

Season Two Special The Resurrection

Many millennia ago, the planet of Thairo lay on the brink of destruction. A dark soul, camouflaged by his kind and gentle facade, charmed his way up through the ranks, into the elite and finally the royal family. What they were yet to discover was his unique and terrifying power, what they later called magicks, had made him untouchable to anyone who noticed his lust for power.

Taken by him, the King's consort, as well as his daughter, lavished upon him all the privileges of their station. Still he wanted more. His ire turned to the king himself, who had come to consider him a loyal friend. That fateful night the king was drawn to his chambers by his faithful wife, only to be slain where he stood. She took her own life before the guards arrived.

With the princess still in his thrall, the dark soul destroyed anyone or anything he desired, until one day the people banded together to capture them. Their punishment, a swift execution.

Little did the people know, the dark soul expected, no, hoped for his capture and death. For he and the princess had jointly cast a spell that would preserve their essence once their souls had moved on to the next. A missing piece left behind.

They say that one day a stranger who shares that fractured piece of his soul will return, and he will be made whole again. On that day our world will be no more.

Kathryn stared, unblinking toward the man on the viewscreen. Many of the bridge crew braced themselves for the inevitable.

"Why didn't you tell us all this when we first arrived? You morons have pretty much screwed yourselves over," Kathryn sniped finally.

Speechless, the man on the screen opted to pressing on a visible control on his computer. Then he was gone, replaced by a close up view of multiple vessels facing them, one of them turned around to leave.

"Hmph, that was rude," Kathryn said flippantly. Chakotay smirked discreetly behind her. "So, did anyone make any sense of that gobbleygook?" No one responded with anything more than a few shaken heads.

Two Days Earlier

The inside of the Delta Flyer seemed to be a little tense despite Morgan's attempts to distract everyone. Her flying the shuttle in somersaults an hour previously still had Craig biting his nails and nervously looking around. She settled on putting her feet up on the console and cracking open a bottle of pop, ready to give up when James passed her to sit at the helm.

"Any sign of this thing Janeway was after?" he asked in a disinterested tone.

"Nope," Morgan replied.

James glanced back over his shoulder at her, "any idea what this thing even was?"

Morgan pulled a face. "Of course. There's this planet with rings that contain giga tonnes of energy... stuff."

She got a blank stare back. "Is this another coffee field trip?"

Jessie scoffed from the far back of the room. "What else? She never trusts us with anything else." James and Morgan looked in her direction while she shook her head, opting to ignore them.

"What did you do?" Morgan accusingly whispered to James.

"Me?" he mimed back.

Morgan rolled her eyes. "It's not coffee. Mum would've told us and or acted sketchy. She's never been that secretive, right Craig?"

Craig barely made a sound over his chattering teeth.

"Fine," James sounded unconvinced. "The only planet with rings is an hour behind us. And the one we seem to be flying closely by with a welcoming party coming our way, doesn't."

Morgan jolted upright, her feet dropped to the ground. Jessie overheard and ran over to take the parallel station to her.

"It should've been on auto pilot. I'm sure I put it back on," Morgan mumbled. Craig made a pained and hesitant squeak.

"Let's turn us around and send them an apology message," James said, turning the directional lever slightly to the left. The shuttle rocked at the same time a flash of light flew by the window. The lever went to the right during a few more flashes. "Warning shot. Almost flew into the first one." He heard a clatter and a splash behind him, followed by some grumbles. "What now?"

Morgan crouched down to blindly pat around for her fallen bottle, a look of thunder on her face. "How dare they, they'll pay!"

"They're hailing us," Jessie said while hurriedly working.

"Alien vessel, you are in Maji territory. You have trespassed in a restricted zone. Disengage immediately."

James looked over at Morgan again, catching her dabbing the wet console with her sleeve. "Restricted zone? Nice of your mum to send you here."

"Wha... she never said that. Only *check the ringed planet Morgan sweetie, it's super urgent,*" Morgan said, pulling a face.

"Yes urgent. Mummy's overdue her million cappuccinos," Jessie groaned.

"So you admit that you have ill intentions. State them or we will open fire."

James grit his teeth for a moment. "Nothing, this was a mistake. We're leaving."

"Lower your shields and prepare for inspection."

Morgan reached over to Jessie's console to cut off the comms. "No way, hose ray," she muttered, cueing three confused frowns pointed at her. The shuttle rocked a few more times, bringing a scowl back to her face. "Ooh, you asked for it."

"Morgan, now isn't the time to avenge your Cherry Coke," Jessie said.

James pushed one of the levers down, the Flyer swerved almost vertically down underneath some of the alien ships trying to surround them, then back upwards, skimming the very edge of the nearby planet's atmosphere. Several of the ships started firing as it sloped back to the left to get out of orbit. One of the alien ships sharply turned to fire phasers at the same time red pulses shot out from the nearby moon.

The shields couldn't take much more, a few strikes snuck through them to strike the engines. Light quickly faded, smoke billowed. The shuttle floated instead of flew, one more hit rocked them further into atmosphere. Gravity soon grabbed a tight hold.

Morgan eyed the window and the closing in planet. "Shoot, try extending the wing flaps."

"The what?" James stuttered.

"Tom said it was a new feature that I was not allowed to try or he'd tell my mum I had a wild party in here," Morgan said bitterly.

Despite the situation James struggled not to laugh. "Ok so, one of the do not push buttons, easy."

He looked over the side panel which happened to have a little framed photo of Tom scowling and pointing at whoever was looking at it. Several buttons were disguised underneath a fake plastic panel.

After a few button presses, the Flyer's wings extended at the back, slowing their descent down somewhat. The Flyer's nose glowed from the heat as it attempted to pull up. The efforts were in vain as several more torpedo shots struck, pushing the shuttle onto its side. It span the rest of the way through the clouds, towards the ground.

When Craig awoke with a splitting headache he found that he'd landed on ceiling, right side first. He tried to look around, very little light seemed to be getting through the windows. The first sign of movement he crawled over to them. He was more than a little relieved to find it was Morgan.

"Where the hell are we?" she asked in a groggy voice.

Craig squinted towards the darkened window. Morgan followed his gaze. They both realised almost at the same time the darker patch had been where James was unfortunate to land when the shuttle flipped upside down.

"Oh yeah, we're..." Craig mumbled, pointing up at what used to be the floor and the consoles.

Morgan stumbled over to James to give him a shake, then a few more when he didn't respond. "Wake up you lazy so and so."

James eventually woke up, he stared at her with puzzled narrowed eyes. "What are you doing?"

Morgan stopped shaking him, and she walked away. "Somebody had to wake you up," she replied as she walked over to Jessie. She knelt down to check on her, then give her arm a shake as well.

"Morgan, quit it," Jessie moaned.

"Is it me or is it getting hotter in here?" Craig timidly asked.

James could feel the heat building at where he touched the ground. He looked down at the cracked and chipped glass beneath him. Carefully he stood up. All he could see seemed to be dirt or sand which had started to leak through the cracks.

Seeing that, Morgan rushed down to the lower level to push the exit open, only to be immediately dazzled by a huge, blazing star in the sky. She rushed outside to pick the door back up and close it up again, retreating back from the searing heat to the stuffy shuttle.

Craig had followed her. Without the sudden light in his eyes he was the first to see the stretch of desert all around them. "Oh boy," was all he could mumble.

Meanwhile at the top, front part of the shuttle, Jessie tried to stand up but a sharp pain took over her left foot.

"What's wrong?" James asked.

"I think I've twisted my ankle," Jessie replied. She shook her head when James approached. With some grumbling James held onto one of her arms as she wobbled to at least one of her feet. Once up she quickly sat on a nearby side turned chair. "I'm fine. I'll be fine here."

"Okay, but we should see if we have any water or rations first," James said, about to go down to the other room as well.

Craig hurriedly came up, blocking his way. "This desert is all we have, and it's a bottle out there," he stammered, waving a bottle in his face.

James took it from him, staring dubiously at him. He barely loosened the lid when he got a whiff of the definitely not water. "Great, a desert? We can't stay in here, but we can't go out either."

"Not true. Morgan spotted a mountain and she thinks some stone structures," Craig sounded sheepish. "Then she took off."

"What?" James stammered. "Did you see it?" Craig shook his head. "Go get her back, there's a chance she might have been seeing things." He shoved the only tricorder he had into Craig's hands.

"Hang on. There's no power in here, no protection. We're not much better off in here anyway," Jessie said.

"Yeah it'd be like camping in Neelix's oven, only cleaner," Craig said.

"She's right," James sighed. He looked at Craig a little irritably, "really?"

Craig's eyes bugged out, "oh!" He ran back out.

Jessie shook her head, "charming as always."

James walked back over to her, offering a hand. Instead she stubbornly used the nearby console for support.

"We should stick together at least," he said.

"We, or all of us?" Jessie wondered, pointing at the vacant door. Even doing that caused her to wobble, almost losing her balance. With an annoyed groan she accepted his help. "Fine, fine. I'd rather you than Craig."

Fortunately for the group Morgan wasn't seeing things. After hours of stumbling through sand, cursing, removing layers of clothes, vowing to kill Kathryn later, they reached the stone structures she and Craig mentioned. An ancient town sitting at the base of some hills with no sign of any kind of life.

"This doesn't look good," James wheezed.

Morgan brushed him off to sit behind the first large stone she saw to get some shade. Craig didn't care much either, he was tempted to crawl the rest of the way. Though with sand all over, stuck to him he might have well have done.

"Is there anyone even here?" Jessie asked while James helped her sit down beside Morgan.

He looked to Craig, expecting the tricorder to still be in his hands. Only he seemed to be partially lying on it, so James nudged him to one side so he could pick it up. The exposed portion of it felt so hot to the touch, he held onto the part Craig had lay on. A short scan later he sighed, "no other lifesigns, but why?"

"We need to find some water or we'll die here too," Jessie said.

Craig's moans muffled in the sand, "that's why." The others barely made him out.

Morgan groaned impatiently in his direction. "Ok, I can take a hint." She got up to everyone's bafflement. "One of you come with me."

James glanced at the still lump that was Craig, he waited for any sign of life before turning back. "We can scan for it." Typically then he noticed the screen had froze, the entire device had heated up so much it was starting to burn his palm.

By the time he got it to respond, Craig dragged himself into a sitting position after a few attempts to find a spot that wasn't burning his butt, while Morgan stared curiously around, apparently not bothered by the excessive heat and humidity. "There's a well spring system underground, as well as a maze of tunnels."

Morgan brightened up, "ooh, sounds like fun. Which one of you losers are coming with? Old man or sad boy?"

"Hey," Craig barely whined, he had little strength left.

"What? Jessie can't walk, genius," Morgan mocked him.

Craig weakly glanced towards James with a tired frown. "Why don't we decide this like adults."

"So, Rock Paper Scissors?" James said.

Craig stared as if he'd said something obvious like *up is up*. "Ready?" They both counted to three, then drew. Craig moaned at his balled up fist and James' straight palm. "Best two out of three?"

"Oh for," James groaned, not only for his response but Morgan leaving without anyone. He ran after her.

The heat underneath Craig had him shuffling across to where Jessie sat, with the biggest pout on his face. She stared at him back as if he'd sat on a puppy.

"So er, should we be worried?" he asked.

"You should," Jessie snarled.

He found out the hard way that he'd actually sat on her good foot.

Morgan excitedly ran around every corner and room they came across, eyes wider than usual. James wondered if she'd snuck that bottle Craig found. Her next target seemed to be the only room with a door. It looked heavy and had been bolted up in chains attached to the wall.

"I doubt that's the well," James said, warily staring at it. Something about it had given him goosebumps.

"It's nice down here. Maybe we should tell Craig and Jess," Morgan giggled.

James chose a random direction to look and it didn't disappoint; a grimy corner where a number of furless rat like creatures gnawing on a long dry bone, bugs scampering about. "Yes, nice."

A massive bang brought his attention back to the door, which no longer stood and instead lay flat on the floor with Morgan walking over the top of it.

"Morgan, what's the matter with you? There's nothing here you'd like or need," he complained.

They both spotted the only item in the surprisingly cool and dry room, a huge stone box as tall as they were with a lid three foot thick. Alien text on its side got his attention, but Morgan stared towards the lid.

"Oh that looks..." she said eagerly. Quick as a flash she wasn't, she shuddered in revulsion. "Eew, why?" She went further into the room anyway.

"Did Craig offer you any 'water' during our trip here?" James asked before following. "Come on, we need to find some. Jess and Craig need it."

"Water, oh yeah," Morgan said, finally with a focused look in her eye. Instead of leaving though she pushed at the heavy lid, leaving it very slightly open. Clouds of dust billowed out. James pulled her away before she got a face full of it. She snatched her arm away, only to swing it back at him. James ducked back just in time. "Get off me, or it's off next time you prick!"

"Fine, I'll get the water. You have a great time grave robbing or whatever this is," James snapped. He marched off without her.

"Oh stop being such a..." Morgan groaned, then her eyes shot wide open. "That's not funny!" She chased after him. "Why would a grave be in their water system?"

James shrugged, "I dunno, why is a huge box sitting in a previously locked room?"

Morgan sighed, "how strange." James nodded. She responded by grimacing, "oh gross, stop that."

"What?" James silently said to himself, his patience a thing of the past. He turned around to face her, "stop what?"

Morgan whined, "no I don't. Harry's greasy and annoying and kissable, wait what?" she shrieked.

James stepped back once with his eyes widening, "seconded the what. We need to find that water, you must be dehydrated badly."

Morgan shivered as her eyes darted around. "Yeah, probably right. It's creepy, cold in here."

Finally they continued onwards until they reached an old, crumbling well. A couple of buckets had been dropped half hazarded nearby it. With no ropes that they could see, James figured they couldn't use them. He peered down the well, hoping to see the bottom but all he could see was black. The well itself seemed too narrow to climb down.

"There has to be somewhere else," he said, checking the tricorder once more.

Morgan watched him while pulling a face. Then she'd nod and look away, grimacing again.

"That's really creepy, stop that," James muttered.

"What is?" Morgan said irritably, "are you done?"

"I think so. There's a storage room I think two levels up, we can look there for anything we can use," James replied.

As soon as he lowered the tricorder, Morgan lunged for him. He expected another attempt at a punch, anything other than the 'smack' on the lips he did get. He pushed her from him in shock and quite a bit of horror, it didn't register that she stared similarly back at him. "Morgan, what the hell are you doing?"

"I dunno, I don't, I didn't," Morgan stuttered. She wiped her mouth repeatedly, "why would I? You asked me to stop being creepy and then..."

"That counts as creepy. I'm done, you go back up, I'll look up that store room on my own," James said fast and louder with every word, his voice started to tremble.

Morgan felt a metaphorical punch to the gut and throat. "No, I'm sorry, its too dangerous."

"I dunno, it seems safer to be on my own," James muttered as he hurried away without her.

"What the hell just happened?" Morgan stammered once he was gone. The memory of it made her gag. A woman's laugh echoed around, but she groaned merely as if it were normal. "Oh leave me alone."

Night had fallen by the time Morgan returned to the surface. The temperature had fallen dramatically to almost comfortable. Jessie noticed her first and tried to get up.

"Where's James?" she asked. The pain in her foot forced her back down.

"I dunno, took off and left me," Morgan replied over the top huffily. Both Jessie and Craig stared at her suspiciously which prodded her nerves. "Stop that, it wasn't my fault."

Jessie raised an eyebrow, "what wasn't? He better be okay."

"Yes and so am I, thanks for asking," Morgan said lightly to cover her nerves. She rushed over to their new camp fire, reaching for the bottle Craig had found in the shuttle.

"Morgan, I know he can take care of himself but..." Jessie tried to sound patient.

Craig scoffed, "yes, he's very good at dying." Both of the women glared at him, putting off any smile he tried. "Take care of, get it? No, okay."

Jessie rolled her eyes in disgust, then focused on Morgan. "Why didn't you follow him?"

"Pfft, he'd get the wrong idea," Morgan blurted out bitterly. Then she realised what she said, her eyes nearly bugged out. Jessie and Craig weren't sure why, so looked on confused. "I was drunk, must've been it." She twisted open the bottle.

"On the bottle you just broke the seal off now?" Jessie said plainly. Morgan wordlessly offered her it after one sip. "No, what did you do to him?"

"Oh nothing like that!" Morgan groaned at the same time James approached the group carrying the two buckets. "We just had a little, bitty kiss, that's all."

"What?" Jessie and Craig stammered. Craig wasn't done, "I knew it. I was right, right?"

Jessie stared at the fire for a moment, then at James standing afar from the group, his gaze a million miles away. Craig walked across to accept one of the buckets, but with a cold look on his face.

"I thought you were my friend. Not anymore. You've just made an enemy," he muttered.

James groaned impatiently, abandoning the rest of the water to walk away towards the fire. He noticed Jessie glancing aside, away from him. "Why are you all acting like this is my fault?"

Craig only glared in response. Morgan avoided looking at him. Jessie bit her lip firmly. "It's not that, it's just... she's sixteen and... you didn't?"

James' shoulders dropped, he stared back at her in dismay. "I didn't. I pushed her away. Morgan..."

Morgan squeaked in response, "I didn't start it."

"What, you..." James stuttered until his face hardened. He looked around a little helplessly, then with offense. "You know what, I'd rather bake in the shuttle than put up with my own friends thinking I'm a pervert."

"Think?" Craig quipped.

James gave him an extra special glare as he walked off away from the group, towards the desert. Jessie tried to get up to follow him. It took her a while to get to her feet and limp a few steps.

"James no, I didn't mean it that way. Wait!" Jessie shouted after him. She stumbled, landing on her knees. Morgan walked over to help her. James, having heard her fall, stopped and turned around. Jessie pushed away any attempts Morgan made, "oh stop it, you have some bloody nerve, get off me!"

Morgan moved off with a scowl on her face, "fine, be a jealous cow right here."

Craig meanwhile glanced between them all, his expression a little torn from watching Jessie's reactions. "Look, doesn't matter who did what. We shouldn't be alone, especially when it's pitch black out there."

James had already started to walk back to where Jessie had stumbled. "*She's sixteen* sounds like an accusation," he mumbled bitterly. Even still he helped her back to her feet.

"To be fair, out of the two of you, you're more likely to do creepy stuff like that so," Craig chimed in. Morgan gave him a look of utter betrayal which punched him in the gut. Fortunately for him the others chose to blank him out all together.

"I'm sorry, what she said threw me a loop," Jessie meekly said. "You're okay, right?"

"Hmm," James barely said, taking a spot the furthest away from everyone that was still in heat range of the fire.

Craig avoided eye contact with all of them, then he realised his bottle had gone. Seeing Morgan take a swig of it, he panicked and rushed over to get it back. She moved out of his way with a childish groan.

"What's it about him anyway? If I hit people and go on a murder spree, will I be more appealing then?" Craig whispered to her.

Morgan slowly turned her head towards him to glare. Then she shoved him so he was lying flat on his side.

As the night went on the temperature dropped even further until the crash party were starting to shiver. What pieces of clothing they'd took off earlier that they still had with them were put back on, but it wasn't enough. Three of them had shuffled closer to the fire, Jessie somewhat reluctantly.

She looked back over her shoulder towards James still sitting in the same spot as before. Holding what was left of their water, Jessie tried to get up. Instead she shuffled over to him, still in a sitting position. Her ankle still complained so she only got close enough to offer the water.

They sat in awkward silence for a while, long enough for Craig to curl up by the fire with his long sleeve grey shirt about to fall off into the flames. Morgan noticed so she reached over to pick it up. A little snore from him startled her, she dropped it onto his face instead.

"I didn't mean to blurt out something so stupid, or accuse," Jessie stuttered. "In that split second I was thinking that Morgan meant you both chose to, and..." James glanced at her curiously and a little shocked. "I hated that it bothered me so much. I wanted to know if you did and I knew it wasn't any of my business. All in that one second."

"I didn't. It came out of nowhere, I stopped it," James said. Jessie nodded but looked guilty anyway. "I don't think she's herself. I'd expect Tani, not her to do... that."

"What else did she do?" Jessie asked. A bemused glance had her stuttering, "not that making a move isn't weird on its own."

"It is, and no it wasn't the first or only thing," James answered. "Come on, you know the Morgan crush rumour isn't true. You of all people."

Jessie smiled, scooting up a step to sit beside him. "I of all people get it."

"Huh?" James said.

Jessie playfully bumped her arm into his, remaining there. "You and I both know what you and I mean. You mean she's your close female friend, like me, so I shouldn't humour the rumours, or should I..." she sounded serious but her eyes were anything but. He didn't have to say no, his face said it for him. "And I mean I've been there and miss it sometimes."

James inched his shoulder away, staring suspiciously, "did you have some of that wine as well?"

Jessie grimaced, "eww no, wine is like sweet fizzy water."

"Okay," James said while uneasily glancing around, "maybe I misunderstood then."

Jessie surprised him by stroking his cheek gently. He froze for a moment while her thumb caressed just under his bottom lip. "You miss me too, right?"

The proximity, it took all the strength he had not to close in, but it wasn't enough to pull him back either. "Jess, I, we can't..." he whispered.

Jessie's smile was sweet, which didn't help him at all. "Yes we can. Just pretend I lied about having the wine." She had moved closer while she spoke.

"I did try some of it earlier to make sure it wasn't water," James said.

"See, it's our thing," Jessie giggled.

They brushed lips for a moment and lingered there for a moment. He closed in to kiss her gently. Once her arm was tightly woven around his neck it got more intense.

During a brief separation for air he realised her breath did have a taste of alcohol to it. She was about to lean in for another when he pulled back slightly. "You did drink some?"

"Only a little bit," Jessie said, gesturing her hand to indicate half a bottle.

"Oh, ohno," James mumbled just as Jessie passed out on his shoulder.

The tunnel never seemed to end, nothing but darkness lay ahead. A voice, gentle as the breeze that carried it, soothed and beckoned. A stampede of the tiniest feet echoed above, following them. It seemed to be getting darker still, their eyes could not focus on anything. A warm gust drifted into their face. They followed it to an ember orange wafting in the distance.

The corridor reached its end, a large opening walled by small flickering flames. Walking inside they felt their weight begin to lift. Skin felt cool, tingly. Through the smoky haze someone approached. Their pull drained what little energy they had. Skin felt like it was on fire. Then they stepped forward, allowing them to see.

James reached gingerly out, expecting nothing but glass. His reflection smiled, bringing out the darkened brown eyes and ashy hair. The reflection reached out as if the mirror was delayed, only they grabbed his arm, dragging him into the darkness again.

He hit the stone cold floor hard, yet he felt no pain. Footsteps ran by him. He weakly looked up to try and see who it was. Then he saw her face, twice and blurred. The one in the lead, holding her by the hand, smiled and said something he couldn't hear.

"Morgan," a different voice said ethereally. It jolted him back to reality with a panicked Craig crouching next to him, shaking his arm.

"What's the matter?" James groggily asked. He found he was unable to properly open his eyes yet with the scorching sun peeping over the nearby building.

Craig's attempt to scramble back to his feet scraped the stone they were lying on, waking Jessie so abruptly she gasped.

"Morgan, she's gone," Craig said.

James sat up in a hurry, squinting his eyes. "What?"

"When I woke up she was gone. Why would she..." Craig stammered.

"Hold on," James tried to sound calm. He looked around for their few items, hoping for a clue. Water buckets, the tricorder, the ropes, a couple of phasers, empty wine bottle, all were still there.

Craig nabbed the tricorder as if he'd just seen it too. "Underground. She's gone underground."

James remembered the last few seconds of his dream; Morgan running, her face full of terror. "We should go look..." he hesitantly glanced over at Jessie.

Craig shook his head, "no, no we. We can't all go and we can't split up."

"Well we have a problem, don't we," Jessie muttered. "Just give me a sec..."

"Nuh uh, no time," Craig said. He tried to run off but James grabbed his ankle, almost toppling him over. "What are you..."

James glanced again at Jessie. "Are you okay to?"

"No, yes, maybe. Doesn't matter, I'm not staying here," Jessie replied.

Craig struggled on his one free leg, "get off."

"Did anyone else bring weapons?" James asked.

That got Craig even more panicked. "What do you mean? We're alone here, oh god."

Jessie reached for her discarded jacket she'd used as a pillow, quickly brandishing a phaser. "What, do you think I'm new at this?"

James tossed up a phaser to Craig, and to the boy's relief he let go of him too. He barely caught it, it bounced on hitting his hands and fell into the fold of his arm.

Once Jessie was up and limping, they made their way over to the same underground tunnel James and Morgan used the previous day. The temperature shift from hot and stuffy to cold and dry disoriented all of them for a few steps. The clammy walls and echoing drips, the darkening corridors had them all on edge. Everytime Craig heard so much as a click or a tap, he'd pick up speed and or try to investigate rooms without his teammates, even if the tricorder didn't say anything.

After six attempts at this, James pulled him back once more and took the tricorder away. A quick scan told him the only lifesign was two metres below them. He quickly tried to scan for the nearest route down.

"Craig," Jessie hissed when Craig tried to escape again. He made a little whimper and protested a but. "Fine, go off without us. Deal with whatever's managed to kidnap Morgan without either of us."

Craig pouted, "fine fine, no go without super freak and limps-a-lot."

Despite what he said he walked ahead of her and tried to overtake James. Jessie glared into his back. James had enough and left him to it, as long as he was within arm's reach. He slowly span around on the spot until settling on one of the doors Craig had tried to go through earlier. "This way I think."

"Oh sure, now it's right," Craig grunted, stopping and turning to go back the way he came.

The door lead to another long corridor, with massive steep steps going down. Jessie clutched onto the wall and took them one at a time with her good foot. Craig typically picked up speed and once more got ahead of both of them. James was more concerned with the wincing and occasional stops Jessie was doing.

"It's okay," she said assuredly. As if it'd prove her point, she took another slow step down. "While you're stuck there," she gestured to him standing ten steps below, "I really wanted to apologise for yesterday."

James flinched, briefly turning his head away. "About what?"

Jessie glanced to one side, biting her lip firmly. "About being all, I don't wanna say jealous but, yeah jealously blurting something stupid and hurtful out like I did. I didn't mean anything by it."

"Oh that," James said to her confusion. He winced, this time in her line of sight so she frowned. "You already told me," he said regrettably. Jessie lost a little colour. "It's okay, I get it."

"You do?" Jessie said, worried and a little embarrassed. "When you say *oh that* though, it makes me think I did something else. It was only a few sips, what did I do?"

James hesitated, once again wincing. He glanced down the steps to see how far Craig was. He still could see him, stopped on one step trying to catch his breath. He turned back to Jessie biting the nail on her thumb while clutching a part of the uneven wall. "Nothing, nothing wrong. I'll tell you later."

Jessie sighed in relief. "Our little wannabe hero's gonna get away if we don't keep moving."

James smirked before checking on Craig again to find him at what looked like the bottom. It looked to him like he'd jumped off the last step to make some action pose with his phaser pointing. He couldn't help but laugh at the thought when he heard Jessie yelp behind him. Stone groaned and scraped at the same time. He swung around to find no sign of her.

Craig took that opportunity to look for Morgan without them.

Jessie landed on the hard sandy ground. Her injured ankle throbbed so much it took her breath away.

She saw a ray of light flickering only a few metres away. She pulled herself over to it. The light was getting dimmer by the second. Jessie picked it up, recognising it as one of the light arm bands. Pointing it at all corners of the room she saw nothing but the walls.

A voice whispering whistled in her ear startled her into dropping the light. It span a little as it hit the ground. When it stopped Jessie noticed it was shining on Morgan lying slumped on her side. She pulled herself closer to her. The teenager's head was bleeding heavily and face was deeply scratched.

The light finally went out completely and Jessie found herself in total darkness. She couldn't even see her own hand in front of her face, let alone anything else. That was when she heard the sound of footsteps. The sound was closing in and getting too close.

Another noise joined the foot steps, it was like somebody was breathing through a scratched throat. As both sounds got closer, Jessie shook. She pulled herself back the way she came until she hit what felt like a stone wall. The sound increased until it was so close that Jessie could sense whatever it was, was standing just a centimetres away from her.

James pushed at the spot he thought he saw Jessie last. All he achieved was a cracked stone and some light rubble falling over him. He stepped aside to try elsewhere when he heard a familiar sound, not that he could place it. Constant tapping, hundreds of small footsteps. He looked up to see a swarm of black insects scuttling down for him. He had no choice but to run, and then jump the rest of the way down.

Craig reached a large open room filled with statues and many other carved stone objects. He was busy ogling the tall, raised platforms that seemed to lead elsewhere when he heard the same sound that James did, coming from the wide corridor to his right.

"Craig!" he heard James yell over the top of it.

"Fine, I'll wait," Craig huffed, eyeing the ground level exits on either side of him. Then he saw James and what he was running from. "Nope," he squeaked with his eyes bugged out. He ran to the left.

James meanwhile spotted the ledges. He leapt onto one of the stone carvings, then jumped again to grab the edge of the ledge. The bugs ignored him and continued running straight, likely after Craig instead.

Once he was safely up on the ledge James followed the narrow, rocky corridor down into a familiar cross section. He wondered why until he recognised the door Morgan had broken down. He went inside with a sickly sense of unease, but he stopped when he realised the box Morgan had barely opened had been pushed off entirely. The feeling that someone was watching him made him turn around sharply to confront them, only to find he was still alone. Even then he didn't feel that way.

Craig came to a sharp corner. He heard voices coming from around it. He backed up against the wall and peered around it. About five aliens were standing, armed to the teeth, far down a corridor. They were discussing something frantically but they were so far he couldn't make it out.

He pulled back, opting to stay where he was until they were gone. Then he heard a chilling, painful scream. Craig looked around the corner again. Thousands of black bugs that were the size of mice had swarmed over two of the aliens, bringing them screaming in agony to the ground.

As soon as a few of the bugs cleared Craig could see what little was left; charred flesh and ripped clothing. The bugs started running after the others. Craig decided to run back the way he came. What he didn't know was that the three aliens were right behind him.

Using only the tricorder as a source of light, James stumbled up some large steps in the pitch black. He happened on a stone door part the way up. Even though he could see the faint glimmer of light at the end of the stairs, the door drew him toward it. It felt like the right way.

He pushed it open, then he immediately spotted Jessie knelt on the ground against a wall. Her eyes wide, staring straight ahead of her. James ran over to help her up to her feet, the entire time she didn't move on her own steam, her eyes remained locked on.

"We have to get out of here, the place is infested with..." James stammered until movement caught the corner of his eye. He turned his head to follow Jessie's gaze as it stepped out of the darker shadows. With its rotting skin, visible bones and empty eye sockets, it looked like any old corpse, only it was standing upright, glancing between them, growling through the gaps in its throat. He or she seemed to smile, exposing its jawbone for all to see.

Hurried footsteps approached, they both thought the worst.

"Oh god, they're in my hair," Craig's voice stuttered. Neither of them could see his eyes bug at the sight of the walking corpse, he ground to a halt. "What the hell is that?"

The corpse briefly looked over its shoulder then back again. "Finally, after three thousand years," it spoke in a very hoarse voice.

Craig noticed Morgan lying nearby. His face hardened as he reached for the phaser.

"I will be whole again," the corpse continued.

"Ah, shut the hell up!" Craig snapped before firing. The blast tore a chunk off its rotting back, it dropped to the ground.

Jessie pulled an annoyed face while James stared at it blankly. Craig meanwhile crouched down to gather Morgan in his arms.

"Is that it? I could've done that," Jessie complained. She and James noticed its back regenerate, it was getting up.

The team rushed out through the door James had come in. They hurried, even through the pain in an ankle until they got back to the surface. Only they were greeted with more company, aliens pointing rifles at them. One of the ships that attacked the Flyer had been parked outside the town.

"You, what have you done?" the leader snarled at them.

"Well funny story, I wouldn't go down there," Craig stuttered. "Bugs and stuff."

The leader stared at him coldly, "you have disturbed Him. You have doomed us all."

Craig smiled a little too smugly, "you mean Him as in that walking corpse. No problem."

"Don't be a simple buffoon. You cannot kill what's already dead," the leader said.

"But," Craig whispered.

James stepped in front of him, rolling his eyes. "Can we save the blame game and exposition until after we help this girl?"

The aliens looked disturbed and started talking amongst themselves. The leader shushed them. "If it were her, then surely he wouldn't have awoken," one alien spoke up.

"Perhaps, the mythology may have been mistranslated," the leader said.

Jessie cleared her throat. "Excuse me, but some answers would be nice seconds after some medical attention."

"You're correct. We must evacuate the ruins. Come," the leader said.

They lead the awayteam inside the small ship, still under guard, into a room with a bed and a woman sorting through medicines. With Morgan lying on the bed, she got right to work.

"We asked you to leave. Why didn't you?" one alien angrily asked.

"Woah, hold on. You barely gave us the chance to. We would've gone but you destroyed our engines," James snapped.

"That was definitely not our intention," the Maji leader said. He ushered the last remaining members of his team outside, leaving only the guards and the doctor. "It is as we feared. The beast has awoken. The question is how, considering what we know."

"How do you know, did you see him?" Jessie asked, shuddering.

The Maji leader clenched his jaw, his gaze drifted over towards Morgan. "No, the signs were there. The Sbaracs, the toxic atmosphere. Although your claim to have seen and defeated him gives me some doubt."

Craig scoffed in offense, "oh we saw him alright. He kidnapped Morgan, did something to knock her out, was probably going to do the same to Jessie... I bust in and save the day while this guy stares at his nails." Fortunately for him James only found the remark funny and smirked.

"Perhaps, he is weak still from his resurrection," the leader mused aloud. "You claim he pursued the two females troubles me."

"Why, other than he's a big creep," Jessie said.

"Goes without saying," the leader said. "But no, his first action must be to regenerate. If he pursued you both instead then our information is wrong or incomplete."

James exchanged similarly confused glances with the rest of the team. "No context doesn't help."

"Right yes," the leader said. "Legend has it that the mage will rise when the remainder of his soul, his reincarnation, returns to him. He won't be alone. The princess he bewitched, traitor to the royal line, she would wake up too. He wouldn't dare risk using her soul to save his own."

Craig started to fearfully stutter, "there's another one of them?"

The leader nodded. "They who hold great power with a grudge to rule, or destroy this world. In death they are invincible. With their completed souls they'll be a curse on this entire sector."

Jessie chuckled not out of humour but confused nerves. "I don't get it. You mentioned reincarnations, so how would these two still exist to wake up if they've moved on already?"

"Magic. The mages were extremely adapt at it," the leader replied as if it answered everyone's questions. "If Iinan has awoken, Unu will have as well. This means one of you at least shares a fragment of their soul."

James warily glanced behind him toward Morgan. Craig stared at him suspiciously. "He lured her there, twice," James said. "Just because he was a he back then, doesn't mean he is now."

"It's possible, but that's not how the myth is told," the leader said. "Considering what happened we must consider anything. It's still possible Unu's soul is here too, or that she's still sleeping. Either way we must depart from here." He moved over to a wall console to tap on it. "Arden to Control, Ishnan are all four search parties back yet?"

"No sir, and they haven't called in."

The leader Arden's face filled with conflict. "We cannot waste anymore time, nor can we leave people here. Iinan will use them. Try again to contact them."

Screams from outside so chilling it gave everyone a cold shudder. Most of the room ran back to the airlock they came in through. The scream had turned choked and croaky by the time they got there. Not far in the distance, near the underground opening, stood a man dressed in tattered clothes with their back to them. He held up a rotting corpse wearing the alien's uniform by what was left of their throat, and coldly tossed it aside. As if he could hear them, he turned around.

The three Voyager crewmembers looked on in horror at his face, less so than James at seeing his darkened reflection again, in the flesh.

"Get back inside!" Arden shouted, pulling more of his people with him through the airlock.

The door had barely closed when the ship took off, leaving the James lookalike behind, smirking and following their path with his gaze.

"What the hell... what the hell was that? I thought you said he needed him to charge," Craig stuttered angrily and fearfully, pointing at James repeatedly. He didn't notice, he was in a daze.

Arden sighed sadly, "it's only temporary. It is merely a flesh regeneration. Iinan would need his fragmented soul in order to stay that way permanently."

Jessie held onto the nearest thing while her whole body trembled, the pain in her ankle a distant memory. "Ok so, what did he want with Morgan then? Unless..."

Craig calmed down long enough to scowl in James' direction. "What is it with you? You and your past life can't leave her be, you creep." James' eyes drifted in his direction.

"Oh give it a rest Craig, now's not the time," Jessie hissed.

Arden seemed deep in thought. "Perhaps, I've been thinking about this all wrong."

The ground beneath their feet jostled, a panel similar to the one Arden used earlier bleeped a second later. He quickly pressed it again. *"Sir, a sandstorm appeared out of nowhere. It's blocking our targeting scanners."*

"Take us into orbit," Arden commanded.

The next time the ship jolted, it didn't stop. Anyone who wasn't already quickly clung onto something.

"It's thickening. Almost as if it is blocking, no following us."

A huge gust of sand struck the right of the ship, pushing it on its side. Everyone felt the ship lose pull down. The windows on the left almost pointed directly towards the surface.

Morgan ran in from the medical bay despite the guards trying to stop her. "What's happening now?"

Craig turned to look at her but in between he noticed the right hand window, double checking it he swore he saw a face within the sand.

"We're going down. Brace."

Craig stumbled towards Morgan. Jessie was inadvertently in his way, clinging on to a wall post near the ground. "Jessie?" She frowned up at him. "You scare the hell out of me sometimes, but you're cool." He wandered off, leaving her very confused.

"You," Craig said with venom. When James looked at him his resolve wavered. "I hate you, jerk, you're a murderer," he said so quietly and quickly. James heard him anyway and shook his head.

Craig reached Morgan. "I feel like if I don't tell you now, I never will."

Jessie squinted her eyes in his direction. "Is he?"

"Yeah," James groaned.

"Sad bastard," Jessie sighed. James chuckled quietly.

Morgan was far from amused though. "What are you talking about? We crash all the time. We did it yesterday in fact."

"Morgan, I love you, I always have," Craig announced a little too boldly.

To no one's surprise Morgan groaned impatiently. "Oh thanks for making everything awkward, you ninny."

The ship meanwhile grazed the sand on landing, bumping lightly into a stone hut similarly sized. Everyone barely rocked on impact.

"Ohno," Arden said, noticing the buildings around them.

"Did we go in a circle?" Jessie asked.

"No, much worse," Arden replied, glancing panicked between the two women. "You both must stay here until we can take back off. We can't risk Unu awakening."

"Tch," Craig grunted, getting everyone's annoyed attention, "it's obvious who Iinan's girlfriend is." His face fell, anger in his eyes, "then again, it's really not."

James internally counted to ten, anyone watching him noticed his fists continuously clenching. "So what then, how did I wake him up so we can avoid that again?"

Arden glanced between everyone. "Proximity was probably enough. You entered the city and Iinan..." he stalled to click his finger.

"Then why did it take so long, and why did he take Morgan?" Jessie asked.

"Yes why me, and who is Iinan, and what the frick?" Morgan stammered.

Arden groaned a touch impatiently before he started to tell the story again.

"Okay, so we avoid opening things, fix this ship and wait this guy out," Morgan said. "Or have I or Jess..."

"Or Craig," Jessie smiled cheekily.

Morgan looked put off for a second, then sniggered quietly. "Or Craig's already woken her up?"

Craig didn't look impressed. "Hey, if anyone's James' soul buddy it's not me."

"No way to know who Unu's reincarnation is, so we must leave. Only then we can work on an evacuation procedure," Arden interrupted to everyone's relief.

"Hold on, evacuate what?" Craig asked.

Arden scowled, "the planet, clearly!"

James shook his head stubbornly while pacing across towards Arden. "Are you saying that we can't stop him? I did this, I should try."

"No!" Arden barked, "Iinan will drain your body and soul, a fate worse than a simple death."

"But..." James protested.

Morgan pushed her way in front of him, forcing him to back off a touch. "Nothing is invincible. This Iinan creep must have a weakness. Won't he die if he finds no one to kill?"

"We just don't know. His curse has laid dormant for thousands of years. There's no way to know everything," Arden answered.

"What about these abandoned cities, are they from that time as well?" Jessie asked. Arden's worried expression answered her. "Then would a magician have stuff like books and potions, I dunno, a broomstick?"

"I can't express this enough. Any one of you stepping outside could doom us all," Arden said.

"Really? Cos we're already in a pickle with this Iinan guy. Is this Unu girl even worse, or..." Craig wondered.

"They need each other as much as they need their soul buddy, as you put it," Arden said.

"So we do nothing?" Morgan stuttered with a helpless expression on her face.

Arden looked at her with sympathy. "Yes. You'll be transported to the flagship as soon as we can repair. There you will also do nothing." A few members of his crew entered to talk quietly to him. None of the team made it out. "Excuse me," he said, walking off and leaving the group with only the guards.

Jessie shuddered as she sat down on a box nearby. "I don't like this one bit."

"Ok so this James past life is just a witch, big deal. I really doubt our James is so accident prone that he'd trip and fall into getting a life suck," Craig said.

Morgan stared with some contempt, "this *just a witch* crash landed a shuttle with sand. Avoiding him's the only part I agree with."

James glanced across at the nearest window. "How far do you think we got away from him?"

Craig followed his gaze, confused, "I dunno, a few miles at least, why?"

"None of you three can risk going out there, but I can, at least until he gets here," James replied.

Jessie's head darted up, "and what? You don't know what to look for."

"A book," one of the guards said. "Ancient magics. Iinan in the myth wielded one in his more powerful spells. It and its opposite were buried in one of the three abandoned cities of the old kingdom. This could be it."

"What are you doing?" another guard snapped at her.

"Three, so there's a slight chance this isn't Unu's city?" Morgan said with interest.

"Wait, why would we want his book?" Craig asked.

Morgan shrugged indifferently, "it won't stop him, but it means he won't be as tough. Right?"

"Right," the first guard replied. "There were two opposing sides in the ancient magics, but the texts that mapped out where both books were hidden were destroyed during the Borg invasion."

James thought about it, then nodded. "It's a start. I'm looking for a book."

"We are," Morgan abruptly said. She noticed Jessie's attention going towards her.

"I feel like I should remind you of the part where Iinan regenerated into a James clone," Craig said. Morgan mouthed so in his direction. "So James' past life looks like him, but Princess Unu doesn't? Doubting it. Unu's reincarnation will be a woman, so I should go instead."

"We will escort you both," the guard said.

"Both?" Craig moaned. "That would mean having to put up with him."

"Oh grow up, Craig," James groaned.

Morgan and Jessie didn't look happy about it, for different reasons. Jessie glanced at the agitated teen. "If Unu is me, and I start wandering around, punch me out or something."

"But..." Morgan stuttered, "what if it's me?"

Jessie smiled deviously, "please you maybe super strengthy, but I have my ways. Ask James."

Craig smirked in James' direction, who looked a little flustered already.

Morgan was confused at both their reactions, and at Jessie's comment. "But I was sleepwalking when I went down there. I assume to lure him down there. So with Unu, maybe someone else will go wandering, like Craig or even me again."

"Either way, you're going to get a phaser to the foot and a kick in the face," Jessie said.

Morgan pulled a face at her, "haven't you gotten that backwards?"

"Nope," Jessie said with a smile.

"Just what do you two get up to in your spare time?" Craig asked in James' direction. He looked at him strangely, then decided not to bother and walk off. Craig hesitated over following with growing impatience.

"Sometime today, Craig," Morgan said, rolling her eyes. "You know before the gross dead guy comes back for his book and happens on James."

"I'd get more sense out of a dead guy anyway," Craig huffed. He finally followed after James, still making huffing sounds. "You better keep that weird kink of yours away from an innocent girl like Morgan, you creep."

Morgan and Jessie stared after them, looking a little confused. Jessie gasped when she got it, then cringed, "that's not what I meant."

"Oh, I thought you meant you like to kick James's ass from time to time, and can't say I blame you," Morgan said.

"No, he meant... actually yes, that's less embarrassing," Jessie stuttered, blushing furiously. She turned her attention away from the teen, leaving her even more confused.

The team of James, Craig and three guards entered a large structure that reminded the two humans of an ancient church. The first room they came to was a massive, mostly empty hall with rubble covering most of the floor. The only thing still intact was a podium at the opposite end. The team split in half to look around.

"So what is it?" Craig asked suddenly.

James glanced over his shoulder briefly. "Dust, and over here more dust."

Craig's little growl amused James more than he liked. "No. Jessie, Tani, that future girl, now Morgan. What's it about you that gets girls all drooly over you..." He didn't wait for an answer he knew he wasn't getting. "Morgan's not going to be as impressed with your Slayer thing so it's not that."

"Craig, there's a skin melting zombie sporting my face who wants to destroy a planet, likely on his way here to do just that. Maybe save your needy, creepy entitlement for a sixteen year old girl for later, or the more appropriate time of never," James said in a dreary, uninterested tone.

Craig hmped in response. "Oh, so it's a huge insult when it's said to you, but with me..."

"With you it's accurate," James cut him off before walking away.

Craig stared at him, jaw agape. It took him a while to recover. When he did, something black, metallic resting on the podium caught his eye. He hurried over to claim it, only to be blocked by a shield closely surrounding it. Everyone heard the buzz. "Er guys?"

The sinister chuckle from a woman he could not see echoed all around him. "Okay, creepy factor reached," he stuttered as James approached him, staring curiously at the object. "Not you, that's..."

"Don't care," James muttered. He reached for it and got the same forcefield buzz back in response.

"You've found it," a guard said on approach. "But it's the dark, this is troubling."

Craig glanced between them all, the laughter he heard continued to echo around him. Judging by the others reactions they couldn't hear her. He turned towards the altar behind him. A movement in the shadows caught his eye. He got the attention of a female guard, gesturing for her to follow him. James and the other guard were discussing the book and didn't notice.

A stretch of corridor lay ahead of them behind the altar. Neither of them could see anything unusual, but Craig could still hear the woman's laughter from the end of the corridor. "Do you hear that?" he asked the guard.

"Hear what?" she said.

Craig walked a few steps ahead to peer around the corner. To his surprise he found Jessie standing around casually. She spotted him. "Shh," she pressed a finger by her lips.

"What are you doing here?" he whispered.

Jessie stepped closer, eyeing him up and down. "Same as you. Looking for a book."

Her voice sounded breathier, almost sultry to him. He couldn't help but wonder if the same thing happened between Morgan and James earlier. It pressed on his nerves a little, he didn't notice her step into his space and peer up at him with her dark, almost black eyes.

"Look, I'm mad at James too but I'm not that mad, or suicidal," Craig stuttered, his whole body started to shake. She had his neck in a claw grip, leaving him genuinely fearing for his life and tried to back away.

The Maji guard looked on, worried, she wordlessly ran back the way she came. Jessie's eyes followed her, freezing the woman in her tracks.

"We've lost contact with the team."

Jessie and Morgan looked on at the couple of Maji's at the nearby console, both worried. Jessie turned her back on them all to tap her commbadge. She was the only one to see Arden enter the room.

"What team?" he asked.

His crew nervously eyed him. "A recon team of no consequence," one answered.

"You mean the alien men, one of which is Iinan's reincarnation, is of no consequence?" Arden said calmly with a straight face. He turned on his heel to hurry back, yelling, "assemble security teams, bring back the aliens, whatever it takes!"

Morgan ran over to the doorway to block him. "Don't get your pants in a twist. We're just sorting your mess. Iinan won't be here yet, chill out."

"My what?" Arden said. He signalled for the people approaching behind her to continue, he moved out of the way towards the two who were inside already. "My mess? You shouldn't have been in our space." Several security got stuck trying to get by Morgan, while some knew better and slipped under or around her.

Morgan grabbed one of the pushers behind her by the arm to push him backwards into some of the others, bowling them over. "And you thought the best way was to shoot at our engines while we were still near the orbit of your cursed planet?"

"I already said, it wasn't..." Arden's eyes flickered fearfully. "Your friend, where is she?"

Morgan glanced around to where Jessie had been earlier to find she was no longer there, or anywhere in the room. "She's hurt, she couldn't have gone far."

The man she'd grabbed struggled a bit, then piped up, "she seemed fine to me."

Morgan groaned, letting him go as she ran out. Arden shouted at her to stop.

James followed the same path Craig did through the church, on guard long before a whistling cool breeze brushed by and through him. He heard whispering ahead, so hurried to the end of the corridor. When he turned the corner he couldn't believe his eyes.

"Oooh," Jessie squealed, her eyes bugging. She shoved Craig harshly into the wall. "There he is. At least you made this easier."

"Unu," James said.

Craig panicked, he scrambled over to him making all sorts of whimpering sounds. "How, how?" he asked. His face turned red, so he tried to avoid eye contact with either of them. "Oh, I see it now."

James frowned at him, "you thought she was Jessie?" Craig instinctively yelped a no and shook his head. He tried backing off, and away only to be blocked by a warm energy shield like the one around the book.

"My, don't you look..." Unu purred while thinking of the word she wanted, "better. You think he'll mind if I took those before my shmookum devours you?" James or Craig had no clue what she meant until she pointed at her own eyes, then at James.

"Why?" Craig blurted out.

James briefly looked at him in contempt, "look, neither of us have what you want."

"Wrong," Unu sang mischievously.

James shook that off, "and you can't hold us here forever. We..." Craig meanwhile chewed his fingernails to the bone. "I won't make this easy for you."

"Ooph," Unu pretended to sound scared, but her eyes were flirtatious. "You're no pretender, are you handsome? You're right. Maybe I should take you, him for a refresher and grab my soul mate, then live magically ever after."

Craig stopped to look annoyed, "how the hell do you do it? It's not just Iinan that's the witch, right?"

James resisted glaring, or even looking at him for the moment. "There's nothing here for you, this planet's a wasteland."

Unu clicked her tongue as she wagged her finger, "oh, what a bad puppy. Stop trying to get it, you don't. Now sit still while I seek the most beautiful one among you." She pretended to look apologetic, "yes even you, Iinan Junior." She gave the two a wink, then disappeared within a whirl of blue smoke.

Craig gingerly felt in front of him, as he expected there was a shield there as well. He turned to James, catching him eyeing the ceiling. "What?" he wondered.

"No," James sighed, turning his head to fixate on the stony, uneven ground. He gave one of the rocks there a little nudge, dislodging it which flickered the shield. It rolled away to the other side. Craig groaned impatiently.

Morgan ran into the chapel, nearly slamming into a frozen one on the spot Maji. Wiggled at that, she moved around them, spotting Jessie standing at the altar, staring at the book.

"Jess? What are you doing?" Morgan stammered as she ran across.

Jessie meanwhile tried to pick up the book. No shield stopped her, the weight of it shocked her and did the job instead, dropping it back where it was. Doing so opened it a page. She looked around in a daze, eventually focusing on Morgan. "What, Morgan?" She tried to shake off the remaining fog, "I was going to contact James or Craig, then..."

Morgan stepped up to join her, eyeing the book. She glanced back at the frozen aliens. "This must be Iinan's book. These guys messed with it, maybe?"

"Then, where are our people?" Jessie questioned.

Screams, yelling and some phaser shots outside got their full attention. Morgan grabbed the book from the altar. "You think that's...?"

"Iinan," Jessie said with worry.

They hurried outside to find the ground littered with corpses, some rotted like previous victims but some looked eviscerated instead. Morgan yelped and scurried back a few steps, while Jessie looked a little sick and tried to avert her eyes.

The blue mist formed a few feet in front of them, revealing Unu looking displeased with her hands huffily on her hips. "Men these days, so rude! I only asked..." her eyes flickered to Jessie, they brightened up. "Ah ha, so she did come like I thought."

"You did this?" Jessie said, immediately uncomfortable at the strange mirror image.

Unu smiled while stepping over one of the bodies. "This, that, bit of it all. I had hoped my soulmate would have the same connection with Iinan's better half that we do." She pursed her lips, bending over to stare mockingly at her, "you felt he was in trouble, that's all I needed."

Her eyes slipped to the side, landing on Morgan. Her mood switched just as quickly as Kathryn's would when the coffee buzz wore off. "You!"

"Me," Morgan said in a bored tone.

Unu marched over, pointing a finger at her face. "You get your filthy claws of my belongings, you harlot." Morgan took a step back to give her enough room to aim her left fist, even with a conflicting glint in her eye. Still she swung, knocking Unu stumbling backwards. Despite that the witch howled with laughter. "Oh I see, it's like poetry and all. Nothing to worry about then."

"What?" Morgan hissed.

Unu stared directly into her eyes. Morgan and Jessie noticed her near black eyes, the irises glowing in the dark. "No matter, it's just a little..." One hand wave and the book vanished from Morgan, instantly reappearing in Unu's, "non inconvenience."

"Damn it, that's cheating," Morgan grumbled as she ran toward her. Unfazed, Unu created another shield with a mere blink which Morgan struck at full speed. The force of it threw her flying back at twice the strength, slamming into a nearby wall.

"That was cathartic," Unu chuckled, her eyes gleaming further on slow approach toward Jessie. "Now my little beauty, time to give me back what's mine."

The pair heard a lot of commotion approaching, they both glanced over to another building nearby in time to see James and Craig arrive on the scene.

"Jessie?" James said, stalling for a moment.

"No!" Jessie snapped to warn him, then pointed at Morgan's listless body. Craig almost leapt forward to get to her, but he got James' arm to the gut for his trouble.

"Tsk, men huh?" Unu said playfully to Jessie. She began to circle her, staring at her almost intimately. "Underestimating us, always their greatest mistake."

"Enough," Jessie groaned in disgust. "I thought you wanted to regenerate. What's stopping you?"

Unu cackled viciously, "call me hypocritical but we're a player missing." Her gaze darted to one side, "oh, were." Then the awayteam heard what she did, footsteps against stone from above and behind them. They all looked around to see Iinan peering down at them from a balcony, sneering.

"How... oh right, he teleports too," Craig stuttered.

Iinan chuckled darkly. "I have no need or interest for showmanship, boy." He locked eyes on James, he glared back. "I'm sensing a fight. A mere waste of all our time. I'll allow the boy and what's left of these bugs go unharmed, if you two come with us."

"Oh Niny, you know that wouldn't work on you," Unu teased him.

Iinan chuckled, "of course not. Beneath me they are. I feel that's still true. You're worth more than the kid and these vultures."

"What the hell are you droning on about?" James snapped.

"I see," Iinan said with a flinch. He shook his head in disappointment. "I see, no loss then. You give or we take. Those are your choices."

"Fine," James said to his amusement and the others horror, "you can take me."

"James," Jessie hissed in panic.

Iinan and Unu both laughed derisively together. Unu finished hers with a little ooh. "I don't think you understand, my blueness." She gestured to Morgan, "brains over brawn, any day."

"Oh I'm way ahead of you," James said, discreetly snatching the phaser Craig had. Iinan nor Unu still didn't react when they saw it, not until he pointed it at his own forehead, then they widened their eyes.

Jessie did as well, she pushed by Unu to try to get to him. "No, stop doing this!"

Iinan leapt down, landing between James and Jessie, stopping her in her tracks. He quickly grabbed her by the arm. Unu giggled as she transported besides James and grabbed the phaser.

Craig took that opportunity to hurry over to Morgan's side.

"Ooph, you're a tough one. I like a little roughness," Unu said with a twinkle in her eye.

James shuddered, yet kept his grip on the phaser. In the struggle it had felt like he was thwarting off Jessie until her comment, that helped him remind him she wasn't. In that split second he tossed her over his shoulder and got ready to fire again. Only Iinan had already countered by pressing a dagger to Jessie's throat.

"You've forfeited your right to choose," he snarled.

Unu peered up from the ground, gasping as if he insulted her. "Hey, hands off my goods."

"Don't worry, my love," Iinan sneered. "We'll each get our fair share."

Morgan groaned into consciousness. Relieved, Craig tried to help her sit up. "What's happening now?" she tiredly asked.

Craig squeaked back, "bad's happening."

Jessie struggled, the dagger pressed in deeper. Iinan then turned to her, speaking closely into her ear. "If you know what's good for him, you'll do as I say."

The stench of his breath was a horrible reminder that he was nothing but a corpse 24 hours ago. She recoiled from it, but had little room to turn away. "If you know what's good for you, you'll never breathe on me again." Iinan seemed dumbfounded, giving her the chance to stomp hard on his foot.

James took that as a cue to head over. Unu followed and tried to pull him back, it was as useless as keeping Neelix from chucking Leola Root in a pan. She tsked, stomping her foot. Another shield sprang up between James and Jessie.

Morgan was put off from going to their aid as well, what with her being stuck on James' side. Unu giggled like a little girl, passing through it like it wasn't there. Jessie glanced between her and Iinan, blocking her way no matter which way she went.

"He's heavy," Unu said in a childlike voice, "and mean."

Iinan smiled at her, "so we're not that dissimilar after all. Good, the self sacrifice routine was making me feel sick." He roughly took Jessie's arm again, the long nails clawed into her skin. "My soul's been tainted. How retched. I'll need time to recover."

"It's kinda hot," Unu said, cuing Iinan to glare at her, "in a totally change of pace kind of way."

"Enough," Iinan gagged. "Don't think you're free from us. Though I have a feeling you'll be volunteering to see us soon enough." He roughly jerked Jessie closer to him as a point.

James changed the setting on the phaser. Morgan snatched it from him before he could do anything else, then chuckled it over her shoulder.

"Let's go, we may as well get you prepared first," Iinan said directly to Jessie. She grimaced from his breath again.

Unu looked bemused for a moment. "Oh yes, lets. But you know me, I can't leave a scene without a flourish."

"Really? Fine, make it quick," Iinan groaned.

Unu walked around to face her reincarnation, staring into her eyes, transfixed. Jessie looked away in disgust. "Oh, don't flatter myself, silly. I was just going to give you a decent send off before we become one."

"What?" Jessie hissed.

Unu smiled over her shoulder towards the others, clicking her fingers a couple of times. "Got any last words for anyone?" She smirked back at Jessie, "it's a bit sad, I know, but who cares? You're gonna be bone and some leftovers in a few minutes either way."

Craig scoffed with quite a bit of offense, "what's so sad about last..." Iinan gestured at him, he instantly passed out.

"Well now, what if she had to say something to the boy?" Unu scolded.

Morgan rushed to check if Craig was still breathing. To her it looked like he'd only just fallen asleep.

"I doubt it, he's probably already heard it a million times," Iinan said in deadpan.

Jessie shook her head, firmly biting her lip. Unu watched her until her eyes accidentally drifted over to James for a second.

"Fine, don't jump to my strings. I'll just have to play with him instead, and oh, I have some ideas," Unu cackled.

"Morgan," Jessie abruptly said, surprising Morgan into looking up at her. "I'm sorry for snapping at you. You've been a good friend to him, and me. So I hope you keep doing so."

"Jess," Morgan stuttered, guilt bringing a lump to her throat.

When Jessie looked at James directly, he stood at the shield with a hand pressed very near it as if he were touching it. "You don't have to do this," he said.

Jessie smiled at him, "what would you do in my place?" James wavered a little, she saw his head briefly shake. "See. I'm sorry I was too much of an idiot, a coward for avoiding this but er..." she hesitated since everyone conscious was watching. "I've loved you since... forever, as long as I can remember. Please don't do anything rash, for me."

James looked on in shock as Unu laughed like a hyena would, Iinan merely smirked. "Oh perfect, just what I was after," Unu said before she spirited her, Iinan and Jessie away.

The shield vanished as well, making James stumble forward and keep going to where they all were standing before.

Morgan hurried ahead to make sure he didn't go any further. He stared in a daze, clenching his fist over and over. She eyed that, then him, "it's okay, keep calm."

"How? We don't know where they went," James mumbled.

"True but I think you realised the same thing I did with that phaser bit," Morgan said. James barely turned his head to look in her general direction. "They can't do anything without you. Unu said before, one less player. She had the chance to regenerate but didn't."

"Hmm," James didn't sound convinced.

Craig's groans and one last snore diverted Morgan's attention. He sat up in a hurry, "what did I miss?"

The inside of the Maji ship was eerily silent. The first room they entered from the airlock had been the scene of a slaughter, so the trio moved into another, finding only Arden tampering with a computer.

"Where is everyone?" Craig asked very quietly.

Arden dipped his chin and closed his eyes. "Dead, or frozen in time. I should've been with them, but..." he continued working.

"But?" Morgan said.

"I was trying to send a message to my colleagues to warn them. The sand storm is blocking all communications. I'll need to tell them in person," Arden said, getting up. That was when he noticed there were only three of them. "You didn't find her?"

Morgan winced, while James walked away, turning his back on everyone.

"That is strange. Why didn't they take him as well?" Arden asked.

"They couldn't," Morgan replied. "Look, I'd avoid bringing in more fodder. It's up to us four to stop them."

"How? We don't have any of the books, we still have something they want," Arden stuttered.

Morgan scoffed at him, "god, someone's glass is empty."

Craig allowed a discreet smile, "are we so sure we're in a stalemate? Jessie and all."

"Sure," Morgan sounded confident.

"But how? Their spells gave them many edges against even you," Craig felt bad for saying. "Why did they give up when they did?"

Morgan fidgeted slightly, her eyes kept drifting back towards where James paced. "They can't hurt him, we saw that already."

James kicked what looked like a crate, breaking it in to many pieces. "I could've done something, why didn't I?"

"No, you couldn't," Morgan sighed as she walked over to his side. "It's not your fault."

"Right," James said sarcastically, "so they need us both to regenerate, but they gave up and left. Where do they need to go to do it?"

Arden felt like that question was aimed at him. "I'm not sure. Their ritual requires more than a transfer of energy, skin, organs. They'll repair their broken souls, rendering them invincible."

"That's not helpful at all," James snipped back.

Craig looked on a little surprised, "isn't it? They'll expect you to follow Jessie to the grave, and literally. You're too obvious." James stared firmly at him. "They'll be somewhere easy for us to find."

"He's right," Morgan said. "And we can't fall for it."

"Excuse me?" James sounded offended.

The smile Morgan gave him looked more like a warning than anything else. "You go in there and they'll kill both of you. So you're out."

James' eyebrows flickered, his jaw dropped. "You're joking, right? I'm not staying here." Craig shook his head with his nose shrivelled up. "Just being in the vicinity won't kill us, or it would've already. I'm not going to do nothing."

"Oh give it a rest," Craig snapped to Morgan's surprise. "Jessie dies or gets hurt, captured and you get all mad, kill things when it's too late. We know your routine by now. Try a new tune for once and work with us."

Morgan winced as James moved around her to go to face Craig. "I assume you've got a plan then, or are you flapping around thinking anyone cares what you think?"

Craig's lips quivered but he was determined to stand his ground. "At least I'm not some suicidal moron who thinks he's the hero of the hour."

"Oh spare me," James groaned.

"News flash, you're not even close," Craig quickly said to cut him off. "Everything you do makes things worse, so if you really care about Jessie, you'll stay here and wait."

"Craig," Morgan pleaded and yet commanded at the same time.

James' eyes had narrowed, and even though Craig had watched him the whole time, it felt like he had moved in dangerously close. "Don't pretend you know me, or that I haven't heard a variation of that speech before..."

"Maybe take the hint then," Craig snapped.

James' jaw clenched. Morgan quickly stepped in between them before he did anything else.

"You know, you just don't want to admit it. You're only a burden to her. The sooner she sees that the better," Craig said.

Morgan guided him to one side and back, but James followed. She pushed her hand out in front of her to stop him. "This isn't helping Jessie, is it? We're wasting time," she scolded the both of them.

James nodded, "you're right."

Morgan didn't look so sure, she stayed on her guard until he turned his back on them again. Satisfied he was leaving things be, she turned slightly to address Craig. As if he sensed it, James swung back around to back hand Craig to the floor anyway.

"Oh for..." Morgan whined.

"Suddenly my headache's gone," James said, finally walking off.

Arden hung back, wondering if that was the time to interrupt. An *um* slipped out, making Morgan look at him. "If the younger one is correct, Iinan and Unu will have taken their sacrifice and lure to a place you've been, but not in an immediate vicinity."

"Why the latter?" Morgan asked.

"It'd be too obvious as a trap," James replied. Arden nodded.

"Right, so they expect us to barge in, so they can grab James and do the ritual. We can't do that, but..." Morgan said.

"Why not?" James looked on in annoyance. Morgan returned the favour. "They can't hurt me remember, they need me."

"They also know your general whereabouts," Morgan said.

James looked puzzled but still annoyed, "how do you figure? Iinan forced the ship to crash here. Unu was likely buried around here somewhere."

"No. We found the book here. Sure Iinan I'll give you, but Unu had us sussed," Morgan said. "She's been awake, probably as long as he has."

"Oh," James said with a flinch, "so she's the powerhouse of the two."

Morgan smiled as if it were obvious, "she'll also be distracted."

"Um might I interrupt?" Arden stammered. "You have no idea how you'll stop them for good. It's fine to leave Iinan's reincarnation here, but that's a stall at best. What we do need is a weapon we can wield against them."

Confused glances were exchanged, James' was more impatient than Morgan's.

"Not many know this, but it was necessary to protect the book of light," Arden said, hesitantly glancing in James' direction. "I know where it truly is hidden, and it's not here."

"Oh of course," Morgan complained.

Arden inhaled through his teeth, suddenly very nervous. "There's another problem."

Voyager entered orbit of the same planet under tight guard, sporting a couple of phaser burns to its hull, joining other damaged Maji ships in a higher orbit.

"Captain, might I remind you..." Tuvok said. Kathryn said no. Nevertheless he continued, "the Maji will take this move as an aggressive stance. They out number us..."

"They fired first, and second," Kathryn said grumpily, pointing over her shoulder at an unfortunate ensign sporting a bump on his head. Tuvok glanced across, eyeing another crewmember next to him

attempting to fix a circular crack in one of the computers. "They're lucky they haven't killed anyone yet."

Chakotay laughed quietly, catching it in his throat. "They did."

Kathryn rolled her eyes, "anyone I give a crap about."

Meanwhile in one of the Holodecks, or what was left of it, a team of crewmembers were busy cleaning up the mess of charred wires and metal. One swept in a straight line without paying attention, until their brush snagged on something bigger. She glanced down to instantly be horrified at the sight of her brush tangled in a glittering heeled shoe with jagged catsuit edges coated in blood.

"Well she owed us two, I don't see the big deal," Kathryn said absentmindedly.

The Doctor hurried out of the turbolift next to Tuvok. He directed the hologram to the bumpy ensign. He groaned impatiently on his way over.

"Are we picking up our awayteam yet?" Chakotay asked.

Harry worked while pulling a few unsure faces. "I'm picking up human lifesigns."

"And that's bad?" Kathryn snapped.

"Yea...no," Harry cringed. "I've never seen anything like this. The entire planet is covered in storm clouds. It's blocking pretty much everything else. I can't even pinpoint their location, let alone beam them back."

Kathryn quickly got lost in thought. Chakotay watched on, worried. "Hmm, if only we had some way of tracking one of our people. Hmmmmm?" She eyed the Doctor accusingly.

It took him a minute to notice. When he did he scowled across, "I hardly think so. I've severed the connection and she's sleeping off her screaming, panic attacks."

Tom uneasily chuckled, "yeah that was weird. Emma's not easy to scare, but I thought that about Morgan too. I wonder what freaked her out that badly down there."

The Doctor rolled his eyes, "and I'm still uncertain how so few stray nanoprobes created the connection between them in the first place. Morgan does not have a functioning cortical node. I'd rather not."

"She does claim to hear thoughts, so..." Harry suggested. Tom's eyes bugged out fearfully.

Chakotay irritably sighed, "enough, it doesn't matter. Even if we could locate Morgan, the transporters won't work through that storm."

"Um er, I wouldn't recommend sending another shuttle down either," Tom stammered. "Morgan wouldn't read my thoughts, that's so silly."

"Yes it is, we hear your thoughts 24/7," Kathryn sniped.

Harry brightened up. "Oh, you may be onto something." Tom didn't look too impressed with him. "Not that. We might be able to use Emma's connection to Morgan without Emma having to suffer what she is."

The Doctor scoffed in disbelief. "Right. Their connection appears to be purely sensory. Next you'll be telling us you can cure Janeway's coffee addiction by giving her a coffee shop to run." Kathryn's eyes darted side to side.

Harry smiled far too smugly.

Inside the vast underground room decorated with stone artifacts, walled by dozens of ledges leading to higher floors, Jessie had been chained to a slab, while her kidnappers argued in whispers next to the lit torches.

"I could've taken him, easily. Wench made me sick," Iinan said.

Unu smiled coyly, "aaw, you mad he hurt your precious princess?"

"That isn't funny," Iinan grumbled. He strode over to where Jessie lay, leaving Unu to sulk. He leaned over her far too closely, folding his arms across the slab beside her arm. "Tell me something, is he all talk and no fight?"

Jessie turned her head away.

"I see you're as interesting as she is sane," Iinan said, gesturing his head towards Unu. "I hope my impression was off. He came from me, so he can't be so hopelessly naive and *ohno, must save the damsel*." He groaned in disgust. "Though it'll help me greatly. I'd much rather face myself in a showdown than some mongrel lapdog like your lover boy."

Jessie remained still, only clenching her eyes shut, determined not to give him the reaction he wanted.

"I think you'll find my power, confidence and my intellect much more appealing than him, don't you?" Iinan whispered near her ear. His hand crawled across her chin, cupping it, pulling her to face him.

"Oh leave her alone," Unu hissed.

Iinan stared at her with much amusement until he noticed her straight face. "Come now Unu, you know how much I need you."

"Need not want, huh?" Jessie muttered.

Iinan and Unu stared down at her, him furiously. "What?" he barked.

Jessie turned her head away again. "He doesn't care about you. Anyone can see that. Once this is done, he'll leave."

"Oh I see, playing a game are we?" Iinan teased through the anger. Unu meanwhile chewed the inside of her mouth, her head fallen sullenly. "It won't help you. I have no reason to part with her, just as you have no reason to think you're getting out alive."

"No, what was I thinking? You need her," Jessie said overdramatically. "Without her you're a blowhard, no talent wannabe. The only thing you're right about is you and James have nothing in common. You won't beat him, unlike you he has a soul."

Iinan trembled with rage, his hand raised as if to slap her. Unu grabbed his wrist long before it reached her. Instead he used his other hand to fire a blue energy blast at a nearby wall, destroying it.

"Don't let her get under your skin, Inny. That's my job," Unu purred.

"You and everyone," Iinan growled, pulling his arm back to walk away from them.

Craig nursed his swollen cheek with a cool flannel rolled up.

"You got a death wish or something?" Morgan grumbled from the other side of the room.

"Ah ha," Craig laughed, but his cheek hurt, so he winced instead. "So you admit he is a killer?"

"No, but I know you're full of crap and take it out on him," Morgan said.

"Huh?" Craig stammered.

Morgan rolled her eyes, "remember when we first met? You tried to bring him down but instead you made yourself look bad, so you doubled down. You whine that he's not a good friend to you, when you've been the biggest prick since, ever."

"I wouldn't say biggest," Craig mumbled, fidgeting slightly.

"Accept it, he's like me and so it makes sense; the leap into action instinct," Morgan said. "Something I learned from him though is you can't always win like that. He's forgotten, clearly."

Craig nodded lightly to avoid making the pain worse, "yeah."

"And you, you're not like me and so you've got to stop trying to save me," Morgan scolded. "You think you're better, more rational than he is? Prove it."

"I..." Craig stuttered, "I don't get it."

"Yeah I know," Morgan sighed. "Now get up, we gotta go through with our plan."

Craig's eyes darted from side to side, "we have one?"

"Yes, that's why James is in a huff on the top deck," Morgan laughed. "He can't go, he knows it. He goes, she dies. He doesn't go, it betrays who he is. Poor boy's all confused."

"Good," Craig smiled through the painful reminder, "so what's the plan?"

"I don't like it," Craig said.

Morgan and Arden groaned. "Tough, it's better than his idea of destroying the whole town from orbit," Morgan said.

Arden looked more than a little sheepish, even guilty. "I wasn't entirely serious... more or a last resort, yes."

"Yeah yeah," Morgan chuckled.

The ship gently rocked, which relieved Arden for more reasons than one. "We're here," he said while scampering out of the room.

"We can't trust him," Craig whispered.

Morgan clicked her tongue on approach, "speak for yourself."

Arden returned with his arms full of rifles and his hand clenched. Morgan and Craig each got a rifle, then he revealed the small pins in his clenched hand. "They will light the way at a touch. If you need

stealth, which we will, a tap will turn it off. We have no idea how far down we're going, so we must be prepared."

They each attached one of the pins on their chest.

"Lets do this," Morgan said, already running out.

Craig and Arden followed looking less than confident.

On opening the Delta Flyer even in the dead of night, James was hit by a heatwave on opening the door. He had to pull back first and wait a bit before chucking in a few bags. As soon as he walked inside he immediately started to unpack them, one of which contained a rectangular device an arm's length, which he attached to one of the consoles to his right.

While that was clicking away, a cable went into one of the panels. Lights weakly flickered on around the console the device was plugged into. He hurried over, rerouting the system to bring up the sensors. His target was the largest of the stone buildings in the city, only below it. It took a few minutes to map out the narrow corridor of stairs down. Once it got to a floor with many paths, it crashed and he had to start again.

The further down he had to scan, the longer it took.

Morgan snuck a peek at her tricorder right as it beeped. At a much quicker speed, a map of the underground structure started to appear. A few taps brought it down to the third subterranean floor, three dots flickered in the middle of a long corridor. "Nice one, we're mapped. We must hurry. Arden?"

Arden peered over while Craig anxiously fidgeted.

"There appears to be two similarly sized altars here," he pointed at a far away room, then below where they were. The path to it seemed to stop just outside it. "It looks like we're going to have to dig our way through to that one."

"Lets try that first one then," Morgan said.

Deeper down Iinan inched his chin to the left and gazed up. A smile crept onto his face. "We have guests."

"Ooh," Unu laughed, brushing her hair back. "I was right Nany. What do you say?"

"I say we let them suffer a bit," Iinan sneered. His attention turned to the metal book sitting open on top of a stone slab.

Unu pursed her lips and narrowed her eyes. "Alright, I'll let you play this time. Next time though."

"Of course my dear," Iinan sneered. Without looking at it, he turned the pages. Once he stopped he looked down. Its contents made him chuckle. "A little unimaginative, but we got to start somewhere."

A musty damp smell intensified with every step as the team squeezed through a narrow tunnel. Craig ducked his head slightly to avoid scraping it on the ceiling.

The sound of water gushing in the distance brought Morgan's attention back to the tricorder. They weren't very far from their target, she could see the opening in the wall even with the limited light. She picked up the pace to enter a stuffy, damp chamber not much wider than the corridor. Craig was relieved he was able to walk straight again.

Morgan looked around, pointing the light wherever she faced. She assumed the room was a one they hadn't been to until she noticed one of the statues. A groggy memory of its beedy little eyes staring down at her came back to her, even though when she approached it the statue was shorter than her.

"No Iinan," Craig said, bringing her out of her head. He looked around. "No book yet. Is this the right place?"

Arden approached to have a look at the tricorder in Morgan's hand, then he peered slowly around at the numerous statues lined almost uniformly throughout the chamber. "This could be it. An assembly, a memorial to passed monarchs. The white book will be in the murdered king's shrine."

Morgan's skin crawled for a moment. Craig saw her shake it off. "You didn't mention the shrine part."

They all heard the sound of the water streaming getting louder, almost as if it was coming right for them, getting louder by the second. They all braced, thinking the worst until it seemingly passed by them. A sludge of water dropped into Craig's eye, quickly followed by a few more drips.

"Oh god, worst nightmare," Craig squeaked.

The ground beneath their feet trembled fiercely, they could barely stand still let alone walk. Instead they stopped to clutch the walls until it stopped. A few seconds later it did as if nothing happened.

Morgan sighed in relief. She took the first step onward only for the sand in front of her to burst upward. Only when it settled she saw bony, rotting fingers curl out of the new hole and grip the ground.

"What?" Craig stammered. The same thing happened all around them, Morgan jumped out of her skin everytime.

"My worst nightmare," she whimpered.

"He's awoken the dead," Arden said, astonished and disgusted. He raised his weapon at the closest hand which had turned into an arm and head. "They are his servants. Do not hesitate, they are not the people they were."

One of the corpses grabbed Morgan by the ankle. She screamed and kicked wildly in front. Its head went flying down the chamber until it smashed into the wall. The hand still kept a good hold of her.

"No problem," Craig tried to say lightly.

He and Morgan aimed their weapons to try and clear the path ahead of them while Arden focused on behind them. No matter how many they shot down or into pieces, another would quickly take its place.

Morgan ran forward away from the only door, shooting or simply pushing any in her way. Each time she had to touch one, her whole body shuddered in revulsion.

"Where are you going? That's a dead end!" Arden yelled after her.

"No it's not, I remember," Morgan mumbled when she reached the end of the chamber. She started pushing on different parts of the wall. Craig shrugged, and went to follow her, grabbing and pulling Arden with him. They arrived just in time for one push to trigger part of the wall to slide forward, revealing a steep sloped path down. "I came this way."

"When..." Craig started to ask when one of the corpses grabbed his arm. Morgan in turn grabbed his, taking the thing's arm out of the socket and pulling Craig through the new door. The slope being so steep knocked her out of balance, they slid down instead.

Arden readied to fire, until he noticed the door returning to normal. He slid through right before it closed. His foot slipped so he ended up on his backside all the way down.

Despite landing in a crumpled heap at the bottom, Craig laughed it off. "We have to do that again later," he said to a very unimpressed Morgan.

She was about to reply when Arden made his landing on top of him. A smirk spread across her face, "you first."

"Well maybe we should get started, pass the time," Iinan cackled. He turned, spotting Unu sitting on the slab next to Jessie's, talking away to their uninterested prisoner. "Unu, darling."

Unu huffed, "don't you know when you interrupt girl talk, there's a price to pay?"

"Only if you want to rot for eternity," Iinan hissed, eyes hardening. "Stop testing me, woman."

Jessie turned her head to stare across at him, her eyes wide with disbelief. It threw her to hear someone that looked like James to talk to someone he claimed to care about that way. The disbelief turned to anger when she noticed Unu act like she was used to and even enjoying it.

"Someone's forgotten his place, tut tut," Unu playfully scolded him. The next she directed toward Jessie, but kept her eye on Iinan, "how do we put up with these ego monsters?" Iinan ground his teeth. "Help me out, woman to woman. Or rather me to me, why do you love yours?"

Jessie stared up at the ceiling instead, determined to ignore her.

Unu clicked her tongue, hiding her annoyance. "And what about that other girl? Manipulative, boyish little shrew. He's too weak to handle both, hmm?"

"Unu," Iinan coldly said.

"Iinan," Unu mimicked him, then smiled mockingly. "Oh we're so similar, two of a kind. They forget who has the real power."

Iinan marched across to grab her arm and pull her off the slab. She responded by giving him a little static like shock from her fingertips. "See," she giggled. He growled and stomped back over to the book.

Jessie rolled her eyes. "Stop assuming James and I are the same as you two," she grumbled. Her fists clenched, the chains rattled lightly. "And I don't know why you're bringing Morgan into this, so just stop it."

"Ooooh," Unu pretended to sound hurt. "You still don't get it. I am you, it's me that is not you."

Jessie frowned, "what?"

"My soul is inside you, waiting to return home. You... well, you were barely your great grandparents twinkle when I lived. If anyone knows you better, it's me," Unu said, sporting a sly smile.

"Then what are you wasting time for?" Jessie snapped. "If you think James is Iinan as well, and look at that piece of shit..." Iinan's eyes drifted over to her, "then you'll both rot before anything happens."

Unu eyed her lover with sparkling eyes. He smiled back almost smugly.

"He'll come," he said. "My ambition, my power lingered behind to keep me here. Something as strong had to take its place for my reincarnations. I've counted stupidity, nauseating heroism, recklessness. Putting him out of his misery will give him the death he seeks."

His gaze drifted up towards one of the balconies overhead. There he, then Unu saw a figure pointing something at him. He was about to duck or repel with magic when a knife pierced its way through his cheek and to the floor. The figure then disappeared. Unu smiled as she followed the wall to the left, keeping her eyes locked upwards.

Iinan staggered up from the blow to check his face. Jessie could see already and had pulled away in disgust. Skin and muscle had been torn from his cheek, exposing the bone. The edges of the wound looked rotted and dry, with no sign of any blood.

"Perhaps I underestimated him," Iinan said. If anyone was looking at him, they'd see him grinding his jaw.

Jessie meanwhile discreetly shimmied one of her sweating, red raw wrists through the chain until it got stuck part of the way through her hand. "You have no idea," she muttered.

Iinan chuckled, "good, I love a challenge." He grabbed the book to take it to a different podium, all while flicking through the pages for something specific.

Unu reached underneath another balcony. Within a blink of an eye she was standing on it. She turned to peek around the entrance. As she expected James had his back behind the wall, grasping a rifle to his chest.

"Hi sweetness. Fancy a ride?" she purred.

James thought better of confronting her and ran off, only to be flung into and through the same wall, then over the balcony. Unu rematerialised on the ground level, a few inches from where he landed along with the rubble he'd brought with him.

"Good girl, lets get started," Iinan chuckled. He began to read aloud from the page he'd chosen.

"Here," Craig said as he stopped. Their path blocked by moist rocks and moss. He winced while doing another scan.

Morgan checked over her shoulder, then approached the blockade. "Is it?"

Craig noticed Arden stare at him accusingly. He tripled checked his scans, "no, it's dry." He focused on Arden. "What, she's stronger than both of us together."

"No," Arden said bluntly as if Craig stated the obvious. Despite that he had to look twice at Morgan picking up one of the bigger rocks. "Why aren't they following us? I'm starting to worry that they only attacked us to chase us out of the correct room."

Morgan rolled her eyes. "Will you make up your mind?" she hissed over her shoulder. "Why else would they..." her face fell, "oh."

Craig nodded a little too much, "what did I tell you?"

James dodged out of the way of an electric bolt and retreated outside, leaving Unu growling with her hands on her hips.

Iinan noticed and groaned. "Would you stop it. You're not the one doing all the toying around."

"Hmph, you boys can be so cruel," Unu said, puffing her cheeks. Iinan pointed at the book so she reluctantly took his place.

"As usual I'll be the one to do the real work. You read your part," Iinan snarled as he exited.

Outside James clambered up some huge steps, all while readjusting the rifle. A sense of dread hit him from above. He heard them first, the horde of walking corpses straggling down toward him.

"Of course," James muttered as he double backed to take aim. Some were shot down, many were punched into pieces, but they kept coming and surrounded him.

Several ahead of him parted to let Iinan through while four held James back. Iinan sneered, "you took your time, fool. All of you. How hard is it?"

James' struggling inadvertently led him to elbowing one. Its shock at falling in half allowed him to shake off the other corpse on the same side and try to get away. Iinan literally shielded his escape route.

"Unu said you were different. Stating the obvious I suppose," he said on approach. He didn't stop until they were nose to nose, James averted his eyes from the rotten jaw wound. "Foolhardy. I knew that already, all I needed."

"We're not that different," James said.

Iinan's eyes flickered in surprise, "oh? Enlighten me, you seem to be the worst mirror im..." James used his minions hold on him to kick Iinan back with both legs, knocking him and some of his backup to the ground. The recoil from that bowled over the ones still holding onto him, one even lost his arm.

"We both talk way too much." James ran forward, through and around them, only to run right into Unu. So close she could wrap an arm straight around his neck.

"Can't we keep him?" she purred. Her other hand nestled his chin, "I always wanted a pet."

Iinan grumbled while he got up and headed over to them. "No, this is good. He's strong, that's far too useful to ignore."

Unu giggled as she transported James and her back to the chamber to join Jessie. She had been busy trying to pull her hand out of the restraints while no one was around, so froze at their appearance.

The transport had left James feeling disoriented, the room span. Unu took that chance to grab the metal book from the alter and smack him in the face. Jessie winced and tugged on her chains as he went down.

Ian approached with a malicious sneer, "double chain him, just in case."

The rest of the team entered a similar chamber to the last. Inside it housed a small room guarded by a vulture like statue which had Arden all excited. He ran over to open it, failing miserably.

Morgan and Craig caught up with him. "What's the matter?" Craig asked.

"The mechanism's jammed. Hasn't been in opened in thousands of years," Arden mumbled.

Morgan pointed to one side, "let me."

Arden did move but not to let her through. "We're five levels underground. This is already unstable. We must be careful."

Craig smirked briefly. "So no to the bomb?"

Arden stared in quiet dismay, at least at first. "Yes, at least until..."

Morgan meanwhile pushed the stone door, cracking it horizontally in two. It still remained standing in their way to her annoyance. She instead changed to pushing the top half.

"Wait!" Arden panicked, "ok fine, a bomb will do."

Craig blinked rapidly. "Really?"

Arden pointed to the crumbling ceiling above Morgan's head. "Without her, we can't use the book. We all die, agreed?"

"Oh thanks," Morgan grumbled whilst stepping out of the danger zone. She and Craig focused on a small bag he had brought hanging off his shoulder.

With the undead standing in a circular guard formation around the alter, Iinan and Unu stood at the podium with the book, uttering what sounded to Jessie like nonsense.

She watched James on the parallel slab, unmoving with his head turned away from her. She tried to call him awake, while at the same time continuing to fight against the metal cuffs around her wrist.

"To transfer the souls a connection has been made, a one we must unravel," Iinan said, eyeing Unu. She smiled coyly while he moved away towards their sacrifices.

"Untangle, dechain. Be free to rule for all eternity." He stroked the slab Jessie lay on, circling it, leering at her.

Meanwhile on a larger balcony a few stories high a large slab lifted slightly, then gingerly moved to one side. Morgan stuck her head out from the hole it left behind. Her body shook, she cringed in disgust. "Yup this is it. Gimme," she whispered downward.

The rest of her team made some strained, painful grunts while she reached down. With little effort she snatched the item they struggled to lift to her; another large metal book, this one a dirty white stained with sand.

Iinan crouched down, staring at Jessie's face, eyeing her like a piece of meat. The rotten jaw, the dark eyes would've been enough to distinguish him from James. But his aura, the sneering expression, everything about him repulsed her. She turned her head away as far as she could. He in turn grasped her skull and forced her to turn back.

Unu turned her own head away to not watch as he pressed his lips against Jessie's. She struggled with her eyes tightly shut. The dry, rough lips deteriorated as his chin and jaw did, she squealed in horror and disgust.

No one noticed the shifting on the slab beside her.

"Eeew, what the hell?" Morgan whispered with a massive grimace.

Only Arden had climbed out so far, Craig had managed to get stuck halfway. Arden abandoned him to hurry to Morgan's side, crouched behind the wall of the balcony, peering over it. "We must hurry. That was the Kiss of Death. Lets hope that was the first one."

"First?" Morgan recoiled.

Iinan retreated, leaving Jessie coughing, spluttering, unable to breathe properly. He chuckled darkly, "reminds me of our first kiss."

Unu blushed, "oh you." They walked up to one another, passing by to take each other's place. Only Unu went over to James to likely do the same thing to him.

Morgan turned away to grab the item she left on the ground. Arden watched her with some concern. At the same time Craig squeezed out at last, clinking his phaser against one of the rocks. They all winced.

Iinan glanced up in their general direction. His eyes narrowed, the skin left on his face tightened. He directed some of his minions to go.

Unu either didn't hear it, or didn't care to, as she leaned over towards James' face. His arm slipped out of the metal with ease, swiping her to one side away from him. Iinan swirled around, catching him ripping the ankle restraints off.

"Now?" Craig asked. Arden nodded while aiming his own weapon over the edge of the balcony. "Now." They started firing down towards the alter, hitting the minions and blocking Iinan from getting to James. Unfortunately it blocked him from getting to Jessie. He made a little annoyed grunt before targeting the walking dead first.

Jessie managed to slide her bruised, scraped hand out from one of the restraints. Unu noticed her, but was more interested in the balcony. She grabbed the knife Iinan had been struck with earlier and willed herself up there, appearing in front of Morgan. She slammed her foot down on the book to get her full attention.

"Damn," Morgan muttered, grabbing it and rolling to one side to avoid a stabbing. Craig and Arden looked back over their shoulders. Arden continued, but Craig hesitated. "Go, out of here," Morgan snapped mid scrambling to her feet.

Unu took a few swings at her, forcing her to duck. Craig then realised Unu was in the way of their only escape route. "How?" he stuttered.

Arden nudged him, pointing down at a lower balcony a few feet away.

"You kidding?" Craig stammered as the Maji leader started to climb down.

"Cover me," Arden ordered.

Iinan had a similar idea, only he grabbed any minion closest to him to take a phaser blast instead of him, all to get to James. He saw him coming though and turned to *greet* him.

"I'm about done with you," Iinan snarled, his voice distorted from the rot around his mouth. "You..."

James swung a fist at him while he was still talking, destroying more of his face and forcing him to stumble back. Still he sneered. "You are strong. Not strong enough to beat me."

Morgan knocked Unu to the ground. The knife she held flew out of her hands. The teen quickly crouched to pick it up before Unu could recover. When she looked ahead to check on her, the witch was already rising to her feet with skin dripping off the bone.

"Oh... god..." Morgan shuddered and almost gagged at the same time. She backed off.

"Oh?" Unu sounded offended, she cocked her head to the side she was injured. The rotting skin peeling from her, Morgan had to avert her eye while continuing to walk backwards. "Is there a problem, is there something on my face?"

"No," Morgan said in between gulps of sickly breath. "No problem at all."

Unu grinned widely, knowing that her gradually exposing jaw would show that off perfectly and creepily well. "Poor little girl, you're so out of your depth here. What did you think you were going to do, stroll in here, read that... thing," she said eyeballing the light book with disgust, "and kill poor, dead us. We only want to live. What do you have against dead people?"

Morgan laughed to cover her nerves, still avoiding eye contact with her. "Nothing, that's really dumb. You're just, very Jessie lookalike but creepy acting and..." She reached the entrance to the balcony, only to be jumped by another of the corpses. She screamed hysterically as she tossed it over her shoulder, almost into Unu's face who ducked to avoid it. The minion flew over the balcony, crashing into pieces in between Arden and another attacker.

"Cute," Unu mockingly said, tip toeing toward Morgan. Her hand uncurled and stretched out toward her, hinting. "You can't read that. You're too alien, too ordinary, too lecherous."

"Really," Morgan said through slightly gritted teeth, briefly glancing down at the book in her hand. She raised it, holding it by the spine. "Okay fine, read this." Then she swung her hand as if it were empty, delivering a brutal backslap to Unu.

As soon as she was done, Morgan bolted for the entrance and down wherever the corridor lead her.

Another hit knocked Iinan into the empty slab and over it. The snarl he made sounded almost demonic with his rotting throat. With little left on his face, he no longer bared any resemblance to his opponent.

"Play time's over, boy," Iinan snarled, his eyes turned completely black while his hands began to burn.

"James!" Morgan yelled from a different balcony.

James looked up as she threw the knife down towards him. He hoped to catch it and dive out of the way of any attack, but a nasty ball of flame charged right for him, forcing him to only dodge.

Iinan gestured his hand once more, guiding the flame after his victim, chuckling darkly to himself. A presence behind him distracted him for a moment, he groaned irritably. "Unu, where have you been, we need to finish..." he spoke as he turned barely in time to see a fist flying for him.

"Eew, that was weird in so many ways," Jessie cringed while flapping her right hand around.

James waited for the fireball to pass over his head and into the wall before he looked up at her, only to be briefly dazzled by a wave of light emanating from one of the balconies. Iinan screamed agonisingly as it struck him, melting the rest of his skin away.

Arden lowered his weapon and gazed around at the remaining undead soldiers dropping where they stood. "How," he mumbled, turning to where he remembered Craig was.

He gasped and ran towards one of the entrances to the chamber. Before he reached it, Morgan stumbled out from it looking a little woozy. "Morgan? What happened?"

Morgan shook her head but it only made her feel dizzier. "I read the book," she answered, getting Arden's shocked attention. "Must've got the right passage, huh?"

"I don't..." Arden tried to say, only to be drowned out when the ground shook violently beneath their feet.

"What now?" Jessie tiredly complained.

Several hundred metres above their heads Voyager leveled off after a dive, grazing above the tallest building. Its shields fluctuating with a coating of dust resting over the majority of it, stirring up even more from the surface.

"Now?" Kathryn snarled through gritted teeth.

Harry wiped his brow, doing so he noticed something different. His sensors changed from a cloud of fuzz to a clear image of the underground with five lifesigns flashing clearly. "Um, sure? No problem," he stuttered and got to work.

At the other side of the bridge Tuvok saw something similar with the shields. With the smoke billowing from Kathryn, he chose not to say anything.

"They're..." Harry squeaked. He cleared his throat before continuing, "still too deep." Kathryn's shoulders twitched. "But they look like they're coming up, should be fine."

Everything was fine for a calm minute, at least until Tom saw something on his own station. "Hey, the storm's gone."

Tuvok and Harry cringed while Kathryn started to growl.

Sickbay:

"Bridge to the Doctor."

The Doctor groaned, "why is it always when I'm busy?"

"Prepare for incoming possible patients, and an attitude readjustment," Kathryn's voice hissed.

Strangely the Doctor didn't look intimidated one bit. It might have had something to do with the bug eyed, unblinking Annika staring he assumed at him. Little did he know she was actually staring at the other occupied biobed.

"I might have a... clash if I do that," the Doctor said with some impatience. Annika's eyes pointed at him, he felt a little unnerved at that. "Perhaps you should tell the transporter room to do an exchange... to the H deck."

"Oh I see," Annika sniped. "What has the Janeway Brat done to get the royal treatment this time? Saving the galaxy?" her voice sounded smug and bitter at the same time.

"Shhh," the Doctor tried but it was too late, he could hear Kathryn's teeth grinding over the comm.

"Fine. But you and I are overdue a little talk," Kathryn's voice said dangerously.

Voyager lifted up its nose to head back up into the sky. The tall building only a short distance underneath them cracked and started to fall into itself.

By the time Voyager had reached the clouds all that was left of the city was a flattened sea of broken stone.

"Oops," Tom whispered when he realised, his eyes darted side to side.

"Oops?" Chakotay asked, raising an eyebrow.

Tom laughed very nervously, "loops. You know, it's so nice to be flying free, I'm gonna do some loops and..."

"Tom," Kathryn groaned, "if I wanted an overgrown toddler manning the helm, I'd have asked your son to drive. Though he'd probably be more mature. Just take us up in one piece."

"He'd probably be more mature," Tom mimicked her extremely quietly, hoping with his back to her she wouldn't notice.

She didn't, but Chakotay caught some of it so he smiled slyly.

Sickbay:

Kathryn nodded more times than necessary while mumbling, "mmmhmm, yes. That's very nice, I look forward to your reports."

Morgan and Craig were confused, they eyed one another briefly then back at the Captain. "But we've just told you," Morgan said.

"Yes I know," Kathryn said with a friendly smile, "but I like to read horror novels before bed, and I didn't want to be spoiled. Excuse me." She walked off towards Arden waiting by the door, leaving her daughter speechless for once.

Craig chuckled to himself. "She either has the hugest amount of confidence in you so she wasn't worried. Or..."

"What or? I'm grounded for a month, she's never that overly nice. I'd get out before she decides to spank you," Morgan said.

Craig believed her and so hurried out of Sickbay the long, other way.

Morgan sighed as she glanced between her mother and the bemused Arden, then to her biobed neighbour currently engrossed in scratching an already sore-red hand. "So um," she said to stop her, "you're the one who was thinking about Harry's butt?"

"What? He's cute," Emma protested with her innocent smile. It didn't last, she cringed when she looked across at Morgan. "At least I don't kiss random guys, weirdo."

"Er what?" Morgan stuttered, "but you..."

A serious, almost annoyed look appeared on Emma's face as she shuffled off the biobed to her feet. "Nuh uh, don't blame that ick on me. I only wanted to pinch his butt. More importantly I didn't." She shrivelled up her nose in disgust, "Harry's not James."

Morgan could only watch silently at her walking around the two blocking the door, then out. "But," Morgan finally protested when she was gone. She hurried over to Kathryn. "Mum?"

"Oh you probably read my mind, good," Kathryn said with a beaming smile directed at her. "Mr Odour was just blabbing about something or another, a doohickey you took or something."

"The books," Arden muttered. "It's Arden."

Kathryn waved a hand near his face, "yes yes. Go get them and take him to the transporter room." Morgan nodded. "Then I want you straight home, understood."

Morgan sighed, "sure." Kathryn turned on her heel to leave. "Yeah, sorry about her."

"It's fine. I knew she wasn't listening when she said *too bad* to my apology about the damage my people did to her ship," Arden said.

"Really?" Morgan sounded surprised. "I figured she'd be a little pissed about that."

Meanwhile in the still intact Holodeck, Annika paced in her fake hospital room. "Oh got to roll the red carpet for that little snot, who cares about Annika. I'll show them some day. I'll get my own show, or at least a guest spot on someone else's and everyone will be like, ooh look, Seven's back and still as beautiful and useful as ever. That'll teach them."

What she didn't notice during her rambling and pacing was that she was no longer the sole occupant in the room. Her new roommate squeaked, then squealed as she nearly stepped on them again. It decided after the tenth time that it had enough, clawing its way through her boot. That eventually got her to stop.

"Hmm, what's..." she said with her lips curling into uncontrollable giggles, "that tickles." The laughter turned into painful grunts as a massive lump underneath her catsuit crawled up her leg.

Back in Sickbay Morgan shrugged off her confusion. "There's a Security team outside, they'll show you the way. I got something I need to be alone about for a second."

"No problem," Arden said, bowing his head briefly. "And Miss Morgan, many thanks to you. You should be proud of yourself today."

Morgan winced, "yeah, not really."

"Why not?" Arden sounded concerned. "I had my doubts that you'd be able to read the book, but you did."

"Unu knew. She said I was meddlesome," Morgan said uneasily. "Or she just didn't like me."

Arden chuckled, "perhaps you reminded her of someone." The glint in his eye made him look serious, Morgan frowned. "Whether it was told or not, your fate is linked with theirs. Perhaps that is the reason."

"Why, what, huh?" Morgan stammered.

"Never mind now, it's done. Goodbye and good luck," Arden said, turning to leave.

Morgan glanced towards the Doctor working in his lab, then at the two remaining patients. She went into the empty office full of thought.

James walked over to Jessie's biobed just as she climbed off it. She tried to smile at him but ended up staring down at her feet.

"So er, did you mean what you said?" James asked quietly.

"When, or what do you mean?" Jessie pretended to sound confused.

"You know, when you said that you, were in love with me," James replied even quieter than before.

"Oh... that," Jessie whispered, her cheeks started to betray her. "Well er, yeah I think I did," she said to her own annoyance. "Yes."

James leaned down and he kissed her briefly.

"What was that for?" Jessie asked.

"I thought it would be obvious," James said sheepishly.

"No it isn't, this isn't the first time you've done that," Jessie laughed gently.

"Well it's simple, I love you too," James said quietly.

Jessie smiled warmly. "That's the nicest thing you've ever said to me."

She then put her arms around his neck and she kissed him. He kissed her back as he put his arms around her.

THE END