

Episode 2.07

Anarchy

It was the day they thought they were prepared for. A cloak to hide from the primitives, perimeter shields, intruder alarms. Photon canons at the borders, two ships on patrol at all times.

All of them failed. The cloak and alarms were rendered useless, the shields fell instantly. Cannons were turned inwards, the two ships were on their side.

Everywhere people tried to hide they were being blocked by soldiers. Their own, demanding to know which side they were on.

One girl though seemed nonplussed to be confronted.

"You, I'm talking to you!" one soldier barked at her. "The royal pacifists or the free and democratic resistance?"

Emma smiled, "which side means I get to use this?" She brandished what looked like a cross between a grass trimmer with a circular saw instead of the wires.

"Oh my god, it's Emma," one of the soldiers stammered and they bolted in the opposite direction. Many soon followed him, leaving one clueless schmuck behind.

The deadly weapon roared into life, the saw part of it underneath the guard span so fast it could no longer be seen. Emma grinned. The remaining soldier yelled and ran for their life, she gave chase giggling.

She got similar reactions on her way to the building high up on the east hill. Emma had to duck and cover as weapons fire slammed into its personal shields. The loud hum of an engine nearby told her she had no choice, so she took off toward the gate. Her rare ID card let her through the shield surrounding the building, yet it did nothing to open the front door. She banged her fists on it over and over.

Then she realised the engine she'd heard didn't come from the building as she'd thought and hoped. It came from behind and above, it was closing in. Her head turned to have a look. The front door opened in the split second she caught sight of the silver, Borg tainted vessel swoop directly towards and fire in her general direction.

Emma was yanked inside mere seconds before the shields fell.

Present Day:

Tom stared blankly, except for his rapid blinking. "I'm sorry, would you run that by me one more time? I think I have some awful joke in my ear."

B'Elanna sat across from the table, watching her husband tap and sometimes stab his breakfast with his fork until it was mush. "Well, you chose the godparents the last time."

"But," Tom said as he twitched. "I thought you'd pick Chakotay, or I dunno, Janeway again. Not those two. Why?"

"Jessie said she owed me after *saving her life*. James has been really grateful too; first in the queue for breakfast, no burned food unless I asked, gave us some baby things like toys," B'Elanna answered. "Though I had to grit my teeth when he offered to carry that container for me to Engineering."

Tom's twitching turned into an ambivalent cringe. "Why? He is a freakazoid, make use of it."

B'Elanna wasn't amused, she resisted giving him a scowl considering the circumstances. "Just because I'm six months pregnant, doesn't mean I'm an invalid."

"Fine. Getting back to the making people who hate me, my kid's god parents?" Tom grumbled.

B'Elanna sighed. "Chakotay didn't want to get involved. Janeway was fine, but I couldn't turn Jessie away."

"Yes you can," Tom stuttered desperately, almost begging. "She owes you, not the other way around."

"She thinks so, I don't," B'Elanna countered. "It's not that big a deal. You still have Harry and Janeway for Bryan, so..."

"Janeway I only asked because she said if I got her involved with my *crotchspawn*, her words, she'd make me pay. I thought I had the upperhand there. Harry's my go to babysitter," Tom said.

B'Elanna smiled. "Exactly, it doesn't mean anything, calm down. Your breakfast has turned into soup."

Two tables away Lilly held back a couple of gags, staring in disbelief as Emma poured salad cream all over the lumpy stew Neelix had called a porridge. Her spoon needed to be pushed into it with brute force.

"You can't be serious," Lilly said, shaking her head.

Emma looked up at her innocently. "Why not?" she squeaked.

"Death comes to mind. The painful kind," Lilly answered.

Emma pointed a malicious grin at her, "you promise?"

"Uh," was all Lilly had time to say before Emma tossed the bowl at the neighbouring table. The only occupant there was knocked out instantly. Lilly sighed, "what did he do?"

"Said I had a nice ass, perv," Emma replied in disgust.

"Are you sure? I thought he said you seemed like a nice lass," Lilly said.

Emma cringed even further, "ew."

Lilly shrugged that off, hoping it was all over. She knew she'd be wrong. Emma tossed her hard as a rock bread roll at the same guy just as Tom was passing through. It hit him instead, souring his mood further.

"Oops, sorry," Emma said meekly.

Tom either didn't hear or ignored her completely, he kept going towards another table. The occupants there looked unsure as to why. Jessie though saw his face and thought the worst, she tried not to show her concern.

"You want to tell me why you and your chump get to be god parents, when it's you that owes us?" Tom snarled. He glared first at her, then at the other at the table, immediately getting confused as it was a different man to who he expected.

"First I've heard of it," Andrew tried to smile to lighten the mood.

Jessie exhaled in relief, still her shoulders remained tense. "Look, I'm sorry but if that's what B'Elanna said, then..."

Tom scoffed, "you two don't even like me. So why do you want to get involved with my kid at all? I don't get it."

Andrew stood while arming his counsellor's face. "I'm certain Jessie feels bad enough for Torres helping her, saving her so soon after the first pregnancy, but she had no choice in the matter. If this helps ease both their worries, why..."

"Oh butt out James Two," Tom snapped, staring at him harshly.

"Huh?" Andrew was more than confused.

Jessie firmly ground her teeth. It didn't deter her. "What the hell do you mean by that?"

"Oh I'm sorry, you're right," Tom pretended to look apologetically at her. "This one's too nice and polite, and reasonable, and not trying to murder people. What was I thinking?"

Jessie jumped to her feet and glared up at him. "You wanna try saying that to his face, if there's any left of yours after I smash my fist into it."

Andrew inhaled through his teeth, awkwardly. "Jessie, try to remember the breathing exercises."

He got a narrowed eye all throughout Jessie's overexaggerated breathe in and out. "Yeah *thanks*," she muttered. Her focus returned to Tom. "The god parents title means so little these days, it doesn't matter. It could be much worse, so unstick your knickers from your ass, okay?"

Tom forcefully snickered, hoping to contain his temper. "Try listening to the anti-James, Jess. He may make a lady out of you yet."

So much anger flashed in Jessie's eyes, Andrew looked on worried. "Oh, so because I'm not a wimp like you, I'm not feminine in Tom Paris' eyes. God forbid, I'd better change at once so the overgrown toddler gets what he wants."

She wasn't the only one who was shocked when Tom's hand flew out and struck her cheek. The entire room froze in subzero temperatures. It was so quiet, coughing from Engineering could be heard clearly through the floor.

"Keep up being classy Jess, and good luck with the backup dweeb," Tom grumbled as he stomped away towards the exit. He almost walked into somebody standing in the doorway. They were about to be told to get the hell out of the way, when he noticed who it was and thought better of it.

"Hang on, you forgot something," James fake smiled.

"Oh cra..." Tom stuttered before it went dark.

Sickbay:

Kathryn struggled not to laugh. "At least it wasn't the nose this time."

The Doctor wasn't amused, but that cracked any resolve she had left and laughed loudly. He turned to continue treating Tom's very swollen cheek and eye.

"When I said it gets quiet in here sometimes, it wasn't a hint. It's idle chitchat between staff members. Like when a morgue attendant says he's bored, he's not asking for a serial killer to go on a spree," the Doctor grumbled.

Nearby James stood with his arms folded, he shrugged indifferently. "Does it still count if I no longer work here?"

"James," Kathryn tried to sound commanding but she was still recovering from her earlier laughing. She took in a deep breath to compose herself. "You've been off probation for what, five days..."

"Two," James said.

Against her better judgement Kathryn ended up sniggering once again. "Two days. If you miss it so much, I can always arrange another six months."

Both the Doctor and James stared at her with widening eyes. "No thanks," James said, while the Doctor shook his head. James noticed and couldn't help but smile. "If you think my time here was bad, you should've seen what I did on my cleaning shifts."

"That reminds me, you still owe the department three floor cleaners and a sink," Kathryn said, managing a straight face despite her mood. "But getting back to the matter at hand, we should have a little chat." She walked away, beckoning her head towards the office.

James got the hint and followed.

Moments later Tom made a few groans as he stirred into consciousness. "My face," he mumbled.

"Yes it's still there," the Doctor quipped, side eyeing the people in his office, "for the most part."

"How did I get...?" Tom stuttered as he looked around. The pain the movement brought on almost made him pass out again. It took a few seconds for him to see straight. "Ugh, James. He's usually not so kind to knock me out."

"What part of this is kind?" the Doctor wondered at the same time Tom tried to touch his cheek. The Doctor swiped the hand away. "I see, kind to me."

"Please tell me that psycho's locked up for good this time," Tom said. The Doctor's wary face answered him. "Oh of course," Tom groaned and sat up despite the protests. "Fine, instead tell me what kind of dirt he's got on our command trio, or which one he's sleeping with. If it's the latter, I may have to borrow your mobile emitter."

The Doctor gasped in offense. "Absolutely not. You won't sully my emitter."

"Oh relax. I wasn't going to make a hologram for that," Tom dismissively said. "I thought if I make it as strong as I want, I'd be doing the ship a favour."

The Doctor metaphorically started to sweat. His eyes drifted to one side, briefly making contact with Kathryn's, hoping she'd help him out. She shook her head.

"It's a little rich that Jessie acts as if I'm belittling her, when meanwhile he's all; *huff puff, I'm the Slayer, I'm so tough*, smacking anyone that blinks at her," Tom continued to ramble, completely oblivious. "She probably loves it, hypocritical cow."

"Anything else?" Kathryn asked a little too cheerfully. The Doctor stared at her in dismay.

Tom frowned, "really? Don't tell me it was you he's got on his side. I assumed he was bedding Chakotay instead."

Kathryn glared lots of painful holes into him. It didn't matter though, because that's when he noticed the third other person in the room.

"Hey Doc, you missed a bit," James said, briefly pointing at him.

"No," the Doctor could only groan.

Tom once again ended up on the floor, this time wheezing through his sore ribs.

"Why?" the Doctor moaned, "can you at least help me get him back onto the biobed?"

James scoffed, "no way, I've already touched him enough for today." He walked off to leave.

The Doctor glanced toward Kathryn, one last time hoping she'd help him.

"Fine," she sighed, getting his hopes up. As the hologram hurried around to lift Tom up by his head, Kathryn followed James to the exit. "I have the perfect idea. When you're done with him, send him to my Ready Room."

She was long gone before the Doctor thought about objecting. "Williams!" he shouted toward the office. "Have you finished your third breakfast yet?"

Lee hurried out of the lab, into the office, and peeped around the door frame, all with a sandwich still in his mouth. "No."

The Doctor rolled his eyes.

The Ready Room:

Tom shimmied his chair barely a centimetre every second or two, aiming to be as far to the right as possible. James rolled his eyes and shook his head after a dozen or so. Kathryn for once looked patient as she watched and waited for him to be done.

Finally he stopped for more than twenty seconds. Kathryn began to speak but he did it one more time. "For god's sake Paris..." she snapped, startling him, "if you move that chair again, I'm gluing you to the damn thing."

"Fine," Tom huffed after one last shimmy.

Kathryn's eyes narrowed. "Now, we have a problem here, gentlemen." She dared either of them to comment with an icier than usual glare. Something rare happened, they didn't. "I'm going to fix it, once and for all."

"Uh I don't see a phaser on kill anywhere in here," Tom said while pretending to look around.

James' brow lowered at the same time the smallest of smirks raised the right corner of his lips. He chose to keep quiet for now.

Kathryn visibly twitched, "it's not just James, Mr Paris..."

"Oh," Tom's pretended to look offended, "first name basis for one only. I see how it is."

James' smirk threatened to grow if he didn't say anything. "How do you feel about Eugene?" Tom gasped and glared at him.

"Gentlemen!" Kathryn barked at them. This time both of them reacted, James looked like he was itching to comment, while Tom sounded like he laughed and scoffed at the same time. "You two need some time alone, to find some common ground and stop being so... male with each other."

Tom snorted loudly and obnoxiously into laughter. "James, male? Those two don't go together unless you're talking about his preferences."

James shook his head as he looked up at the ceiling, "really? You still can't think of anything new. I'm gay, I'm obsessed with Jessie, I'm bedding command officers to get away with murder, I'm a robot, I'm short." Tom didn't care, he was only disappointed he didn't have anything to record all of his so called confessions. "We can fix this problem quite easily; you only bother me when you can actually bother me."

Tom continued to laugh at him. "If you're not bothered, why do you keep hitting me?"

James shrugged and smiled toward him, "why not?"

Tom's jaw dropped, he looked to the Captain. "Did you hear that, Captain?" he screeched like a schoolboy who'd been accused of starting it.

"Though to be fair," James was far from done though, "you did deserve it more with the favours accusation."

"Why? It's not like I said *who are you threatening to sleep with*. That's an insult," Tom snapped.

He was surprised that James flinched at that. "You, why...?" he stammered.

"Yes, got him," Tom internally high fived himself. "It is a good day. Thanks for doing this Captain."

A brief glance in her direction told him that was a big mistake. He got numerous chills. "Are you done, you pissant!?" Kathryn snarled.

Tom fearfully shook, "hey come on, it's just words. James is the violent killer. I'm the endearing funny one."

James laughed despite still feeling a bit uncomfortable, "you're right. That is funny."

Tom clenched his jaw as he once more stared at him. "You want this fixed? I can even the score. One phaser blast and you go down like anyone else."

"Thomas Eugene Paris!" Kathryn roared as she stood up, hands on hips. Tom cowered to the right of his chair.

"You wanted first name basis," James sniggered.

"Normally I'd say it's only your big mouth that's part of the problem. You provoke people, on purpose, which is really creepy," Kathryn said, scrunching up her face. "But witnesses saw you striking Jessie, apparently unprovoked, after you started an argument with her."

Tom looked on helplessly. His outrage helped him out of his cowering, "what? How many times has she struck me?"

"Not enough," James commented.

"Enough," Kathryn said for different reasons at a similar time. She passed him a brief frown. "You two are suspended without pay until you can go a whole day together without a fight."

James groaned, "great, I'm going to have to throw Neelix out of the kitchen again."

"Huh, here's a thought; try not using your fists, then we'll both not starve to death," Tom hissed.

"I mean all kinds of fights. Arguments too," Kathryn said.

Tom's face paled, "I... what?"

"Yep, we're going to die," James said.

Tom scowled, "you may."

"Probably," James shrugged nonchalantly. "But I doubt you'd have much to do with it."

"Try me, you overcompensating hothead!" Tom snapped.

It struck further nerves when James laughed so much at that, a tear even formed in his eye. "Me?" he managed to splutter, then looked at the helmsman. "What am I overcompensating for exactly? I'm not the one always puffing my chest out, picking fights and trying to look taller than I am to appear better than everyone."

"Pity, you should try the last one," Tom angrily quipped.

"You're not, and it bothers the hell out of you. I've met loads of insecure pricks like you. I'm stronger than you, so you try to take me down a peg or four because power is the only thing that matters to little boys like you," James said. The words seemed to slap Tom in the face, leaving him speechless. Kathryn tried not to show any approval. "Don't flatter yourself Paris. If you really believe that I'm this psychopath who cares what you think of me, then I'd have murdered you years ago. You're not worth the little effort to smack."

"You... did you...?" Tom spluttered to Kathryn's disappointment. She couldn't help the resulting groan. "You'd know all about little... effort."

"Wow, a short joke, that's new," James smirked.

Tom almost leapt out of his seat, instead he lurched to the very edge of it. "Oh my god, does this circus freak ever shut up?"

James tried not to laugh again. "Oh my god, mummy," he said mockingly, like a child, "I can't spike the ship's air or slap women who I disagree with, cos he's always being mean to me."

Tom's face flushed, Kathryn wasn't sure if it was anger or embarrassment. She hoped the latter.

"Oh yeah, big talk for the only person on this ship who gets a slapped wrist for killing people," Tom snarled.

"I'm sorry, I don't do anything big because I'm average height, remember?" James said with a harsh looking smile. Tom stood up this time, he was about to say something but James laughed once more. "See what I'm talking about?" he smirked in Kathryn's direction.

Kathryn barely had time to sigh in response.

"Oh look at me, I'm James, I'm so great at everything," Tom muttered mockingly in a bad Geordie-English accent. "Everyone's beneath me, so weak and pathetic. I think I'll abuse my power instead of being a decent human being with a gift, and smack that so called harmless helmsman around and laugh about it."

"It's funny, because..." James snickered.

"True?" Tom cut in.

James' face fell slightly, "because you think my knocking you unconscious is abusing my power."

"Ugh see! Son of a bitch thinks he's god's gift. If he weren't a Slayer he'd be this hippy looking gay creep who everyone avoided," Tom grumbled.

"Oh for god's sake, enough!" Kathryn screamed, startling them both into silence. "Until you can prove you can behave like adults, you'll be on shuttle detail. That means; cleaning, maintenance, all the dirty work. Absolutely no flying."

"You had me until the last part," Tom nervously smiled. James gave him a disgusted stare which he laughed off. "Some of the gunk on the shuttles needs some elbow grease. I recommend scraping it off with your fingernails, but be careful not to lose any."

James looked amused to Tom's annoyance. "Oh, and there I was about to warn you that your freak insults have exceeded their quota, but gay's still got one left. Great, no problem then."

Tom made a little whiny noise while pulling a face. He then tried to repeat what he said in his earlier mocking tone. He finished it with a slowed down, "I'm soooo funny."

Kathryn inadvertently scratched her computer with her nails. They both heard it and stared. "Maybe you two would get along better working with Annika," she said dangerously.

Tom shook his head quickly, desperately, while James merely answered with a quiet no.

B'Elanna gestured to a console in a far corner section of Engineering. "This is usually the skive console. I can't see it from my usual spots, so people use it thinking I'd never know."

One of the pair following her nodded in understanding. "So you want me to hit them?" Emma asked politely.

B'Elanna smiled as she reached around the back of the console, then brandished a hydrospanner. "That's what this is for." She glanced toward Lilly. "I like her."

"Yeah, she was infamous in our staff for a reason," Lilly chuckled nervously.

"Staff? You're only kids," B'Elanna said, slightly put off. It didn't last long, "that's why you're still to work with Carey, unfortunately. He's too much of an obnoxious know it all to be in charge on his own. Very punchable."

"Um so... how long are you going to be off on maternity for?" Lilly asked sheepishly.

B'Elanna frowned at her, "I'm not off yet. Not until this kid shows its face. For now you follow my orders, get a feel of the place first." She fidgeted and grasped her belly. "If you'll excuse me, the little bastard's trying to punch its way out like an Alien." Then she walked off grumbling something about its rotten dad.

Emma snickered to herself, Lilly wasn't sure why so gave her a curious eyebrow raise. "Orders huh. Do you think you can follow for once, if your life depends on it?"

"Of course," Lilly said a little too defensively. "Neelix's serving his surprise pie on payday, I'm not stubborn enough to die."

"There's a first," Emma said, briefly shuddering. Lilly did as well. "When she's had the little brat, you can play captain again, so hang in there."

"Play?" Lilly pouted, one eye narrowed. "I dunno why you're teasing me. I don't remember you being good at being told what to do either."

Emma gave her a sweet, innocent smile. "I did. Sometimes. When you said please."

"Yeah and for those occasions, I'm glad you're on my side," Lilly smiled. Emma giggled in response. "I'm serious, thanks."

"Oh hey..." Emma looked very embarrassed, "why wouldn't I? You're like my family."

Lilly snorted briefly, "really, even my brother?"

Emma was about to answer, but hesitated at the last breath. "Only you."

Lilly smiled gratefully. "Great, cos I wouldn't want to get on your bad side. I'm not that dumb."

"Move that any closer and it'll go straight through you," James groaned.

He heard Tom snigger behind him. "What, you're going to force me to eat it?"

A sponge hovered slightly closer, barely an inch, before it was swatted away. "For once, I'm being literal," James answered.

Tom whined and held his sore hand. "You know, normally I'd tell for that threat but that'd be another day with you."

James shrugged as he walked towards the helm of the Flyer. Tom saw red when he dared to sit down.

"She said we both clean and stuff, are you going to help?" Tom snarled.

"I am," James smiled while putting his feet up on the console.

Tom imagined wringing his neck, but then reality crept into his imagination and the roles reversed. He muttered angrily to himself. "That's not..." James looked over his shoulder at him. For once Tom's resolve won out. "Ugh, feel like I'm back in detention with the bullies. I bet you were the worst one." He continued using a small device that sucked up dust wherever he pointed it.

James' face fell. He was grateful Tom couldn't see it. "That's interesting, because you remind me of all of mine."

Tom burst into hysterical laughter, he had to put the device down and sit. James still had his back on him but he knew his response had hit a nerve since James' shoulders looked to clench up.

"You were bullied?" Tom managed to wheeze, he coughed to stop laughing. "I'm curious, is there a makeshift graveyard or a tribute to the dozens of kids you murdered at your school?"

James' feet lowered back to the ground, then he turned his chair to face him. "You know," he began to snap, he thought better of it and sighed. "I don't care what you think."

"Yes you do," Tom smirked. "So come on, out with it."

"No, I'm not gay and I think it's really offensive you use it and apparently being girly as an insult," James said while turning his back on him again.

"No I mean," Tom chuckled, "Janeway wants us to get along. We got to have something in common we can talk about, or do, so we can get through this painlessly."

"Painlessly? Try shutting up," James said.

"Tsk," Tom huffed, "now come on. You weren't always the one dimensional psychopath with a smart mouth. I find it hard to believe that you're the same guy who turned my holo novel into a crazy parody with Teletubbies and Flotter as the primary villains. He annoyed me but at least he knew how to have fun and had an imagination I kinda respected. A worthy rival I was eager to beat. Not the quipmaster who'd rather knock me into a coma with one punch."

James pulled a confused and annoyed face. "I can't be both?"

Tom shook his head. "Nah, cos the guy who captured Janeway perfectly, I'll admit better than I did; Wrote the Seska sings a Disney-esque villains song in Engineering. He sounds like fun, I'd love to collaborate with him or just hang out with. I could do without the fist usage, it clashes."

"I can't take all the credit. Kiara wanted it to be a musical, and she insisted on the Flotter stuff," James groaned.

"Come on man, I'm trying here, which is pretty big of me considering it was you that hit me," Tom said.

James' eyebrow raised, he once more turned his chair around. "After you slapped Jessie and ran off."

Tom felt his cheeks turn a little red and his throat felt a little lumpy, he had no idea why. "Yeah well, rare moment of madness. Still, I'm trying. So, what did you do for fun before you stressed out?"

"I'm not stressed," James said.

"Really, cos this," Tom said, bopping his fists meekly in front of him "is very recent."

"No, no it's not," James quickly said a little impatiently. "I've always not liked you. You've always tried to piss me off, knowing that I may lash out. Same with Jessie. And before you say it, yes I've hit you before and I'm starting to wonder if I need to soften my punch a lot more if you think this is new."

Tom acted as if he didn't hear the last sentence. "You program holodeck games and novels before?"

James sighed as his lack of patience and the effort to keep it from running out had tired him out. "No. I only know how to mod. You don't need to do this, we can get along if we don't talk to each other."

"Ok, any sports or... you don't seem like a book guy, music? What did you do in between smacking fools as a kid?" Tom asked lightly.

James sighed, defeated. Not answering was making him talk more not less. "Nothing. I went to college, worked in a bar because my mother thought I should get out more, sometimes had a ride out. Nothing you'd care about."

Tom's eyes though lit up to James' continued disappointment. He even hovered right behind him. "Oh, a ride in what?"

James shook his head. "Why did I mention the last one?" he muttered to himself. "It was just an old bike I took out into the country. An odd car now and then, but..."

"You mean the gas fueled, wheeled kind of bikes and cars?" Tom was practically giddy, making James wish a hull breach would happen. "Why didn't you ever say you liked vintage vehicles? I couldn't even get Harry interested and he pretty much tags along to everything."

"I didn't, it was my step dad. He collected them. I only liked to drive them," James said carefully.

"Oh, oh what kind?" Tom asked.

James was half tempted to make the hull breach himself so he could escape without hitting him again. "Uh, there was a blue one, and a large four by four."

Without looking he knew Tom's face fell, the little whimpered sigh gave Tom away. "No. Its name."

"Ugh, my stepdad named his cars too. I refused to drive the one he named after my mum just because the plate on the back had the letters SZY at the end," James groaned.

Tom snorted a bit, "cute," he whispered but to James it was like nails on a chalkboard. "I meant the brand."

"I told you, they weren't mine. I didn't care what they were. The bike was mine and I haven't a clue what that was either, it didn't matter to me," James snapped.

"Come on," Tom smiled as he sat on the console nearby. Since that meant he had given James a little more space, he was able to turn the chair around a bit to grimace toward the chirpy helmsman. "This is what Janeway was after," Tom said, either immune or fueled by it, "us finding something in common and getting along. I don't suppose you have a pilot's license?"

"Sure, since I was fifteen, why?" James replied.

The grin that spread across Tom's face made him regret answering yet again. "There's an asteroid belt and a nebula near the station we're stopping at later. The question is, would it be fair on you to race the ace pilot in the fastest shuttle?"

James' tired and annoyed stare turned blank. Tom thought he was confused. "You just want to beat me at something," he said instead.

Tom forcibly laughed, "maybe. And I will, can you handle that?"

James laughed, "unlike you, I don't care if someone's better at something than I am."

"Oooh, are you talking about Morgan coming along and stealing your super Slayer crown?" Tom teased. He was disappointed he got no response whatsoever. "Wow, you're not kidding. This is why I call you a robot sometimes."

James rolled his eyes as he got up, then walked off to the back room of the shuttle. He expected it but still groaned when Tom followed him.

"Look, competition is life, it's the fire that keeps us going," he said quickly in a vain attempt to stop him leaving. He sighed when instead James only was heading for the replicator. "I suppose that's hard for someone who was given his freak buffs at birth, to imagine. You never earned anything."

A bottle of coke and a large bag of crisps rematerialised on the replicator pad. James took them but kept his back on him. Tom wasn't sure how he took that, he inched back just in case.

James eventually turned around after an awkward minute of silence, breaking it by opening the bag. "I get competitive when I give a crap." He walked by Tom while scoffing a handful of crisps.

"Then give a crap. You don't want Tom to be better than you at something," Tom said playfully. "Do you?"

"I already know you're a good pilot," James said in between reaching into the bag and eating more.

Tom chuckled, "well yeah," then he realised something and frowned. "Hey, you can't use sarcasm as a way to pretend you're the better man."

James' eyes drifted from one side to the other, eyebrow raising. "Are you really that insecure?"

Tom's upper half flinched, he tried to grin it away. "See, you're still pretending you're high up there, above us mere weaklings."

"Oh for god's..." James groaned while rolling his eyes. "If I do this stupid race, will we spend the rest of our forced day together in complete silence?"

"Oh absolutely. You'll be too mortified to talk," Tom said cheekily.

"That's a no, clearly," James said. Tom blinked a few more times than usual. "If you're just going to brag when you win, I really don't see the point of indulging you."

"Ahha, you know you'll lose and so won't compete. I knew it, James is a coward," Tom said not seriously. He only got a bemused raised eyebrow for that insult. "Hey, it's gotta be better than scrubbing the consoles. Janeway did say no flying, but if I tell her why, she may let us. Especially when it'll be ten minutes after coffee twenty by now, so."

"Fine," James said to Tom's huge relief, "but, time trials. No racing. We both use one regular shuttle."

Tom snickered at all of his conditions, "getting rid of the Flyer won't give you the edge you need. It's that or no deal."

James smirked, "what, you're okay with me handling your precious Flyer?"

"Since you're an old school driver, you know how to drive stick right?" Tom said, resisting a joke or even a smirk. "I'm assuming that the Flyer will be simple for you to figure out. Though, have you flown her before?"

"Nope," James lied, hiding a smile.

Tom didn't notice at all, "piece of cake. Prepare to be trounced for once in your life."

Almost everyone held their breath while watching the docking to a spacestation, which looked more like a floating shopping centre. One crewmember passed out, a few chewed off their own fingernails, Harry chose the far safer option of holding on for a dear life after he nearly suffocated the first time. Kathryn peered around her to find Tuvok meditating, she rolled her eyes and shook her head.

Naomi gasped as her eyes widened. Her finger flew out towards a large flashing square panel on the helm. "Oh, there it is, go faster."

Her hand was slapped away at the last minute by the person using the helm. Two more people passed out.

"We're parking, not running away from something," Chakotay barked up at her.

Naomi pouted, apparently immune to the death glare being pointed at her from the command chairs. Kathryn sensed that and disarmed it. "Wildman." No response. She sighed, "Naomi."

Naomi gasped again and ran over eagerly. "Yes Captain?"

"This cup won't fill itself," Kathryn said, waving a mug in front of her.

As soon as Naomi had ran off, into the wrong door that is, the gentle rumble of the station and Voyager connecting had everyone finally relaxing.

Chakotay looked pleased with himself as he span around, until he noticed the three passed out crewmembers and Jessie unbuckling a custom seatbelt.

"Really? I'm not that bad," Chakotay groaned.

"Um, the Flyer is asking for take off clearance," Harry said while caressing one of his bleach white knuckles.

"Granted," Kathryn smiled, cueing a bemused stare from Chakotay.

"I thought..." he said.

Kathryn nodded, "mmhmmm."

Chakotay smiled knowingly. "You're hoping that he snaps and gets rid of Tom."

Kathryn gasped overdramatically, Chakotay knew it was faked. "Ohno, I never thought of that." Her shock vanished in a split second. She looked serious as she stood up. "Make sure Neelix doesn't get off the ship. Checking if the food was edible before we let him out the last time proved to be a fool's errand."

"Already taken care of," Chakotay said, smiling broadly.

Kathryn returned the favour and headed for the Ready Room, still carrying her empty mug. Opps decided to make a lot of noise before she reached the door.

"Captain, the trading station is hailing us," Harry said.

"Ohno. Did Annika slip away already?" Kathryn sighed. "Tell them she's not with us."

"No, they say it's urgent," Harry said.

Kathryn nodded, "mmhmm, I've already told you what to say."

Chakotay sniggered on route back to his usual spot. "On screen."

The viewscreen switched before Kathryn could finish her scowl-walk in his direction. She immediately had to put on her cheery, diplomatic face and hurriedly sit down.

"This is Commander Chakotay. I hear you have a problem, Governor," Chakotay said.

The woman on the screen's own customer service smile faded. "A puzzle Commander. You said you were a lone ship on your way home."

Kathryn's curiosity was piqued, it made her unconsciously sit up. "We are."

"Yes well, a vessel sent out a distress call a short while ago. One of our scout ships received it but they're not armed and couldn't assist them. They did though scan for lifesigns, and they matched with a good majority of your crew," the Governor explained.

Kathryn slouched back into the back of her chair. "Oh. Did the ship look exactly like ours?"

"Not at all," Governor replied, cueing everyone to look at her like Kathryn would if someone said coffee. "It was black and blue, almost flat except for its canons. They looked a little like yours but they had four."

"Canons," Kathryn mumbled, "those are our engines."

The Governor managed to bring back her cheery smile. "Oh well, the scout ship was mistaken with their visual assessment, my apologies. I assume by your reaction you either don't know the ship or it is one of yours."

"No to both, but it's worth checking out," Kathryn said. She noticed Chakotay nod in her peripheral. "May we leave a couple of teams behind to trade as we agreed, while we investigate?"

"Of course, we welcome it. We'll send you the co-ordinates, it's not far. Good luck," the Governor answered.

As soon as the viewscreen changed back to the station view, Chakotay lowered his voice and leaned in towards Kathryn. "I know you don't think it's Starfleet; they rarely, if ever change their hull colours, as we've already seen during our future trip. It's not who you originally thought."

Kathryn didn't reciprocate, she shook her head firmly. "I knew you agreeing was too good to be true, or suspicious. Regardless of who they are, they're in trouble. Besides if my theory is right, we may get some much needed friends."

Chakotay thought he understood and nodded. "Danny, if you remember how, prepare to take us back out and to those co-ordinates, maximum warp."

Over at the Science station parallel to Jessie's, Danny quickly and discreetly closed a program with her eyes wide. Only Jessie saw her do it. Oblivious to that, Danny hurried over to the helm a little too eagerly. "Aye aye, sir."

On board the Delta Flyer, Tom grinned and cracked his knuckles before getting up from the helm. "Beat that. If you can."

He expected to be at least scowled at, pushed away at most. Instead James still remained in his seat at a nearby console, paying zero attention while occasionally tapping the screen.

"Hellooo, I'm done. I suppose with it being a smooth ride, you wouldn't have noticed," Tom teased. His eyes brightened, "ooh, maybe I should quickly install some seatbelts."

James' brow briefly flickered up, he exhaled as if slightly annoyed. "Two minutes fifty," he said in a drroll voice. Tom assumed he had given up already. "I thought you were trying to give me a challenge."

"Oh ho ho," Tom laughed, pretending to be offended. He walked off to allow free reign of the helm. "Be my guest." James shrugged and got up. Tom tried not to worry about his poor baby being in such a brute's hands as he passed by him. He shivered involuntarily. "So er, what kind of driver are you?" he ended up blurting out.

James smirked as he sat down. "Demolition derby style."

Tom of course panicked, he darted around almost on the spot, sweating. James laughed, causing him to stop and grumble. He side stepped into an empty station, "you are very difficult to get along with. Don't scratch her."

"Hmm," James barely acknowledged as he casually turned one of the key-like levers which powered up the impulse engines. His hand then hovered over the manual steering lever. Even that made Tom very nervous. He tried to tell himself that James did know what he was doing and was making him sweat on purpose. Then he thought he could be acting calmly because he didn't care that he didn't, which had him fearing the worst.

"Um," Tom said to stall him. It did but he got an annoyed exhale for it. "You bring her back in one piece and I'll buy you a beer or something. Heck I'll get you your own shuttle."

"A compromise. You relax and stop breathing down my neck or I'm going to damage it on purpose," James said.

Tom flinched and stumbled back into the nearest seat, it rolled so far back he had to pull himself back to the station. "Seriously? I'm surprised you have friends at all with the way you treat people."

"Why, I'm not trying to be your friend," James said, confused and a little put off.

"That's not what Janeway implied. I'll tell her you're being difficult," Tom said.

James looked back over his shoulder at him, eyebrow pointed up. He shrugged and pulled the lever to move the Flyer. It took off directly towards an asteroid. Its flight path curved sideways at the last second to avoid collision.

Tom, already drowning in sweat, clutched the console for a dear life even though if he wasn't watching, he wouldn't even know they were moving. "I'm sorry baby," he whispered.

James overheard him, he rolled his eyes but had a smirk on his face. "How wide is the Flyer again?"

Tom squeaked and looked up in time to see another asteroid, this one with a hole in it. "No, no..."

"No time," James said while pulling the lever further back to increase the speed.

Tom watched as they flew straight for the narrow hole and out the other side. The Flyer's first flight, at least with him at the helm, flashed before Tom's eyes.

"Ok ok," he stammered, "you're good with her, you made your point."

"What point? I thought I was supposed to beat your time," James pretended to sound confused.

Tom squeaked, "I've created a bigger monster."

James shook his head while sniggering to himself. His next course wasn't anywhere near as kamikaze-ish as the last ones. "Is that better?"

"It's okay. You still won't..." Tom wheezed. He tried to put on a confident smile but he still grasped the console with white knuckles. "Beat me even if you jumped to warp."

"Your original idea was a race, with you in the Flyer and me in the Planet Scraper 2000. So you mustn't have been that confident," James pointed out.

Tom recoiled and scowled from the verbal punch to his pride. "Went way over your head didn't it? You have all the advantages over me. Giving you the weaker shuttle would bring you down to us mere human level for once."

James' eyes drifted to one side, brow lowered. He went to stop the shuttle abruptly. Tom looked on in shock, he quickly checked to see if his precious toy was ok.

"What are you talking about?" James asked.

Tom briefly glanced up, "uh, you're going to lose."

"Only you care about that," James said as he turned the chair around to face him. "Look Tom, you're not the first guy I've emasculated by merely existing. I didn't choose this, so don't project..." Tom tried to object with a but, he wasn't fast enough. "Don't deny it. You're all the same. I don't get why you all have to be the best at everything. It's pathetic. I don't get it."

Tom found himself smiling. "Of course you don't. I've already said why. You're one of the strongest, people like you, women are lining up which is more infuriating when you're ignorant of it, or not fussed. Smart and funny, like me, so yeah, of course you don't get it."

James stared at him blankly, then turned to face the front of the shuttle. "Idiot," he grumbled.

"Wh... what?" Tom said, taken aback.

James' head shook. "You're doing the job you love. You're married, got a son, and you've got that holo novel crap going on. You claim you're happy with everything, right? So what the hell are you doing trying to be competitive and compare yourself to people who aren't?"

"Well," Tom was speechless for once.

"It's not always fun you know. People are afraid of me. I've lost count of how many times I've died, been badly injured. I'm always worried about people I care about. If that wasn't enough, I'm worried about everyone else too," James muttered bitterly. "You try it for a week and you'll wish you were Tom again, trust me."

"Huh, I..." Tom stammered. "Does that mean you want to be like me?"

James froze, Tom thought he was offended or thinking about it but he only burst out laughing. "Ok fine. You are funny, I can't be sarcastic about that." He pulled the lever to get the shuttle moving again.

Tom seemed calmer this time. He loosened his grip on the console, staring thoughtfully into literal space. "You know, you're right. I am happy. Thing is, I enjoy a bout of excitement and pressure now and then. Being Voyager's best pilot is a responsibility that I love, but most of the time it's driving in a straight line. Your life would never be mundane."

Consoles bleeped. James frowned and briefly glanced back. "You're not wrong there," he said, "what is it?"

"Voyager's approaching us. Must be something wrong," Tom said, trailing off. "They're..."

"I see it," James said, turning one of the levers to the right. This time they did feel the shuttle sharply turn.

Tom looked out the window at the same time and saw the phaser strike graze the edge of their shields. "That's not our Voyager."

"Neither of us are very popular with Janeway right now. How can you be so sure?" James said.

"Duh they wouldn't..." Tom said defensively until he heard the slightest of chuckles. "Oh haha, very funny. Let's swap."

They turned again, this time down. The shuttle trembled from the back. "You kidding? Now's not the time for your ego," James snapped.

"Hey hey, if we're being boarded by muscle dudes, I'm not going to be charging in, getting in your way cos I was already there," Tom rambled, he was interrupted by two bigger tremors. "You want the best person for the job in every situation. This situation is me."

James groaned. He pushed two levers all the way down. Tom tried to object, he didn't have anywhere near enough time. The Flyer stopped abruptly once again, this time it veered vertically, pointing down. Another lever pull and it shot off in that direction.

"Uh, what," Tom said a little too bitterly.

Voyager meanwhile flew right by and over them. They both noticed the Borg looking modifications to the belly, as well as some phaser scorches on its side.

"Fine," James said lightly as if it were shift changeover time. He rose out of the chair to take a completely different one.

Tom was more than a little shell shocked so he didn't go for the helm right away. He still got there in time to steer them out of the way of another asteroid hurtling toward them.

"You're flipping crazy as a pilot, sheesh," Tom said. He couldn't help but smile despite his freaked tone of voice. "Hate to admit it, but I like it."

James briefly smirked, then laughed quietly to himself. The console next to him which Tom had been using chirped. He transferred it over to his station. "They're sending us a message." Tom pulled all manner of faces.

"*Prepare for tr...*" a familiar voice snarled.

James instantly cut them off. Tom tried to stop from laughing but he snorted loudly instead.

"Yep, that's definitely our slightly badder than us *clones*. We've got to get out of here," Tom said.

"Where exactly, we can't outrun them," James questioned.

Tom shrugged, "well we can't go back, can we?"

A few lightyears away, the real Voyager dropped out of warp. In the distance one black shiny vessel, almost flat, barely lit up by its blue shields and red tinted quadruple warp drives, tried to dodge the dozens of phaser blasts from the swarm of similarly sized ships surrounding it.

"Have they spotted us?" Kathryn asked.

Tuvok double checked before answering, "unknown. If they have, neither side see us as a threat."

Kathryn paced to the Tactical side of the bridge while keeping a close eye on the battle on the viewscreen. "Status on the solo ship, Commander."

"The vessel appears to be made out of similar materials to our own. Its energy levels are random, I can't see a pattern to them as of yet," Tuvok answered. "The Governor was correct, the ship's crew are all reading as Human."

Chakotay stood up with a worried frown, "and the enemy ships?"

"Curious," Tuvok said, cueing stares. "They're of similar materials, construction and design, and yet their weapons, shields, power source..." Kathryn's stare turned into a hurry it up glare. "Everything but the actual age of the vessels, points to them being older classes of the lone ship. If they attacked them one on one they'd be extremely outmatched."

"Hmm, are they Human too?" Kathryn asked.

Tuvok's eyebrows both sprung up, "yes, indeed they are."

Kathryn wasn't anywhere near surprised, she nodded formally. "Hail the lone ship." Harry nodded. "This is Captain Kathryn Janeway of the Federation Starship Voyager. Do you need assistance?"

"No response," Harry said after a thirty second wait. "Looks like their comms are busy."

"Captain," Tuvok warned. Anyone watching the viewscreen saw the same thing, six of the attacking vessels veering off to confront them. Pulses emerged from their bows.

"Shields!" Kathryn barked.

The ship trembled only a little. "We were entering an unknown distress call situation, Captain. The shields were already up," Tuvok said. Kathryn growled more towards the ships, but Tuvok assumed it was him. "They're at 95%"

Kathryn stared daggers into the attackers who were still in her sight. "Harry, send a message to them." Harry gulped before doing so. "Hostile ships, this is the USS Voyager. Who are you and why are you attacking us..."

A male voice cackled over the top of her. She only stopped talking because she found it so cartoony, it nearly made her burst out laughing. "*Lower your shields and prepare to be boarded Voyager. Don't make this harder than it needs to be.*"

The comm line instantly cut off, leaving Kathryn smirking towards Chakotay. It was infectious, he did so back. "Optimistic little twerps, aren't they? Tuvok, disable their weapons. Danny take us closer to the other ship."

Voyager flew forward, dodging some of the barrages fired at them, towards the smaller, black vessel. It fought back as well with missile looking weaponry. Two of the attacking ships took advantage of the different attack direction and charged to fire. Two of Voyager's torpedoes flew into their path, detonating them early and sending them flying off to the side.

With Voyager in the mix, the ambushers shot off a few warning shots before making a break for it by jumping into warp.

"Typical. Bullies," Harry commented.

Kathryn smiled confidently. Chakotay watched her, "you knew they'd do that."

"Why wouldn't they? Can we hail the other ship now?" Kathryn questioned.

Harry nodded, his eyes lighting up, "they're hailing us."

Kathryn gestured her hand in the direction of the viewscreen. Harry thought that meant to open a channel.

Even though they were all told to expect it, most of the bridge were still surprised to see a human on the screen, sitting in the centre of a bright bridge. He looked surprised as well. Kathryn thought to repeat her earlier introduction in case he never got it.

"Federation?" he seemed even more puzzled. "I'm not familiar with that. I suppose we have been away a while. Anyway, I'm Commander Dave Johnstone. This is the Z5. Thanks for your help."

Kathryn and Chakotay exchanged knowing glances, then returned to face the viewscreen. "Pardon me," she said, "but you wouldn't happen to call yourselves Liger, would you?"

Dave's shoulders tensed. He gestured to someone off screen to his left to come over. "Um, you're not?"

"I realise that you'd be wary of us considering your history with *us*, so to speak. However I'm sure you're aware that you're not in the same dimension you were, and..." Kathryn explained.

"You're Humans," Dave said warily. A young ginger haired woman arrived at his left side to whisper something. He nodded. "Yeah I wasn't expecting any. We picked a spot far away from Earth for a reason. How did you get here?"

Chakotay gave him a friendly smile, "it's a long story, like yours I assume."

Dave hunched forward, almost sitting on the edge of his seat. "At least you have a head start here. If you're Human and of this dimension, where we didn't exist, I checked." The woman stared suspicious and a little anxiously toward the Voyager bridge. "How did you know of us?"

"Should I?" Chakotay asked in Kathryn's direction.

"Yeah, it's time," Kathryn whispered. She waited for him to walk away and tap his commbadge. "I'm sure you're familiar with this ship already. Our other dimension, badly hair dyed counterparts?"

"Oh, we're very familiar with Seventh Voyager," the woman spoke up, eyes narrowing.

Dave though seemed to relax a bit. "But it's like you said. This Voyager isn't the same." The woman sighed and nodded. "Sorry Captain. Carly witnessed the other Voyager destroy parts of our colony. I was off world at the time."

"That's alright. We expected a lot worse from you," Kathryn said.

"Well it does sound like we have a lot to talk about," Dave smiled, it looked forced and uneasy. "Your place or ours?"

"Commander?" Carly said while widening her eyes in panic.

Kathryn shook her head. "Whichever you think or feel would be the safest for you."

Dave glanced up at Carly. They lowered their voices again to talk to each other. Dave once again addressed Voyager, "looks like it's yours. We'll be right over. Maybe get the kettle on, it's gonna be a long day."

Kathryn tried not to visibly twitch in response to that. The coffee cravings weren't helping. Then she remembered Naomi hadn't returned from when she asked for more coffee two hours ago.

She cleared her throat, "Tuvok, Harry, make sure those other ships are long gone before we lower our shields for transport."

Both men acknowledged with a nod and got straight to work. Seconds later three figures rematerialised in the centre of the bridge via a red transporter beam. Tuvok instinctively reached for his weapon.

"Oh sorry," one of the figures, which turned out to be Dave, held his hands up meekly. "I thought it'd be safer if we used ours, they can go through shields like yours." He and his two shipmates were stared into icecubes by a nearby Kathryn. He laughed it off, "maybe I should've warned you first."

"Maybe?" Kathryn was close to snapping. She tried to soften her face, but her eyebrow kept twitching. "What about your friends, won't they..."

Dave and his companions resisted laughing at the thought, he changed his brief smirk into a friendly smile. "No. This is a recent upgrade to our transporters. They won't have even thought of it."

"Fine, but maybe you don't do that again," Kathryn said through near gritted teeth.

"Unless needed, right?" one of the three piped up with a chirpy smile.

Dave glanced back at her and lowered his voice to a groaning mumble, "you said you were aiming for their transporter room, Kim."

The crewmember who piped up didn't look fussed in the slightest. She gave the Commander a cheeky wink. "If I told you it'd be better to aim for the bridge so they don't think there's intruders, you would've..."

"I would've said yes, and warned them," Dave meekly hissed back to her amusement and Kathryn's growing sympathy.

"I see, it's no problem," she said on approach. As she did, the turbolift doors opened. Dave's eyes nearly bugged out at the sight of who stepped out of them.

"Lill?" he stammered before hurrying over.

Lilly stopped barely over the turbolift door threshold, freezing in shock. "Jimmy?"

Dave stalled for a moment, cringing. "Ohno, not that again. It was a phase. It was seventeen years ago."

"Not from my perspective," Lilly laughed awkwardly.

The two embraced, relaxing finally. It didn't last when Dave spotted Emma behind her, he got extremely nervous. "Oh, why am I surprised you survived too?"

She smiled sweetly at him but with the dangerous glint in her eye. "Hi Davey. How's the leg?"

"Still scarred, don't worry," Dave replied.

Kathryn cleared her throat loudly to get their attention. "You know each other? That's not a coincidence."

"He's my brother. But yeah that's a point. How are you here?" Lilly asked.

"That's a part of the promised long story, I suppose," Dave answered.

Kathryn sighed, "I have a feeling I'm going to need two filters for this one."

"Only two?" Chakotay was surprised.

"You're right," Kathryn said. "Tuvok, three jugs of filter coffee in the Conference Room."

Tuvok still managed to look shocked and offended. "I am Chief of Security."

"Good for you, now," Kathryn said and clapped.

Dave chuckled as the poor Commander walked off into the empty turbolift. "Ah, memories." Lilly scowled at him. "What? At least it's not just me."

Lilly shushed him, "not now."

They both got bemused stares from everyone who didn't identify as Ligers. It made Lilly a little uncomfortable. "Conference?" she suggested.

The Delta Flyer shot out of the asteroid field. The Borg tainted Voyager swooped in from above to pursue them, occasionally firing.

Phoebe Janeway kept a narrowed eye or two on the shuttle directly ahead of them on the viewscreen.

"Tractor them," Seventh Chakotay barked.

"Console says no, they're not in range," Seventh Harry said.

Phoebe calmly sighed, "fire a couple of warheads directly ahead of them."

"Really? Didn't we want it one piece?" Seventh Tuvok said. He shrugged and did it anyway.

On the viewscreen two green pulses pushed ahead of the Flyer and detonated. The shuttle sharply banked up and shot into warp.

"Match their speed," Phoebe smiled darkly.

Seventh Tom cackled, "oooh, aye aye smarty pants."

Harry started to sweat nervously. "Uh, Console's getting a message from headquarters."

"So?" Chakotay scoffed.

"Tell them the usual," Phoebe said.

Harry laughed and whimpered, "are you sure? We've got special orders from the Boss himself."

Phoebe walked over to give him a harsh slap across the back of the head. "How many times... That snake's no boss of ours. We're free agents until we get the real Boss back. That shuttle will help us do that."

"Okay then, but you might as well tell him yourself," Harry huffed.

"What?" Phoebe bellowed into his ear.

Harry rubbed it, moaning ow. "Didn't we say; his ship's right behind us? All the rock dodging helped him catch up."

Phoebe glared at Chakotay. He did so right back, then pointed it at an oblivious Tom.

"Perhaps we should replace the crew first," Phoebe smiled.

Chakotay smirked and nodded, "starting with those two, finally. I've had dreams of this day. Ready the booze."

"Me too. Our Tom floating outside mouthing help me," Phoebe cackled.

Seventh Tom didn't react right away. When he did he shook fearfully. "Oh," he said to cover the sound of him lowering the warp speed. Unknown to anyone else, the Flyer's gap increased while the small ship following them did the opposite.

"They're slowing down," James said, suddenly cautious.

Tom felt the same, he winced through his gritted teeth. "Keep an eye on them. I got to find a quiet place to shake 'em."

"We're in the middle of nowhere. Do you have a plan B?" James asked.

Tom snickered, "of course I do. I'll set you loose on them. Have fun."

James faked a smile, "oh yeah, lets give them what they want. That'll show em. Hey does the Flyer bend over?"

"Oh, that's right. We're replacements. Maybe..." Tom winced.

"Try heading for that system we passed," James suggested.

"That won't be enough. Still too much free space," Tom said.

James tried not to sound impatient but his sigh gave him away. "Really, you said I was the one with no imagination. Twin star system. We could go between the two suns and..."

Tom laughed obnoxiously, "no no. Let the master deal with this, remember? You keep an eye on them." He was surprised that he got no bite back. It was eerily quiet. Still, he let his guard down and smiled proudly. "I win," he whispered.

"Pathetic," James whispered back.

Seventh Harry trembled. "It's getting closer."

"Good. Lock onto their engines," Phoebe said.

Harry whined and started to panic. "You want to fire on our not Boss?"

Seventh Chakotay rolled his eyes, "let's be clear. There are two ships, yes?"

Harry whimpered again. "Sorry, I'll be clear next time." He cursed at his console, "look what you did." It sparked in retaliation, leaving him with his hair sticking up.

Meanwhile the Delta Flyer disappeared, shocking whoever was watching.

"Man I'm good," Seventh Tom said, clicking his tongue and grinning.

"What?" Phoebe snarled as she stood over him.

Seventh Tom didn't seem to notice this, "other me must've slammed on the breaks. Nice move." He only noticed Phoebe's proximity when she growled down his neck.

Chakotay inadvertently saved him by shoving him off the chair so he could take over. "Taking us about."

Phoebe's eyes nearly shot out of their sockets. She got back to her seat in a flash. "That seatbelt better be working."

Seventh Voyager dropped out of warp, turned sloppily to pursue the Flyer making a break for it. On their trail another smaller ship made the same turn, but sharply and so was able to overtake Voyager effortlessly.

"There's two of them," James said. Tom tensed and glanced behind him. "I don't recognise it, but its occupant is human."

Tom ground his teeth, "shoot."

"Yeah ok," James said.

Tom's jaw dropped. "Now you listen to me? No, no, stand down the missiles."

"No *miss-els*. Sure," James said. He pressed to fire anyway.

Tom muttered under his breath. "For god's sake James. Now's not the time for British versus American jokes. You knew what I meant!"

It was way too late, one of the Flyer's missiles struck the smaller ship, slowing it down. Seventh Voyager ducked down so the second missile grazed the side of its shields. It kept coming.

"Oh well. Thanks a lot chump," Phoebe laughed. "Other you is just as dumb."

Seventh Tom pouted while rubbing his sore arm. "Does that mean you won't replace me?"

"No," everyone replied.

"Really, that's... not... helpful," Tom snapped slowly. He pulled the shuttle to the left to avoid another tractor beam attempt. "That's it. Preparing for warp."

"I thought we were sitting ducks at warp," James said.

Tom chuckled, "just keeping them on their toes."

James noticed another two shots of green from Voyager. He fired back in the same general direction, detonating them early before they could hit the Flyer.

"No, no. We've got to work together. This is why!" Tom cried, slamming his hand at the leverless side of the console.

"Why?" James groaned.

Tom grit his teeth again and made a squeaky grunt sound, hoping it'd give him time to calm down. "Can't generate a warp field in the detonation range. Give us some room."

"You were flying us into it," James snapped back.

Tom's spare hand balled into a fist, "excuse me. I was going to warp us out of here!"

"You didn't have time," James said, breathing in to calm his own temper.

The Flyer shook, the pair jolted back a bit. The cockpit glowed blue from the tractor beam light enveloping them.

"See, look what you've done," Tom grumbled while letting go of the controls. "Violent hothead."

"Maybe you should've been watching the road instead of trying to be right," James muttered.

Tom's jaw dropped, "huh!" He swung around, "me? You can't stand it when you're wrong and I'm not. I'm the pilot, I have the brains, the imagination. You're the muscle, that's it. If I want a jar opening I'll call you."

James faked a pout, "aaw, does this mean our BFF initiation party in Captain Proton's damsel in distress den is off?"

Tom only saw red in front of him. Fortunately his survival instincts kept him from acting on it. "She's not a damsel in distress. She's a secretary. And I'd never lower myself to be your friend."

"Well in that case, good luck, I'm not watching your back," James sniggered.

"I don't need your help!" Tom screeched at him.

Two throat clears behind them got their attention. They looked around at the two armed guards behind them. Tom shushed them and turned back "And furthermore..." he continued.

James though got up quickly to try and disarm them. They were too far back and had time to point their phaser rifles, stopping him in his tracks.

"Good job Ensign Getskilledalot," Seventh Tuvok said on entering the shuttle.

"Wh... what?" Tom said, too annoyed to laugh but not enough to keep his mouth shut. "Honestly. Gets killed a lot, and James the serial killer couldn't off him. That is a great job."

James knocked one of the rifles being pointed at him upwards so it'd fly up and knock out one of the Security grunts. The other raised the frequency while Tuvok quickly pointed a regular phaser directly at his forehead.

"On the other hand," Tom quipped.

Tuvok looked down and up at James again. "Getskilledalot, grab a dustpan would you?" The other officer hurried out.

Tom quietly snorted, "oh. Still."

"No matter. It's so good of Fifth to send us a present now and then. Come with us," Tuvok sneered.

"Hmm, I'll pass," James said casually. Tom rolled his eyes slowly, the eyelids twitched. Tuvok looked annoyed that he wasn't moving. "Come on," James laughed, "you can't kill us. We all know it."

"True," Tuvok said hesitantly. He sharply turned to point his phaser at Tom instead, firing at him. It missed by a hair. "I can't kill you. But I actually quite like our Tom. He amuses me."

Tom groaned, "oh great, this is how it ends."

James sighed and frowned, glancing briefly at the helmsman. "Fine," he said to Tom's utter shock.

"Oooh no no," Tuvok chuckled nervously. "You must be restrained first. We're not stupid." He nodded at his only remaining conscious teammate, who had just hurried in carrying a broom with a brush two metres wide. They quickly swapped it for what looked like hand cuffs from their pockets.

"Remains to be seen," James said. Still he reluctantly held his wrists out so they could be put on. They locked closed with a little string of buzzing light. "So is it a nickname, or...?"

The grunt gasped in offense, "it means heroic in German."

"Right," James tried not to laugh.

Tom made a little huh sound. "While we're all together, what does useless translate into?" James stared at him harshly. Tom tried to pretend it didn't effect him, still he shuddered.

Tuvok walked over to Tom to grab his arm roughly. Getskilledalot led James out first and through the shuttle bay, passing the other ship with its engines still on. Other Security waited outside for them. Tuvok noticed the other ship when he and Tom were the only ones left. "Oh dear, Phoebe's gonna get the whip out."

The doors to the strange ship opened. A man dressed in a black robe stepped down. Tom instinctively thought of Damien but remembered his previous deaths. He still wasn't sure if he should be worried or not.

Security came in to drag him off before he could make up his mind, leaving Tuvok alone to greet the new arrival.

"The Boss, I assume," he said pleasantly.

"No, I am your mother," the robed man said. He lowered the hood to reveal his pale, bald and yet young teenaged face, covered in Borg implants and scars. "Of course I'm your Boss. Was that Fifth Tom I saw?"

"Uh, yes sir," Tuvok answered, confused.

The new arrival waited impatiently. "And?" he snapped.

"Oh," Tuvok stuttered, eyes widening. He ran back into the Flyer.

The new Boss turned around to watch him, curious and skeptical. He was right to be the latter when Tuvok eventually emerged dragging a groaning Security officer along the ground, sporting a swollen lump on his cheek.

"Thanks, almost forgot about him," Tuvok said. "Come on now, Crewman Phodder. It's not that bad."

As soon as he was alone, the cloaked figure sighed. "It's awful to be back." He stomped out after him.

Fifth Voyager:

Lilly couldn't tear her eyes away from the ship outside the Conference window. She tilted her head and frowned.

Dave smiled from afar, "yeah, she's a beauty. Armed to the teeth, top cruising speed 1.5 light, seat warmers and reclining Captain's chair."

Kathryn tried her best not to look jealous with a scowl, "pointless junk."

"Hmm, so what do you call this dull monstrosity?" Lilly asked as she turned around.

Dave blushed and started to laugh awkwardly. "You don't like it, little sis?" He got a blank stare. "Yikes, well I always preferred to call it Z5. Simpler."

"Zedfive?" Lilly sniggered.

"That's what I was going to say," the Doctor quipped. Kathryn deleted him with her death glare beams.

"Well it's no Lillyia F9, but what is?" Dave teased his little sister.

Harry's eyes widened, "oh zed, as in the letter zee. At least we know where the Ligers emigrated from now."

"Anyway," Kathryn snarled threateningly, making the Lieutenant whimper. "This ship bragging and whining about isn't giving us any context."

"Ooph right. I'm assuming Lilly told you the beginning," Dave said, not noticing Lilly's strained smile response. "I was on Venus when the civil war kicked off. A lot of us fled to the underground and..."

"Venus?" the Doctor said, stunned.

Neelix looked the same, "civil war?"

Chakotay sighed, while others who already knew this part groaned. "The civil war between the Liger loyalists and the Six Faction, the people who tried to interrogate us on that AU Earth. Correct?"

Dave was more than relieved, he smiled gratefully. "That's right on the nose, mister." Lilly sat down next to him and pointed a cough in his direction. "Oh come off it, it's not like you ever acted all stiff upper lip either."

Harry nodded, "yep, thought so." Kathryn stared icily at him. "Good thing Tom's not here. He'd be having a field day with these English speaking Ligers."

"As for Venus; we colonised it, when was it Lil?" Dave said.

"1997, or 6," Lilly answered hesitantly. "We used technology we'd borrowed to cloak it in its original toxic atmosphere. Visually anyway."

"Maybe don't mention the borrowed part, the story's long enough," Dave said with a smile. "Venus was the start of it all. The Sixes wanted Earth. They thought we were superior to Humans and shouldn't be the ones to leave it. Our side argued that we were leaving because we were capable of it and Humans weren't. In the end the majority agreed to keep our island on Earth, with the condition that the royals still ruled it as before. That wasn't enough, they didn't want to live with monarchy rule. They thought the people had equal say."

"So they wanted, what, a democracy or..." Harry questioned.

"More like mob rule," Dave scoffed. Lilly didn't look impressed with him. "Well, what would you call it? Anarchy's the closest and it's still too far off. Truth is, they all wanted to live completely free to do whatever they wanted. We knew what would happen if we let them; they'd retake Earth, enslave humans and eventually expand their territory, knowing full well that they'd outnumber us before they even finished taking over the southern hemisphere."

Lilly glanced down with shame clouding her features. "Our civilisation was founded because we wanted to devote ourselves to science, culture. We didn't care about wars and territory. The Sixes stand for everything we wanted to get away from. Using our technology for war, it's an insult."

Neelix firmly nodded, "that's such a shame. Your people seemed like a lovely tight knit community, like one big family."

"Yeah, but there's always *one* in your family that has to ruin it all," Emma commented.

"With over half our population sympathising with the rebels, we've fallen far behind, had to leave Venus and our home dimension," Dave said.

"What?" Lilly snapped in shock.

Dave cringed. "We had to, so we could rebuild our fleet. We couldn't without them knowing. We've lost so many ships over the years."

"The Z5," Lilly said, her eyes averted when she had a realisation. "That's an awful amount of ships."

"Uhhuh," Dave barely opened his mouth. "It took us a while to follow you safely into this dimension. We have another planet near here with an enhanced cloak, adaptive. The Sixes know we're here now though, and have been trying to follow what ships we do have to our new base. We can't let them, any means necessary."

Emma couldn't help but smirk, "so you started that fight with those ships?"

Dave smiled back at her, "they think they can put old cloaks on and fly alongside us, I don't think so."

"Captain," Tuvok said. Kathryn's eyes bugged out. She hurried over to him to snatch one of the two jugs he was carrying. As if she hadn't, he continued, "perhaps we should reconsider any involvement with these people. The Liger civil war is not our concern."

Kathryn was too busy pouring the contents of the jug into a massive mug to hear him.

Chakotay though did and seemed torn, "he's right." Kathryn heard that and stared icily. "But the Ligers are our distant cousins, in a way. In our reality, their descendants would be living amongst us. Can we really ignore our own people?"

"True but who they're fighting with are also our people," Jessie chimed in.

"Your evil twin ship did most of the damage," Dave quickly said, more than a little annoyed.

Lilly slapped his arm and glared at him. Doing so spared him from a direct hit of Kathryn's far deadlier version. "Dave, that doesn't mean they owe us. They had nothing to do with it. They helped Emma and I off Earth, away from the Boss." Emma smiled maliciously and giggled innocently. "Well, Emma helped too."

Dave's face paled, "the Boss is dead?"

"Just a bit," Emma giggled.

"Are you sure?" Dave stuttered.

"Doubly. He died, came back and died again," the Doctor answered.

Dave stared at him blankly. "That doesn't sound sure to me."

Kathryn blew a coffee scented raspberry, "Damien, pish. The best thing he ever did was croak. Couldn't organise a pissup in a Voyager party."

Jessie laughed, "you can't put it any better than that. Even his brainwashed lackeys hated him."

Lilly wasn't amused, she looked worried. "Why are you acting like this, Dave? Something..."

"The Sixes still have a leader out there," Dave quickly answered, inadvertently cutting her off. "If it isn't the same guy, that'd explain why no one's seen him and why they've been so chaotic lately. Also, Seventh Voyager has allegedly cut allegiances with the Sixes. At least that's the intel I got. It's been sighted close by, hunting for something. Perhaps he is with them."

"Captain," Tuvok warned.

Kathryn only stared at him expectantly, "I thought I said three, not two."

"Come on. Mr Vulcan's much too clever for such a demeaning job. Let me serve you your coffee," Neelix said.

"Yes but he won't feed me compost like you did last time," Kathryn hissed.

Tuvok tried again, hoping someone would treat him with respect. "While it's true another Voyager is responsible for the civil war, it does not mean we have to get involved. Crewman Rex also brings up an interesting counterpoint no one else has addressed; the Sixes are also humans. You cannot take one side on the pretence of helping your *fellow man*."

"Thank you," Jessie sighed out of relief. Tuvok gave her a nod.

Kathryn stared thoughtfully at him. Tuvok was expecting another coffee involved order. "You're both right," she said to his and Jessie's surprise. "However, Seventh Voyager and the Six Faction have attacked us, both with the intention of taking our ship or crew. Both have tried to kidnap us, kill us. Their shared leader has used our likeness to drastically alter the fate of another civilisation to his own ends. So, I'm sorry but I disagree. We are already involved."

"That is correct, however any interference we may undertake, may be construed as not only an act of aggression, but will inform them of our whereabouts," Tuvok said.

Chakotay nodded. "This isn't easy. For once both sides have good points. There's got to be a plan we can all agree on."

"The Sixes are already well aware we're here. Seventh however, there's a chance they might not," the Doctor reminded everyone.

"And dealing with Seventh Voyager isn't provoking any tensions, or getting involved in a civil war," Kathryn smiled.

Harry sighed, "yeah but we have no idea where they are."

Seventh Voyager:

"Ok, now you're being disrespectful. Bend over," Phoebe snapped at the same time Tuvok arrived with the visitor. She didn't notice and started rummaging around behind the cushions on her chair. Seventh James took that opportunity to run off to hide underneath Jessie's engineering station. Phoebe darted around, confused since he was gone.

"Well hello mother," the new Boss said in smarmy voice.

Everyone looked across with a similar gormless expression. Almost everyone, Tom typed something on his station before turning around, while Jessie ran over to Phoebe's chair. She snatched what looked like a whip, and ran back.

An ignorant Phoebe glared at the new arrival. "What the... Alex?"

"Who?" Chakotay wondered aloud.

Phoebe's head snapped to glare him into a coma. He withered back down into his chair and shrunk into it. "What do you mean, who?" She hurried over to Tuvok and the new Boss, "oh Alex," she sounded

relieved. As soon as she was close enough she gave the cloaked figure a nasty slap. "Where have you been!? I have a good mind to actually kill you for making me think you were dead."

The new Boss rubbed his cheek, trying to curb his growing temper. "Who do you think took over the Sixes when the great Damien fell?"

Harry snickered, "what, you're the new boss. How cute."

"Yeah, you're a lot bigger than I remember," Seventh Tom added.

Alex narrowed his eyes as well as his hood. "Well I had to be, to earn their respect."

He and his mother exchanged scowls. Being a Janeway as well gave him the edge to tie with her. Tuvok had to escape before he was burned alive.

"What, isn't this what you wanted, mother?" Alex hissed.

"You're Borg. They're going to know you little..." Phoebe snapped back.

"Ha the Borg," Alex scoffed, walking off to stroll around the bridge, eyeing everyone. "Nothing to worry about. They were nought but tools for my ascension. Too busy destroying themselves from the inside." He stopped where Seventh James and Jessie were, choosing to stare at them for longer. He huffed and continued. "Now that I am in charge, we're going to make some changes around here."

"Tom," all but Tom said.

"Phoebe," he said, prompting a glare.

Alex smirked. "Ah yes, our guests. I know you have their Tom Paris, but who is the other?"

"Our scans identified him as James Taylor, sir," Chakotay said.

"Pfft," Seventh Tom burst into sniggers, "what a stupid name. Why would you name yourself after a city?" Tuvok smiled, while everyone else reacted with awkward silence.

Phoebe cleared her throat, "no seriously. Their Tom's got to be an improvement. He can't be worse."

Alex turned on his heel to once more look towards the engineering station, focusing on Seventh James. "Ah, the wretch. The fiend who murdered our beloved Boss." Everyone but Tom frowned in confusion, Tom was already there. "Allegedly."

Seventh James made a little scoff sound with just his nose and looked away. "How would you know that?"

"Oh how?" Alex said slowly, mocking him as if he were a child. "Never you mind. You'd best get packing, you useless creature."

Phoebe chuckled mischievously, "you heard him." There were similar cackles all around the bridge, peer pressuring James to the nearest turbolift. The only one not, Jessie, stared after him looking concerned.

"First though, he must be punished," Alex said. "Escort Fifth to the torture bay. I'll deal with him later."

"Okay!" Phoebe laughed and grinned. She grabbed Seventh Tom and yanked him over.

"Hey!" he whined.

Alex closed his eyes and breathed in, his eyelids fluttered. "No mother. Do what you'd like with either of them later. But for the moment, Paris Mark Five will assist us in finding some old friends."

Phoebe looked intrigued, "you mean his ship?"

Alex's smile turned dark, it almost looked like a smiley death glare. "Ohno, I've got much broader aspirations."

Fifth Voyager:

"This isn't going to work," Kathryn said.

Chakotay snuck a smile in Tuvok's direction. "Why not? Didn't you say they were idiots."

"I said Seventh Voyager and Damien were idiots," Kathryn sighed as if for the tenth time. "We don't know anything about the Six people other than they're allegedly the Liger alt-righters."

Chakotay still smiled but a lot less discreetly.

Tuvok quickly went to his rescue, "Seventh Voyager is MIA, Captain. Unresponsive to orders. An all out attack is ill advised, and if Captain Johnstone's intel is correct, the new leader will not be among them. If we are to learn anything about them..."

"Yes, no... why?" Kathryn stuttered. "It's bound to look for us, we don't need to find out where it is or what the Sixes are up to. You were right, no interference."

"Captain," Chakotay said, gesturing to the Astrometrics screen which displayed twenty two ships in one sector. "We have few options here. If this fleet attacks the Liger's colony at once, they don't stand a chance. With Seventh out of the picture, we have a chance here."

Kathryn glanced up at the screen, scoffed and back again. "Those old banger ships. I'm shaking."

"Captain. You are only resistant to the plan because..." Tuvok said.

Chakotay quickly shushed him. "She hasn't technically said no, so hush."

Standing behind them all, Dave cleared his throat. The command trio turned to stare at him, Kathryn did as if he were an intruder. "Hi yeah, I'm still here."

"Goodie for us, so?" Kathryn snapped.

Dave squeezed through them to get closer to the screen. He pointed to the right section of the ships. "The T2, T3." His finger slid to the left and down, "M5 and Z4."

"Let me guess, T3's not as good as T2," Kathryn said.

Dave mouthed *what* while scrunching his face. He looked around at her, "T3 is younger than T2."

"Oh," Kathryn pretended to understand him. Once he looked back at the screen, she gave him a glare that normally would've turned him to stone.

"The Sixes didn't destroy our WIP ships just to cripple us. They'd steal them if they could. The T's and especially the Z4 will pose a threat to us on their own," Dave explained.

Kathryn tried to shake off her earlier annoyance. "I realise that. Surely it'd be more convincing if I lead the mission." Tuvok nodded knowingly. Kathryn took it as an agreement. "Excellent."

"What if they don't fall for it? We're putting the ship in the firing lines of twenty two hostile ships," Chakotay said.

Kathryn groaned in defeat, "all right, fine. But I coach him. He'll let it go to his head."

"I wouldn't expect any less," Chakotay smiled. He turned towards Tuvok. "Have you informed B'Elanna of the plan?"

"I did," Tuvok seemed to wince.

Chakotay did too in sympathy. "She insisted on installing the emitters herself, didn't she? Did you remind her?"

"Excessively," Tuvok replied. "She said she was not an invalid, only six months along. Then she walked off shouting at I assume the infant; *don't make me come in there you little... uh, excrement.*"

Kathryn chuckled, her eyes twinkled. "Ah the little mite's kicking, good times."

"Not particularly. She showed me the bruise earlier," Chakotay said with a cringe.

Tuvok's brow raised high, while Kathryn light nodded with her bottom lip out as if that were normal.

"Yeah, she told me she was going to castrate James personally when he returns," Chakotay continued, trying badly not to show how uncomfortable the thought made him.

Dave's eyes widened, "er wow, overreaction much?"

Kathryn tutted like it was a minor threat. "I really doubt he or she will take after hi..." she stalled and scowled at Dave, "oh, forgot about you."

"Yes, I've noticed," Dave muttered.

Chakotay nervously coughed a couple of times. "So yes, the emitters. I've enlisted some extra help. We should be ready to go in an hour if all goes well."

"Miss Hansen claimed she could do it in forty five minutes," Tuvok said.

"Or," Dave said very slowly, "we could modify our cloak. It'd take ten." He was stared at again not just like he was an intruder, but a one stealing the coffee as well. "Your holograms could be a good backup option though."

"You mean the cloaks the entire fleet uses, hardly. One hour and we sneak in," Kathryn ordered. She wandered off to the exit. "I could get a wig, and maybe..." The men didn't hear the rest as the door shut behind her.

Chakotay looked worried. "Maybe we should hunt for Seventh Voyager after all."

Seventh Voyager, Sickbay:

The Doctor looked on with a mischievous smile as a group began strapping down his next patient. "Any requests?" he asked when they were done.

"None, other than keep him alive," Ensign Getskilledalot replied. "We'll be outside."

They left, leaving the Doctor to his twisted imagination, passing Jessie on the way in. They gave her an extremely wide berth and quickened their pace, whimpering all the way.

"Jessie, if you've made a mess again, please just leave it in my office," the Doctor scolded.

Jessie shrugged, "nah, not yet.," she said with a pout. She approached, eyeing James lying unconscious on the biobed modified with dangerous looking tools.

The Doctor sighed irritably, tutting as he pressed a hypo into his throat. Whatever he injected James with woke up him but barely, in a groggy half asleep state. "Can't you... go elsewhere. This is not your James. I doubt he'd be as receptive to your playing as him."

"Oh I know, and you don't know for sure," Jessie protested.

The Doctor frowned, more than confused. "Which part don't I know?"

Jessie peered over the the patient, hovering her hand a breath away from his cheek like an airy stroke. He was so heavily sedated he could barely flinch, let alone move out of the way.

"Yeah you do, in a way. They're still us, but with stupid hold backs like shame and embarrassment. My James, this James, they're the same deep down. I can help him realise it," she said.

The Doctor gagged on purpose. "Perhaps later, after the Boss is done with him. Not here either. This isn't the place for that mush."

Jessie once again pouted and stood straight. "Tch, you got a dirty mind. I wasn't going to... not in front of you, you perv!"

"Of course," the Doctor laughed, "because you have no shame."

"He's the Slayer, right? More versatile, quicker to heal, used to pain?" Jessie asked. The Doctor looked at her as if he had the same epiphany as her. He then doubted it when he spotted the dreamy look in her eye. She shook it off, "there's no one better than me to get information out of him. Especially when I know his ticks already."

"Fine," the Doctor groaned in disappointment. "Don't kill him. Then again, I don't think information is his purpose here or I would've been told. I think he's just here for my expert doctoring skills."

"No harm then if I interrogate him then? You never know," Jessie giggled.

"I suppose," the Doctor shrugged casually and walked off.

Jessie smiled, this time out of relief. Still she had a playful glint in her eye. "Alright. Where does it hurt the least?"

Kathryn sat at her Ready Room desk, impatiently staring at the computer with a hand by her ear. On the screen showed a live aerial view of the bridge.

"Emitters online. We're ready," B'Elanna said from the Engineering station.

Chakotay nodded. "Great. Danny, take us in." He glanced briefly at B'Elanna and lowered his voice, "maybe you should put on your disguise."

She growled at him, "oh for the love of..." She reached around for the loose uniform jacket on the back of the chair. Once she put it on she lowered the chair so her bump was hidden by the console.

"Okay, if we're ready, let's do this," Chakotay said. He snuck a peek at the different woman sitting beside him, just in time to catch her caressing her own hair and smiling. "Er, Doctor."

She jumped and looked around at him. "*Moron*," she heard Kathryn hiss in her ear. "No, no. It's Captain Doc... er Janeway. Phoebe Janeway."

Behind them, Jessie rolled her eyes. "This is never going to work."

Chakotay glanced up and pointed at his own head. The stare he received for it burned his insides. Still Jessie threw on a bright red wig and started scowling.

Harry meanwhile scratched at his own. "I think I'm allergic."

At the helm Danny pushed her chair halfway around, "hang on a mo. I'm not meant to be Tom, am I?"

"Rather you than me," Jessie said in disgust.

Chakotay sighed, "if they ask, which they won't, he's on kitchen cleaning duty."

"Oh nice!" Danny laughed, turning back. "We are really good at this being evil thing."

Seventh Voyager:

Bruised and cuts all over him, Tom was chucked into the brig like he was trash for the bin. His guards left, leaving him alone with his guard. He tried to sit carefully to avoid putting weight onto his painful left thigh.

Once down, he racked his brains for a plan. There was barely any time to think a sentence. Somebody else walked inside, glanced at him, then the guard who he then walked over to.

Tom glanced up. Who it was left him smirking, and a little curious what their evil self would be like. He quietly laughed at the thought of him being a goody two shoes who was also nice and polite.

Seventh James told the guard something. She hurried off almost drooling.

"So er..." Tom said in a strained, friendly tone. "What's up, *my old friend*?"

James looked at him in the exact same way the one he knew would, and he instantly felt disappointed that his nice and polite image was wrong. It still lingered even when he was laughed at. "Oh I get it. Old friend. Good one."

Taken aback, Tom forced a laugh. "Yeah I'm a joker. So, I hope you're not here to question me too. I'm all tickled out."

James had his head down, working on the guard's console. Tom saw him smirking briefly. "I don't do that kinda stuff," he said, "I just told her that dinner was ready."

"Woah. So Neelix can cook here?" Tom asked.

James cringed and glanced up, "was that supposed to be funny?"

Tom's face fell, "uh, I wasn't. It was, I assumed he..."

"Oh it *was*," James chuckled nervously. "It takes me a while, I wasn't sure. Can't hurt to ask."

Tom smiled in relief, he was right about him. This James was almost harmless and not very bright. He could put up with this one. Just as he was thinking that, the forcefield lowered.

"Come on," James said on the way out.

Tom stared after him with his eyes bugging out. He hurriedly got up and limped forward. "Wait."

James stopped in front of the door and jumped a little, Tom assumed in shock. He turned around at the opening door to stare at him. "Why?"

"I thought you don't do the smacking around, you know," Tom stammered. James stared at him blankly. "Tell me what you know. No, bam. Yeah?"

"Not much," James said with a shrug. "They want to replace some of the crew, like me. Maybe even raid your Voyager for better parts."

"I wasn't..." Tom burst into laughter, making James' face twitch a bit. He felt sorry for him, he looked so confused and so stopped sniggering. "I wasn't asking you what you know, I implied that you were taking me away to do that to me. Oh never mind. Who do they want, and why you? Is it because they think our James is more your crew's style, cos yeah, let's go."

James glanced at the door, frowning a little. He stepped to one side, allowing it to close. "Is that another joke, because it's not funny. A little mean actually."

Tom wanted to laugh considering who said it, but felt a little bad at the thought of alienating someone dumb and/or nice enough to trick into helping. He also thought he'd be useful in a fight, whereas the James he knew would be more likely to stand around and watch him die.

"No, no. Not like that," he eventually said reassuringly. "I mean you'd fit in nicely with us. He's brrr, horrible, not very nice. No sense of humour, up his own ass."

James' face didn't change for a bit, worrying Tom that he had offended him again. Eventually he smirked and looked away. "Well, thanks I guess. But would you really leave him behind?"

Tom almost said yes, but he hesitated. "Oh, I wouldn't go that far." James looked at him with a raising eyebrow. "Maybe. We should probably try to help him first, unless..." Tom's face paled as a thought came to him. "Oh, I am an idiot. No, nice try bud. I suppose my evil clone is waiting for you in the Flyer. No dice."

James smiled and shrugged, "okay." He strolled out without a care in the world.

Tom waited, slack jawed. He gingerly checked to see if the forcefield was still off. Since it was he hurried out the best he could with his limp, checked the coast was clear and bolted for the nearest Jeffries Tube.

The original Voyager flew toward the horde of ships lying in wait ahead of them. Three approached, one of them with an almost identical design to the Z5, only smaller with two protruding engines instead of four.

"We're being hailed by a ship Johnstone labelled as the Z4," Harry reported.

Chakotay checked on a very nervous and Phoebe looking Doctor. "Ready?"

"Always," he lied.

"Okay, break a leg. Game faces all. On screen," Chakotay ordered.

They were quickly faced with a young woman, no more than nineteen years old, sitting in a similar bridge to the Z5. Only this one looked like it had been taken out of the shipyard before the painters and furnishers had finished.

"Ah Voyager. It's about time you answered our calls. Where have you been?" the woman hissed.

The Doctor did a near perfect angry twitch like Kathryn would as he stood up. "Who do you think you are, talking to me like that? If it were not for me you'd still be on your little island whining about the taxes."

Chakotay cringed, "tone it down."

In the Ready Room Kathryn laughed and took a sip. "What was I worried about, he's good."

The young woman on the screen quivered fearfully, she tried to maintain her cool facade. "The Boss has been looking for you. He has a mission you need to undertake. He doesn't take kindly to insubordination."

"Listen, er..." the Doctor stalled mid snap, he acted as if he didn't care, "Captain Nobody. We're not your lapdogs. If he has a problem, he can tell us himself." To complete the act he put his hands on his hips.

Kathryn meanwhile watched it all unfold in her office, content until she spotted Jessie tying her wig and accidentally her regular hair into a ponytail. She was about to comment when she noticed Harry's excessive scratching. "Would you cut it out with your hair, you fools."

The Doctor frowned and checked his own, briefly smiling. Chakotay noticed and got up. "Phoebe, maybe you should pull your knickers out and calm down," he tried to say in a sharp tone.

"I beg your pardon, Commander!" the Doctor exclaimed in dismay.

Jessie groaned as she was sure that was a legitimate reaction.

"Hmph, a circus as always Voyager," the woman snarled. "I trust you didn't fly straight by supreme leader Alex's ship on your way here. He won't be pleased."

"Wait, he's looking for them?" Harry quietly said to himself. His eyes widened, "us. Hush talking console, you're confusing me."

Jessie rolled her eyes, "let me guess; you didn't see him cos you were too busy groping Opps."

Harry stuttered nervously, "she has a name," he tried to sound angry.

"Alex?" the Doctor tried to say nonchalantly, but everyone heard it as the question it was.

Fortunately the woman didn't seem suspicious by it. "He was anointed last week after Damien was declared dead. You'd know if you answered your hails."

Chakotay glanced away from the screen, deep in thought. "Alex, Alex," he whispered.

"I thought you'd be proud you got your way, Janeway," the woman said, eyes narrowing. The Doctor reacted with worry before he could stop himself. He swapped it for a forced frown. "We wanted rid of the monarchy. Instead we got some bastard spawn of yours that Damien picked at random to be his heir," the woman continued to grumble, oblivious to it.

"Uh," the Doctor hesitated.

"Mind your tongue you little brat," a modulated deep voice said from the Ready Room door. Everyone stared in shock at the cloaked figure standing there. Chakotay tried his best not to show any amusement.

"Sir Alex?" the woman stammered fearfully again.

"Lowly minion," the figure snapped as they stomped over to join the Doctor and Chakotay. "If you have a problem with my appointment, perhaps you'd like to challenge it?"

"No no, Boss sir. I was under the impression you weren't on board," the woman stuttered, then cringed. "These fools told me you didn't make it."

"We have a problem you see," the figure said icily. "Rumour has it Fifth Voyager is in the area making friends with the Ligers. I couldn't risk exposing my presence until I was sure."

"Yes sir, I realise that. The G1 and Excelsior reported their interference when we were following their latest model. We were forming a battle plan to take them both..." the woman said.

"Shh!" the figure snapped. "You were forming a plan, without me? I should take your ship right now for the insolence alone. What is your name again?"

"Constance, Jo Cons..." she replied.

"From now on, you're called No Common Sense. Out of my sight and prepare the ship for my arrival," the figure ordered. "I have a plan to capture the Liger's new toy. I'll need that junk bucket you call a ship to do it."

Jo trembled, unsure what to do. "But, what about the other Voyager?"

"Will be no problem if we have the latest, actually finished ship in our arsenal. Commanded by the greatest leader and villain. Correct?" the figure said.

"Uh correct sir," Jo squeaked. "We'll prepare for your visit."

"Good. Don't forget the yoghurt, and make sure it is chilled this time," the figure snapped. Jo nodded very quickly her head blurred, then she was gone.

Jessie couldn't hold it in any longer, she laughed before she loosened her lips. "Wow, you make a great Damien."

The figure lowered the hood on route towards Jessie. No one was surprised to see Kathryn under it. Despite looking calm, Kathryn yanked the wig down from Jessie's head before aiming a slap at her head. Jessie slapped her first, putting her right off. The entire bridge froze in solid ice.

"Watch it," Kathryn growled, "you only get one."

"Oh I didn't know, so I get one more," Jessie sniped back.

Kathryn turned to walk off, leaving Jessie to fix the mess the wig taking left, all while wincing at the strands of hair that were pulled. "Only if you want your upcoming motherhood to be common knowledge," Kathryn whispered on her way by her. "Prepare a boarding party. We're taking the ship." Jessie scowled into her back.

"Uh Captain. As soon as we tip our hand, the entire fleet will grossly outnumber us," Tuvok said.

"Then no tipping, how hard is that?" Kathryn snapped. She swirled around to face Harry. "Hidden transmission to the Z5. If Davey knows anything that'll help us..."

"They've been listening in since we opened comms. He's suggested taking Lilly and Emma," Harry said.

"Fine," Kathryn said as she walked over to take her seat.

Chakotay frowned down at her, "they'll not be expecting either of them. But they will be expecting you."

"Any schmuck can wear the cloak and act like an up himself know it all with a god complex," Kathryn said.

"Not just anyone can make a convincing Damien though," Jessie smirked.

Kathryn growled. Harry though made a little confused huh sound, distracting her. "But, they said Damien's dead. Alex is the successor. We may have already gave away who we are, they'll have an ambush waiting for us."

Chakotay nodded, "yes, I thought that was a little odd too. Though Dave said the new Boss hadn't been seen..."

"Alex?" Kathryn mused aloud.

The Doctor groaned as if it were obvious. "Phoebe's son, Kiara's half brother on Seventh."

Kathryn got up, glaring at Chakotay for no reason he could understand. "You dirty git. As soon as I'm gone, you'll knock up my sis..."

She was about to slap him as well when B'Elanna interrupted, "but wasn't he a baby, a one about the same age as our Kiara at the time?" She flinched and looked down at her belly, "I'm not talking about you."

Kathryn lowered her hand. Chakotay sighed in relief. "We should be prepared for a bigger resistance when we board. For now, we keep up the act." Once everyone were no longer focused on her, she gave Chakotay a light slap anyway.

Seventh Voyager:

Crewmembers poured into an already crammed full of people Engineering.

Phoebe arrived seemingly last, closely followed by Alex. Phoebe only had to clap and glare to silence everyone and get their attention. She sneered at Alex. "They're all yours."

Alex darkly chuckled while slowly looking around at everyone.

The doors opened again. Since it was so quiet the noise of it seemed louder than usual, everyone looked to see Seventh James wander in. Their stares stopped him for a second, he frowned at a few, "what?" he said defensively.

Everyone focused again on Alex, apart from Phoebe who glared expectantly at random parts of the crowd.

Alex cleared his throat. "Now, I have no idea what you were expecting of me. Nor do I care." A few crewmembers whispered between themselves. "Your boss never thought you were essential. Just crude, and useless fodder." He slowly paced, eyeing the more disgruntled of the crowd. "But maybe, you have a teeny amount of potential. If allied with my brilliance and cunning."

He reached a dense pocket of the crowd. Instead of stopping, he strode purposefully through them, pushing some aside while leering at whoever caught his eye. By the time he reached the warp core he was getting various defiant looks from a few of the senior staff.

"I know that your powers of attention, are as weak as all of Paris's jokes," Alex snarled.

"Hey," Seventh Tom whined.

Alex circled around them, keeping a close eye. "But as thick as you are..." One crewmember looking bored got his full attention. A hand swiped a can from his hands. "Pay attention! My words are much better than cokes."

A few faces nearby frowned, confused.

"It's clear from your vacant expressions, that the lights are not all on upstairs." Someone hurriedly switched the upstairs lights off, Phoebe groaned. "We're talking schemes and traitors."

Alex lunged in front of Tuvok, who merely raised his bushier eyebrows. "Even you can be caught unawares."

Seventh Tom chuckled and leaned in towards him to whisper, "this sounds familiar, I can't think where."

"So beware, it's the last of your life lines," Alex sneered while circling the warp core. "Be aware of my sensational news. A brand new era, is bringing us nearer..."

Seventh B'Elanna scoffed, "why should we listen to you?"

Alex sharply turned to smirk at her, "fool, you haven't a clue." He continued on his way, ignoring her, "no need to be jaded, you will be rewarded, when at last I'm given my dues. And insults are deliciously avenged."

Finally he stopped to duck under the core's barrier, and stand in front of the core. "Be prepared."

Harry nodded frantically, "yeah I can do that. What am I preparing for?"

"For us to take what is rightfully mine," Alex announced proudly.

A lot of people were confused. Seventh Tom was one of them, "I dunno, our Voyager has the cool Tolg adaptations..."

Alex closed his eyes to hide the rolling of them. "I don't mean your better halves. I mean the Ligers and their technology. I will reign over them as my mother wished, and I will rule the galaxy as their king."

Most of the room froze. A few select people eyed him suspiciously instead, some even angrily. Alex found it amusing though, "oh, do you doubt me?"

"But you said the Sixes wanted a democracy, that's why..." B'Elanna said.

Phoebe's dark and proud smile grew as Alex laughed menacingly. "The fools swore allegiances to me, yes," Alex said. A lot of the room gasped, while the ones who weren't surprised by this kept stony expressions. "Stick with me, and you'll bask in my greatness for all eternity."

A good majority of the crew erupted in cheers, only a few remained silent and a little uncertain about it.

"Long live our Boss!" many chanted.

His new followers had stood attention as he got himself comfortable on the barrier around the core. He sat on it like it was a throne, admiring the view of them fist bumping the air and cheering.

"Of course you should know you're expected, on this glorious anniversary," Alex sneered. "A future that is littered with prizes. Even though I'm the main adversary..."

He caught sight of Seventh James rolling his eyes to one side, and so he casually made his way over. "The point that I must emphasise is..." James didn't seem to notice until he was staring right in his face. "You won't get anywhere without me!" he more or less roared at him.

Seventh James wiped his cheek in disgust while Alex quickly turned to one side and sprayed a throat soother into his mouth. A few nearby heard him clear his throat before carrying on.

The whole thing spurred on his followers nevertheless. "So be prepared for the war of the century," Alex cackled. He grabbed the railing on the lift and swung around so he was on it as it raised. "Be prepared for the dirtiest plan."

As the lift rose he did various arm swinging gestures with each word. "Villainous planning."

"No Fifth Voyager!" most of the crowd roared.

Alex snickered, "goodness damning."

"No Ligers!" almost everyone seemed to yell at the same time.

"Years of denial, is simply why I'll..." Alex snarled as he threw himself off the lift before it arrived at the next level. He walked over to the glass area overlooking everyone and slammed his hands on the railing. "Be feared and undisputed, respected, saluted and seen for the wonder I am." His hand flew to his chest. "Yes my brains and ambitions are great. Be prepared."

"Yes his brains and ambitions are great," a few managed to copy in time, while everyone else repeated their earlier shouts awkwardly.

"Be prepared!" Alex shouted loud enough for the whole deck to hear. A roaring applause and cheers followed. He couldn't help but laugh in a typical villainous way.

Back on the Seventh bridge, the senior staff and a few others slouched at their usual stations like it was a coffee shop. The ones without an assigned station hung around at the back, some gossiping about their previous meeting.

Seventh James grew tired of the conversation between Six and Seventh Neelix, only to almost collide with someone nearly half his height.

"There you are," Seventh Kiara scolded him. What looked like a jar of coffee was thrust into his belly, "open it slave."

Seventh James noticed Phoebe smiling proudly from afar, as well as Chakotay sniggering.

"So, remind me again why your own family's trying to replace you," Seventh James said, resisting a smirk

"Same reason you're a loser with stupid hair. Open," Kiara countered.

Seventh James took the jar from her while giving her a narrowing eye stare. She smiled cutely back. He shook his head and looked at the jar. There were a few snickers around the bridge, he had no idea why. He attempted to turn the lid, which made a scraping sound but didn't open. His eyes had darted around, suddenly nervous with the laughter getting louder. This time he attempted to turn and lift it, all while pulling a strained face and making the occasional grunting sound.

Chakotay laughed a lot louder at him. "Look kid, I don't care how constipated you are but do that in the bathroom." The laughter he got for that sounded like it came from a group of hyenas.

"What's that big C word?" Kiara asked.

Chakotay walked around the banister to reach her. "He needs to go poopie but he can't," he said in a mocking tone in James' direction.

Seventh James made all sorts of faces; confused, annoyed, embarrassed, as he looked around at the people laughing at him. He did notice Phoebe was the only one not, she looked lost in her own thoughts while staring in his general direction.

"I don't need to..." Seventh James sounded a lot more defensive than he intended. He meant to sigh but it sounded more like a growl. One tug brought the lid up and off the jar, which he then handed to the kid.

"Gee, don't strain yourself," Kiara said in her cute, innocent voice. She looked up at her father, "when are we getting the strong version? I've got lots of mum's old jars and junk for him to open."

Phoebe smiled, "very soon, darling." Kiara grinned and scurried off into the Ready Room.

Seventh James meanwhile sulked, clearly offended, as he walked away. He passed Alex stepping out of the turbolift. Alex snorted in disgust and tried to shove him into the turbolift door. Seventh James eventually lost his balance and stumbled into it, glaring back over his shoulder.

"Classic, he's so stupid, even gravity takes a while to reach him," Seventh Tom laughed.

Phoebe stared at the helmsman currently wearing his uniform jacket backwards. "So true, Tom Hamburg."

"Pfft, that's what you think," Tom laughed.

Alex stared coldly at him, eyebrow twitching. "Get this idiot off the bridge."

"Finally, something I like doing," Chakotay said while rolling up his sleeves. Tom had no idea what was going on until Chakotay was right in front of him. He squealed and ran off into the nearest room, which for him was the Ready Room.

"Eew, I just ate!" Kiara cried from inside.

Phoebe didn't look too bothered about that, she shrugged her shoulders. "So do we have a plan besides spoken word Disney songs?"

Alex's widening eyes darted back and forth. "What are you talking about, mother? That was years ago and definitely not spoken word. I clearly remember you lot screeching something about a lullaby while I was trying to sleep."

"No you don't," Phoebe laughed nervously.

Seventh James got his bearings back meanwhile, and took the first empty station he came across which was Opps. A few seconds later Harry emerged looking dishevelled with blushing cheeks. James tried his best not to laugh at him.

"Okaaay? The plan. It is very complicated, I doubt you nitwits would understand it fully," Alex said.

"Oh, we're more intelligent than we look," Phoebe said. She spotted Harry laying out a picnic blanket on top of Opps, immediately gasping and throwing it away to perform CPR on it. "Some of us though are exactly as we look."

Alex nodded, "yeah sure, if you say so. As you should know, though I'm assuming way too much with you lot, the Liger and Rabbiens civil war has been in a stalemate for centuries..."

Everyone listening were confused. "The who?" Phoebe asked.

"Don't you die on me Charlene!" Harry sobbed as he frantically pushed on a solid surface. Seventh James grimaced as the next attempt at mouth to mouth turned into something else.

"Ugh, I told them Six was the operation name," Alex muttered. He shook his head bitterly. "No matter. As I've been out of action for a year, I need to know everything you do. That shouldn't take long."

There was a loud thud in the direction of Opps. Everyone looked over to only see Seventh James. A few looked down to see Harry in a heap on the floor. Seventh James looked shocked until he noticed everyone looking at him. He raised his hand meekly, "um, they're at war?"

Phoebe shuddered in rage. "Seriously, remove the idiot."

Chakotay walked back to her side with a frown. He smiled and grabbed her arm. For that she punched him in the face.

"I'm not the idiot, you moron!" she screamed despite him being unconscious.

Alex sighed very impatiently. "Never mind! I assume the heirs to the Liger throne are still assumed missing. Well only I know of one of their whereabouts. It's time to make cla..."

"Wait a minute, my Alex was definitely sleeping during Chakotay's lullaby," Phoebe said, eyes sharpening. Chakotay groaned from the floor. "And how did you get out of your detention crib anyway?"

"Perhaps if you went in to feed him now and then, you would've noticed the hole in the side," Alex chuckled darkly.

He got numerous blank stares, as well as a few awkward coughs.

Seventh James decided to break the silence, "wait, who are you again? I lost track of this crap long before this turned into a bad musical." Phoebe glared him back into silence.

"I thought you fools figured it out earlier!" Alex snapped. Everyone shook their heads, making him groan loudly. "Who did you think I was? And don't say Alex."

"I thought you were Bobby," Seventh Harry with a new bump in his head said.

Alex stared blankly at the man. "Who the hell is Bobby?"

Harry coughed nervously and glanced away, "nobody knows," he said mysteriously.

"Forget it. It's pointless to explain the plan to you monkeys. Because of that shuttle, we know Voyager is close by. We destroy it and that'll sort out our heir problem," Alex said.

"Yeah problem with that is the Fifth crew have owned our asses both times," Tom said on re-entry to the bridge.

Phoebe rolled her eyes, "three times." Tom gasped in horror.

"Not a problem," Alex chuckled. "I have a fleet of vessels on standby to assist you. Voyager won't know what hit them."

"But, in the original plan we needed them alive," Phoebe reminded him.

Alex smiled maliciously. "The new plan we haven't any use for them. Scan the area for their ship. In the meantime, I have a Slayer to prep." He walked away towards the turbolift.

Tom gasped again, "oh my god, we're cooking him? No wonder Neelix looked happy." Alex stopped, everyone else stared at him. "What?"

"Perhaps I should re-think the no use part," Alex muttered, stepping out.

Six rematerialised in a dark corridor with only one working light. Lilly immediately scoffed in offense. "These idiots couldn't even wait for us to install the light bulbs?"

Kathryn raised her hood up to hide her face. "This is good. It means the old systems should still be the same. My team will keep Captain No busy on the bridge on the pretense of getting the ship ready for the Boss' use. My Liger hostage will make herself known with the disgruntled crewmember." Lilly and Emma exchanged worried glances. "Chakotay, you and Lilly get to the bridge once you get the signal."

"Um mum?" Morgan said whilst raising her hand.

"No," Kathryn groaned and rolled her eyes, "you can't join me Jessie, you annoy..." She did a double take at her daughter. "Where's Jessie, and why are you here?"

"It's okay, we're nearly there," Jessie tried to sound reassuring. With one arm around B'Elanna's back, and the other using the wall as a safety net, they stumbled slowly through Deck Five.

B'Elanna's eyes sharpened and burned. "You've got some nerve telling me it's okay! Do you have any idea how far along you were before I stupidly volunteered for you?"

Jessie nervously glanced at the two crewmembers hurrying by, hoping they didn't hear what she said. "Um, no." She was glared at. "When was the Love Spell again?"

B'Elanna roared in pain and pushed ahead of her, determined to go on her own. Jessie hurried after her. "Well this kid's obviously in a hurry, like you should be!" She reached Sickbay a good few seconds before Jessie did, leaving Jessie with a deer in headlights expression.

"What?" she squeaked fearfully. "But you said it wasn't labour," she cried as she ran in after her.

Kathryn's resolve drained away to nearly nothing. "Oh Morgan, why must you do this every time?"

Morgan shrugged and smiled innocently, "why not?"

"I'd have thought it was obvious; she's her mother's daughter," Chakotay said a little too proudly.

Kathryn thought about it, and thankfully for everyone she chose to smile. "Yes, because we needed more stubborn, impulsive people like I needed a decaf," she said through gritted teeth though. "Fine, change of plans."

Seventh Voyager's Sickbay:

Jessie whined while standing still on the spot. "What do you mean?"

"Interrogation is where you force answers out of the victims by torturing them. You didn't ask him anything, you just tortured him," the Doctor replied, gesturing to the unconscious James on the biobed.

"Yeah that was fun," Jessie laughed, "but I thought he wasn't here to be asked questions." The Doctor groaned and walked off. Jessie took that as a cue to continue, so she restarted up her cordless drill.

At the same time 'Alex' waltzed through the door and fast, almost colliding into the Doctor. "What is she doing?"

The Doctor looked over his shoulder in time to catch Seventh Jessie trying to slap James awake, with a functioning drill in her other hand. "Stealing my tools. If you want a lobotomy, you'd be the first."

Alex merely pushed him aside with contempt. "You!" Jessie jumped, almost dropping the drill. As if nothing happened she carried on. "Move aside, the prisoner has an appointment with me."

Jessie moaned, stepping aside while switching off her drill. "But he's sleeping now. Come back later," she said, then pouted.

Alex grabbed the Doctor's arm before he could walk off. "Wake him up." He let go so the hologram could follow his orders. "First... um, you?"

"Jessie," Jessie mumbled.

"Have you tried to be your... very slightly less psychotic self to trick him?" Alex asked.

Jessie's eyes lit up, "oh that's a good one. Hang on." She turned around to continue slapping.

"No," Alex barked. The Doctor meanwhile hurried over with a hypospray. "Maybe a little less psychotic than that." Jessie pouted again and folded her arms.

James started to stir. The first face he saw was Alex's scowling at him. "Ugh, it's like looking at a male Janeway," he shuddered.

Jessie giggled not very discreetly, the Doctor smiled. Alex's lack of reaction killed the mood for both of them. "Yes well, beggars can't be choosers," he said with a slight tug in the corner of his lips. "Do you know why you're here?"

"Because you want to swap me, I know," James sighed.

"Hardly," Alex chuckled with a dark glint in his eye. Jessie and the Doctor exchanged confused stares. James frowned as well, reminding him that his face had been a punching bag for Seventh Jessie. "I could wear you down enough to get you to join, but then I wouldn't have the satisfaction of watching my murderer die over and over, until I get bored."

James glanced off to the side, "what?"

Jessie nodded frantically, "what he said."

The Doctor grunted knowingly. "Damien? It worked."

Alex chuckled mischievously, "of course it worked. The maturation chamber idea was a stroke of genius. Thank you..." The Doctor smiled proudly. "Me." The smile dropped to the floor.

James tried to sit up. Jessie pressed on his shoulder to push him back down. "What are you weirdos talking about? Damien's dead. You're Phoebe's son, who she forgot to let out of her cage for spray painting Engineering," Jessie stuttered.

The very Alex looking Damien rolled his eyes while turning away from her. "Alex was a weak puppet, just like his father. It's only fair to treat him like one." He tried to snatch the drill from her, but she clung onto it. His Borg strength allowed him to take it, making her splutter. "What's your problem? If I kill this beast, your weaker boy won't be replaced."

"Yeah well," Jessie nervously stuttered, "I like this one better." James side eyed her. She shrugged, giving him a wink.

"In that case, you're going to love what I plan to do with your dweeb," Damien laughed. After he placed the drill down, he gestured his palm out toward the Doctor, "get me the needle, hologram." The EMH hid his offense well, he wandered off to the medical tray that was instead filled with cruel looking equipment, mumbling under his lack of breath.

James didn't bother, he sat up sharply. "You know, that's not a very nice thing to say," he grumbled.

Jessie winced, while Damien stared with narrowing suspicious eyes. The Doctor shook his head in the background. Instead of picking something up, he continued to the station in the middle of the room.

"Excuse me, what isn't?" Damien asked.

James suddenly looked nervous for a moment. He cleared his throat and tried to stare firmly. "The calling me a beast part. Yeah, I'll show you," he didn't sound very confident.

"Down kitty," Jessie snapped, slapping him in the ear. James meekly lay back down, covering his ear. "Slayers, huh?" Jessie sheepishly laughed.

"Oh brother," the Doctor sighed. A panel flashed on the screen, he looked down and saw a countdown starting. His finger hovered over it.

Damien's eyes rapidly widened, he gasped and pointed at James. "You, what have you done... where is he?" he gestured the last part toward Jessie.

Her hand discreetly reached for the drill as she stammered nervously. "What, is your ghost possess creepy kids potion, thingie..." she missed by a hair, so she cringed. "Messing with your eyes... sight?"

"What?" Damien grunted. Then he noticed what she was doing. He was just about to grab it first when James kicked him in the stomach. The blow made him stumble back and wheeze, knocking the drill to the floor. The standing pair dove down for it. He managed to snatch it before Jessie could. "I knew it. Even stupid and brainwashed he's still a pain in my neck," Damien snarled while glaring at James, his finger aimed for the power button.

"Well technically," Jessie said sheepishly, briefly flickering Damien's attention to her, "it's not your neck." The lights in Sickbay abruptly shut off, consoles powered down, as did the Doctor. "Aaaw," Jessie moaned just before she backhanded Damien to the floor, "a few more seconds and that'd have been epic."

James hurried off the biobed with a smirk, not that Jessie could see it. "I thought it was." The pair rushed off towards the exit.

"Tch so true, and look at you with the badass Slayer routine," Jessie giggled. "I almost bought it. Very nice."

"Yeah?" James sounded intrigued, until he walked into the door, nearly knocking himself out cold.

Jessie snickered quietly, "almost."

The Z4:

Morgan peered around a corner. Once the coast was clear she hurried out and did the same with the next one, while their teammate merely followed looking bored.

After the third corner, Emma sighed loudly on purpose. "I thought you were supposed to be all..." she said, trailing off. Morgan jumped out of her skin, then glared over her shoulder at her, not that it bothered Emma. "Buffy like."

"Do I look buff to you?" Morgan whispered.

Emma sniggered briefly, then bit her bottom lip. "Nope, skinny as a rake. Carry on."

Morgan groaned as she faced forward once more. "Neither of us are Seventh crewmembers. We can't walk around normally."

"I can't, but future Kiara can," Emma reminded her.

"Well yeah but..." Morgan said, sounding unsure. Emma tapped her shoulder to get her attention back. Once Morgan looked, Emma pointed at a random crewmember going another way entirely. "So, they didn't see us."

"That guy pissed me off all the time at school," Emma bitterly said. "Bloody traitor," she growled.

"That's nice but first we gotta take over Engineering," Morgan said. She wasn't surprised or bothered to be alone two seconds later. "Neh, she'd probably hog all of my targets anyway."

In full black cloak, Kathryn inspected the bannister at the side of the unfinished bridge with her finger. "Tut. Dust."

Jo rolled her eyes and drummed her own fingers.

"I don't suppose you've done anything since you stole it," Kathryn said at the same time she got a glimpse of her reflection. With a bit of her nose showing she tugged the hood forward quickly.

"Funny you say that, as we have installed one of those coffee pods in the meeting room. People showed up for once," a man standing beside Jo said.

Kathryn was brushing her finger along a console, so when coffee was mentioned she abruptly stopped with a loud squeak. Everyone stared. "Consoles are too loud," she improvised.

"You've still not told us this new, very last minute plan," Jo said impatiently.

Standing at the turbolift, Craig watched as Kathryn cleared her throat and continued her finger groping tour around the bridge, growing increasingly nervous. "Maybe we should change the fleet formation first, it's way too obvious," he piped up. Kathryn's head turned slightly in his direction. He tried not to look embarrassed by it. "It's a well known pattern."

"Out of all your crew, you bring that one?" Jo sounded unimpressed.

Kathryn steered her way towards Craig, hinting for him to move out of her path with a little hand gesture. He double backed more than he needed to. "He may be a moron, but he's got a point. We found you. It's obvious what you're doing."

"So?" the man who spoke earlier boasted. "Voyager and the Z5 will still be outnumbered and outgunned, especially with this ship leading the charge."

"That remains to be seen," Kathryn said in a plain voice.

Jo studied her intensely while her back was turned. "I'm sure dusting will be crucial in this battle." She climbed out of her chair. "Forgive me, sir, you're new to this. I've been in many battles. I know the Z5 crew and their weaknesses."

"Craig," Kathryn interrupted her, clicking her fingers. Craig flinched and stared. "Show them."

"Show them?" he tried to sound normal, but his voice went up a few notes on the last few letters.

Kathryn's eyes hardened. He couldn't see it but he felt it. "Show them the camera you planted."

It took him a few uncomfortable seconds to get what she meant. "Oh, sorry sir." He brought a laptop out of the bag hanging off his shoulder, then put it down on the nearest station. Once he did that the big screen changed to show Lilly and Chakotay in Engineering, planting devices all around with unconscious crew on the floor.

"What?" Jo was one pitch away from screaming. "What's she doing here?"

"Hmph, I was wondering who was helping her," Craig muttered.

Kathryn groaned, "somehow I doubted it was Harry and his wise cracking console."

"Get all of our security in there now, Ed. Bring her back alive," Jo snarled. The man beside her nodded and ran off. Jo stomped over to where Kathryn stood. "You brought them here."

Kathryn pointed a phaser from her cloak pocket, stopping her abruptly. "Ah, ah. That's close enough, Jo Nobody. If you must know, we captured her on Earth before the portal closed. I knew someone was helping her, but I had no proof until now."

"You don't understand sir, she..." Jo stammered.

"I know full well who she is," Kathryn snapped. "She's crafty, so I would do more than send the security guards she expects."

Jo's attention drifted back towards the screen, eyeing what she assumed were explosives planted on her engine. "You're right. I'll deal with this personally."

Tom crept into the dark shuttle bay from one of the Jeffries Tubes, grumbling excessively with sweat dripping from his forehead. He left the door hanging open with the broken opener device still attached.

To approach the Delta Flyer he would have to hide behind other shuttles and a console in between two. Then he'd have to deal with the guards at the entrance. He figured he'd figure out his strategy once he was closer.

His last stop was the nose of the Flyer which he ducked behind and peered around. He then crept on his hands and knees to get around to the back, desperately trying to think of a way to knock out the people between him and his shuttle. They'd have phasers, he needed to go in and quickly.

The thought that he should've rescued James first drummed into his head. He shook it off, he didn't need him. He'd get into the Flyer, beam him out and escape.

Tom leapt out to tackle whoever was to the left of the shuttle door's to disarm them. Only instead he tripped over a body lying on the ground. He collected himself and stood, quickly noticing not two but five guards were lying unconscious around the back of the shuttle. The door to it already open.

The Z4:

A couple of the Six's security personnel were walking down the corridors holding what looked like very colourful phaser rifles.

"Which way?" one asked.

"I don't know, apparently they're in engineering," the second one replied.

Annika turned the corner, stopping them in their tracks. One of the aliens screamed and ran off.

"Damn guest stars, they never help," the first said.

"Oh finally, now I get the chance to prove myself," Annika said giddily. She barely took a step forward and they ran off as well. "Oh no you don't!" Annika sped after him.

Another security guard flew into an already full of unconscious people cupboard. Morgan tried to shut the door but a foot jammed. "Ah, damnit!" Pushing the door any further and she imagined severed feet and blood, she shuddered at the thought.

Another door further away opened, so she had no time to un-jam hers. Before she could duck behind a console, she noticed the only new arrival was a disappointed Emma.

"Why didn't you save me any?" she complained, until she noticed the foot. "Here let me," she smirked.

"No, no, it's..." Morgan stammered, but was cut off at the sound of another opening door. "More where there that came from," she whispered.

They both ducked down to avoid the imminent phaser fire flying at them.

"You're going to let me have this one, right?" Emma asked.

Morgan glanced at her briefly. "Where's your weapon?"

"I broke it," Emma said innocently.

"A phaser rifle, how?" Morgan asked.

Chakotay heard someone approach. He tapped Lilly on the shoulder to get her to hide behind a console in the corner she was using. He slipped behind a nearby wall.

The man passing by was too busy nursing a very sore lump on his head to notice them. "I hate that girl." Chakotay noticed he was carrying around a dented phaser rifle, one of theirs.

"Their shields have gone up. It's time," Lilly whispered.

Chakotay turned around to nod at her, though all he could see was the top of her head and her eyes peering over the console. "Great. You're sure it'll still work?"

"These ships haven't changed much. I suppose they didn't have time to advance their technology," Lilly said, slowly standing back up. "And now we wait," she smiled.

"Wait for what, my old friend?" a woman's voice said from Lilly's right.

Lilly only groaned as if she only dropped something on the floor. "Ohno."

The pair looked around, each pointing their rifles. They got a few similar looking weapons pointed right back at them.

"Hello Lil," Jo sneered.

"Joanna," Lilly said similarly.

The sneer fell instantly. "I should've known you'd be behind this deception. Too bad for you I'm not blind."

Chakotay glanced between them both. "What deception? You know her?" he whispered.

"Know her? We used to be best friends," Lilly said. "Until she joined the Sixes."

"You took the shortcut you bimbo, don't think I've forgotten," Jo hissed. She tilted her head to one side to command the four with guns behind her, "Dispose of her friend, but Lilly is mine."

Suddenly three of the four turned very pale. Two of them turned around to throw up, while another started swaying as if dizzy. The Voyager team had no idea why until they heard Annika's voice behind them. "All right, which one of you has my shoe?" They looked behind them to find her hobbling over on one bare foot, her catsuit leg torn off from the hip down.

"Ohno, dead girl. I'll up the setting," the only Six not disgusted said. She changed something on her rifle and fired, sending Annika flying backwards into and through a few walls. Chakotay took the opportunity to edge for Lilly's console.

"What the hell's going on? I just got that wall fixed," Jo asked. She then noticed the slight movement. "Ah ah!" Jo scowled fiercely, "did you really think I couldn't tell the difference between the Z4 and your garbage copy mark 5? Seeing you alone was enough to tip me off, to look closely. As usual, you overestimate your intelligence."

"Well it might've worked if you cleaned your engine core now and then," Lilly sniggered.

"Hmph, I don't know how you convinced Alex to side with you, but your little con ends now. He and his minion think they have the Bridge, well they're in for a surprise," Jo snarled.

Craig blinked, disbelieving. "We have the Bridge? That was easy."

Kathryn smiled proudly, "what can I say? I have the best genes."

The pair jumped at Morgan's screech at an unconscious man trying to tumble on top of her from an upright, standing position in the lift. She caught him in time and had to try to squeeze him back in so the doors would close.

Tom shook his head, more than a little annoyed, and not just because his seat was occupied and a pair of boots were slouched over the console. What annoyed him the most was the fact that he was surprised. "You, how did..."

The boots were down and the chair swung around to face him. "It's about time. All you've got on this thing is Minesweeper. How old is this computer?" James asked, faking being angry.

"You better not have beaten my scores," Tom grumbled.

James laughed briefly and smiled, "no dice, bud."

The colour in Tom's face drained away to nothing. "You... you've... you're the one that let me out of the brig. Why didn't you say anything?"

"Because I'm not very nice and you're an idiot, remember?" James answered.

Tom ground his teeth nearly into powder. "Out of my seat, I'll get us out of here."

"You're welcome," James said.

Tom strained himself to avoid grunting loudly, keeping his mouth firmly shut. That was of course impossible, "I can't believe I considered saving you."

"Thanks, time to go," James said, getting up to Tom's relief.

Tom heard hurried footsteps behind him. He expected James to be on his guard like he was, but he reacted as if it were a mild annoyance. Tom looked around just in time to be shoved out of the way by another James. This one took the helm. While the helmsman still reeled from that, a giggling red faced Jessie took the weapons station. The first James cleared his throat at her and shook his head.

"Make me," she said with a wink.

James stammered and looked away to Tom's amusement, he also noticed James' cheeks go a little red. "How did you get here after Tom?" James asked his Seventh clone and Jessie.

"I'm not very quick, you should know that," the other James replied.

Jessie broke into laughter, cueing a mortified stare from James and a smirk from Tom.

"Oh?" Tom snickered, clearly enjoying himself.

James sighed impatiently on his way back to the helm. He expected some fuss, but he pushed his other self out of the chair with little trouble. He retook the helm and shook his head.

"Can we keep them?" Tom laughed.

Seventh James used the helmsman to pull himself up and stand again. "Thanks," he said, patting his shoulder roughly before taking the last console.

"I told you," Jessie teased in a higher tone, "you'd be so hot with his power."

Seventh James pulled a face, "no thanks. He'd have less fun I'd wager, having to hold back all the time."

James glanced over his shoulder, catching Tom biting his lip to stop from laughing. "No, we can't."

Tom noticed the other James's console flashing a warning. "Wait a minute, you powered down the ship from here? How?"

James rolled his eyes and started the engines. "Not exac... I'll explain later."

"Why hold back?" Jessie asked innocently. "I'll ask Fifth me, she'll know."

The lip biting didn't help, Tom spat into hysterical laughter. "Yes please, please ask our Jessie if she likes it rough."

"That's not what she means, shut up!" James snapped at him.

Seventh Jessie did a little, "oooh," before glancing at Seventh James. "He *is* grumpier."

He winked back, "told you."

James ground his teeth while his back was on them. "We don't have time for this. I'll just beam them into space later."

Tom once again snorted. "And blow your chance with two Jessie's, when at least one of them is kinky? You know, the gay jokes were just jokes."

"That is funny," Seventh James sniggered.

"You don't know the half of it, my friend. Tell me more about..." Tom said.

James rolled his eyes, "Tom, unless you want to join them outside..."

"Ookay, ookay," Tom chuckled. He really wanted to relieve one of them and man one of the stations, but he didn't want to miss a moment. So he found a chair at the back to sit and eavesdrop, while James hoped once again that a hull breach would save him. For the time being he settled for carving a hole in the shuttlebay doors with the phasers.

"Huh, Alex?" Lilly looked confused.

Chakotay though laughed a little too much. "Wow, Kathryn really does make a very convincing Boss."

"What?" Jo snapped. "Enough. Let's end this rivalry once and for all." She swiped her arm toward Lilly's rifle, forcing her to drop it.

"Woah, wait. What rivalry?" Lilly complained while caressing her newly sore hand. With her good hand she did the same back. "And don't start with that."

"What?" Jo spat.

Lilly sighed impatiently, "you know what."

Being the only one left who was armed, Chakotay wondered if there was any point in doing anything until the time was right. He continued his very slight edging towards Lilly's console while they were arguing.

"Spoilt princess," Jo hissed, then delivered a nasty back handed slap in Lilly's face.

Furious, Lilly slapped her right back. "Sore loser!"

Jo delivered another, "orange bitch."

Lilly gasped and slapped her again as well. "It's red, see," she pointed at her own hair.

"Thinks she knows it all," Jo snapped, cueing another slap. Lilly didn't get a chance to recover and deliver her own, another one followed soon after. "How many ships do you want, brat!"

Chakotay peered over at the console and hope the countdown was near zero. Since it wasn't, he could only wait.

Another team, lead by the officer called Ed, reached Engineering to find it quiet. At first anyway, but then he heard groaning coming from behind a door at the opposite side. He gestured his teammates to search the room while he approached the door.

Opening it, several bodies tumbled out of it, moaning ow's and oophs.

"Commander!" someone shouted at him.

Ed scrambled out of the way of the avalanche of bodies to run over. The officer who called him pointed at a Starfleet tricorder almost finished its countdown.

Seconds later the Z4's entire shields glowed orange before fizzling away into nothing. One by one the ship's lights turned off, its engines powered down.

Voyager locked on a tractor beam once it was entirely dead in the water.

"That worked. It looked just like an ordinary power overload," Harry said.

Tuvok seemed to agree, "none of the other Six vessels have changed their position, nor are they powering up weapons."

The Doctor, still posed as Phoebe, nodded while smiling broadly. "Prepare to meet our guests, Commander. I trust you'll make them comfortable." Tuvok's eyebrow shot up while everyone else sniggered. "Once the transport's complete, get us out of here, warp nine."

"Hey!" Jo complained, earning another couple of overdue slaps. "You!" She got another.

"Yes," Lilly said, about to slap again. She stopped to smirk, "you should've known..." The familiar blue glow of Voyager's transporters enveloped Jo, making Lilly panic. "No wait! You sucked at Micro Machines anyway..." Jo was long gone before she even started. "Damn."

"Oh yes, it's a shame she never heard that burn," Chakotay muttered.

Voyager turned slowly, towing its prize back the way they came. They jumped immediately into warp.

They weren't alone. The Z5 shimmered out of its cloak directly above them.

The Conference Room:

Kathryn didn't look impressed at the ship sitting outside the window. "Good thing you got it back, it could do with a good wash."

Dave frowned while glancing outside as well, his eyes widened at the offense. "That's not the Z4, that's my ship."

"Still," Kathryn said with indifference. "You trying to be edgy with that black hull?"

Tuvok walked in with a jug of filter coffee. Kathryn snatched it from him to drink out of straight away, most of dribbled over her uniform.

"The Delta Flyer has not checked in once. You'd think if Stuart killed Paris, he'd be polite enough to inform us," Annika said, eager to change the subject.

Harry's jaw dropped. He tried to shake it off and fake laugh, "oh James is a murderer, that's hilarious."

"Tom is a sore winner. She's probably serious," Neelix said.

Kathryn sighed in contentment. "Okay I'm back. What did I miss?" she asked while stroking the coffee stains, then licking her fingers "What was that about Tom dying?"

"Is it always like this?" Dave whispered to his sister. Lilly answered by widening her eyes very briefly.

"We were meant to be getting information on this new boss, but we got another ship and some of the Ligers' anarchists locked in Neelix's sentient airponics bay. That about sums it up," Chakotay said.

"That and B'Elanna's having her baby," Harry said.

Kathryn's face softened further, "aaaaw." Everyone but Chakotay looked very surprised, if a bit scared at her. Fortunately it didn't last, she looked worried instead. "Wait, doesn't she have at least two more months?"

"She didn't say, other than *this little sod's as annoying as its dad*," Harry said.

"Don't!"

Jessie recoiled her hand away a mere half a second before B'Elanna's struck the bed.

"If anyone should get their hand squished, it should be *daddy dearest*. It's all his fault," B'Elanna snarled. Both of her hands balled into fists.

"Uh if it's his, then it's my fault too," Jessie said nervously. Even she froze at the horrible stare B'Elanna gave her. "It wasn't just hi..."

"Oh it's always the guy. They don't care, they don't have to do very much. They intrude, do the damage, then sod off," B'Elanna rambled through the pain, while her right fist drummed beside her. "We're either are or we aren't. For a drunk one nighter to end like this, he needs a snip. Bloody dangerous."

"Uh what?" Jessie was at a loss for words. B'Elanna screamed for quite a while, giving her time to find some. "Neither of us were ourselves then, but that should be me so; it's more my fault than his."

B'Elanna weakly swiped her hand in Jessie's direction, barely brushing some of Jessie's hair. She assumed it was meant to be a slap.

"Nah, I volunteered. Nobody asked me to," B'Elanna said breathlessly, cut off by another wave of pain that made her cringe. "Why the hell did I volunteer again?" this time she screamed. Jessie's hand was quickly squeezed, she had to firmly bite her lip to avoid joining her. "Fine, it's your fault too. You'll do!"

"Mmmhmm," was Jessie's pained response.

"Oh," Kathryn still looked concerned as she gave Tuvok the jug back. "I'm gonna need a refill."

Tuvok stared at it, then her blankly. Neelix ran over to his rescue to snatch it. Tuvok didn't bother objecting, he opted to sit down.

"Getting the Z4 back is no short feat. It was the youngest in their fleet by two centuries," Dave said. "They still have strength in numbers, but that's all they have. Our fleet's far more advanced."

"Hold on, centuries?" Chakotay stuttered. He wasn't the only confused one. "Lilly mentioned being there, in the only escaping ship during the revolt. You mentioned they've been looting, sabotaging your attempts to build ever since, and that includes these M and T series's."

Dave frowned at his sister at the same time she looked down at the table. "You didn't tell them the whole thing?" he asked.

Kathryn's caffeine kick wore off. Everyone that noticed braced themselves.

"Oh they know, sort of," Lilly said.

"We picked her and Emma up in the 21st century, but if that's what you mean..." Craig said.

"Like I said, we were forced into the underground when the coupe happened on Venus as well. All ships were taken. We had no choice but to go into stasis and wait it out. We knew they had no interest in Venus itself, but our ships, governing bodies, scientists, you name it, they'd want," Dave explained. "Many stayed behind to rebuild the fleet while we slept. After so many ships were lost, it was decided we'd all follow Lilly's ship and close the door behind us, but we noticed the portal was already closed. It took us a while, putting it mildly."

"Oh," Harry cringed, "awkward."

"Why?" Lilly asked slowly.

Chakotay sighed with a guilty expression. "To keep the Sixes and Seventh out of that dimension, we had to close the anomaly after we returned here. We're the reason your escape route was locked."

Dave actually smiled to his surprise. "Then it could've been so much worse. I had wondered why Voyager wasn't aiding in the attacks."

"So you were in stasis for three hundred years, woke up and went through the exact door we used; so you ended up in the same place and time," Kathryn mused aloud. Dave seemed impressed, he nodded. "Ah good, I was starting to feel the time travel headache brewing."

Annika frowned, her mind itched at the response from Dave. "If it were a static door on our side, the refugees would've entered on top of us when we escaped. So it's only logical that time flows far slower on the Liger's side than ours."

Kathryn tried not to look annoyed. She nodded slowly.

"Ah, that makes more sense. Hundreds of years passed for the Ligers, while months passed for us," Harry said.

"Either way, it seems like the Sixes left behind in our dimension re-opened the door or made their own, otherwise the stolen ships wouldn't be here. Right?" Lilly questioned.

Dave sighed despondently. "Mostly, yeah. All but the Z4 were stolen before the move. That was taken out of the shipyard last month. The Z5 fortunately wasn't space worthy at the time, but their sabotage held its launch back." He glanced at the table, downcast all of a sudden. "I wonder, if they're doing this because they found it, to stop us from getting it."

"I doubt it. They can't get anywhere near it, I made sure," Lilly said.

Everyone heard the twinge that meant Kathryn's patience had gone. "Would you two cut it out with the between you talking. None of us know what you're talking about. What is this *it* you're blabbing about?"

Lilly seemed somewhat annoyed too until she remembered she hadn't explained that part yet. "My ship, the F9. The one which chased Seventh Voyager back here. It was damaged, but it'd still be very useful to them. That's why we hid it. Six ain't getting it, especially now that they don't have a ship that can go there anymore."

"Yep, I wasn't keen on leading the way," Dave said.

"Oh, so you planned this all along. I feel so used, and more than a little pissed off since I only picked the Z ship to take because..." Kathryn said, trailing off. "Ugh fine, I'll bite. What's so special about this three hundred year old ship, and why should Voyager continue to help you if you continue to withhold information?"

Lilly and Dave averted away from her deadly gaze, then at each other, unsure what to do.

"Bridge to Conference. Captain, incoming vessel."

Kathryn groaned. "That better not be this Alex brat, I've got enough annoying kids to worry about." She continued to mutter as she walked out. Some of the Conference people followed.

Danny glanced over at the new arrivals from the helm. "Confirmed, it's the Flyer."

"Great, I got up for nothing," Kathryn said. She kept walking to get to the Ready Room.

"Uh, there's four lifesigns on board," Harry stuttered, turning pale.

Kathryn did as well, she stopped and shuddered. "Oh lord. Was I the only one who got a nightmare image as to why?"

Chakotay chuckled discreetly, then tried to look serious. "Two aliens they rescued. Or three that he rescued?"

"Oh good, it was just me," Kathryn sighed in relief. "Who'd want to make clones of Tom?"

Harry shook his head. "I don't think so. All four are human, and I think sensors are pulling my leg about the four anyway. Two of the lifesigns are identical, so it's probably a glitch."

"So, there's three. That's still more than we expected," Chakotay said.

"A lot more," Kathryn shuddered again. "Some asshole did clone him. When I get my hands..."

"If it were two Tom's, how are they still alive?" Danny giggled.

Kathryn brightened up considerably. "Good point. Hail them."

The inside of the Flyer appeared on the viewscreen, most of it anyway. A lot of the view was blocked by a pair of legs draped on top of their screen.

"...You scuff that, you'll be getting my fist a few times," Tom was in the middle of grumbling.

They heard James laugh closely, so everyone assumed the legs were his. "You're not my type, sorry."

They saw Tom enter the corner of the screen, blushing furiously. "Jesus, I can't tell the difference anymore."

"Ahem!" Kathryn barked. "I see you two need another day together."

Tom's eyes widened. "Ohno, no," he stammered as he ran over. There was a light scuffle as he tried to push the legs down. Most were surprised he did so with the only reaction from James being a smirk and step back. "This isn't uh... James is back there, probably getting friendly with the oddly kinky Evil-Jessie."

"I beg your pardon!" Kathryn roared.

Despite being on different ships, and the vacuum of space in between them, that still blew him away as if he were there. "I er... Seventh Voyager captured us. These two helped us escape."

"Why?" Chakotay frowned suspiciously.

"You can only hear you're getting swapped for your better half so many times before you wonder why you still work for them," Seventh James said.

Kathryn wasn't impressed, "what does that mean?"

"I thought I was clear," Seventh James groaned and walked off, clicking his tongue a couple of times.

Tom pat him on the shoulder, pretty much confirming Tom's story of there being another James elsewhere. "Why don't you go back there for a really weird threesome. Actual pilots should park this shuttle, safely." He hadn't notice the other James enter, blocking the other from leaving.

"Okay, Tom being still alive is just as miraculous with two James, than the idea that two clones of Tom survived the trip," Kathryn said.

Chakotay rubbed his tired temple. "Neither of the Seventh crewmembers are coming on board, especially James. It could be a trick."

Seventh James meanwhile put up his hand as if to high five. The regular James blanked him as he walked forward. "Pfft, you fit right in with Seventh." He stomped off muttering, "uptight arsehole."

James heard him and glanced over his shoulder. "That's still really creepy."

Tom smiled, "well I like him."

James stared into the back of his head with a steadily raising eyebrow. "You would."

Craig chuckled nervously, "yeah I'm on the creepy side."

"What am I supposed to do, I thought you were joking about chucking them into space," Tom snapped. He looked back at James accusingly, "you enlisted them to help you, then whine..."

"We'll take them," Dave said from the Conference door, cueing bemused stares. "They might be useful, have info on Seventh. If they're crewmembers they wanted to swap, then we'll at least figure out what they want with their originals."

Lilly scowled, "we will?"

Dave narrowed his eyes back at her mockingly, "yes, I will."

"Sorted, now hurry and park the shuttle," Harry said.

"Why, you miss me?" Tom winked at his friend. Harry groaned into his hand and shook his head. "Yeah he missed me."

"I won't," James smiled a little darkly. Tom glanced back but James' smile had become more harmless so he missed the sinister part entirely. Still he reached for the helm and sat down. "Okay, quick landing it is." Without thinking he turned off the monitor. Only then he thought about it. "Oooph, witnesses."

James chuckled to himself as he sat down at a console behind the helmsman.

"Did you have fun with the less stuck up Jessie?" Tom asked.

He got silence, so he assumed he was being glared at. James only looked bored though. "Look, if you are that afraid of me, try zipping it."

"Nyeh, that's a no," Tom snickered. He noticed the comms lights were still flashing. He ignored it until he landed the Flyer in the bay. "What's up?"

"Ah, you're back in one piece after all," the Doctor's voice said.

Tom's face fell, "Doc, what is it?" He suddenly got nervous, "I didn't leave that camera in there."

"Oh I know you did," the Doctor tried to say but he was drowned out by B'Elanna screaming. James and Tom were startled so much they froze on the spot. *"You might want to hurry back. Oh, hang on."*

"You hang on you piece of shi..." B'Elanna's voice growled.

"I meant Tom. Push."

"Push?" Tom panicked, darting side to side in his chair, repeating the same word. He found more words when he faced an equally shocked James. "She's not even seven months yet."

More screaming took over the speakers until finally the sound of a baby's cry was heard. It turned eerily silent other than that. Tom turned his chair to the front again to hide his smile and a tear in his eye.

"It's a boy."

"A boy," Tom mouthed it. He again turned his chair around to face James. "Hear that, a son."

"Yeah," James could only say, since he was shook to the core. He tried not to show it and act normal but Tom noticed and gave him a funny smirk for it.

"What's your problem?" he asked.

James looked away, thinking it over. "Where to start?" he mumbled.

Sickbay:

The Doctor almost handed the tiny bundle to B'Elanna, but she nudged her head across to her right at Jessie still holding her hand. She widened her eyes in a panic.

"Wait, you sure... you did all... that..." she squeaked and stammered.

"He's yours, have a hold before Tom gets here," B'Elanna said with a painted on smile. She sat back to rest.

The Doctor approached Jessie, apparently oblivious to her shaking and paler skin. The tremors reminded her that her hand was hurt. She gestured with it quickly, "I can't, I won't be able to... what if I drop him?"

"Oh of course. I'll help here," the Doctor said.

He stood directly in front of her and held out his arms. The first thing Jessie noticed was the little eyes fluttering open, a brilliant blue stared back at her. His cries lowered to a whimper. Jessie's shaking good hand reached across gingerly towards him. A light brush against his cheek soothed him into silence and to sleep.

"Well?" B'Elanna said, this time with a real smile.

"He's..." Jessie hesitated, pulling her hand back, "so tiny. Is he okay?"

"At first glance and scan, it seems so. I'll do a more thorough one now," the Doctor beamed and walked off.

Jessie noticed her shoulders were aching, as well as hunched up. She tried to force them down but it made her trembling worse. "Oh god, I thought the worst."

B'Elanna smiled up at her. "Believe me, that boy's fine. He's been very lively the last few weeks. I'd know if there was anything wrong."

Jessie meekly nodded, unsure what to say. "Thank you," she ended up whispering.

B'Elanna didn't have time to respond, the main doors flew open.

"Can you kill me after I meet the baby?" Tom complained on entry.

"I'm not following you," James said behind him.

Tom turned around and stopped in his path. "You could've fooled me."

"I needed to stop by here," James objected as he walked around.

"Why? Did you break a nail smacking those guards?" Tom said on route to his wife.

B'Elanna glared him and then James into silence. "Really?" she scolded.

"Yeah you're right," Tom meekly said.

"Sorry," James said at the same time. He then noticed Jessie still trembling, staring dazed at her hands. "Jess, you all right?"

"Hmm?" Jessie glanced up. "Oh yeah, she squeezed my hand a bit hard. Compared to her, that's nothing."

Tom meanwhile crouched down beside his wife. "I'll say. Where, how is the little mite? He's super early."

B'Elanna looked toward the other two near the bed without thinking. She covered it up by glancing absent mindedly. "Nothing to worry about. It happens in space, the stress of strange situations."

"So no problems, good," James said, badly hiding his relief.

"Why are you still here?" Tom asked, not cruelly but befuddled.

The Doctor returned from his office, smiling broadly. "Great news mum and dad. Junior here is perfectly healthy, only a bit underweight. Nothing to worry about." He walked by James intentionally slowly to allow him a brief look, on his way to the biobed.

"Maybe I should get out of the way," Jessie mumbled with her head down. She scurried straight outside before anyone could argue with her. James looked on after her, eventually he followed.

"Those two are weird 'uns," Tom chuckled, not noticing B'Elanna's worried frown. "Their evil selves are a laugh and a half though."

"Hmm right," B'Elanna said since she wasn't really listening. She wondered what she was supposed to do now. For that moment, all she could do was put on a tired smile.

THE END