

Episode 1.22

Upendi

"How did we ever get into this mess?" Tom wondered ruefully.

Harry glanced impatiently across at his friend sitting next to him. Even that slight motion rocked whatever they were sitting in a few times. The frozen and quite surreal environment around them curled up whatever was in his stomach. It somehow managed to look stranger in the dark, coupled with the sound of water running that he couldn't see anymore. "Gee, let me guess," he answered through gritted teeth.

"Well excuse me for being open minded and the fun one," Tom huffed.

Harry rolled his eyes, "may I remind you that I'm only stuck here because no one wanted to ride this stupid roller coaster with you."

Tom gasped in offense, "it is a themed water coaster slide hybrid."

"Ohno, I'm so sorry!" Harry snapped.

"Pfft, as usual it's my fault. Did you ever consider that maybe, just maybe, that this little power cut is yet another prank? If the power was truly out, the whole program would be off-line."

"No, the Holodeck has independent power. We'd only be locked in," Harry said.

Tom grew more impatient with him. "Then why are the lights off and the ride stuck!?"

"Oh I know that's not your fault," Harry said flippantly, but Tom blew a fuse silently not that he could see. "Come on, think about it. Everyone else is stuck in the Holodeck too. Do you really think Morgan would do something like this for a laugh?"

Twelve Hours Earlier:

"Of course not," Morgan protested with her arms tightly folded.

Kathryn and Chakotay glanced at one another briefly then back at their daughter. "That wasn't what I was expecting," he said.

"Hmph," Kathryn grunted with a dangerous glint in her eye. Chakotay took a couple of steps to one side. The Captain grabbed a few of the scattered PADDs across her desk so she could wave them in front of her. "Somebody is responsible for this."

"And you automatically think it was me? Wow, thanks mum," Morgan said huffily. The glare intensified which actually made her resolve waver a bit and caused her to stutter, "oh come on. This is totally James's style. Why don't you tell him off instead?"

Chakotay looked on with a smirk threatening to erupt, "I didn't think Doc in a pink tutu singing and dancing to Man After Midnight was his style."

"Eew," Morgan cringed.

Kathryn frowned up at the Commander, "we moved on from that one five minutes ago, keep up."

"We did?" Chakotay was puzzled.

Kathryn growled loudly and a little overdramatically, "apparently that's just how he spends his Sundays." She shoved one of the PADDs into his face, or at least tried to but he had moved too far away. "No, this one."

"Oh," Chakotay's face flushed with embarrassment. "I think we can let her off there."

"Oh we can, can we?" Kathryn exploded.

"I didn't do anything," Morgan whined once more.

Chakotay focused on her, blinking rapidly a little fearfully. "Fair Haven."

"Oh," Morgan pulled a disgusted face. "Dad's right, I think we can let me off there."

"So you admit to turning Harry's fake girlfriend into a cow?" Kathryn asked.

"What's a cow?" Morgan asked genuinely curious. She then looked over to the corner of the room in sympathy, "someone turned her into Seven? Poor you."

Kathryn and Chakotay's attention drifted over to where she was looking to find Harry curled up into a ball next to the door, shaking with his eyes wide. "She... she was still wearing the low cut dress. Oh god the hooves."

"Why is he here?" Kathryn whispered to Chakotay. He shrugged. "Okay so that one was probably someone else."

"Probably? You know who it is, he messes with Tom's crap all the time. Dunno why you're blaming me," Morgan said.

"James has found himself with a lot less time than he's used to after that last stunt," Kathryn said with a scowl.

Chakotay tried not to laugh. The glare he got was worth it. "Well you did want to delete the wife."

"What the... mum!" Morgan snapped at her accusingly.

Kathryn looked a little surprised, "what? That cow banned coffee from the bar!"

"Yeah after a near 100% poll," Chakotay mumbled.

Kathryn's face softened as she looked up at him, "what was that?"

"So yeah," Chakotay said after a quick throat clear. "Thanks to you, Fair Haven has been shut down until it's repaired."

"Okay. So when do I get my rations topped up?" Morgan asked cheerfully.

The command team stared at her blankly which wiped the smile off her face. She slouched in her chair.

"The problem is there are a lot of freaked out crewmembers, with the exception of Harry as he was already there," Chakotay explained. Harry whimpered something about a slobbery nose. "So there's that."

"Yeah, you're welcome," Morgan said. Her face though was stony, "why am I being punished for helping?"

"The drunken idiots who frequent Fair Haven don't see the program going off-line as an *improvement* like everyone with taste does," Chakotay said.

Kathryn shuddered, "and it would've been far less traumatising if we were allowed coffee." The pair looked at her with some judgement, she blushed furiously, "I only go to play pool, and wear my pretty dress. I miss my old school bun, they go together."

"No they don't!" Jessie's voice shouted from outside. Kathryn's cheeks flexed.

"Oh mum," Morgan said pitifully.

Kathryn didn't appreciate that either, her scowl was back. "That's it. I will never be able to look at the Fair Haven regulars without seeing Seven's face ever again, and don't even get me started on the pink sky and multi coloured ponies running around."

Morgan winced, "yeah that was Kiara's idea. She's a bit obsessed."

"And the Cherry Coke rain?" Chakotay asked.

"As if," Morgan scoffed. "It was Vanilla. Pepsi."

Kathryn leapt out of her chair and she slammed her hands down on the desk, startling both of them. "That's it. It's time you learn some respect."

Morgan looked on bemused. "Respect? I only did it for a laugh."

"Well, let's see if you find this punishment funny," Kathryn said. She walked out from her desk to pace around her daughter. "You and a team of your choosing will play a game against the victims of your pranks. It'll be up to them what kind of game."

"That is a bit funny," Morgan said.

"And familiar," Chakotay muttered.

Kathryn glanced back at him with a similar curious expression to earlier, "what was that?"

"How will that teach her respect?" Chakotay improvised.

"Have you played any ball games before, *sweetheart*?" Kathryn asked.

Morgan stared at her blankly. "Which console is it on?"

Kathryn smiled knowingly at Chakotay, a silent *I told you so*.

Morgan looked at the orange ball that landed in her hands curiously. Somebody yelled at her to throw it. She shrugged and tossed it over her shoulder. Seven just happened to be walking by behind her in time for it to slam into her face, knocking her into a near backwards somersault before hitting the ground with a thud.

"We didn't think this one through. At all," Chakotay muttered.

Kathryn sniggered maliciously, "oh I think it worked out fine."

Harry looked around with squinted eyes at the brightly coloured everything around him. The square bar that looked more like a market stall decorated with fake oversized fruit. A pool nearby with a slide hanging over it that he couldn't work out where you were supposed to get on. Every bit of seating he could see was not only green but looked to be fluttering in the breeze. The staff walking around with bizarre face paint.

It wasn't what he was expecting when Tom invited him to see his latest masterpiece. He at first thought it had already been tampered with like the others but Tom didn't react to it with anything other than pride.

He was looking to him for his opinion. After the incident in Fair Haven, Harry didn't think it was a good idea to be too honest. "It's, very lively."

"Yeah isn't it?" Tom laughed, ignoring his friend's lackluster tone. "I was spring cleaning the Mutineers, or trying to anyway, and discovered this little gem unused within. I'm surprised the prissy moron couldn't think of way to use it to embarrass me. No creativity I suppose."

Creative was definitely one word for it, Harry thought to himself. He was a little surprised though. "James made this? He's more mad... fun than he looks."

Tom scowled at him. He wasn't sure if it was for his little slip up or for him giving James the credit for his work. "Oh please. He's an amateur. All he did was copy and paste another story into my work, with some gay jokes added on for funsies. This is part of that story, and I thought because of how garish and random it was..."

Harry sighed in relief instinctively and blabbed, "oh thank god you can see it."

"Hey hey, you said you liked it," Tom stammered, very offended.

"I... do?" Harry stuttered in response.

Tom bought it so quickly Harry thought he was only pretending to. "I thought I could change it from some love scene on drugs into a quirky resort. I surprise even myself."

"That's not exclusive to you," Harry commented. Tom scowled once more. "I just figured you were inspired by or simply upgraded the hacked Fair Haven file."

"Harry, that's still a fresh wound," Tom whined.

Harry rubbed his still sore back with a pout, "tell me about it."

Tom didn't notice, his attention was caught by the music playing in the resort rapidly getting louder and the sound of water gushing. He looked up and pointed, "ah there it is."

"There's what?" Harry asked, following his finger he glanced up in time to see a tiny green roller coaster car shaped like a leaf folded into a right angle, running along a transparent water slide. Two holograms were sitting in it, singing along to the music. "Um," was all he could say.

"Wait..." Tom shushed him. "Here comes the best bit."

The car reached the end of the slide Harry spotted before, only it was a few metres above it. That wasn't the worst part. The track it was following ended abruptly and the car didn't stop there, it gently dropped, letting the passengers fall freely into the slide. They were laughing all the while as they splashed into pool.

"Yes!" Tom grinned and clapped his hands once. "It works." He noticed his friend's face take a turn for the confused, he quickly clasped his shoulder. "I wasn't sure if that would work after I took the air glider bit out. It does, much better."

"I have to ask. What's your Jessie punch score at the moment?" Harry asked flippantly.

"What? I don't know, I lost count, what's that got to do with anything?" Tom stammered.

Harry chuckled nervously, "oh nothing. Nothing at all."

Tom's grip on his shoulder turned into what felt like a couple of massages, "Harry, Harry. I'm worried about you. Maybe you should see the Doc. Seventh Voyager's tricks, the Tolg guy, they're messing with your head."

Harry stared at him with his jaw slightly agape, "uh yeah. I'm the crazy one." Tom's friendly smile looked patronising and in full agreement. Suddenly Harry didn't feel that he needed to be careful anymore. "I'm not the one making an obviously very weird love scene into an even weirder I hope over 18's club."

"It's called Upendi," Tom beamed, annoying Harry further. "It means love."

"That's a little sappy, but I'll ignore it for a dip," a woman's voice said, startling them both. They looked to find Triah eyeballing the pool. "As long as its not salt water."

"How did you get in here?" Tom asked.

Triah stared at him as if he was stupid, "the door was open."

"Ooph, I told the computer to wait until the official launch," Tom winced. He instantly cheered up, "this is a good start, ey Har. Everyone will want to come." Harry rolled his eyes. "Don't mind us, have a look around."

"Thanks, I'll check out the coaster after I get dressed," Triah said as she wandered off to the building in the distance.

Tom panicked and flailed about in front of her to stop her, "no no. You can't go alone."

"Why not?" Triah raised an eyebrow.

"Duh, it's Upendi. *It just takes two to make it true,*" Tom said with a flourished wink.

Triah sighed impatiently, "what?"

Harry shook his head, "Upendi means love."

"I'll just... go for a swim instead," Triah said with her eyes wide and judgmentally. She walked around Tom to continue on her way.

Tom sighed contently, puzzling Harry further. "I think this is the one Harry. People complained that Fair Haven was too singular and offensive, which I don't get. The first resort was too boys club, again I don't get that one."

Harry thought about that for a second and nodded.

"The less said about Mutineers the better," Tom continued bitterly. "But this, this is the one that'll get people to come. Harmless fun. Once more Tom Paris is King of the Holodeck."

"Oh I get it now!" Harry suddenly blurted out in realisation. Tom jumped out of his skin. "You make a program already ridiculous, you beat James and or Morgan before they even set foot in the place. What are they going to do to it, make it normal? Either way, you win."

Tom fought back his offense, especially with the last thing he said. He struggled to put a proud face on, "yes, that's the plan. I'm not just a pretty face."

Harry laughed, "I dunno why I ever doubted you. When's the launch date?"

"Tonight at 1800. I made sure to exclude a certain crowd, but apart from that everyone's invited," Tom replied.

"I'll be there. Though I don't know how you can keep them from finding out," Harry said.

He looked over just in time to see a random crewmember enter the Holodeck only to be greeted by an overzealous hologram singing and shouting *welcome to Upendi* at her. She hurried out before he could finish. "Though, you've definitely got your bases covered," Harry sniggered.

Tom gritted his teeth, "yes."

Kathryn could only shake her head, it kept her temper bubbling under the surface for the time being. The room was eerily quiet, no one dared to say the first word.

"They made me do it," Tani blurted out fearfully. The blank stares she got in return silenced her once more.

"Gee, thanks Tani," Morgan said.

Kathryn groaned into both of hands. "Give me strength." She reached for her cup to take one last sip only to find it was empty.

"Abandon ship," Craig whispered to the two girls standing with him. He didn't have to tell them even once, they were already edging backwards to the door.

"Don't even try," Kathryn hissed, freezing them in their tracks. Her hands lowered, Craig tried his best to avoid eye contact or risk freezing to death. "Do you remember why we played that little game?"

"To show me up?" Morgan answered genuinely.

Kathryn's eyebrow twitched, "so you'd learn respect."

"Same thing," Morgan whispered.

Craig and Tani both cringed at the same time. Kathryn's stare was directed at Morgan, but there was no escaping the deathglare where they were. "It's not the same thing."

"Nope," Morgan agreed a little too casually. "You wanted to point and laugh at the stupid girl who didn't know how to play this Basketball because she lived on a Borg ship. If that's respect, you can stuff it."

"Abandoning ship won't be enough," Tani whispered to Craig. He was too frightened to even nod.

"Would you two wait outside for a moment?" Kathryn asked dangerously. She didn't have to mention that if they ran off they'd be better off dead, her stare was enough.

"Yes ma'am," Craig squeaked and hurried out. Tani did the same wordlessly.

Kathryn breathed in deeply before addressing her daughter. "I let you roam free on this ship with no responsibilities, I rewarded your behaviour with rations. I wanted you to have some childhood while you still could. Clearly that was a mistake."

"Why are you mad at me? I'm..." Morgan protested.

"You cheated. And not in some break a little rule kind of way," Kathryn snapped.

"I don't even know the rules," Morgan butted in.

Kathryn wasn't put off, "oh I'm sure you don't need a rule book to know that altering one of your opponents is cheating."

Meanwhile:

B'Elanna hurried in carrying a tool kit. Without really looking at anything in particular she dumped the kit onto the computer station and opened it.

"Sorry I'm late. What seems to be the problem?" she asked.

"Bwark!" was the response she got, which also prompted her to finally check her surroundings. At first Sickbay seemed empty until she looked down to find a little feathered creature pecking the floor by her feet.

"Um," she was obviously speechless.

The doors opened again. Neelix strolled in nursing his chin with one hand. "Doc, it happened again!"

"Now's not a good time," B'Elanna said, fearing the worst.

Neelix looked at her puzzled. "Why, what's..." The creature quickly walked over to stand behind B'Elanna, unfortunately though he spotted it. His face lit up, the injury on his chin a distant memory as he hurried forward to grab it. B'Elanna didn't see anything wrong other than his chin hair being a little shorter in one spot.

"Buck bwark!" the chicken panicked, its feathers rustled. It bolted for the door, or it tried to but its escape was blocked.

"No don't, that's not edib..." B'Elanna stammered.

Luckily the chicken ran through the gap between Neelix's legs and managed to get to the door. It fizzled out of existence as soon as it reached the frame.

"Oh great," B'Elanna groaned.

Back in the Ready Room:

"You have to admit," Morgan sniggered. "It was pretty funny."

"Do I look like I'm laughing?" Kathryn snapped.

Morgan's face softened, she looked almost innocent. "No, not now but you were."

"And Seven?" Kathryn questioned.

"That was funny, don't deny it," Morgan said proudly. She was surprised that Kathryn still didn't look impressed. "And totally accidental."

Kathryn sighed tiredly. "The trick to dealing with Seven is subtlety. You don't have any."

"It was only a little bit. It's not my fault it was slippy," Morgan whined combined with a pout.

"Enough," Kathryn groaned. "Everyone is talking about this. I can't keep looking the other way and rewarding you for bad behaviour, just because I don't like the target. If you want rations you're going to have to earn them."

Morgan giggled for some reason Kathryn didn't understand. "Oh mum. You're so funny."

"I'm serious," Kathryn said.

Nothing really changed other than a moments hesitation. "Good one. Chuck your sixteen year old untrained kid into Engineering, fly shuttles and run diagnostics. Yeah right."

"Why not? You'll have to someday anyway," Kathryn said, finally making Morgan lose her smile and her face drained. "It's time to pull your weight. It's not like you don't know anything about starship operations. Don't play the dumb I'm just a kid angle because it won't work on me."

"But," Morgan stuttered. "I'm not Starfleet."

"Half of the crew isn't. We'll find somewhere for you that'll suit your talents, in the meantime..." Kathryn said.

Morgan quickly brightened up, "ooh, can I be Captain when you're not around?"

Kathryn burst into hysterical laughter, "I'd have to be sixteen myself to say yes to that." Morgan's face once more dropped. "No. For now we need people on the bridge for the nightshift. There's a lot less volunteers now that Harry thinks he's a badass who should shoot everything in sight."

"Nightshift?" Morgan whined.

"Nightshift," Kathryn said with no sympathy. "Don't worry, you won't be the only spoilt child there. It should make the transition into useful member of the crew a little easier."

The last sentence put Morgan a little on edge, her fists clenched behind her back. "I'm not useless."

"No. That's the point. You're my daughter, I won't let your talents go to waste," Kathryn said with a smile.

"But I was using my tal..." Morgan complained.

"Dismissed. Nightshift starts at 2200 hours," Kathryn said sharply, a hint to not dare argue with her.

Morgan was still a little tempted but she knew it wouldn't help now. She turned on her heel and stomped outside in a huff.

The teenager made sure she did the exact same thing when she entered the Bridge bang on 2200 hours. Since no one was paying attention it made little difference.

Morgan eyed up the Captain's chair until she noticed someone was already sitting in it. Then she looked toward Tactical, only then someone noticed her.

"Morgan? Isn't it past your bed time?" Jessie asked but with a friendly smile on her face.

"No, but it is my me time," Morgan replied seriously.

The two girls heard a chuckle from the Captain's chair. The occupier stood up, making Morgan annoyed once more. "What are you in here for?" James asked.

"Oh hell, you're in charge of the nightshift?" Morgan said in shock.

"No, no one really is. I just don't like to sit in Tom's sticky seat when I can fly from here," James replied.

"Oh so can..." Morgan instantly perked up.

"No," the pair replied in unison.

Morgan rolled her eyes. "Well it's that or I go home. Which is it?" She thought of something a little too late, "I mean, someone's gotta keep an eye on you."

James quietly laughed toward her. "No really, what did you do?"

"You mean which thing is she here for?" Jessie sniggered.

"Hey," Morgan grumbled.

"Come on Morgan. Everyone knows nightshift is the dumping ground for the troublemakers these days. Janeway hopes they'll be too busy sleeping to do anything during the day," Jessie said.

Morgan glanced around, noting the empty stations. She had to look twice at Opps since the person there had been oddly quiet, and she only noticed him due to his meek wave. "Craig," she mouthed. Then she spotted Tani with her feet up at the science station, filing her nails. That seemed to be it. "Oookay," she said, returning back to Jessie. "What did you do?"

"You were there. Guess," Jessie smiled.

Morgan frowned, unsure what she was talking about. For some reason she had an ugly dress in her head, then it clicked, "oh. Mum's frumpy Fair Haven dress."

Jessie seemed a little disappointed. "She needed to know. The look added ten years, she looked like an old granny. Truth hurts."

"That's nice. Should I take over?" Morgan asked, pointing at Tactical.

"No, Harry was bad enough," Jessie replied.

"Well then there's nowhere for me to work. Oh shame!" Morgan pretended to be upset.

Everyone pointed at the closest empty station to them, each of them different to the other. Jessie toward her day time place, Tani over her shoulder at the back stations. Morgan thought Craig was pointing at the command chairs, but he meant the little console Seven likes to use behind them.

Morgan looked a little pained for a moment. It didn't last, an idea put a mischievous glint in her eyes. "You know, you guys are so disorganised. Sounds like you need a leader."

"Is this how your mum got promoted? It's not going to work here," James sniggered.

Morgan mocked him by laughing similarly and pulling a face. "Better than sitting in the big chair cos you feel like it."

Jessie sighed, eyebrow raising. She was about to say something, James beat her to it, "and which station were you aiming for when you first came in?"

"Well..." Morgan said defiantly, but hesitated when a comeback didn't come to her immediately. She stomped over to where Seven usually stood, wiped the panel with her sleeve before she used it. "None, mum's paying me anyway. I'll just pass the time."

"What are you doing?" Tani asked warily.

Morgan didn't have to answer. The music blaring from the computers did. She smiled like she won something. "What? I'm only the Captain's spoilt useless daughter. Gotta act the part."

"Oh god," Jessie groaned to herself as she retook her station.

"Maybe... okay, can you at least turn off one song repeat," James stuttered once the *second* song started playing.

Morgan pointed a pet lip at him as she tapped the panel. The song changed to an annoying one which even Morgan turned up her nose at. She was about to change it again when the singer started singing about being a *blonde bimbo girl* and she burst into giggles. "Oh, this is sooo appropriate," she said thinking of someone else, but still facing James so everyone assumed she meant him.

"Why?" Craig finally spoke up after being silent all night.

Tom tried his best not to laugh at his next guest. Thanks to the previous host of the program scaring the first few visitors off, he didn't want to risk losing anyone else or his new masterpiece would be a flop.

He chose to bite his lip until the laughter subsided.

Unfortunately his guest wasn't fooled. She looked annoyed, very annoyed. "I do not see why I have to join in this irrelevant activity."

"You don't have to. It was an invite and it'll be fun. You have to let your hair dow... oh," Tom trailed off awkwardly.

Seven stared at him intensely. It didn't have the same effect it usually did. Her usually perfect blonde bun looked like it had collapsed on one side. Short strands of hair were flicking out in many directions. It also looked like her eye piece was stuck on with kiddy glue and was ready to slide off at any moment.

"The dress code is frivolous," Seven barked at him finally.

"I figured you'd be the last person to object to swim and beach wear," Tom said, earning him another glare. Despite her complaints Seven wore the same thing she always did. He was a bit concerned that if she went near any of the water attractions she'd scare off most of his clientele. "It's fine. Have a look around, a couple of drinks, socialise. You don't have to go on slides or anything."

"That was not my intention. Very well," Seven said, marching around him.

Doing so Tom got a glimpse of the back of her hairstyle. Usually it was so neat it was impossible to tell she had anything but short extremely bobbed hair. Only now the same half was struggling to maintain its hold and was falling free. The best part was that her left side was unmistakably shorter than the right, and not neatly too. The only explanation was Kiara or Naomi cut her hair.

"Wow," he gasped once she was out of earshot.

Back on the Bridge tempers were a little frayed.

"Oh my god, Morgan. Put it on random for the love of god," Tani whined.

Morgan stuck her tongue out at her, "not until all of the Aqua tracks are over."

James and Jessie looked at one another, she gave him a little smirk and a pointed nod towards Opps. He turned to see Craig busy bopping his head to the music.

"They're one song off singing into hairbrushes together," Tani said after glancing over shoulder.

Another song started making Morgan perk up, "oh this one is the best. We should do a video for it, you think?"

"Yeah def," Craig replied eagerly.

"Thank god," Jessie sighed in relief, seemingly at her bleeping station.

"What, is it the last one?" James asked.

"No, a passing ship's changed their course to approach us," Jessie replied. "No weapon signatures yet."

Tani looked around nervously. "Wait, we actually have to do something on nightshift?"

"I know, how strange. Usually every species in the Delta Quadrant goes to bed at the exact same time," James said as straight faced as possible.

"Wow," Tani giggled. "It's a good thing you've got your looks."

"It's a shame you don't even have that," Jessie quipped back.

Morgan groaned impatiently. Next thing everyone knew the song stopped and restarted. "Can you save your catfight for another time, please?"

James rolled his eyes and tapped on the little computer beside him. The music went off completely and wouldn't turn on no matter how much and hard Morgan pressed the panel. "So about the alien ship?"

Craig suddenly looked a little panicked, "oops." He cleared his throat, trying his best not to seem so. "They're hailing us. Um, maybe we should pick a leader before we answer."

Morgan abandoned her console abuse swiftly and raised her hand, "oooooh, phaser rifle."

"What?" Jessie said irritably.

"Shotgun, I think," Tani answered.

"Never mind, they've sent an audio message," Craig said meekly, he pressed play.

An icy woman's voice spoke over the comm, "alien vessel. You have violated Tinai space. Lower your shields and prepare your ship to be impounded by our government."

"Geez James, maybe you should look more where you're going," Morgan commented.

James glanced briefly at the transferred helm controls again. The auto-pilot course had long since been set by Tom, and he even had a small map of the sector showing a couple of nearby borders, none of which Voyager was close to. "We're nowhere near the Tinai. Um, try to hail them."

"Who made you the boss?" Craig blurted out. He immediately regretted it when he got glares from everyone but Morgan. "Ookay."

He didn't get the response either of them were after. The ship on the viewscreen fired a prolonged beam toward them, roughly shaking Voyager for a few seconds. It triggered the Red Alert klaxon.

"Hey, whatever that is it's gone right through our shields," Jessie complained.

"What is it?" Morgan asked.

"Looks like some sort of tractor beam, but its energy signatures are..." Jessie said with a puzzled frown. Before she could finish consoles and the lights began to flicker.

"Oh for god's sake," Morgan grunted as she ran over to Jessie's station, hoping to see it for herself. "I thought so, it's like what the Borg used to use."

Craig desperately tapped away at his station, "they're not responding to hails. I've even sent the border map we were given by the Vurti."

"If that thing's draining our power, maybe we can reroute a few things, give them a shock," James said, about to get up and go over to another station. He hesitated a moment before going for the empty helm, opting to stand instead of sit in Tom's seat.

"Yes, a feedback loop. Shouldn't be too..." Jessie said as she worked. Only another hand appeared between hers and pressed different panels. "What?"

"No time," Morgan said, finalising her commands.

Tani and Craig were the ones to notice a couple of torpedoes shoot out from their side towards the alien ship. Both slammed into the tractor beam's source, shutting it off with a small explosion. Morgan smiled a little proudly as the ship's lights began to flicker instead of theirs.

It was short lived. Tactical erupted into a fit of sparks, both girls quickly moved away from it. Soon it wasn't the only one. More consoles were flickering again, groaning and spluttering sparks of their own. They could even hear the engines slow.

"What now?" Tani asked, only then putting her feet down from on the console.

Craig was afraid to say what his console was telling him. "Um. Feedback loop, power overload."

Jessie directed a cold stare toward the teenager next to her, who ignored it completely. She instead decided to focus on one of the least damaged stations at the back. "At least our friends won't be bothering us for a while."

"But we're going to be easy pickings if we stick around," James said. He sighed reluctantly, "before we lose power, someone should. Bridge to Janeway." There wasn't any response. "Too late."

"You crazy, I don't want to be here when she finds out about this," Tani stuttered.

James shook his head. He quickly worked at the helm. "For the moment, moving us away. Full impulse, for now." The engines groaned at the command but the ship still followed his instructions.

"It's not going to be enough. We all know how power overloads go down. We need to shut down everything until we isolate it," Jessie said.

"Not if you find where the problem is. I'll do it," Morgan said from another station.

Jessie firmly grit her teeth for a few seconds. "No, pick the wrong one and the aliens will get a free ship. If we're lucky. Is there anywhere we can hide while we shut down?"

"Hide? We'll not get very far, they'll spot us taking a nap on some planet," Craig stammered until he melted from Jessie's gaze.

"Good, can we get there?" Jessie asked.

James winced, he hesitated on the course alteration. "Maybe but... I don't fancy my chances of landing this thing on a normal day."

"Don't! I'll find where the loop is," Morgan shouted over her shoulder.

Tani swivelled her chair around to look up towards Craig. "You're the high rank guy, say something. Do something."

"Um," Craig stuttered, still in a puddle from before.

"Great stuff," Tani said with a fake smile.

Voyager flew at an inconsistent speed toward a golden, rocky looking world. Its lights flickering on and off, or in some's cases off completely. It soon began its decent into the atmosphere.

James looked across at another part of the helm, already powered down. Seeing that made his forehead sweat a little. "We have no landing struts."

"What?" Craig squeaked.

"Why are you listening to her? She's not going to smooch you if you're dead," Morgan spat without looking at her target, and while typing away quickly.

James though was too busy to really notice what she said, or was ignoring it. "We don't have enough power to go back up."

Jessie scowled at Morgan's back. "Why does everyone go there? It's getting old."

"Hmph, you'd know something about that," Morgan muttered.

Everyone else cringed and *oddly* were feeling far less fearful about their imminent landing. Jessie shook with rage. She wasn't the only one though, Voyager trembled more as it approached the surface. Most of the Bridge had sparked or flickered into darkness, making her all the more tense. A quick glimpse at the viewscreen before it went off told her to find somewhere to sit and brace.

"Brace for definite impact," James warned everyone seconds later, all while cringing. As if he had jinxed it, the helm controls decided then was the best time to power off. He was the only one who noticed it though, his face lost all colour. "Really definite." Suddenly Tom's so called sticky chair was ok to sit in.

Morgan looked around desperately, she decided to duck under the banister behind the command chairs to climb into her dad's chair as it was closet. Jessie had meanwhile reached her usual station, grabbing it so tightly her knuckles were white.

Moments later the entire bridge jerked harshly to one side with a loud thud and metal scraping sound. Despite the bracing, some of the bridge crew were dragged to the floor in the same direction the ship tilted. Morgan ended up lightly flung between the two command chairs, while James had clung onto the helm controls until the metal had begun to tear, the seat beneath him already on the other side of the bridge. Finally the ship came to a stop after a few long seconds, levelling them off slightly.

Unknown to them all, Voyager had not only landed roughly on its belly and right of its saucer, it had narrowly missed sliding down a deep chasm by eleven metres. A mountain range lurked a few miles away, another near miss they were not aware of. All of its remaining lights snapped off moments after the impact, a dust and smoke trail lingered behind them.

There were multiple groans as the bridge crew tried to pick themselves up. James was a little confused he had ended up the floor after all, clutching a piece of the helm. The thought of Tom's face for not only that but the landing cheered him up for all of five seconds.

"Great plan, Jessie. I'm sure only the self destruct could've done better," Morgan muttered once she got her bearings, choosing her dad's chair again to sit.

Jessie swung around to stare at her, almost slack jawed. "Me? I'm not the moron who fired the torpedoes into a power sucking tractor beam."

Tani groaned as she struggled to get up, but more for the raised voices bouncing around the Bridge.

"I got us out and I was going to fix it, then you and budget Tom over there thought it'd be better if we skated over a mountain," Morgan snapped.

It took a second longer than usual for James to react, even then he still looked more confused than anything else. "Excuse me, budget Tom?"

"That's rich, you think this is my fault?" Jessie snapped. Her whole body ached and it was tough to get up, but the comments fired her up to stand anyway.

"Think, it is your fault," Morgan scoffed.

Tani sighed a little impatiently, "I'm with her on this one. What idiot pilots a failing ship into a planet." She looked apologetic but not to Jessie, she looked to where she remembered James was. "Tells someone to pilot, not the actual pilot." Morgan rolled her eyes.

"Give me a break," Jessie growled in her direction. "If we had stayed we'd be adrift, about to be boarded or dead. All because of a stupid little brat who thinks she has all the answers."

"Oh boy," Craig whimpered and stayed where he was, on the floor by Opps, nice and hidden.

"Maybe we should, uh, focus on getting the power back on," Tani whispered back at him. He nodded, not that she could see.

James overheard and thought about helping them.

"Hmm, maybe we wouldn't have to if someone did their job instead of doing up her makeup using Tactical as a mirror," Morgan snarled.

The deadly silence that followed froze the entire room. It didn't last long but the atmosphere didn't get any better from it. "Oh right, I'm sorry. Not all of us can be as useful as Princess Morgan," Jessie sniped right back. "What would we have done without the little moron dancing around the Bridge? Oh I know, Craig may have been able to hear warnings on his station and concentrate on it. And I..."

"Would've been able to concentrate on your staring and drooling, so sorry," Morgan said with faked sympathy.

"Is that all you've got? Little digs that I've heard over and over about James and I. Try harder little girl," Jessie said as plainly as she could, although her tone gave away her annoyance.

Tani meanwhile hurried over to Opps, stumbling on route, all while feeling the objects around her to make sure she got there. "Got anything portable, tricorders, flashlights?"

"Already got them," Craig tried not to sound worried, and to Tani sounded lower down than he usually was. After some squinting with a little help from tiny little tricorder lights she noticed he was sitting on the floor, connecting various things to an open panel under Opps.

"Good, cos we're going to need an escape," Tani whispered.

"It pisses you off. You told me that. Ain't broke don't fix it," Morgan smirked.

Jessie scoffed a little to hide her anger, it didn't work too well. "Or you don't have anything, you know you're wrong. Maybe Seven had a point."

Unknown to everyone since it was still pitch black, Morgan's jaw flexed and her fists clenched. "What did you say? Come closer and say that."

Craig gulped thin air, Tani began to sweat. "It's okay. We should have enough power in these to get a power transfer link working. Reroute some unessential systems, and Tactical since yeah..." Craig said quietly.

"Yeah yeah, just do it," Tani stammered.

James glanced over in their direction, then back ahead to where he knew the bickering women were. He knew he was stuck in between them, nowhere to run.

"You think I'm scared of you? Please, I could handle you in my sleep," Jessie said.

Morgan stomped toward Jessie with Janeway fire in her eyes. "You want to try me, huh?"

Jessie chuckled, "maybe come back in five years. I don't smack kids around."

"I'm not a kid!" Morgan roared back at her. Nobody needed lights to know she had lunged for the older woman. "You're all talk!"

James panicked and without thinking hurried over to get in her way. She was closer than he thought and she bumped into his arm with so much force it nearly knocked him flying. After the initial shock he tried to stand his ground. Morgan continued to push him, it took all the strength he had to stay where he was, and even then his feet kept stumbling out of balance.

"Oh, see see!" Morgan shouted nearly in his ear. "Hiding behind your boyfriend. You're pathetic, an embarrassment to women!"

Jessie flinched, something inside her clicked. Next thing James knew he was being pushed at from his other side, only this one was not trying to get through him like Morgan seemed to be doing, she was trying to push him to one side and out of the way.

"Jessie don't..." he stuttered. "She's sixteen."

He felt some hesitation from his left. The right continued to test his balance until the teen changed her tactics, opting instead to clobbering him in the stomach with an elbow. That made him back off a little involuntarily.

"Stop it. I can wipe the floor with all of you!" Morgan shouted, now almost in Jessie's face. She didn't seem too deterred by it.

"Overcompensation much?" Jessie taunted her while still bubbling with anger.

By this time Craig, with a little help from Tani, had gotten emergency lights and Opps back on. They wished they hadn't now with the sight of the two women looking ready to come to blows with barely an inch between them. James having been shoved to one side, unsure what to do.

"Can we turbolift?" Tani asked. Craig shook his head. "Screw it, I'll climb." Off she went for the closest turbolift. Craig wondered though if he should help James out as he looked outmatched. He knew how vicious Jessie could be and that made his mind up for him, he hurried over.

"You can talk. How many weaklings have you slapped around compared to people who actually can defend themselves?" Morgan asked furiously. Jessie shook her head, firmly biting her lip. "What? No comeback? I thought you were the backtalker, all you were good for."

Jessie's eyes narrowed, "what?" her voice sounded dark.

"Come on Morgan, you've won. Now..." Craig said as he tried to grab Morgan gently by the arm. She casually brushed him off and he was still knocked backwards onto his butt.

James sighed, he saw that coming a mile off. He then noticed Jessie curling her fists, inspiring him to try again. This time he tried to get in her way. She didn't look impressed with him for it, seeing Morgan look a little smug over his shoulder made it even worse. "Jess please, we don't have time for this," he said calmly.

"You heard the way she talked to me. I'm not going to..." Jessie spat.

"Yes you are, you're better than that," James whispered to her.

Morgan sniggered, "apparently not."

"Hey!" they all heard Tani shout. If that didn't get their attention, the little frightened squeal and a thud did instead. They all looked around to see Tani raising a flashlight above her shoulder, the turbolift door ahead of her only half open. "We have an intruder."

"What?" Morgan stuttered. She turned on her heel to run over, accidentally bumping Craig with her foot as she did. She mumbled an apology. By the time she joined Tani by the turbolift, the intruder Tani mentioned had shuffled to one side of the lift, out of sight. "Whe..."

Tani though had watched her do it, and pointed to the right.

Morgan sighed, one little shove opened the right door completely. Then she could see the new arrival huddled into the corner. Tani hadn't made a mistake, the figure was definitely not a member of Voyager's crew. No one on the ship had crimson skin, not since Neelix decided to take a nap under three suns during the last shoreleave. "Who are you?" Morgan demanded.

"My... my name's Vitera," the alien girl no older than seventeen replied, her black eyes dilated when they were directed toward the two teens. "Please, I'm not here to cause you any harm."

"Yeah I'm convinced," Morgan grunted as she gestured to the off-line consoles close by.

The girl, Vitera, looked apologetic. It seemed to calm her nerves somewhat. "I'm sorry. Not all of us agree with my mother's methods. I came here to warn you."

"Warn us, about your mother?" Tani said, her demeanour softened.

Morgan though was still reeling from her fight with Jessie. "You're a little late."

"No. This is what she does. She weakens and then she takes," Vitera said.

"Takes?" Morgan said warily, momentarily put off. "What does she take? Wait, why should I trust you? You broke into our ship. How did you even get in here?"

Vitera whimpered at her fierce tone. By this point James had walked over as well to see what was going on. "She probably got into the turbolift before the power went out. We probably didn't notice our shields go down, or intruder alarms during all the commotion," he said.

"Still, she's here, trying to get into the bridge," Morgan said suspiciously. Her eyes met with the terrified girl of a similar age, it calmed her down somewhat. "Fine. What can you tell us?"

"First, I'd find a way to secure this command room of yours before she finds it," Vitera answered. "She'll do whatever it takes to get her hands on it. She's stubborn, she won't quit. I'll explain everything once you do."

The crew trapped and wandering around Tom's latest fad were now very thankful it was so obscenely bright with its colour scheme. With it they could see where they were going, and faintly see each other.

What was left of the senior staff gathered around near the frozen exit to the Holodeck.

"I'm going to kill him when I get my hands on the little pest," Kathryn hissed.

Chakotay was a little confused, "who?"

"Paris. Let us into his stupid corny program, then sods off and now look at us," Kathryn said.

"I'm sure he didn't leave. We don't know what happened yet, maybe..." Chakotay tried to calm her down.

"No she's right. No one's made a comment in a while. Where is he?" B'Elanna asked with concern.

Unknown to them Tom hadn't gone at all, he was several hundred feet above them sitting in one of the coaster cars. It had been about to go over the incline when the power failed. Since Upendi wasn't a one person only ride he wasn't alone.

"May I remind you that I'm only stuck here because no one wanted to ride this stupid roller coaster with you," Harry said tiredly.

Tom gasped in offense, "it is a themed water coaster slide hybrid."

"Ohno, I'm so sorry!" Harry snapped.

Since they were so high up, no one could really hear them over the sound of the water still running through the slides. The music was even still playing, but in really slow motion and kept juddering.

"Strange," Chakotay said.

Kathryn scoffed, "is it really? If you can't hear his stupid voice, he's not here. Maybe..."

"Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to have children on the nightshift," Seven said.

Kathryn growled, almost everyone in the Holodeck backed off as a result. "Morgan couldn't have done this. There were adults at actual stations." Chakotay tried not to laugh but he snorted, getting her attention anyway. "James, Jessie, Harry should've all been there. Don't make stupid assumptions."

"Oh I don't know, that Morgan's a chip off the evil block," Tom said to Harry.

Harry stared blankly back at him. "You're a moron." Tom seemingly didn't hear it or ignored him. "Something went down. It felt like we were under attack. Morgan's biggest alteration was turning people into Sunday roast animals. But sure, this is just another one of the kid's practical jokes. I suppose she didn't get enough bloodlust when the cow nearly trampled me."

Tom laughed nervously. That was enough evidence for Harry to snap, "I knew it, that was you."

"Uh... April Fools," Tom said pathetically.

Harry was speechless, all he could do was quietly seethe beside him.

Meanwhile Kathryn stared into poor Tuvok's back as he tried once again to open the doors by rewriting one of the panels. "I cannot find a system with sufficient or any power, Captain."

The angry retaliation he expected didn't happen, only instead Kathryn perked up to everyone's surprise. "Oh, Seven finally. Make yourself useful."

"Captain?" Seven said, sounding puzzled. She tried to hide the pride swelling up in her chest at the thought of being needed.

"Perhaps you will be able to find a suitable power point since you can dig a little deeper," Kathryn said. Nobody felt like that her sentence cleared anything up, they only were more confused. "Assimilation tubules, nanoprobes. Do I really have to think of the details, can it be done or not?"

Seven raised her non mechanical eyebrow so the other wouldn't slip off, "perhaps I could make a connection, I shall try."

"Great," Kathryn said, gesturing to the panel. Tuvok reluctantly moved out of the way.

"That sounds like nonsense," Chakotay whispered to her.

Seven crouched down to point her fist at the same panel Tuvok worked on. The assimilation tubules shot out and embedded themselves in the wiring.

"So making Talaxian zombies or turning murderers into harmless little puppies is okay, but this is where you draw the ridiculous line?" Kathryn snapped.

"That murderer one again. You need to make up something more realistic," Chakotay laughed.

Kathryn laughed too but mockingly, "how cute, you think I'm making it up." Chakotay turned a little pale at the thought.

Seven glanced over shoulder, "um Captain." Everyone focused on her. "I'm stuck."

"Ohno, what an unexpected turn of events," Kathryn pretended to gasp.

"I'm serious," Seven said, she tried to retract the tubules but they either seemed to be tangled in the wires or trapped within a powerless system.

"So much for Plan B. Plan C anyone?" Kathryn asked like nothing happened.

Seven tugged once more with no success, "excuse me. I need some help."

"Perhaps we find something in this program that will give us leverage to pull the door open," Tuvok suggested.

"I'm sure I saw some of those creepy holograms pushing the empty cars along the beginning of that ride with big sticks," B'Elanna added on. She didn't wait to be told, she hurried off to collect them.

Seven cleared her throat, "I'm still stuck. Excuse me!"

B'Elanna returned with a couple of five foot long what appeared to be tree branches. She offered one to the rest. Tuvok took it before Kathryn could get a chance, fearing the worst. The pair then started to chip away at the crack in the centre of the door until it began to part. B'Elanna forced hers into the gap while Tuvok moved around to pull the doors open with his hands, the others joined in. Of course Kathryn made sure to shove Seven out of her way to do this, not too far since she was still stuck.

They barely got the doors halfway open when they noticed the figures on the other side of the door. One of them cackled in high pitch like a hyena, a male peach skinned alien with a crazy look in his eyes.

"Aaw thanks for opening that, we were about to give up," he was one pitch off squealing.

Kathryn pulled a face in disgust, "oh god, what are you supposed to be?"

B'Elanna and Tuvok quickly brandished the sticks, as they were the closest thing they had to a weapon. Only the aliens, bar the cackling man pointed guns at them.

"Hmph. Some respect, shrill one," the man said whilst batting one of the sticks out of his face. Only it was B'Elanna's and it returned immediately. Nevertheless he pushed his way into the door frame. The gun wielding ones prodded their weapons, hinting they should step back. They had no choice but to do as they wanted, allowing the man to waltz fully inside like he wanted as if he were royalty.

He glanced at the senior staff who'd opened the door with contempt as if they were beneath him. "You are in the presence of the amazing Nuvan, son of the fearsome Xara and Scart. Rulers of the Atinai."

"And what wrong adjective are the Atinai?" Kathryn asked.

Chakotay shook his head while Tuvok's eyebrows shot up to where Tom and Harry were sitting. "Oh boy," Chakotay mumbled to himself.

"What?" fortunately the man looked only confused.

"Should we round these fools up, Prince Nuvan?" one of his companions asked.

Nuvan glanced around at the strange Holodeck program, the Voyager crew were not surprised this guy didn't look dismayed but impressed at what he saw. "No. Bring them all here. I'm sure mother would find this a pleasing prison."

"You bastar..." Kathryn hissed.

Chakotay quickly cut in, "what is it you want here? Maybe we can figure something out before it gets any uglier."

"It can get uglier?" Kathryn asked, gesturing her eyes toward Nuvan. "Looks like the end result of a Tom and Harry transporter accident."

"Can you make anything out? I heard our names," Harry meanwhile asked from their roller coaster seat high above them. They could barely make out who was who as everyone looked like tiny shadow figures.

Tom squinted for some reason. "Kinda, something like interest over, we'll run with accents."

"I don't... don't think that's it," Harry muttered impatiently.

"To run I definitely heard, to run with axes?" Tom mumbled to himself.

Harry sighed, he gave up and sat back in his seat. It rocked the whole thing a couple of more times. Tom's stomach lurched.

The leader of the group, Nuvan puffed his chest as his face turned a hot pink. "Just you wait until mother gets here. She will decide your fate."

"Oh, okay we'll wait for your mummy to get here. Until then can you stamp your feet and suck your thumb in the corner so I don't have to laugh so much," Kathryn said in a sweet voice.

Nuvan gestured to his companions. They marched forward, forcing the Voyager crew backwards again. This gave him more breathing room to step further into the program. He passed Seven still trying to pull herself free. No one had noticed her and she clearly hadn't noticed the new arrivals. He though doubled back to get a better look at her.

"And who are you?" he asked.

That got her attention, her head darted up. Their eyes met. "Seven of Nine," she breathed, almost seductively.

"What a cold name for such a golden beauty. Do you..." Nuvan said as smoothly as he could, which wasn't much.

"But you can call me Annika," Seven said, batting her eyes more than usual. By now everyone was feeling very ill, even Nuvan's teammates.

"Annika," Nuvan sighed contently with a dreamy look on his face.

Kathryn rolled her eyes so much they nearly rolled out of her sockets. "Oh my god. If anyone needs me, I'm going to drown myself in Tom's Upantsi water slide." Since she wasn't leaving, the aliens let her march off in the opposite direction.

Craig gingerly moved his hand in front of him, toward the turbolift shaft. A forcefield sprung up to push him back. He gave James at opps a nod.

Morgan watched from and leaned over the partly scorched Tactical station, with Vitera and Tani standing on the other side. Tani occasionally glanced over her shoulder to check if Jessie was still seething in the first officer's seat with her back to everyone.

"That's all the exits now," James said.

"Even the one no one uses in Janeway's Ready Room?" Tani asked. Both of the men nodded in response, making her sigh in relief. "Now what then?"

Morgan's eyes drifted to Vitera. She didn't have to say anything though, Vitera took in a deep breath, ready to explain.

"Twenty years ago our leader, my mother's first confidant, led a rebellion against the pink skins, you may know them as the Tinai," Vitera said.

"Pink skins?" James said in a wary voice.

Vitera's chin lowered, shame spread on her face. "I apologise, I meant no offense. We were born on the same world, but they treated us as monsters. All we wanted was to live as they did."

"I wasn't..." James said, also a little ashamed. "Just surprised me that's all. Sorry."

"So your father led the revolt against them," Morgan said, hinting that she should carry on.

Vitera grimaced for a moment. "Scart was not my father, he died before I was born. He was Nuvan's though. Mother told me he was a great man, not like *them*. That he was the only one who saw us as people."

"Scart was a Tinai?" Craig asked, but it seemed an obvious question after he said it.

"Yes. He fought for equal rights, our freedoms," Vitera replied.

Morgan looked confused though, "am I missing something? You don't look too thrilled about it."

Vitera's gaze turned sullen, she directed it to the floor. "It did more harm than good. They called him a traitor and executed him. My mother never got over it. Hate and paranoia consumes her now."

"I don't mean to sound like a self centered bitch here," Morgan said, ignoring the humoured scoff from the command chairs which she expected. "But what does this have to do with us?"

"After Scart was executed, the Tinai convicted all of us of treason. We were exiled here. This planet is nothing but wasteland. No food, very little water which is contaminated by the mountains' ore," Vitera explained as quickly as she could. "Our ship belonged to traders who were interested in mining the ore. Mother saw that as an opportunity. Everyone saw it as an escape and went with her. But no matter which direction we chose, there was a border where we were not welcome. Every species we tried to barter with would turn us away in disgust."

Tani shook her head, sympathetic and a little angry at what she was hearing. "I don't get it, why?"

"Humans weren't that much better than the Tinai and their friends, once upon a time," James said with disgust in his voice. "Idiots fear the different, so they blame and hate them for it. They're cowards, nothing more."

"Perhaps. We've wondered why for decades. Everytime we were turned away, mother grew more and more enraged. We were starving, our power was running out. So she decided to take it. So many ships looted and left for dead, their only crime; passing through to trade with the Tinai or their neighbours," Vitera said. "It's the only life I've known."

"So she'll be here now, raiding Neelix's kitchen? No one deserves that, we should stop her," James said.

Morgan agreed, she looked disgusted. "Definitely. Let's hope for her sake she doesn't find mum's stash. It could get ugly."

Vitera was naturally a little confused at the banter, she tucked it to one side for now. "I'm afraid it's not that simple. The looting was for our survival, but mother has wanted for years to escape this sector. She saw your ship as the means to do so."

"Why?" Tani asked.

"Simple, unlike the other ships, yours wouldn't be missed. You wouldn't be coming back through here. It also helps that your ship is habitable," Vitera replied.

"So like you warned us, she'll want to get to the bridge," Craig said. Vitera looked over her shoulder to give him a few nods. "What's she capable of?"

Vitera froze, she couldn't look them in the eye for what she was about to say. "Your species will remind her of them. So, anything... everything. She's..." a lump in her throat cut her off, eyes threatened to tear up. "My mother died long ago, I do not recognise her anymore."

As more and more of her crew, herded by the armed aliens, entered the Holodeck, Kathryn grew even more frustrated. Everyone knew better than to be within a few metres of her when she was like that. Visible steam rose from her.

Finally, the last group were pushed inside, followed by a woman with a cold stare. Tall and proud, with a definite air of authority about her. The complete opposite of Nuvan who had retreated to a nearby bar to flirt like a teenager with Seven.

The woman scanned the crowd, eventually resting on Kathryn. "You. Are you in charge here?"

"What gave it away?" B'Elanna whispered to the people closer to her.

Kathryn glared, too stubborn at first to answer her. Eventually she lowered her arms from the crossed position and took a step forward. "This is my ship. I'm..."

"Not anymore," the woman cut her off. The tension that caused could cut the ship in half in a second, even some of the aliens shivered. "I am Xara. Ruler, Queen of the Atinai."

The tension didn't ease, the silence was uncomfortable for everyone. Everyone except Kathryn anyway, it only amused her. "I'm sorry, was I supposed to bow?"

The woman smirked at her on approach. "You will. From what I understand, your command deck is far above us. Shielded from the inside. Yet you are here."

"That's too bad. Goodbye," Kathryn said.

"You think I'd give up that easily?" Xara sneered. "I'm sure with some, *convincing*, you'll lower the shield. Even a cold blooded creature like you wouldn't want your fellow man to suffer."

Kathryn death glared her, but the woman was strangely unaffected by it. She seemed to have a similar stare of her own. Anyone in the general vicinity were sweating at the proximity.

"I assure you, if anyone on my crew gets even the slightest scratch, you'll find I will become a lot less accommodating," Kathryn said.

Nuvan chose the tense standoff to wander over, his arm linked with Seven's. "Oh mother, I have wonderful news."

"Not, now," Xara snapped slowly without even looking at him.

Kathryn though did look at him, as well as Seven. She shuddered uncontrollably. "Except her." She had to double take, Seven was smiling for once, it creeped her out. She wasn't the only one either.

Intrigued by this and with a completely different image of this *her* in Xara's mind, she turned to address her son anyway. She was soon very disappointed. "What is this?" she snapped.

Nuvan wasn't put off. "Mother, this is Annika. She will be my first confidant. Not that there will be any need for a second," he addressed the last sentence to Seven flirtatiously. She giggled in response.

"What the fu..." B'Elanna blurted out.

Fortunately Xara wasn't too impressed with this news either and she grumbled, "I do not have time for your practical jokes, Nuvan."

Nuvan's smile faded, "I am not joking, mother. Annika is my one true love."

"She is a pink skin. I will not be insulted in this manner!" Xara snapped.

Kathryn rolled her eyes, "oh for god's sake, he's a grown... boy, he can marry whoever he wants. So you'll be leaving for the wedding soon, right? I'll even pay for it, cater... Neelix get over here." Neelix dashed over in two seconds. "That was quick."

Chakotay laughed behind his hand. He wasn't the only one.

"Of course. This is so romantic, I'd love to cook for your wedding," Neelix gushed.

Seven turned up her nose, "of course. Janeway is trying to be rid of me once again. Why don't you just be direct and say it instead of this fake nice routine."

"Fine. Go away," Kathryn said. Seven recoiled in horror.

Xara wasn't sure what was happening, it was making her tremble with anger. "Enough of this. Tell me how to get through the shields or I'll start with her."

"Mother!" Nuvan cried out.

"Okay," Kathryn shrugged.

Xara growled, "you think I won't call your bluff. Your kind always protect those who are exactly like you."

Everyone feared for their lives at this point. Kathryn looked ready to take out the garbage. "Seven. Like me? So racist and suicidal, I see. I know how to handle assholes like you," she even started to roll up her sleeves.

Tuvok thought to step in. Chakotay did too but he was frozen on the spot. "Perhaps we should start again. This is..." Tuvok said.

"You are not like them," Xara said icily.

"No. Voyager is home to a number of species. I am Vulcan," Tuvok answered. "Now..."

Xara looked at him as if he was two Seven's. She didn't look him in the eye, instead rudely shoved her palm in front of his face. "I will not speak to traitors. Now, here's how this is going to go. One of you will inform whoever is up there about your predicament. Tell them you have one day to live. In the meantime I will pick one at random to interrogate."

Kathryn was even more annoyed than before, no one thought it was possible. She placed a hand on Tuvok's shoulder as she stepped a little way in front of him. "Don't you dare talk to or treat my crew like this. You will deal with me, leave them out of it."

Seven looked even more offended than before. "She didn't stick up for me like that Nuvie." Nuvan rubbed her back gently, all while pouting at her. "She's always hated me," she said with tears in her eyes.

"She doesn't deserve you, my lovely," Nuvan said. The people in earshot gagged.

Tom gasped abruptly, Harry jumped. "Oh you don't say that about anyone's mama."

"Are you sure you're not concussed?" Harry asked impatiently.

"I don't hear you trying to decipher this," Tom replied just as much.

"No, I'm too busy trying to think of a way off this ride. So far the winner is jump," Harry grumbled.

"My people on the bridge will never lower the shield for you. Don't waste your time," Kathryn hissed.

"So they'll have your crew's blood on their hands. Of course you'd value this ship over your own people," Xara said. "Pinks! All of you, so materialistic; no respect for life," she spat in disgust.

"Yet you're risking your people's lives to take over my ship? Take your hypocrisy and your pink comments elsewhere, preferably where the endless stream of Neelix look-alike greeters hang out," Kathryn snapped.

Neelix huffed in offense and folded his arms tightly. "That's it, I'm not baking that coffee cake for the wedding." He stomped off.

"As if I'd go to Seven's wedding," Kathryn laughed.

Xara smiled maliciously. "Proving my point, Janeway was it? You treat your alien slaves with such contempt. Even pink ones such as this..." she looked at Seven in disgust, just in time to catch her son and her make kissy faces at each other. "I'm not sure what she is."

"If only Tom were here, we'd have proof Janeway doesn't really discriminate when it comes to crapping on people," B'Elanna said.

Despite not understanding anything that had been said, Tom did hear some of B'Elanna's words. He smiled dreamily, "I love you too turtle dovey."

Harry stared at him blankly, once more considering slipping out of the coaster car and dropping the twenty plus metres into the shallow pool below. "You got that from all that she sa...? Turtle dovey?"

"What? She's cool with it," Tom protested.

"You know for an episode technically called love, it's awfully racist," Harry muttered.

Tom narrowed his eyes accusingly at him. Harry knew why, he kept his mouth shut. He didn't know how wrong he was, "what's racist about a turtle dove? They're beautiful."

"Now, who's first?" Xara smiled deviously. Almost everyone pointed at Seven instinctively. She folded her arms in a huff.

Jessie heard bleeping coming from somewhere behind her, she shimmied her sitting position a little to look behind her. All of the stations there were blank still.

Meanwhile Morgan, Craig, Tani and Vitera huddled around Opps, all focusing on the small sensor screen. James hovered around on the other side, occasionally dividing his attention between that and the command chairs.

"We've found the shallowest source of ore along the edges of the valley," Vitera said, pointing to a wavy line alongside the icon showing Voyager's location. "It won't get your ship off the ground immediately, but if you can collect a few canisters every trip you should be able to build up some energy for your regular systems."

"That's if we can avoid running into your friends," Tani said. "And we still don't know what they're even up to."

"We've barely got enough power to keep the bridge protected. We'll have to do something," Morgan reminded her.

Vitera looked a little guilt ridden, "knowing my mother, she'll try to trick people into getting in..."

"That doesn't seem so terrible," Craig chimed in.

"Or she'll interrogate them," Vitera said, staring at him blankly.

His face fell, "oh."

"Maybe we'll get a clearer picture once the mining team steps outside," James said.

"Yeah. Question is, who's going first?" Tani questioned.

"Not first," James disagreed, shaking his head. "I wouldn't feel right sending kids out there when we don't know what's happening. Plus, this should be a Security job."

"Yeah def..." Craig nodded until he understood where he was going with it. "What?"

Morgan didn't look too pleased, Tani was the complete opposite. "You mean going into danger and lugging heavy metal is a man's job," the latter said, for some reason sounding like she was gushing.

"What's wrong with you?" Morgan asked her in disgust.

"No," James said slowly and uncomfortably. "If this was about simply lugging metal around, I'd imagine everyone but Craig would be fine."

"Yeah!" Craig agreed too enthusiastically. Once again he misunderstood what James' point was until he'd opened his mouth. This time he looked offended, "hey!"

Vitera giggled to herself. Morgan though still didn't look impressed. "I want to help, I'm not sitting around here like a Jessie."

Jessie of course tensed up at the remark. This time though she kept quiet.

"Tough," James said with no room for argument in his tone. Morgan narrowed her eyes at him.

"Now now, let's not do this again," Tani laughed nervously. "We'll need something to carry the ore stuff in, so why don't we see if there's anything we can muster up. Maybe if it's safe we can go next time."

Morgan didn't respond immediately, she kept hoping her Janeway glare would work. James' own expression showed no sign of cracking, but she wasn't going to let him think he won so her eyes rolled before turning away. "Mum has those bags she uses to collect coffee beans. They'll do."

"Great, come on," Tani said with a desperate smile that said come with me, please. She hurried to the Ready Room, reluctantly Morgan followed.

"Phew," Craig wiped the sweat from his brow. "So about volunteering me for a mining mission."

James smirked at him briefly, "I could go alone if you'd prefer."

"Oh I see," Craig eyed him suspiciously. "You think you can guilt trip me into volunteering. Well you got another thing coming."

"No, I don't mind going..." James said.

"No way, and let you get all the glor... fun. This'll be a cinch," Craig grinned.

James looked at him with a rising eyebrow, "you sure showed me," he said flatly.

"Damn straight," Craig said, walking off toward the open turbolift.

James wondered what he was doing, but shrugged it off and walked over to the centre of the bridge. He chose to lean on the little console behind Jessie. She knew he was there but didn't bother giving him even a side-eye. "Are you..." he began to ask.

"Hmmm," Jessie barely responded.

"I wasn't siding with Morgan," James said. She gave him the silent treatment for a little too long for his liking, he felt terrible. "Look, I..."

"I'm not that bad okay," Jessie said with a frog in her throat. "I wasn't going to hit her."

James was a little shook with that response. It left him stammering a bit, "I didn't... it's just..."

"Forget it," Jessie sighed as she looked away from him instead of directly ahead. James nodded and was about to walk away when she said, "don't do anything stupid."

James was still a little put off, but still he managed a small smile. "No promises." He walked over to Craig, who was still at the turbolift wondering how to get around it and climb down the shaft. James shook his head as he grabbed his arm, then dragged him to the other turbolift door to open it.

The beeping started again. Jessie looked over her shoulder behind her. Before it could stop she moved up onto her knees and peered over to the computer panel on the metal divider behind her. One part of it was flashing. She went to press it. Text began to crawl across the screen. By the time she was done reading it there was no one left on the bridge but her.

Nuvan and Seven slid off to a quieter section of the program, she looked pretty upset.

"What's wrong, sugar bunny? You can tell me anything," Nuvan asked her sweetly.

Seven huffed pathetically. "You see the way they treat me, especially *her*."

"The Janeway witch?" Nuvan wondered aloud.

"She and her awful daughter. They don't appreciate my perfection, they're threatened by it," Seven answered.

"Daughter?" Nuvan seemed surprised.

Seven looked across at Kathryn and the rest of the senior staff. "If you met her you'd understand. Vile girl, so irrelevant and plain, it's why she acts out I believe."

"Don't worry honeybumpkin, I'll recommend her for the torture-gations. They'll all get it for tormenting my darling Ani," Nuvan snarled.

Seven shook her head. "No. We'd have to get through the bridge's forcefield first. A shame. Captain Janeway would've co-operated if we had her."

"Hmm, if only we could lure her out. I'd take care of her myself, if it's the last thing I do," Nuvan said.

Seven smiled at him, her cheeks blushing. "Oh my Nuvey Wuvey, no. She is a Borg like me, I don't want her to hurt you too. We'll take care of her together."

Nuvan embraced her dramatically, "oh Annika. I'd like nothing better. You are the greatest gift I've ever been given." Seven swooned, and before anyone knew it the two were kissing passionately.

"Eew," most of the room grimaced, and turned away.

Xara dared to approach them, she grabbed Seven by her botched hairdo and tugged hard to separate them. "Do not defile my son any further, and you!" she snapped at her son. "If you are going to follow your father someday, you must prove yourself. Choose someone to interrogate, and I will show you how it's done."

"But mother," Nuvan whined like a child, until his mother deathglared him to submission. His neck disappeared into his shoulders. "I want to torture all of the people who upset my Annika-poo."

Everyone in earshot slowly put their hands up, Kathryn slapped the hand of the nearest person to her doing it. They all got the hint and quickly put their hands back down.

Kathryn then looked to see who she had hit, and was very surprised to see it was Chakotay's. "Even you?"

"If you open a program called Human Error you'd under... actually don't ever do that," Chakotay said with a disgusted look on his face.

Nuvan stomped forward to point accusingly at them, "you will all be tortured! My honeybunny will be avenged."

Xara rolled her eyes, "don't be such an overdramatic fool. Get out of my sight." Nuvan huffed and walked off, Seven hurried after him. "Now, it's obvious who I should pick for my first interrogation."

"You mean that wasn't the torture?" Kathryn asked, pointing at the retreating couple.

"You," Xara sneered at her.

"Okay, but I don't think you can beat that," Kathryn smirked.

Xara cackled, "oh, you'll see soon enough."

Acting Captain's Log Stardate... er Thursday: So far everything...

"Acting Captain?" Tani sniggered.

Shh Tani, no one has to know. Anyway, what was I saying? Oh yeah. What with the crew apparently being held hostage in the Holodeck, it's up to us to get the ship's power back and then find a way to get rid of our intruders before anyone gets hurt. Hopefully when James and Craig get back we'll have a good idea how much fuel we're going to get from each trip, and how long each one will take. Until then we need to think of a rescue plan.

Vitera slid her arms across the Conference table to lean in and whisper to Tani, "who is she talking to?"

"It's a computer diary thingie. It's not working, don't tell her," Tani giggled back.

Jessie sighed impatiently from the other side of the table, the two talking to each other heard it and looked at her. "Someone tell her she's not Janeway, so stop trying to be. Quit mucking around and wasting time."

"Why can't you?" Tani snapped back.

Jessie shrugged nonchalantly, "I thought she was very clear about the pathetic no good for anything. Who'd listen to that?"

"Wow, no wonder James doesn't want you," Tani said with a smug smirk.

Jessie laughed halfheartedly, then she rolled her eyes. "Oh sweetie, if only I put all my self worth into whether or not a guy fancies me. Save all your stupid insults for when you grow up a bit."

Morgan groaned as she dropped into a nearby chair with a thump. "Hypocrite Jessie strikes again. Got any bright ideas or do you just want to pick on, what did you call me again, little girls?"

"Sure. You're focusing on rescue missions and getting Voyager back into orbit, when we can save time and chuck all of the power we mine into transporters," Jessie replied through near gritted teeth.

"Yeah but..." Tani tried to cut in.

Jessie wasn't going to let her, "it's not as fun as beating up aliens and rescuing everyone, I know, but that's tough. Welcome to the real world, kids."

Morgan scowled viciously, "what's your problem?"

"You say that like I was the one who started this wannabe catfight," Jessie said.

"No but you call us kids and tell us to grow up, so maybe you should be the grown up for once or is that too hard for you?" Morgan said coldly.

Jessie didn't know what to say to that, all she did in response was sit back in her chair and grind her teeth.

"Yep," Tani smirked.

To her surprise Morgan glared at her as well, "she is right about one thing, we're wasting time with this crap." Tani reluctantly agreed. Morgan then turned her attention to Vitera, "did your ship land with us, or is it in orbit?"

"Mother intended to abandon it and replace it with yours, but didn't want to draw attention. It's somewhere on this planet hidden, I don't know where," Vitera replied.

Jessie sat forward again with a worried expression, "that's what's been bothering me. Won't she be wondering where you are if she beamed her entire crew here?"

Vitera flinched visibly, she looked down at her hands to avoid the stares she was getting from all of them. "You're right. I should show my face sometime. I won't be able to return though, not without putting you at risk. She knows I disagree with her, she'll get people to follow me."

"In that case you going back would be dangerous as well," Jessie said.

"Better than mummy dearest thinking we've kidnapped her or something," Tani pointed out.

Vitera nodded, "and she will. I doubt she'd imagine anything else."

"Even though you disagree with her?" Jessie said.

"Mother believes me to be too weak to oppose her. She'd be correct," Vitera said, bowing her head. "This could help you though. Nuvan and I are still her heirs. An enemy capturing one of us she'd see as a weakness, a one she'd be eager to remedy."

Morgan looked concerned, "would she...?"

Vitera nodded whilst biting her lip. "Yes. All mother cares about is getting revenge. We're merely tools to her at this point." She looked up with a sparkle in her eye. "A tool worth a few of your crewmembers, I'm sure."

"I dunno. It's a little risky. Yeah she could free some of ours, but she could also send people to follow them and attack. We still don't know if you're tell..." Jessie said.

Morgan's attention darted to her quickly, glaring all the while. "I think that," she said abruptly to stop her. Jessie not only glared at her back, but the intensity of it matched. Tani and Vitera looked on nervously. "We need to act quickly. It could be a while before we have enough power to mount a rescue."

"I guess if this Xara thinks we're holding her daughter hostage, she'd be expecting us to make demands sooner than later. The longer we wait, she'll start to suspect otherwise," Tani said.

"Right," Vitera smiled meekly.

Jessie looked around the table at everyone feeling a little helpless, she covered it up by looking annoyed. "Fine," she eventually muttered with a shrug.

"Problem. We don't know when James and Craig will be back," Tani said.

Morgan shook her head, "why? We can handle this without them, as long as there's still someone on the bridge to open and close the door."

Jessie sat quietly, worry clouded her features. This wasn't going to end well, she knew it, but they didn't want to listen to her. Her eyes fell on Vitera and she noticed as well.

"Oh please, you'll have to do better than that," Kathryn scoffed.

Xara's jaw dropped. With a grunt she gestured to the two minions currently dunking a poor crewmember's head under the pool water.

They nodded and lifted him up. The crewmember spluttered out a gallon of water, but not because he was trying to get his breath back. He had been laughing until he noticed they weren't going to do it again. "Aaaw, why did you stop?"

B'Elanna struggled not to laugh, "what are the odds they'd pick Sid for torture?" Chakotay smirked.

"You are callous Janeway. I hate to admit it but I'm impressed," Xara said, resisting the urge to grit her teeth. She was able to smile though once a new idea popped into her head, two other aliens were recruited with a finger click. "Maybe this'll get your information juices flowing. Bring her to the drinks station."

"What?" Kathryn said in a bemused tone. Her arms were roughly grabbed. With too many guns on her and the crew she couldn't resist them dragging her over to the odd looking bar.

Xara strolled into it first, scanning the shelves for something in particular. The red fizzy juice and green, almost solid milkshake looking stuff was her final choice. By that time Kathryn had been dragged over to face her.

One sniff of the green drink made Xara shudder, then smile again. "Perfect." She looked at the stuff left on the counter in disgust. "But first let me..." with a single arm swipe everything on the counter slid into a broken pile on the floor.

Kathryn gasped in horror and screeched, "no! God no!"

Xara looked on flummoxed, "what? I haven't..."

The two holding Kathryn were just as confused, but not for long. Both were on the floor seconds later, cradling their newly aching ribs.

Kathryn ran over to pile. Shaking she picked up a piece of glass that any Voyager crewmembers nearby recognised, but the aliens didn't. "You bitch!" she snarled.

"What, who'd put a jar of dirt on a drinks station?" Xara said right before she was tackled to the floor. Nearby aliens quickly rushed to their leader's assistance. It took more than two this time to hold Kathryn back.

Xara climbed back to her feet with a deranged look on her face. "That's the last time Janeway. Nuvan!" she shouted. After a few seconds of not getting a response her anger was making her shake.

Kathryn though found it funny, "what, you need your weirdo son to handle me?"

"Hmph. He may seem harmless to you because of how he acts, but no one can match him in terms of physical prowess. Once I tame him he'll be a fine successor to his father," Xara said proudly. In a blink of an eye she was furious again, "Nuvan!"

One of the aliens approached her nervously, "he doesn't seem to be here, Highness."

"What? Then where is he?" Xara roared at her.

Seven giggled as she wrapped her arm around Nuvan's, tugging him towards one of the bay doors.

"We'll show that nasty Janeway, right snugly bunny," Nuvan smirked at her.

"Right. She's bullied me for the last time," Seven said with a smile, although with a tear in her eye.

Nuvan gently wiped it away, "weak people see true greatness, beautiful diversity as a threat. No one understands that better than I. We will show them together."

"Kiss me. Resistance is futile," Seven purred.

Nuvan though looked confused, "resistance is wha..." he didn't get to finish.

It took them a while to reach without working turbolifts and a few Jeffries tube trips, but the walk to the valley that only looked close to the ship felt so much harder. The star blazed over them, the air was so dry it scratched at their throats.

By the time they had reached the ore deposit Vitera mentioned, they had very little energy left to fill the only bag they had brought.

"I get it," Morgan panted once she finished and picked up the bag.

Vitera raised an eyebrow curiously toward her. "What?"

"Why your mum lost the plot. Half an hour on this planet and I'm tempted to jump," Morgan said, gesturing down at the chasm. Despite her comment she still walked the few metres up the steep makeshift path to the top.

Vitera shook her head, offering her hand to the girl which she regretted immediately. Doing so nearly pulled her over. She was a little shocked, but she tried to hide it when Morgan joined her. "You should pace yourself. The ore is heavy."

"I'm fine. Borg strength," Morgan tried to smile, but she was too tired for even that. They headed back towards Voyager which looked a little orange from the winds blowing sand all over it.

"Mother may not have been as vicious and hate-filled as she is now, but..." Vitera said with some hesitation in her voice. "She's always been a passionate woman, stubborn and deadly. Nuvan and I both feared and respected her. Although she was brilliant and always put her people first, there was a ruthless pride within her. I think you overestimated how much this exile influenced who she is now."

Morgan frowned, some of what she was saying felt oddly familiar to her but she couldn't place why. "You think your old mother would've looted passing ships and held people hostage if this hadn't happened?"

"Well..." Vitera mumbled, hesitating again. "No, she'd have no reason to. I just mean, how can I say this without offending you?"

Morgan decided to keep silent, not only to let her think but to make the trek back to the ship easier.

"We were just like anyone else, but people hated, feared us because of something out of control," Vitera said through her coarse throat. "We did nothing wrong and yet we were treated as if we were killers, thieves. Not because of anything that we did but how we looked."

"I don't understand," Morgan blurted out in a stutter. She glanced apologetically to the girl beside her.

"I don't know how your race is, but from what your teammate said before and the behaviour of our neighbours who refused to let us escape this sector, it's a widespread problem," Vitera said. "You, you may not have noticed it since you weren't the focus of it."

Morgan stalled for a moment, the bag she was dragging behind her suddenly felt heavier. A few tugs and a glance back told her nothing changed, it was her. Vitera stopped as well, watching her curiously.

"I'd like to think I judge people based on their actions, but..." Morgan muttered hesitantly. "I hope I haven't..."

Vitera shook her head, now she looked sorry instead. "No no, I wasn't accusing you. But I must admit when I was discovered in your lift, I did."

"Huh?" Morgan frowned.

"When your friend opened the door all I saw was another pink skin," Vitera said reluctantly. "I was afraid you'd treat me the same as them. We attacked you though so... yeah." She smiled sadly. "Like the Tinai, I didn't fear you because of actions, it was bias."

Morgan shook her head as she carried on her way. They weren't far from Voyager, and she was a little worried about getting to the airlock whilst dragging the heavy bag. She was more worried about what she was thinking than that though. They reached the slouched in the gravel ship in silence.

"You're being too hard on yourself," Morgan said finally. Vitera looked to her in surprise. "You're not the Tinai. It's definitely not the same. If I was bullied my whole life and I happened to run into someone who reminded me of them, I wouldn't be all *meh*, my first instinct would probably be wary of them. The Tinai though can't say the same."

Vitera wasn't sure what to say to that. All she could do was smile kindly.

With that off her chest, Morgan got ready to climb onto the edge of the saucer. Vitera offered to hold the bag which was a struggle. Even though the ship had tilted to the right, the saucer edge was still quite away above the ground, she only just managed it by jumping up and grabbing it. Once she was up Vitera shakily held up the bag for her to pull up.

Finally they were both up on the saucer, where they had a steep walk once more to reach the airlock they had used to get out. The hard part was over though, both were relieved and not eager to do it again.

"You know, it's weird," Morgan said in between heavy breaths. "When you described your mum before, it reminded me of someone."

"Yeah?" Vitera wheezed behind her.

"She sounds a lot like my mum," Morgan laughed. "I wouldn't like to be in the Holodeck with them two facing off, that's for sure."

Vitera laughed with her at that image. "Finally, a worthy nemesis for her."

Halfway up Morgan thought of something and looked over her shoulder, "are you sure you want me to take you back to her? What if she finds out you helped us? We can go straight for the bridge and..."

"I'll be okay," Vitera shook her head.

"You're a little eager 'bout it, I knew you were too nice to be real," Morgan teased her in a tone that she hoped Vitera would know was in jest.

Vitera smirked up at her, "that'd be a little too predictable, wouldn't it?"

"Well done sister!" a male voice shouted from what sounded like a little way below them. Vitera recognised it and cringed, Morgan though tried to follow the voice to see where it came from. She didn't have to, two figures emerged from the large oval crevice at the front of the ship. She didn't recognise either of them, but the sparkly brown outfit one was wearing instantly told her who one of the pair were. "Saves us the trouble of hunting her down."

"Brother," Vitera squeaked. "What are you doing here?" she had to shout down since he was too far away to hear her soft voice.

"Never mind that," Morgan grumbled, she then pointed at the brown catsuit wearer. "Why is she with you?"

"Mind your tongue!" Nuvan shouted back at her. "You dare speak to my delicious shnooky like she's dirt. You are the dirt."

Morgan snorted before falling into a fit of giggles. "Oh my god. Thank you for this, I needed a good laugh."

Seven narrowed her eyes at the girl. "See, see the way she treats me. Like I'm beneath her, when she's the irrelevant one."

"What's going on?" Vitera asked desperately. "How is mother allowing this to happen?"

"Mother will be proud," Nuvan answered. "I will avenge my beautiful princess and doing so will give mother the advantage she needs. Janeway will not crack, but with her precious daughter buried in the chasm she'll fall to her knees."

Morgan couldn't help but smirk. "I'd like to see you try."

"Don't. Everyone underestimates him. He's stronger than he appears," Vitera said quietly to her.

"So am I," Morgan said without missing a beat.

Seven clutched onto Nuvan's arm to whisper something in his ear. He nodded. He then launched himself into a sprint across the hull toward them. Seven followed at half the speed, mostly due to her heels.

"Brother no, there's no need for any of this!" Vitera yelled desperately, all while instinctively backing away a few steps.

"Get her Nuveytoovey!" Seven shouted.

Nuvan cackled, now only a few metres away. "I'm doing this for you Anny!" he shouted, but he muttered only to himself, "and I'm doing this for me."

Vitera looked on with worry as Morgan stood her ground even though he was so close, only instead of standing mostly straight like before, she changed her stance as if she was going to run as well.

"No," Vitera stuttered, she launched herself forward to in front of her. Morgan looked on, momentarily shocked she didn't react immediately. "Stop!" She shouted and outstretched her arms.

Her brother glowered at her, he didn't slow down. "Traitor," he growled at her, then callously pushed her aside with a mild arm swipe. Undeterred he kept going, ready to take a swing at the other girl in his way.

Morgan reclined a little backwards at the last second, avoiding the strike, then swung a kick into his stomach. It took him by surprise, Nuvan couldn't help but stumble back from the painful blow.

She was about to kick him one more time when Seven shouted to warn him. Nuvan grabbed Morgan's leg before it hit him, and pushed upwards. She fell hard onto the sloped hull, back first. She slid down for a couple of metres. It dazed her long enough for him to get up and crouch over her.

"Nice try, now you pay for hurting my sweet Annika," he grumbled as he grabbed her by the throat.

To his surprise Morgan wasn't put off by it; she even smiled before returning the favour, only her throat grab was pushing him up. One more kick and she let go. It not only got him off her like she wanted, it sent him hurtling down the saucer. When he hit it a deck down he fell into a fast paced roll toward Seven.

Next thing anyone knew Seven was flying forward, landing flat on her face against the hull.

"Ohno," Vitera stuttered.

Morgan scrambled to her feet. She swung around in time to see Vitera bounding down the saucer, Nuvan still rolling and very close to the edge. Only it wasn't the edge Morgan and Vitera had climbed from earlier, it was the front of the ship, and that wasn't anywhere near as close to the ground.

"No, brother!" Vitera screamed as he slid over the edge, disappearing from their sight. She reached the edge moments later.

Morgan had frozen on the spot, shaking with a lump in her throat, pins and needles swarmed her chest.

Vitera shakily dared to look over the edge, what she saw made her gasp and look away. Morgan assumed the worst and flinched horribly.

Unknown to her Nuvan had fallen ten metres from the saucer in full view of a group of the aliens walking from near the deflector, and one of them was furious. She was the first to run over and kneel beside him; she gently raised his head and shoulders to cradle him in her arms.

"Mother. I'm sorry," Nuvan mumbled in a croaky voice. "I tried. Janeway daughter. For Anni. She..."

"Shhh, it's okay," Xara tried to soothe him by stroking his face.

It did just that, he smiled weakly. "Are you proud of me now, mother?" he wheezed. She didn't have time to answer him, his body slumped with his eyes still partly open.

"Nuvan," Xara sobbed. Reluctantly she let go of him gently so she could stand, despite her trembling knees. Hoping to catch her son's killer in the act her head shot up, only she found her daughter's face peeking from over the edge. Once she was spotted Vitera ducked out of sight. "Vitera, get down here now!" she hissed dangerously.

From Morgan's point of view Vitera barely moved. She thought about walking over but her guilt weighed her down. The earlier conversation repeated in her head making her feel worse.

Movement from the right made her crouch down. Xara and the people with her had climbed up the same way she did earlier. Morgan quickly looked for a crevice to hide in. The one underneath the Mess Hall was closest, so she crawled into it. Only then she noticed they weren't coming for her, they hadn't even noticed her. They were heading for Vitera. Morgan scrambled back out of her hiding spot.

"You. What have you done!" Xara snapped at her daughter.

Vitera cowered at her mother's imposing stare. "I didn't... there was... I..." She couldn't think of anything to tell her, for some reason she couldn't explain it gave her courage. "I did nothing," she barked back.

"Nothing?" Xara was momentarily taken aback. Her anger soon took over. "You stood there and let that monster murder your brother in cold blood!"

"No!" Vitera cried in protest. "It's not like that at all. He..." Xara didn't give her time to finish, she swiped her hand across her face, knocking her daughter onto her knees.

Morgan flinched, it stopped her in her tracks. It was only then she realised the aliens were armed with what looked to her like phaser rifles, and she was nowhere near close enough to land a blow before they'd spot her and fire. She fought the urge to help Vitera, knowing it would only get her shot. Reluctantly with a growing lump in her throat she continued on her way to the airlock, briefly clasping her eyes on Seven lying unconscious only a few metres away.

As tempting as it was to drag her along and give her a slap or twenty for the situation, she figured the ore was more important. So Morgan hurried back, grabbing the bag on her way.

"She did what?" James stuttered. The shock didn't last, he only shook his head. "She's a Janeway, why am I surprised?"

Tani shrugged meekly, "things changed. Hostages and whatnot."

"No, can't forget the whatnot," Jessie commented. Tani laughed mockingly.

"So was the plan for Morgan to drop off our fake hostage and go mining on her own, risking them following her, or..." James questioned.

"She's not that suicidal," Tani replied, her fake laughter turning into the nervous kind.

James nodded while his face twisted, "yeah, right. Maybe we should go back out and look for her." He turned back the way he came, instantly reminded of a certain problem with that idea.

"Sure... I'm... game," an orange Craig panted while slouched haplessly over two bags of ore.

Both Jessie and Tani rolled their eyes, not surprised in the least. James however stared at him in disbelief. "You're no good to her passed out or dead, are you that desperate?"

Craig had no answer for him, probably because he was taking an unintentional nap.

"Come on James, you know the answer to that," Jessie snickered.

James shrugged, "yeah. Did she say which way she went?"

Tani raised an eyebrow quizzically. "Are you serious? Morgan can take care of herself better than anyone I know," she said. Jessie recognised the jealous tint in her eye but she didn't understand why.

"I'm not saying she can't. She's still a sixteen..." James started to reply.

"Yeah exactly," Tani said quickly, confusing him into silence. "If Craig does it he's desperate, but it's okay for you to?"

Jessie laughed at her now that she understood, "oh god, but I suppose that one year gap makes all the difference."

James glanced between them, "what, huh?"

"Well yeah, Morgan's young for her age, always has been," Tani stammered. Jessie still laughed quietly at her. "I'm just saying he's gotten back ten, fifteen minutes ago. If someone's gonna look it should be someone who hasn't been, like you or me."

"Oh, I get it. I think. Some of it I get," James said. Jessie smiled toward him. "I'm fine, ish. I can at least trace her steps. Hopefully she didn't go a different way." Craig started to snore, making James wince. "Then again, hopefully she did. I feel like I've ran a marathon."

Jessie nodded, "you look it. Jealous seventeen year old aside, Tani has a point."

"Tani has a point about what?" Morgan asked.

"That someone different goes out to look for..." Jessie replied, then she realised who asked. She did a double take toward the same turbolift shaft James and Craig entered in from. "How... that was fast."

"Was it? It felt like a few hours," Morgan said unenthusiastically.

James glanced at her, unsure whether to be impressed or annoyed until he noticed she seemed unusually sullen. "What happened?" he asked.

"Nothing. Tired," Morgan replied.

Tani frowned as she hurried over to her friend's side. "You're not fine. Tell us."

Morgan sighed deeply. "Ambush. Vitera's brother. She's been taken I guess."

"You guess?" Tani stammered.

James noticed Morgan flinch at that. "At least you got away safely," he said to reassure her.

Morgan glanced between the two, she settled on him. "Tell that to Vitera. They're not going to buy that hostage story now, are they?"

"She's their family. I doubt she's in that much danger," Jessie said.

"I wouldn't be so sure," Morgan muttered. She walked over to the two bags of ore and Craig to dump her own. She looked briefly puzzled when she spotted him. "Ookay?"

"Yeah. We really should fill the tank. We don't know how much we're going to get from this," Jessie suggested.

"Okay, why don't you and Tani get on that, Engineering's a long walk," Morgan said plainly. "We should come up with a plan in the meantime, and fast."

"Do you think they'll take Vitera's actions out on our crew?" James questioned.

Morgan shook her head timidly, "not exactly."

Xara marched back into the Holodeck with a thunderous expression on her face. The people with her dragged both Vitera and Seven with them by the arms.

"Oh joy, she's back," Kathryn groaned.

Xara kept eye contact with her as she stomped over to her. No one was really expecting it, Kathryn included, when she backhanded her as hard as she hit her daughter earlier. Unlike her though Kathryn only stumbled back from it. "You watch your mouth," Xara hissed.

Both Tuvok and Chakotay stepped forward, Kathryn hinted at them to stop by putting her hand up.

"I was actually talking about Seven, but that I'll take back," she said icily.

"Play time's over Janeway. My son is gone, murdered in front of my eyes," Xara snarled.

Kathryn frowned even if it did sting her sore cheek further. "What?"

"Who would murder your son?" Tuvok asked.

"Guess," Xara scoffed. No one did, the Voyager crew were baffled. "You think I'll let you and your murderous daughter get away with this, you're kidding yourselves."

Kathryn and Chakotay shared a glance, but not of shock like a lot of the crew were doing. Chakotay shook his head, prompting Kathryn to face Xara once more. "That blonde bimbo isn't my daughter, don't make me sick."

Seven scowled at her, eyebrow twitching. A lone tear dribbled down her cheek.

"This looks really bad," Tom commented from far above.

Harry rolled his eyes, "thanks, I would never have figured that out myself."

Tom stared at him with a hurtful expression. "I miss the nice Harry, what did you do with him?"

"Nice try Janeway. *That blonde bimbo* told me everything. A little black haired gir..." Xara said.

"Oh of course Seven told you that," Kathryn laughed with derision. "She's so jealous of some kid she'd make any old rubbish up. What's low is she'll do it even if it means putting her in fatal risk. That's lower than I thought you were capable of."

"Enough. I saw her, she pushed my Nuvey!" Seven snapped at her.

"And what exactly was *Nuvey* doing when this happened? Clearly doing his own thing, at least," Chakotay questioned.

Xara's face stiffened, it sharpened her dangerous eyes further. "Of course! As usual it's not the poor little pink girl's fault she killed somebody different. He shouldn't have been mixed race around her."

"That's not what I implied," Chakotay snapped. His offense would've been clear to everyone who knew him, but his tone and sharpened features clued everyone else in. "Your people have suffered unfairly. I

understand that, I truly do. But our people would not have done anything, unless it was in self defence."

"Even Jessie?" Neelix questioned.

Chakotay sighed impatiently, "and even then we don't kill..."

"The description sounds like Jessie," Triah chimed in.

"You're not helping," Chakotay whispered over his shoulder to her.

"I don't know, if James was there and Nuvan made a comment. She can be very defen..." B'Elanna said.

"It wasn't Jessie!" Seven snapped.

Chakotay groaned while Kathryn looked at him with sympathy. "We're surrounded by idiots, don't even bother," she said. Then she twitched somewhat violently, "wait, are you people implying that I'm old enough for Xara to mistake Jessie for my daughter?"

Everyone shuffled a few metres backwards away from her. Chakotay sniggered to himself, earning him a glare which didn't have much effect. "What? I didn't say a thing," he smiled.

A vein on Xara's forehead throbbed, a two second warning before she exploded, "enough! Clearly we've been too soft. It's time to make an example out of some of you."

Sid jumped up and down, "ooh, I volunteer for another interrogation session!"

Xara shook it off before swivelling around to address all of her people. "Herd them up. We're going for a walk." Some of them immediately raised their weapons while gesturing for the Voyager crew to move, others talked quietly between themselves before doing anything.

"Mother," Vitera tried to protest, "please stop. You're making a mistake."

Xara ignored her to close the gap once more between her and Kathryn to grab her arm. Kathryn instantly pulled back, only to get a couple of the nearby aliens point their weapons at her. Xara this time had no resistance. "You won't get my ship this way," Kathryn hissed at her.

Xara chuckled, "no, but I'll get your daughter." She then pulled her roughly towards the Holodeck doors.

A couple of the primary stations flickered back to life, bringing a smile to Craig's face. "We're on," he said, tapping away at the Opps station.

James climbed out from underneath the Engineering station, which only a small section of it was back on. Before standing up he closed the panel he had been working in. "I tried to cut off the less essential systems, so we should have Opps, part of Tactical at least, helm control if we're lucky."

"Yep, we've got interior sensors, short range kind, no transporters yet though," Craig responded.

James thought to check Tactical, but not before glancing over to the helm where Morgan sat. Only she had a vacant stare on her face with her feet draped over the far edge of it. "Morgan," he said carefully.

"Oh right," Morgan said with disinterest. She leaned forward a little to look at the console then sat back again. "Barely."

"Barely?" James sighed.

Morgan did the same, almost like she was mimicking him. "Engine statuses and stuff, stuff we already know."

"Okay, but I guess we don't need that for the moment," Craig said with a smile. Morgan didn't take the bait, she shrugged passively.

"Right. It's the transporters we need. I wonder if we can spare a little more from elsewhere," James said as he got to Tactical.

Jessie and then Tani emerged from the turbolift doors, both looking frazzled from the long walk and climb from Engineering.

"Please tell me we don't have to do that again," Tani complained.

Craig looked a little nervous about his answer. "Probably not." James frowned and looked towards him. "I scanned the Holodeck first, it's almost empty."

"But the message..." Jessie stuttered.

Craig's forehead looked more like a waterfall at this point. "There's very little people still on the ship. Apart from a few stragglers still I assume trapped in their quarters, the ship's empty."

That got Morgan's interest piqued, she swung her chair around so she no longer had her back on everyone.

"Then where the hell is everyone?" James asked.

Craig squeaked a bit before he answered, "there seems to be a mass of lifesigns outside."

"Let me guess," Morgan muttered to herself. "Can we get the viewscreen on at least?"

"I'll give it a go," Craig replied. He tapped away, occasionally stopping to wipe the sweat from his brow with his arm. Eventually the viewscreen did come on, but the image quality was poor and kept cutting out. Through the pixelated grain they could make out the orange surface gradually filling up with blurry figures.

"Hang on. Maybe we don't need a few things on here," James said, quickly working on Tactical.

A few tense minutes later the picture sharpened slightly, some of the figures looked more like people, some of which they recognised. Morgan scanned the crowd until two stepped forward, far enough away from everyone else. It got everyone's attention. She recognised them both clearly, her face drained quickly.

"Is that...?" Tani asked in a whimper.

Morgan stared at the woman she saw on the hull holding her clearly miffed mother by the arm, unable to do anything since armed aliens were standing closely behind her. With her spare arm she made what appeared to be a beckoning gesture in their general direction.

"She's baiting us to come out," Jessie said.

Morgan bit her lip in an attempt to stop her from losing her temper. It wasn't working, it was making her tremble as well as her lip bleed. "We've got to do something."

"Definitely, but what?" Craig said.

"We need the transporters," Morgan said. "If we chucked almost everything into them, including the bridge shield..."

"We risk bringing up the aliens who are holding onto our people," Tani said.

"And retaliation," Craig added.

Jessie had been unable to keep her eyes off the screen the whole time, her eye was beginning to water. When she finally turned away the first person she saw was Morgan, catching the girl slouching her shoulders and shaking her head.

"We need a distraction," Morgan mumbled.

"A distraction? What are you going to do, show Xara your dance routine for Halloween?" Tani questioned with a slight giggle.

"I give her what she wants. That'll distract her," Morgan said.

Her reply shocked most of the bridge. Jessie on the other hand smiled at her with a sly tint in her eye. "Pissing off and floor wiping with the aliens I presume."

Morgan's lips curled only slightly, "what else?"

"Now you're talking," James sniggered.

Craig and Tani glanced at each, sharing a similar wince.

A little while later the group hovered by the half open turbolift door, four armed with phasers while Tani only looked to be armed with a frown.

"You can handle this right?" Morgan asked her.

Tani squeaked, "sure. No pressure or anything."

"None. Once this starts, we're operating blind. All you have to do is remember the code words," Morgan said.

"I still dunno why Craig made the cut and I didn't," Tani said with a huff.

"I'm a Security trained officer," Craig protested, gesturing the rifle in his arms. "That's why."

He knew it would happen when he did it, still he groaned when James and Jessie smirked at him. "You're right, you man, you show her," Jessie said in a deeper voice than usual.

"Yeah that's why, we need some brains on the bridge," Morgan said, pointing a cheeky wink in Craig's direction.

"Ohno," James said mid cringe, "that'll only encourage him."

Morgan was confused, even more so when Craig seemed to accept her comment with a smile. The others knew better; he only cared about the wink. He then gestured for her to go first.

"Weird," Morgan whispered to herself as she squeezed through the gap in the door. Single file the others followed leaving Tani to stand around and look worried.

Outside the ship the star had begun to set. The temperatures had took a nose dive already with the cloudless sky above them. The unfortunate crew who had gone to the Upendi program in summer wear couldn't stop shivering.

Xara meanwhile tapped her leg impatiently, while the other arm kept a tight grip around Kathryn's neck. "She'll come, she'd better," Xara muttered.

Despite her position Kathryn smiled knowingly, "not all of us are gifted with loyal daughters like yours."

Vitera overheard and winced. Xara though took great offense and dropped her to the ground. The aliens pointing their guns quickly changed their aim, just in case.

"You wait. I'll have that vile creature's throat in my hands before long. You meanwhile will be still falling to your grave," Xara snarled, pointing towards the valley nearby.

Kathryn stood back up without breaking eye contact, "I thought it was my ship you wanted. Maybe you should make up your mind first."

"Hmph," Xara grunted. "I've been waiting for the day I can turn my back on this place for too long. Don't think I've forgotten. First, a score needs to be settled."

"And what then? On route to take over the bridge you'll trip over a loose wire, and we spend the next five hours on another revenge mission against the ship's *chef*."

"What did I do?" Neelix whined.

Tuvok's eyebrow levels were critical on both sides. "Captain perhaps..."

"Highness!" somebody shouted, pointing upwards.

"What?" both Kathryn and Xara said. The latter scowled as the former laughed it off, embarrassed.

Xara swung around to follow their gesture, catching Morgan in the act of standing on the edge of the saucer and she wasn't alone. She wasn't fazed at being spotted, it even looked like she had been waiting for it with her folded arms, stare down stance she had adopted. Unlike her teammates she didn't have a weapon drawn, the rifle hung from a strap over her shoulder.

"That's her," Seven snarled.

Xara narrowed her eyes. "You! You will pay for murdering my son!"

Morgan flinched internally, she tried not to show it though. "He tried to kill me, like she told him to," she said loud enough for them all to hear, whilst pointing towards Seven. The ex drone was about to protest, but Morgan wasn't done. "She tricked him and he paid the price."

A lot of the crew looked toward Seven accusingly. Several didn't look surprised though. Her eyes darted side to side, but her expression was the same neutral one she always sported.

"Can you sink any lower?" Kathryn muttered dangerously toward her.

The skunk eye Seven was getting weakened her facade; her right eye twitched, arms folded behind her back. "I was... supporting my man. I did not know what he intended to do."

"This changes nothing!" Xara snapped, her crimson skin flushed a brighter red. She locked eyes with Morgan. "First you killed Scart, then you take my son. You all will pay, starting with you."

"Works for me," Morgan said flippantly.

"Morgan," Kathryn warned her.

It made little difference. Morgan jumped the couple of metres down from the saucer to the ground. Craig was about to do exactly what she did but noticed how high the drop was, he quickly hurried down the slope to shorten it.

Morgan walked toward Xara and the rest, soon followed by her three companions.

"Last chance Xarhate," she said, stopping a few metres away. "Go back to your ship and we'll forget this happened."

Xara ground her teeth before answering, "this is my ship." Quick as a flash she grabbed Kathryn again by the arm. "Give me the codes to my ship or your brat dies."

The proximity allowed Kathryn to laugh in her face, "again, you can't keep track of what you want first. Maybe you should sit down and have a rethink."

Xara shook her roughly, "maybe you should keep your mouth shut before I..."

Somebody screamed hysterically. Nobody knew why or where it came from, at least until Morgan was tackled to the ground by a blur of brown and blonde. It was a shock to everyone who saw it.

"Um, do that," Xara mumbled, temporarily put off. "Enough of this. Kill them, kill them all!"

Her people didn't react immediately, it gave the Voyager crew time to fight back and spread out. Guns were swiped or knocked out of hands. An all out brawl broke out. Kathryn took that opportunity to clobber her restrainer in the ribs.

Morgan was still a little stunned from the sudden tackle to physically respond. "What... what the hell are you doing?" she managed to ask before her attacker pressed her arm into her chest to hold her down. Only then she noticed her rifle had not only fallen off her shoulder, it had span a few feet away from the impact.

"I am going to kill you for all the things you have done to me," Seven snarled.

"Why, you couldn't convince some other idiot to fail it for you?" Morgan taunted her.

Seven growled and was about to strike her when Morgan pushed her off of her. She rolled over to get onto her feet, just missing an offer of a hand from Craig and James. The two ex Borg girls faced off, Seven seethed at the sight in front of her.

"Do you want some help?" James asked.

Morgan shook her head, "no. I can handle Barbie Girl. You help get the others to safety."

Jessie nodded and hurried off, making sure to give Seven a wide berth. It didn't matter, the ex Borg didn't give Jessie a first glance. "Split," Jessie whispered whilst keeping her chin down. Craig hesitated briefly and needed an elbow nudge from her to do the same.

"You want to get one last hit in, for old time's sake?" Seven asked James maliciously.

Morgan frowned and looked over her shoulder at him. He though smiled, his eyes were elsewhere and so he began to walk away as well. "This fight is already not in your favour and I have better things to do," he said, then noticed Morgan looking at him. "Have fun."

Seven glared at him as he left, but once she and Morgan were alone it faded away like it was nothing. "You think you're better than me?"

"No," Morgan replied in a light tone, her lips curled, "I know I am."

"You're a killer. Nothing more, nothing less," Seven said, pointing her normal blank expression at her. Morgan yawned mockingly. Doing so flicked a switch in her psyche, she charged once more for the young girl, only this time she was expecting it and delivered a swift kick to the knee.

While the fighting raged on amongst the Voyager crew and the aliens, handfuls of the Starfleet crew who had spread out away from the battle disappeared in a transporter beam periodically. It took a few of these before enough of the aliens noticed and shouted warnings to their leader.

"Grab one, storm the ship, I don't care how... take it!" Xara commanded.

Craig overheard, he looked around to see the aliens spread out further, hoping to get close to any crewmembers who were trying to get away from it all. There was still a good amount of crew left to beam away, but after a couple of beam outs it was getting far too risky he thought. Making the choice he went to tap his commbadge, only to be interrupted by being tackled to the ground.

He tried to push his attacker off, only that made them more interested in the rifle in his hands. They each attempted to tug it toward them for a few seconds before the alien gave up and instead went to kick him to take it. Craig saw it coming but could do nothing.

Before the kick could land the alien was seemingly pulled backward, forced to turn around only to get a punch to the jaw. They landed in an unconscious heap beside Craig, startling the last remaining life out of him.

James stood over him, crouched then held his hand out. Craig took it and was immediately dragged to his feet. He ignored the ache in his arm for the time being.

"Thanks," he squeaked. Before James could respond Craig remembered what he was about to do with a gasp. He tapped his commbadge, "up," he whispered.

Tani heard him, she shook her head grimly. "Shields."

A completely drenched Harry with a towel around his shoulders glanced up from Opps with a frown. "I've only gotten thirty so far."

"We can't risk it. That's the code, there must be a good reason for it," Tani said.

"Fine," Harry sighed, he got straight to work. "Redirecting power reserves to the shields."

Tom looked very disappointed when the entire Tactical station turned completely black. Seeing that he had nothing to do he got back to twisting his jacket to drain the water from it.

"Not on the carpet!" Tani shouted at him.

"Sorry," Tom said with a bemused smirk. He turned to share it with Harry, but he wasn't amused in any shape or form. "Oh come on, you're not still mad about the Upendi ride, are you?"

"Hmm, I spent god knows how many hours sitting in a cramped seat too many feet off the ground until suddenly I was propelled into a pool at thirty miles an hour. Only then to spend the last twenty minutes trying not to freeze to death as I had no time to change," Harry grumbled while he worked. "What do you think, am I still mad?"

"I dunno, you're like a closed book at the moment," Tom replied with a smile.

"Are you an idiot, of course he's mad," Tani grumbled at him. Tom groaned and facepalmed. "Next time we'll leave you literally hanging, hmm?"

Xara had only one thing on her mind even with her people and the Voyager crew fighting all around her. Even when one fight was directly in her path, she pushed them both aside to keep going. Then she had her target in her sight.

Seven stumbled down to her knees, her cheek stung. The rifle Morgan had dropped when she first attacked was a little to the right of her, only just out of arms reach. Morgan approached her, looking ready to strike again. Seven scrambled to the right on her hands and knees to grab it. Before she could pick it up Morgan pressed her foot over it and aimed her fist in anticipation.

"Cut it out, you're not going to win," Morgan complained.

Seven stared at her coldly, her eyes showed her refusal. Morgan shrugged and swung. At the last second Seven rolled to one side, avoiding it completely. Seven recovered and jumped to her feet quickly.

"I'm serious. Get over yourself, you're not as wonderful as you think," Morgan snapped.

"And you aren't as strong and capable as you think. Just a little brat with delusions of grandeur with no talent to back it up," Seven said.

Morgan smirked at her, "oh really?" A tap of her foot hurtled the rifle into the air high enough for her to catch. "Let's try that again."

"That's probably a good idea," Seven sneered before lunging for her.

Morgan readied to fire only to find the rifle pointing the wrong way and of course the controls not where she expected. "Oh shoot."

Seven pushed with all her might, slamming the young girl into Voyager's hull and hopefully stunning her enough to keep her still. She held her still anyway by pressing her arm into her throat, the other arm holding her arm against the metal.

"Why... why are you doing this? Mum won't let you stay if..." Morgan managed to splutter despite her predicament.

"Perhaps you'd like to guess," Seven said while pointing at her uneven hairdo. Morgan laughed briefly, then her eyes darted as she bit her lip. "You do not belong here, you only cause trouble. In time, she'll thank me."

Morgan stopped struggling for a moment, a look of realisation flooded her face, confusing her attacker. "Why you betrayed us and tried to kill me, all that and all you want is for mum to say how *awesome* you are. How sad," she said without any pity, only disgust. "Is that why you slobbered over Xara's idiot son? He's the only one who complimented you?"

She hoped it would anger the ex-drone bringing him up, but it seemingly did nothing. Seven kept her usual face. "You misunderstand. He was from two different worlds, tainted in one, a symbol of hate in another. But he was pure, a victim of circumstance, an innocent made into a tool by his guardians. In desperate need of love and understanding."

"And you related to all that. Spare me," Morgan groaned.

"His mother will have only turned him into a hate filled monster just like her. Too far gone to make any real difference," Seven snarled. Morgan's face twisted into a confused grimace. Then Seven leaned in and lowered her voice, "and I killed him."

Morgan's eyes widened, "wha... what?"

Seven pulled her forward to throw her face down onto the floor, all while looking distraught, hoping the approaching Xara would hear her. "You killed him, you freak!"

Morgan looked over her shoulder back at her. "Are you insane?" She scrambled to her feet to counter, Seven though was already charging up to her. Morgan grabbed her and slouched over, hurtling the drone over her shoulder.

Xara was close, only a few more steps to go until she reached her unaware target. So engrossed she was in reaching her, she missed somebody grab her from behind using a rifle pressed against her throat.

Seven huffed painfully, she struggled to get back up.

"He tried to kill me, I pushed him away. What are you talking about?" Morgan shouted at her.

To his surprise Morgan wasn't put off by it; she even smiled before returning the favour, only her throat grab was pushing him up. One more kick and she let go. It not only got him off her like she wanted, it sent him hurtling down the saucer. When he hit it a deck down he fell into a fast paced roll toward Seven.

She tried to get out of the way, but her heel typically got caught. No matter how hard Seven tried she couldn't pull her leg away. He was almost on her so she took a chance and tried to leap over him. Typically it broke free as the other leg was in the air, so not only did he collide with her, she went hurtling forward.

It slowed his roll down though, at least until she accidentally kicked him back into it when she landed flat on her face and chest.

Seven looked shifty eyed for a moment. "It was the perfect moment to bring you down. I took it. Everything I do is on purpose, I'm far too close to perfection to not."

"Um..." Morgan mumbled whilst crouching down to collect the rifle. This time she made sure it was the right way around.

"It doesn't matter," Seven huffed, clambering back to her feet. "As long as she believes it, I'll take care of you without any of the consequences."

Morgan mouthed *who*. To her left Xara aimed a sharp elbow jab into her attacker. They recoiled and dropped the weapon, allowing her to pull free and grab the person responsible. Since it was Jessie, it didn't go entirely to plan. Xara had to take a foot stamp and a near backhand before she was able to clasp a hold of her wrist and reached out with another hand for the scruff of her uniform.

It was then everyone heard a loud buzzing sound building up above them. Most people stopped to stare up at the ship. Many Voyager crewmembers hurried away from it. The ones still looking saw a smaller energy bubble than usual envelop only the saucer section. It disappeared seconds later but they all knew it was still there.

Fury overwhelmed Xara once more. She screeched while tossing Jessie down to the ground like she was nothing.

"Damn it..." Morgan said spotting this, about to go to her aid. Seven ran at her while her head was turned, though she still saw her coming in her peripheral. With an annoyed sigh Morgan pointed the rifle in that general direction and fired a shot before going to close the gap between her and Xara, who waited, expecting her to do exactly that.

They were little more than a metre apart when someone ran to stand in between them and pointed her palms at each of them, stopping them in their tracks.

"Vitera, move!" Xara hissed at them.

Vitera turned her head in her direction. "Mother this has to stop."

"You're even weaker than I thought. Get out of my way!" Xara roared at her.

"A long time ago there was a woman who was brave enough to put aside centuries of fear and hate, so she could be with the man she adored," Vitera said, taking her mother aback for a moment. "It didn't

matter to her that his skin was lighter than hers. He didn't prejudge her as a violent *savage* like the rest."

Xara froze. She wasn't the only one, the fighting had ground to a halt, everyone was watching them.

Vitera smiled gently at her mother. "Even when their families turned their backs on them they did not falter. They knew. They were one in the same, equals."

"They... they were fools. Naive fools that got one of them killed for it," Xara stammered.

Vitera shook her head, determined not to lose her nerve before she was finished. "No. When I was young that story gave me hope, it inspired me that someday our people would be just that; one people, not the Tinai and Atinai, together as we should be. That woman was my hero, I worshiped her so, I wanted to be her." Tears streamed down her cheeks, still her voice was angry, "what happened to her? It's not too late mother, you can be her again."

"Nonsense," Xara said through a hoarse throat. "I would sooner die than trust those mongrels again."

"But..." Vitera stuttered.

"No!" Xara snapped. "Look at what happened to your brother. He trusted one and look where it got him."

"Only because you taught him to hate, to solve his problems with violence," Vitera protested.

Xara's eyes flared up in fury. Vitera winced from it. "How dare you blame me. My own daughter, how could you betray me like they would."

Vitera stumbled back a little fearfully, she accidentally bumped into Morgan who then moved around to stand by her side. "Fine, the Tinai are mongrels, they're monsters, you're not like them. Prove it," Morgan said.

"What?" Xara growled.

"Don't prove those racist, backwards twats right," Morgan said. "End this, we can help you out of this sector, you can start afresh. You show them how it's done and maybe someday they'll grow up, realise they were wrong and make amends. If they don't, that's their problem. At least you can live the rest of your lives with your head held high, knowing that you..."

Xara lurched forward, "enough! You think you, a child and a sheltered brat, can tell us how to live. You don't know how we've suffered. Perhaps if you did..." The sound of weapons being dropped to the floor caught her off guard, she looked around to find some of her people were the only ones doing it, as well as moving away from whoever they had been fighting with.

"What are you doing? Don't fall for this rubbish. This line of thinking got us exiled in the first place," Xara tried to sound commanding but her voice shook. "They're children. What do they know about any of this?"

"Sometimes that's just what a people need; the opinion of untarnished innocence of the next generation," Kathryn said from within the crowd. Neither Morgan or Xara could see her at first, when they did Morgan saw an odd glint in her eye she hadn't seen before. Anyone else who saw it recognised it as pride. "I'm willing to take your people away from this place. But first you have to let it go, stand down."

"Mother," Vitera said in a hushed tone, her eyes begging her mother to listen. Many of her people chimed in with their own pleas.

Xara trembled, with her jaw clenching anyone nearby could tell why. "You're all traitors. I will end the Atinai's suffering, avenge Scart and Nuvan on my own if I have to."

"But these Voyagers had nothing to do with this, they only want to help us, mother please!" Vitera begged again.

"All the same," Xara muttered so quietly the pair didn't hear. Jessie, still reeling from being thrown to the ground, did though. When Xara began to pounce she made her move and grabbed her, hoping to drag her away. Xara pushed back, and they stumbled toward the edge of the valley.

Pulling her arms free, Xara went to strike her with a vicious backhand. Doing so she stepped back onto a loose rock, it gave away to the sudden weight. She slipped down the steep cliff face, but not without grabbing Jessie's arm and pulling her down with her.

"Mother!" Vitera screamed as she ran over. It seemed like she was about to jump down after her, Morgan quickly held her back. "No!"

Craig looked on helplessly much further along than they were. He scanned the rougher side of the cliff face for the section he and James used earlier to get to the ore. Then he saw movement, a blur dropped down onto another ledge. "Shi... what are you doing?" he yelled toward it.

It got everyone's attention. Many looked around to see what he was talking about. A few spotted James drop down from one ledge onto another.

"Please, save my mother!" Vitera cried.

Morgan kept a firm grip on her, a little annoyed that she couldn't help. The girl whimpering in her arms reminded her she was, but still she couldn't shake off the helplessness.

"Damn it," she heard her own mother grumble behind her. "Can any of you contact the Bridge, none of us have commbadges."

"Oh," Morgan stuttered, feeling a little stupid. She gestured with her chin as her hands were full.

Kathryn reached around to take the commbadge off her daughter. She proceeded to tap and bark into it, "Janeway to Bridge. We have an emergency here, you need to lower the shields and get a lock on..."

"Woah, don't we need code words or something?" Tani's voice stammered.

"Tani, James and Jessie are in trouble," Morgan scolded her.

Everyone close by heard her hesitation. *"Okay, we'll see what we can do."*

Craig meanwhile shook his head, disgusted with himself for doing nothing. He hadn't heard the call to Voyager and so quickly scanned the cliff face for the path James must've taken to get to where he first saw him. One little rock protruding near the top a few metres away got his attention, so he ran.

Kathryn crouched down as close as she could to the edge and peered over, fearing the worst. She saw Jessie first, about ten metres down lying slumped on a large ledge. At first she saw no sign of Xara. Slight movement near the end of it caught her eye, then she noticed hands trying desperately to cling on.

"Hurry," Kathryn said through gritted teeth. A nervous couple of squeaks over the comm told her they heard her.

Shouting erupted from crewmembers and aliens to the right of her. It didn't take long to see what they were talking about, and that was Craig following James' path down to where the two women were.

"Oh you've got to be kidding me," Kathryn groaned.

Morgan glanced over and spotted him too. "But why, why's he doing that? Idiot."

"Men, some do like to play at being the hero," Kathryn scoffed.

The further down Craig went, the less stable the path was. Two loose rocks had him skidding down some of the way until he lost his balance, and fell onto his hands. He quickly brushed himself off as he stood. Straight ahead of him was James on an almost parallel ledge, the gap between them must've been about two metres. Craig gingerly walked up to it and looked down, his heart was suddenly in his throat. If he messed this up he'd be falling for a very long time.

He wondered how James got across, then he looked to the left and assumed he used the jagged rocks there to climb across. He tried to gather the nerves to do so. He could see James was close to Jessie and Xara's position, but he needed to help him, he couldn't do it alone he thought.

Jessie meanwhile woke up in a daze. The environment span around her. Still she tried to sit, then stand up but an agonising pain in her leg objected to even just sitting. Her pained gasp echoed across the valley.

Grunts and scratching sounds distracted her for the moment, she turned her head to the source of it. She saw the hands grasping rocks close to the edge, knuckles bright white. Despite the pain she felt doing so, Jessie dragged her body across with both of her hands. It didn't take her long to get close enough to see Xara clinging desperately over the edge, with an incredibly deep chasm beneath her. Seeing it made Jessie's head spin and her stomach lurch.

On seeing her Xara's face turned from terrified to angry in a blink of an eye. Still Jessie reached over to clutch her by the arms and try to pull. The action nearly pulled her over as well, she clambered back and instead went to clasp her hands. To Jessie's shock the woman slapped one of them away. That arm scraped against the rock and began to slide back over the edge.

"You!" Xara snapped, wounding her it left her gasping. "Here to finish the job?"

Jessie's jaw dropped, still she grabbed at the hand that slapped hers away before. "I wasn't trying to... just hold on, we'll help you."

"No," Xara wheezed. She started to slide, Jessie tried to keep a tight hold but it was pulling her too. "Never!" she smirked.

Xara's grip on the rock face loosened and she slid over the edge. Jessie felt her body being pulled over as well until someone's arms wrapped around her torso, pulling her back to safety.

The sudden jolt in being pulled back brought a searing pain to an already throbbing leg, Jessie couldn't help but cry out from it. She felt her rescuer flinch from it, his arms moved, one away completely and the other to her shoulders. "Sorry, I'm sorry," the familiar voice whispered, a one she was extremely grateful to hear regardless.

"I'm fine," Jessie breathed through the pain, "thank you." Even only doing that wiped her out, she felt her head drifting to the side, she let it knowing his shoulder was there.

James sighed in huge relief it would've been heard at the top of the valley. It was quiet for a moment until heavy panting and footsteps approached. He groaned and shook his head, "what are you doing?"

"What are *you* doing?" Craig asked.

James looked back to find him doubled over, ready to keel over at any moment. Fortunately for them all the transporters enveloped them before Craig could pass out.

Captain's Log Stardate 53397.1: That's the last time I leave my daughter on the bridge without Chakotay and I around.

Morgan pouted angrily. "That's it?" Kathryn stared back at her, a stubborn smile on her face. She gave her a light shrug. "Oh come on. The same would've happened to you, admit it."

Kathryn turned her attention to the other guest in her office. "It'll be a while before we can take off again. Plenty of time to search our Astrometric data for a planet to settle on."

"Thank you Captain," Vitera said sullenly.

"Is that even what you want? I was the one blabbing about it, you wanted your people united," Morgan asked her.

Vitera smiled weakly, "maybe we will be someday. One step at a time though, we need a home first. Then some kind of election."

"Don't be so hard on yourself. You have principles, a strong heart. You'll be a fine leader, maybe if you're not ready now you will be later," Kathryn said.

"We'll see. I'm sure Morgan will be ready before me," Vitera said. Morgan laughed nervously while Kathryn pointed a quick one eyed narrowed frown at her. Vitera seemed to miss it as she bowed her head, "thanks again Captain, excuse me." She stepped out leaving the mother and daughter alone.

"Why does she think this ship runs on a monarchy system?" Kathryn asked.

Morgan smiled awkwardly, "beats me. Hey, maybe I'll check that You Wendi program out after all, I could do with a laugh."

"Hang on," Kathryn said when her daughter was half way out the door. "There's still parts I'm not clear on."

"Mmhmm?" Morgan looked very uneasy.

"Seven had an awful lot to say when we chucked her into the brig boob first. Usually I wouldn't humour her but with what happened, I've got to ask. Did you..." Kathryn questioned.

"Hey that's not true, I only shot her a little bit," Morgan blurted out before she could finish.

Kathryn blinked a couple of times. "Okay. Dismissed."

Morgan smiled in relief and waltzed out.

"Now I've got to pay her. Back where I started," Kathryn mumbled to herself.

Tom watched the latest arrivals to the Holodeck like a hawk, unless people were walking or stopping in his line of sight. So far they were only standing and talking with drinks in their hands, probably plotting to add something to his program he convinced himself.

"I really thought I deleted all of this crap," James muttered, trying to avert his eyes from the crazy. Unfortunately it was everywhere.

"So, did you learn anything from this little adventure?" Jessie asked.

Morgan thought about it, "I'd say racism is for idiots but I already got that memo."

Jessie laughed, shaking her head. "So much for Janeway's learn some respect lesson."

"Nah, I know not to piss you off, especially now that I owe you one," Morgan said.

"No you don't, don't worry about it," Jessie smiled.

Morgan looked a little disappointed, "oh, shame. I could still take you though."

"We'll see," Jessie pretended to look mad with narrowed eyes, all while sipping on her drink.

Craig glanced between them, tugged on his collar and hurried off towards the pool. Neither of the girls noticed. James did though, he shook his head.

"Well, I'm going to look around for something to modify. Not that anyone will notice," Morgan said before turning to walk off. Doing so she bumped immediately into one of the waiters with the face paint. "Eeww, I'm going to start there."

"That kid's a bit odd, then again she is a Janeway," Jessie said.

James nodded while he finished his drink. "She'll fit right in then."

"True," Jessie laughed, turning on her heel to look him in the eye. "Now that we're alone, I gotta bone to pick with you."

James' eyes shifted side to side nervously. He didn't dare move anymore than that. "Don't climb down dangerous cliffs to save me?"

"Don't do that. I'm grateful, I am but it could've easily gone to hell in a second. I dunno how I'd cope if you had fallen all because of me," Jessie said. She noticed James' entire posture slumped along with his mood. "Swap our positions, how'd you feel?"

"I'd never forgive myself," James mumbled, even his voice was low too. "I get it, but again roles reversed, I... can't even say it."

Jessie smiled sweetly at him, she playfully tapped him on the arm before hooking it with her own. "Come on," she said, walking off with him still attached to her.

"Why, where... are we going?" he asked warily.

"If we're going to test the ride, I'm going to need at least ten more drinks," Jessie laughed.

"Wait, we are? But it's a water slide," James cringed.

"It's a themed water coaster slide hybrid!" Tom screamed from afar. The pair looked and couldn't see him, they quickly shrugged it off.

"With erm, some weird requirements to get onto it, I've heard," James continued. "Knowing Tom he's probably got a height restriction about half a centimetre higher than me."

"Oh well that's me out as well, too bad. Just the drinks then," Jessie said with a shrug.

"Sure, we might be able to tolerate all this after a few, or be able to *improve* it," James smirked as he followed her, this time willingly.

A couple of hours later the only inhabitants of the Upendi program were the drunks, and Sid who had convinced a tipsy Triah onto the ride.

Tom tried to lead B'Elanna in a straight line, while she hung onto his shoulder, squinting her eyes. "How many of those banana drinks did you have?"

"Hmm, mine... and yours," B'Elanna laughed in response. Tom sighed, he was painfully aware of the last part. She slapped his arm and hard too. "Pout pout, I needed something to stomach this Fun House resort."

They heard Triah's screaming roar overhead. Seconds later there were two large splashes, then Sid's disappointed groans. "This is false advertising!" he shouted as he stomped off in a huff, soaking wet.

Tom and B'Elanna passed Harry, who had decided the best place to sleep off his drink was a sun lounger by the pool. Only he was lying on it the wrong way and so it only supported his torso; legs and head were slumped over the sides.

"Oh yeah, you weren't coming back Harry. Way to stick it to me," Tom teased him.

B'Elanna dropped down onto the neighbouring one, accidentally pulling Tom with her. He quickly pulled his arm away before he was on the floor. Triah meanwhile crawled out of the pool via the steps looking a little green.

"Mmm, mist, shoot," Harry mumbled, half asleep and barely aware of his friends nearby. He rolled over, tipping the sun lounger upwards, making him slide off. "Ooph!" he grunted when he hit the ground, waking him up fully.

B'Elanna made an out of character, "aaaaaw," towards something on the other side of the pool.

Harry thought she was pointing it at him and so he smiled. "I'm so glad someone cares."

"Pfft, not you!" B'Elanna waved him off. Then she gasped, jumped to her feet to cover Tom's eyes. "Don't look, you creep!"

"Hey, I'm not a creep," Tom complained, pushing her hands away. Since she had told him not to he just had to see what she was looking at. He looked across to the other side of the pool. What he saw there widened his eyes, made him laugh both awkwardly and a little too enthusiastically, and very glad he felt sober enough. "Now, that's hot."

"No, you're not creepy," Harry yawned, getting up off the floor. He turned to see as well, "woah."

B'Elanna rolled her eyes, "oh grow up. Boys!" She stomped off in a huff.

"Yeah um, yeah... we should go, before they see us," Harry stammered. He looked back expecting to find Tom still there, only he had vanished. "Tom?" He wasn't sure where he could've gone, he didn't see or hear him anywhere and he checked his surroundings twice. The third time though Tom reappeared in the exact spot he was in before, grinning slyly. "How did you..."

"You're right my friend. We should be heading home," Tom said, feigning innocence for some reason. Then he walked off towards the exit.

Harry eyed him suspiciously. Still he followed, leaving the clearly drunk couple across the other side of the pool kissing under the stars.

Once they were alone they parted, one laughed sneakily. "We showed him whose just friends," Jessie giggled.

"Yeah. Wait, have we got that backwards?" James said, looking confused.

Jessie did too, until she looked like she figured something out; then her features brightened. "Oh yeah. Oops." She shrugged it off and got up to leave. "Tomorrow's going to be awkward," she said in a singsong tone, and off she went.

James nodded a little too much, "yep, see you then." Left alone he looked around the program, scrunching his face up, "nope, drunk and it's still stupid." He shook his head and got up to walk out as well.

THE END