief appeared to be the major issue.

T'Mur leaned in and whispered in Sienna's ear, "I have a special reward for you if you stand up."

Sy stood. It wasn't pretty, it wasn't stable, and she wasn't entirely sure that she could walk. But she did it. It took T'Mur supporting most of her weight and Sy clinging to her, but she made it. As T'Mur stepped back, Sienna tried to bend her knees to follow her mate, but her muscles were not responding properly. Her knees buckled and she fell forward, into T'Mur. Sy stared into her mate's eyes, ::This would be fun at any other time:: She communicated with a mix of despair and frustration and laughter.

Staring into her mates face T'Mur's eyes filled with love as she held Sienna in her arms. ::I promised you a reward:: She leaned in and planted a soft kiss on her lips.

Penn and Teller had kept themselves busy since the meeting in the morning. Together they were a formidable scientific force, but individually they still were two of the top minds in their respective fields.

And while Teller poured through the readings and calculations that had been collected on the PADD Captain Sekal had given them, Penn continued to work through the medical data from their samples they had collected from the dead Rhyne crew's brains. They knew that there was a connection between the two so they took a divide and conquer approach.

By the end of hour nine they had come to the conclusion that they were going to need the services of a medical doctor and there was only one person they trusted on this ship that could help them. They located Doctor Solice, packed their information into their PADDs and headed to the medical bio lab.

"Henry Morton to Dr. Livingston in Africa," Penn said to Teller with a smile.

Then the Benzite approached Solice, "Ah Doctor Solice, just the person we are looking for."

Quinna looked up from her microscope and turned to the physicists. "Gentlemen, What can I do for you?" Quinna was busy setting up her one data parameters.

"Sergeant Hulka, to the recruits," he said with a smile.

"We have been looking at the results of the brain scans, and deep sub molecular probes with a scanning microscope and find that we need to get medical advice on our next steps. You are the only person on the ship we feel comfortable bringing these results to."

He handed her his PADD, "As you can see the brain tissue has been affected at the sub molecular level, causing the changes to the brain cells. Those changes are causing the cell nucleus to send out false messages that are causing the protein folding we are seeing creating the prions that are causing the brain damage."

"Archimedes', to the Greeks running to the king." Teller added triumphantly.

Quinna took the PADD. She stood and paced the lab as she was reading the data. The analysis seemed spot on. "Ok, so Sub-Molecular....So neuro..."

"Quantum neural," Penn corrected.

Quinna looked up from her thoughts. "Excuse me?" She said. Quinna put the PADD down. "I suppose you two already have a plan as well?"

Teller looked pained, "Shaka, when the wall fell."

"No," Penn said looking confused, "that's why we came to you. We're not medical doctors. We may be able to determine the cause of the problem, but when it comes to live specimens we may not have the exact skill set appropriate for that task. We don't want to kill anyone while we are trying to save them."

“Book, the Shepherd, to Zoe Washburne,” Teller added, with a slight grin. “The Curie’s in Stockholm. Roentgen and his wife, Bertha, taking an image. Emil Grubbe, in Chicago. Grubbe and Rose Lee.”

Penn smiled and clapped his friend on the shoulder, “Exactly.”

Quinna picked up the PADD and then headed over to where she was working. “So it is almost like a Quinna bit her lower lip and reached for her coffee. Sadly it was empty. “Fudge Monkeys!”

Penn smiled and reached into his pocket and pulled out a shot glass. Looking at Teller he said, “Jimmy Buffet on the Hullbilly?”

Teller chuckled and pulled out a flask and a second shot glass. “Tyrion Lannister to Missandei, his glass raised.”

Penn looked at Quinna, “Doctor Solice, you look a bit stressed. Allow me to offer you... you might call it a tonic.”

“Oh, no, I just ran out of coffee...” Quinna moved what she was looking at to the big screen. “You don’t suppose the answer to all this could be simple, do you?”

Penn looked a little disappointed and shrugged. However he offered his own glass to his partner who filled it. They acknowledged each other then emptied their glasses.

“It has been my experience,” Penn managed to say through his body’s strain to allow the “elixir” to go down, “is that the best answers tend to be the simplest and often the most overlooked. What were you thinking?”

Quinna moved to the big screen, “Computer, extrapolate the effects of a cortical suppressant if applied to exposure to the Maelstrom effects.”

The display populated. There showed a build up of the cell mutations.

“Hmmm...,” Penn said as he looked at the data, holding his glass out for a second round. “That is not the effect we were looking for, was it?”

“So a blocker or suppressant is not going to work.” Quinna turned, “Computer, reset sample.”

He looked at his glass full of the clear, syrupy liquid, and said, “Perhaps a suppressant is the wrong way. Perhaps we should be looking at a stimulant? Or at least something that stimulates Serotonin in or dopamine levels that appear to decrease through the apparent protein mutations.”

Quinna looked at Penn. That was what she was thinking. “Get out of my brain.” Quinna replied. She went over to the replicator for more coffee. She then moved past the men and exited to room. Then in turn she popped her head back in. “Are you coming?”

Penn looked at Teller who shrugged. They both followed the doctor out of the lab.

