

## Episode 5.03 Outbreak

*Lieutenant Commander Paris' Log Stardate: Season Five, episode three. What, that's it... hmm at this rate we'll be finished in Christmas 2008. Ahem, now that we've left Death Corridor we're on a mission to find the Crazy Horse which flew through before us. According to scans there is no sign that it was destroyed, so we've sent out message beacons to get their attention. The horse is out there.*

### **Voyager's Bridge:**

"Why do I get the feeling we'll have a Worst and Best Logs category in 2006's awards?" Jodie muttered. Everyone glanced in her direction. "And that one will be a nominee for the Worst."

Tom climbed out his chair, he put his hands on his hips and tried to look menacing. Obviously he failed, that might have had something to do with his new messy hairstyle. "What, it's taken over four months just to get to episode three."

"Um, 'the horse is out there'. Enough said," Jodie said.

"Yeah and the stardate, that 'joke' has been done before," Kevin added on.

"Do you really think the writers, or rather writer has any original ideas in the fifth season? That's laughable, they were never original in the first," Tom said.

Jessie shook her head, "well at least they've gotten rid of their random appearances thing." She looked around, "ok there's no wood. Tom, come here."

Tom raised his eyebrow suspiciously, "why?"

"I need to touch wood, and your head's filled with sawdust," Jessie replied.

Tom narrowed his eyes, "don't count on it anyway, Damien's still here. We're doomed to be a cheesy parody series forever, no matter how many serious storylines we get." While Jessie rolled her eyes he quickly tried to fix his hair so she wouldn't notice. "Speaking of which, how's the family?"

Jessie widened her eyes, she slowly glanced over at a very nervous Jodie. She nervously fiddled with her commbadge with one hand, and looked around for a quick escape. "I didn't say anything Jess, your storylines have always been serious so, heh."

"You can tell you only joined in the third season," Jessie muttered. "I recommend avoiding Season One, or you'll eat and choke on your words."

Tom sniggered as he sat down, "ironically she and lover boy became more interesting when their storylines went serious."

Kevin groaned, "ok can we stop talking about the series and get on with the episode?"

"How is that ironic?" Jessie questioned with a raised eyebrow. "Serious doesn't always mean dull."

Jodie sighed in relief, "ok we can stop now. There's a..."

"I don't hear you disagreeing with me. Even Duncan was more mature than you back then," Tom said.

Jessie shook her head, "that was a spell anyway, now shut your face. And now we definitely can stop talking like this."

Jodie cleared her throat, "ahem, Tom there's a..."

"No no, I told you. It's Captain Tom," Tom said.

Jodie raised an eyebrow, "whatever, there's a ship approaching."

"On screen," Tom commanded, standing up. He tugged his uniform's jacket down like Picard and Riker used to do, but accidentally he did it to his trousers. They fell to his knees. "Crap!" He pulled them back up, blushing madly. "I'm so not used to these new uniforms."

"Nice spotty underwear Captain Tom," Jessie laughed.

Tom's face went even redder, his eyes focused on the viewscreen. A fleet of three ships were flying towards them.

"They're hailing," Jodie said.

"Whatever," Tom grumbled, fixing his jacket very carefully this time.

Everyone's eyes widened, cringed or jumped in shock as the viewscreen changed to show inside one of the alien ships.

"That isn't your typical Star Trek human looking alien with the forehead crap," Jodie squeaked.

Tom tried to act as normal as he could as he faced the alien on the screen. The alien was reptilian and looked about seven foot tall. Its three arms rested on the table in front of it, the one attached to its stomach drummed the desk impatiently.

"Um, I'm Captain Tom Paris of the Starship Voyager," Tom said.

The alien hissed, its snake like tongue shot out of its mouth for half a second. It opened its mouth, but all that came out were some strange ticking noises.

"Universal translator," Tom said through his forced smile.

Jodie looked very worried as she worked at her station, "it's working fine. Obviously it doesn't know any Beta Quadrant aliens language."

"What a shock," Kevin muttered sarcastically.

"Actually it is. Everyone in the Delta Quadrant seemed to speak English, with or without one," Jessie commented. "Looks like you're on your own, Captain Tom sir," she said, trying not to laugh.

Tom sighed, "ok I'll improvise." He began to click his tongue in response to the alien. The alien spat its tongue out again, two of its claws slammed down on the desk. It continued clicking.

"Um I think you made it mad," Jessie said.

"Uh oops," Tom stuttered. He clicked his tongue again. The alien swung its left arm at the screen, the viewscreen switched back to space view.

"I think you need to brush up on tongue clicking," Jodie sniggered.

"Great, now they're powering weapons," Jessie groaned.

Tom looked at her nervously, "ok from now on my first officer deals with first contacts."

"Look Tom don't give up just yet, you have a rare talent. You can annoy people in many languages," Kevin said. "Your first officer probably can't do that."

"Shut up, just keep the shields up and get us out of here," Tom grumbled. He sat down in a huff.

Kevin developed a smirk on his face as he turned back to the helm, "aye aye."

The turbolift door nearby Jodie opened, a familiar elderly man stepped out looking too cheerful for his own good. "Ah it's good to see the whole crew back together."

Jessie groaned into her left hand, "ok who else did Paris invite, the Borg Queen, Ligod, the Upendi villains?"

Tom shuddered, "please Jessie, don't remind me."

Wesley glanced around the bridge with a confused expression on his face. "Ligod's still in jail isn't he?"

"What are you doing here Wesley?" Jessie asked.

"Isn't it obvious? Most of the Slayers are here, so I should be too," Wesley cheerfully replied. "It's not as simple as that might I add, Admiral Paris assigned me a task."

"What kind of task?" Tom muttered, looking worried.

"Why don't we discuss this in private," Wesley smiled, gesturing his head toward the Ready Room.

Tom raised an eyebrow, "um ok." He and Wesley exited the bridge while everyone looked on with identical worried looks on their faces.

"So, it looks like you'll be busy for a few days Jess," Jodie commented.

"He better not, James and I have enough to deal with as it is," Jessie said.

Kevin shuddered as he turned his chair around, "it could be my turn. Zare's been screwed with, James I've lost count. Oh maybe Ylara will get it." He sighed in relief, "I always forget about her."

"Um, why on earth did she join a starship?" Jessie asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Tom's dad obviously wants to have a collection of Slayers on the fleet," Jodie shrugged. "Beats me really, while we're on this trip we're back to Voyager's rations system so she ain't going to last long, nothing to worry about."

"Look any Slayer who doesn't have any other skill gets dumped in Security, trust me I know. Why do you think I'm here," Kevin smugly said.

"Because you don't actually have any of the Slayer skills to go with your other non-skills?" Jessie said. She smiled in the same way as him.

"Hey at least I can fly something without crashing it," Kevin muttered, he turned back around.

### **Meanwhile in the Ready Room:**

Tom stood in front of his desk, he rested his hands on it. "New trainees?"

"Admiral Paris feels we need more fighters. He wasn't sure what to expect from the Beta Quadrant," Wesley said.

Tom frowned, "um, try Romulans or Klingons maybe."

"We're not that close to the Alpha Quadrant right now. Death Corridor took us to the other side of the quadrant. We're quite a long way from both spaces," Wesley said.

"Ok so how many members of the crew volunteered for Slayer training?" Tom asked as he turned to go around his desk. His chair seemed to turn around on its own, he of course jumped back a metre or two. Wesley seemed to expect it.

The culprit, a man in his mid thirties, sat back in the chair cleaning a pair of glasses in his hand. "Only two, but we've only asked Security crewmembers."

"Um er..." Tom stuttered, glancing at Wesley. "Who's this?"

"This is Li'Chin, he's one of our promising new watchers. He specializes in the knowledge part of Slayer training," Wesley replied.

"It's nice to meet you," the man said. He placed the glasses on his head, while brushing back his thick black hair that hung in front of his eyes. He stood up then held out his hand, "you must be the Leda Commander Harry Kim, I heard a lot about you."

Tom stared blankly, "this is Voyager."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear you got demoted then," Li'Chin said.

"Actually this is Mr Paris' son," Wesley smirked.

Tom frowned, "demotion? Voyager is a lot better than the cursed Leda, furthermore."

"I must apologise, I must have got the descriptions a little mixed up," Li'Chin said.

"We should get on with business," Wesley said.

"Excellent idea," Li'Chin said in an annoyingly chirpy voice. "I must meet Mr Stuart."

"Um, surely this involves me a little more than just knowing about this," Tom muttered.

"No no, this is a Slayer and watcher issue. Nothing to worry about, we'll take care of it," Li'Chin said.

"Ok but why just James, there's Kevin, Zare and..." Tom said, trailing off in mid thought. "Lara, Yila... whatever her name is."

"It would be an experience to meet all four of them, but first I need to discuss the trainees issue with Stuart," Li'Chin said. He clapped his hands, Tom jumped again. "I'm so excited, it's like going to meet a famous person."

Tom widened his eyes while backing away from the eccentric watcher. Wesley raised an eyebrow, "but he is famous."

"I suppose he is," Li'Chin said.

"No, he's just infamous. People only know about him cos he killed people," Tom muttered.

"It's not just that he's famous for. He's the longest living Chosen on record, the first to have children, possibly the strongest and did I mention the scandal with the other watchers, oh boy," Li'Chin said.

"Actually Lena was the first technically," Tom pointed out.

"Yes but that doesn't count as it was against her will," Li'Chin said.

"And Duncan wasn't against his?" Tom said bewilderedly. "Sure whatever."

"We have work to do, let's go Mr Wesley," Li'Chin said, wandering out.

"Mr Wesley?" Wesley muttered.

"What is the matter with that guy?" Tom whispered.

"Nothing, he's always like this," Wesley replied. He handed him a PADD. "Here are the personnel who are going to the training sessions. This'll have to mesh with their Security training, but that doesn't take long does it?"

"Good students it only takes a week, bad ones, they'll be there forever," Tom replied.

"They won't be, they seemed promising. Can you inform the rest of the crew about this?" Wesley questioned.

"Uh yeah sure," Tom muttered. "Isn't four Slayers, not including James' kids, enough?"

"You can never have enough I say," Wesley replied.

### **Holodeck Two:**

The ten Security trainees were scattered across a basic outdoor obstacle course. James stood out of the way, his arms folded with a bored look on his face.

Near the end of the course Stewart stopped dead in his tracks. He eyed a sloped block which was five feet tall in front of him, with a sigh he ran right at it. James' bored face turned quickly into a smirk as Stewart crashed right into the block.

The girl named Annie jumped at it, held onto it for a dear life then fell to the ground in a crumpled heap. Janet ran at it, she then jumped over it easily. Everyone who was watching looked on with a shocked look on their faces. She just had to run a few more metres and she was finished.

"Janet, did you just win?" James stuttered.

Janet smiled, "I'm not just a pretty face."

James sighed, "if you say so." He continued to watch the rest of his trainees' hopeless efforts to reach the end of the course. Stewart limped his way around the block, although he was obviously first a few moments earlier he finished last. Everyone gathered around in front of James.

The holodeck doors opened for Wesley and Li'Chin, they were busy discussing something too boring to mention. Wesley turned away from Li'Chin, "ah, we're right on time I see."

James shuddered, he slowly looked over his shoulder. "What are you doing here?"

Stewart limped to stand next to him, "he is our new teacher sir."

"You're taking Wesley's 'how to be an annoying ass' class?" James questioned with a raised eyebrow.

Wesley frowned, "it's good to see you again too Mr Stuart."

"Aaaw thanks," Stewart said.

James rolled his eyes, "ok from now on you're called Stew."

"Speaking of, when's lunch?" Stewart's friend asked.

"Not soon enough," James muttered. He turned around to face Wesley and Li'Chin. "Now on the subject of you being here and annoying."

"Ah I'm glad you asked, not in that way though. I'm here to train new Slayer trainees," Wesley replied. "Janet, Stewart how is your Security training going?"

"Great, I won the race and Stewart ran into that block thing," Janet said.

James sighed, "ok it's not the annoying ass class, it must be the 'be a bigger bimbo' class."

Janet pouted, "no, as of yesterday we're Trainee Slayers." She pointed at her cheek, "not just..."

"I heard you the first time," James muttered, shaking his head.

"My my, it's true what they say about Chosens. All have serious attitude problems," Li'Chin said.

James raised an eyebrow, "who's this guy?"

"This is Li'Chin, one of our promising new watchers. He's here to help you train our new trainees," Wesley replied.

Li'Chin held out his left hand, "it's an honour to finally meet you."

"Um, that's nice," James muttered. "Why's that?"

"Why you're legendary on my world. It's like meeting a celebrity," Li'Chin replied. He glanced down at his hand, "I'm sorry, am I doing this wrong?"

"No I just don't do that," James replied. "What do you mean by help me train?"

Wesley smiled, "we should discuss this in private."

### **The Brig:**

Zare stood with her arms folded, tapping her foot impatiently. "So, what are you saying?"

Stood behind a forcefield yet again was an annoyed Damien. "I helped capture Mr Ex-Tolg, he attacked that guy. Plus Admiral what's his name let me join the crew, this is discrimination."

"I don't think the Discrimination Act mentions mad rabbit obsessed moronic criminals," Zare muttered.

"Actually it does mention that employers cannot discriminate against ex-cons," Damien smiled smugly.

"When were you ever a con?" Zare questioned. "You were never punished so it doesn't count. Wait another fifty or so years, then you can complain."

"Of course I was punished. Hello I possessed Justin Timberlake, two women, plus I've had to put up with you lot beating me all the time," Damien grumbled.

Zare sighed, "oh I'm sorry, next time we'll let you attempt to kill people, take over the ship and or Federation."

Damien groaned, "it's no fun if you just let me."

Zare rolled her eyes, "look you're in here cos of the Chakotay thing, that's all. We'll figure out a more suitable punishment afterwards."

"What? I never beat him up, Ylara did," Damien grumbled.

"Let's see, punishment," Zare mumbled to herself. "Who do you hate the most out of us?"

Damien looked like he just developed a headache, "ok this is going to take a while. I need to list everyone, then order them by stuff they've done, how they talked to me, the insults. Why do you ask?"

Zare sighed, "no reason, none at all. You just think about it."

The door opened for Craig, he stopped next to Zare. "Well?"

"I'd get more information out of a stone wall," Zare muttered.

"You would if it was graffitied," Damien commented.

"Ok relevant information," Zare groaned.

"Look I told you. He attacked us, Ylara beat him up and we locked him up. End of story," Damien said.

"Why did he attack you though?" Craig asked. He pulled a face as everyone stared blankly at him. "I can't believe I just said that to Damien."

Damien smiled slyly, "oh you don't know, do you? Admiral Paris has been very secretive lately so it's not really a shock."

"What do you mean by that?" Craig asked.

"It's funny when you think about it. I know more than everyone on board, and I'm the bad guy," Damien muttered to himself.

Craig rolled his eyes, "ok, remove the oxygen from his cell."

The brig guy and Zare stared at him with wide eyes. "Did you swap bodies again?" Zare asked carefully.

"What?" Craig looked confused. He glanced at the brig guy, then back at Damien who was still smirking. "Ok too harsh, whatever."

"Let me handle it angst boy," Zare muttered. She stepped closer to the forcefield, "now talk or..."

"Is it true you used to date him? I heard Slayers were desperate, but wow," Damien sniggered.

"You heard the Chief brig guy," Zare grumbled.

The brig guy pouted, "my name is Charles."

"I don't really care," Zare said.

Charles sniffled, "ok, but Craig's not in charge of Security on this ship, only Leda. Stuart technically controls both while the fleet's together."

Craig turned to look at him, "what? I only get to boss you guys around when Voyager nicks off on its own or his majesty goes on a mission?"

Damien burst out laughing, "oh it's like having clowns as entertainment, oh wait, like?"

Charles nodded, "yes it's true sir."

"He doesn't outrank me though," Craig grumbled.

Zare shrugged, "first officers outrank everyone but the 'captains'."

"This is just getting better and better by the hour," Craig mumbled. He glanced at Damien, he was busy rolling around on the floor laughing. "Stop that, you're the only clown here."

Damien jumped to his feet quickly, startling Charles. He dried the tears from his eyes, "ok so where were we?"

Zare turned back to him, "what do you know that we don't? Oh and if there's any smugness, sarcasm or attempted drama you won't have any need for the oxygen in there."

Damien sighed, "all right fine, maybe then you'll show me some respect." Zare and Craig stared blankly at him. "Ok Admiral what's his face made sure I was apart of the crew so I could find the intruder."

"That's it?" Craig muttered.

"Yes actually," Damien sniggered. "I didn't even know who the intruder was at the time."

"That doesn't explain why Chakotay attacked you, not fully," Zare said.

"No you're right, it doesn't," Damien said. "You see, you're interrogating the wrong guy. Chuckles has been a bad boy."

"Yeah we got that when he scarpered from an important battle last year," Craig rolled his eyes.

"Oh but you haven't heard the best part," Damien said with a smirk planted on his face. "Check the communications he made before the first battle with 8472, and the transporter logs during it. Once you've done that, come back to me."

"What's that got to do with..." Craig grumbled.

Zare elbowed him in the arm. "Ok you can't seriously be telling me that he was contacting you."

"And Charred-Hair gets a point," Damien said.

Zare narrowed her eyes while Charles behind her giggled, "that rhymes, cool." She flashed him a cold stare, making him cower.

"Why would he do that?" Craig asked.

"Ah ah," Damien said while waving his finger. "After you've found the suspicious communications and transporting."

Zare rolled her eyes, "we may as well. If we don't check and he's lying."

"Fine," Craig groaned. "Can you at least tell us why you were talking to him back?"

Damien glanced down at himself, "why do you think Anderson?"

Zare frowned, she glanced at Craig, "what does he mean by that?" Craig beckoned his head toward the door, then he stepped out. Zare soon followed him.

### **The Security Office:**

James marched in with Wesley and Li'Chin right behind him. "No, no way."

"Why not, you already train Security newbies," Wesley questioned.

"That's different. They only need basic training for a week or something. Slayer training takes a lot longer," James grumbled. He turned around to find Li'Chin right in his face. "What are you doing!?"

Li'Chin eyed him up and down twice, "five ten?"

"What?" James snapped, backing away.

"Height, you're five ten aren't you?" Li'Chin asked.

"I don't really check, what's it to you?" James muttered.

"Uh huh," Li'Chin mumbled. He took out a tape measure. Ignoring the angry look on James' face he extended the tape to about a metre long. He dug an alien scanner out of his pocket with his spare hand.

"What is he doing?" James asked.

"Oh he does that to all Slayers he meets," Wesley replied. "He likes to keep stats, it helps him decide what kind of attacks are suited for each one. It's a very efficient new way of training."

"What does my height have to do with anything, you've seen Zare right," James said. He glanced back at Li'Chin, but he was now kneeling on the ground. He placed his foot on the tab at the end of the tape, then stood back up.

"Hold still," he mumbled.

James stared blankly at him, he grabbed a hold of the tape and snapped it on the four foot mark.

"Oh," Li'Chin moaned. "You broke it, this way I'll only be able to measure a certain distance."

"That was the whole point," James said. "Now getting back to Janet and Stewart."

Wesley smiled, "we are already aware of your schedule and it's easy to adapt to the trainee sessions. Stewart and Janet can be Security trained at the same time as their Slayer training, I'm sure your other Chief of Security can train the other Security members."

"No why, it's your job, not mine," James said.

"Yes but you never got any training from a watcher and..." Wesley replied.

"And you know how well that turned out," James muttered.

"I know, but you're good at your job and no Chosen has lived as long as you. Not that we know about. Zare is our longest lasting Natural, and well you know Naturals tend to live longer than Chosens. Before you two the oldest Slayer was twenty two. We can't really count Kevin and Sandi as they're younger than you, well now anyway," Wesley said.

"They were presumed dead when Sandi was twenty one and Kevin nineteen back in 2173," Li'Chin added on.

Wesley nodded, "the only reason they survived as long as they did was because they spent five years in the safety of Game hopping."

"Ok, Sandi might be just good at her job and protected Kevin," James said.

"You explain how they ended up in the twenty fourth century, they must have been in non stop games. Sandi was always an average fighter, and well Kevin wastes his potential," Li'Chin said. "He maybe twenty seven, but that doesn't mean he's any good. He survived five years under his sister's protection."

"The point is we've never had any Slayer train his or her self, or got to their thirties. We only heard stories about Chosen telepathy, telekinesis." Wesley said.

Li'Chin nodded his head, "indeed, you are very impressive to have gotten to that level. Unlike Kevin you have earned it."

"I doubt turning evil and killing people qualifies as earning anything," James said. "Anyway I'm hardly the first, Lena got it early and you said there were stories."

"Our computer records only go back so far, and our paper records have been damaged or lost over the years. An old record mentioned one man getting to his fifties, but was killed by a vampire. We've come

to the conclusion that it was false as the Masters had only just escaped the game that created them," Li'Chin said.

"Well they probably killed him. Explain how you guys supposedly knew about Chosen's thirtieth birthday presents, so to speak," James said.

"I really doubt that he lived that long, Chosens have harder lives as more things want them destroyed. Naturals have it easier, a lot of creatures consider them too weak but a Chosen. Oh boy, you have to be good to last this long, Kevin's just lucky," Li'Chin said.

James frowned, "ok I know I don't like the guy, but that's a bit harsh."

"It's true though. He spent most of his time womanising, records show that Sandi was the fighter," Wesley said.

"Uh huh, I still don't see why I have to train these guys," James said.

"You taught yourself to survive, you can teach them and Li'Chin will teach them about what they have to face," Wesley said. "You see you turned evil as you didn't know anything about your abilities at first, or the things you had to face. Combine the knowledge with the skills you taught yourself."

"I thought Trainees can't turn evil," James muttered.

Wesley glanced at Li'Chin briefly, "they can't, but they still need to learn about Games and the creatures that they created."

"Ok if I'm so different why are you not bothering Zare, she's my age," James questioned.

"I did say Naturals live longer as they have less after them, less responsibilities and they don't get the premonitions that you do. They also have to rely on less power than a Chosen, learning to fight is more a priority. A lot of the times Chosens just need their strength to win," Li'Chin replied.

"That explains Kevin," James said to himself.

"You do understand why we chose you now, don't you?" Wesley questioned.

"No, I understand it less. Naturals learn more skills to make up for what I have and they don't. That means Zare's the best one for the job. It's easier for her too, I could just change her shifts so she teaches instead for half a day. I can't work overtime either, she can," James said.

Li'Chin frowned, "why not?"

"Um in case you've forgotten, I have three children," James replied.

Wesley smiled like he had won the argument, "exactly, two of them will need the best training in order for them to survive like you. You will want the best for them, won't you?"

"Your point?" James questioned.

"If you help train these people you will learn from any mistakes you make here and now. This'll make it easier to train them in the future," Li'Chin replied.

Wesley shot a glare at him, "do you mind?"

Li'Chin raised his shoulders meekly, "sorry."

"You won't have to work overtime that often at all. Training will be mostly holodeck simulated, real life training won't be for a couple of months," Wesley said. "All you need to do is leave the remaining eight to Mr Anderson on the Leda, and train at least two Slayer Trainees in one afternoon a day, you can have weekends off if you want."

James raised an eyebrow, "yeah thanks, I already do have those off."

"I thought the Chiefs are supposed to work seven days a week," Wesley frowned.

"Craig does that, I don't," James said.

Wesley folded his arms, "ok then, will you do it?"

"You're giving me a choice, how nice," James sarcastically muttered. "Yeah I will but I'm allowed to change my mind whenever."

"Understood," Wesley smiled.

Li'Chin also smiled, "I'm looking forward to working with you."

"I thought you trained them separately," James said.

Li'Chin's face dropped, "oh yes, but we will have to meet up now and again to discuss progress."

"Great," James sighed.

### **The Nursery:**

All of the kids had scattered around the room, most playing with toys and two of them were drawing on scrap paper. The teachers stood in separate spots to keep an eye on them all.

One of them headed over to Scott, she knelt down beside him. "Oh, that's a nice drawing," she said, eyeing the paper in front of him. He looked at her with pen ink and crayon marks all over his face, clothes and arms. Her eyes widened, "oh my."

He just laughed, then continued with his masterpiece. She watched as he pressed his hands on the paper, which still had damp ink on it. "Grace, we need to get rid of the pens, look at this." she called to the nearest teacher. She rushed over.

"Oops, that's not good," Grace gasped.

Scott giggled, showing off his multicoloured hands. "Do you have any paint?"

Both women glanced at each other with fear in their eyes. "Oh god no."

Johnathan walked up to them, then tugged on Grace's leg. "Miss Gracie, someone's escaping."

"Huh, escaping?" Grace muttered. Johnathan pointed toward the doorway, she followed his finger. Sure enough Amy was crawling toward the door.

"Uhoh." She jumped back to her feet and ran over toward the door. She knelt down in front of it with her arms outstretched, "no no sweetie, you can't leave yet."

Amy sat instead with a pout on her face, "why?"

"You have to wait for mummy or daddy to pick you up," Grace replied.

"When's daddy coming back?" Amy asked.

"He's only been gone an hour, he won't be back for a few more hours," Grace replied. "You're here to have fun rem..."

Amy started crying. "I want daddy," she cried while rubbing her left eye.

"Daddy works, here you can play and make friends. Don't you want to do that?" Grace said, glancing at her fellow teachers for help. Each of them were busy with other kids.

"No, daddy always plays with me and Sasha," Amy pouted.

"Ok, what do you play?" Grace asked.

"Hide and seek, and play games on computer, and treasure hunt, he hides sweets and stuff, we go find them," Amy replied.

"You can play hide and seek with the other kids, or play on the computer," Grace said. "The treasure hunt sounds like a good idea for the whole group actually."

"But wanna go home," Amy cried. All Grace could do was sigh.

### **The Security Office:**

Craig and Zare walked through the door to find the office empty. Craig headed straight for the computer on the desk.

"Why would he want his old original body back?" Zare questioned.

Craig activated the computer, he leaned on the desk with both hands on either side of the computer. "The real question is how did he get it back. He died back in 76, after that he had the capability to transfer his soul to another body."

"Again I ask why, he was technically invincible like that," Zare muttered.

"First let's figure out how, and then maybe we'll find out how Chakotay's involved," Craig said.

Zare raised an eyebrow, "what even makes you think he's telling the truth about that?"

"Zare I've known that guy for a long time, you can usually tell when he's lying or not," Craig replied. He glanced over his shoulder, "Chakotay attacked him specifically for a reason, Damien could have easily betrayed him." He turned back, "plus he looks like he's escaped from the Tolg."

"Are you sure about that?" Zare said. "If he was dead, those scanners to get on Voyager would have picked him up immediately. I'd say that's Borg or another race messing with technology they shouldn't be."

Craig sighed, he pressed one of the bigger keys on the computer. Chakotay's voice came over the speaker, "well, have you found one?"

Damien's last host's voice soon took over, "I have. When should we do this?"

"Be patient, I can't just leave un noticed, you'll have to wait until the timing is right," Chakotay's voice snapped.

"Fine, contact me when you have something to tell me," Damien's voice groaned.

Craig looked back at Zare, she stared at nothing in particular in disbelief. "He was right."

"Why do I have a really bad feeling about this?" Zare muttered. "And I mean a really bad one."

"Because I got it too," Craig said. He turned back to the computer, "there's at least three more. The transporter logs does show that somebody on the bridge transported one person off the Pegasus before it was destroyed."

Zare shook her head, she headed over to the sofa that sat in front of the wide viewport. "I don't get it though."

Craig keyed in a few more commands. Damien's voice again started to come from the computer, "you just don't get it do you?"

"Ok thanks, that was creepy," Zare said as she turned around.

Craig shrugged, "sorry."

"You need me, there's no way you'll get anywhere without me," Damien's voice said.

Chakotay's voice sighed, "and why is that?"

"Because they'll just assimilate you both, or whatever they call it if you go aboard. With me there, we can negotiate," Damien's voice replied.

The computer started to beep violently, Craig glanced at it with a frown. "Computer, continue playback."

The computer responded, "unable to comply, the transmission is encrypted."

"I know, I just decrypted it," Craig muttered. He continued working on the computer.

Zare sighed, "typical, we were getting somewhere too."

Craig shook his head as he shoved the computer away from him. He turned back to face her, "it's enough. We can put together everything, I'm sure we'll figure it out."

Zare folded her arms, "ok Chakotay working with Damien, Chakotay a year later tries to kill Damien."

"Damien only just arrived in the missing shuttlecraft from Voyager last week," Craig said.

"Your theory about the Tolg is close, they must have went aboard a Borg ship. Obviously it couldn't have been the Resistance," Zare said.

Craig shook his head, "no, why would they? The Borg wouldn't negotiate, Damien knows a lot about other dimensions, they wouldn't hesitate. It was the Tolg I know it."

"That technology could be either, why are you so sure?" Zare questioned.

"How else do you explain Damien's body being in ok shape and in use after five years?" Craig replied. "We have a good idea what the negotiating was about."

"Um no we don't. Why would Chakotay help Damien get his own body back, like the Borg they'd just assimilate them," Zare said.

Craig shrugged, "Damien would have arrived there with his host's body, obviously. They would have exchanged that for his old body."

"They still wouldn't like the idea of not really profiting from it," Zare said. "I doubt Damien learned more in those five years that would be of any use. Though if it is the Tolg, that does explain how they seem to move from dimensions so often."

Craig turned a few shades paler, "they'd probably want something else to square the deal. Chakotay must have wanted something off them, or he wouldn't have went. Damien seemed to take advantage of it, that conversation we just heard proves that."

"Are you ok, you look a little white?" Zare asked.

"Think about it Zar, Chakotay's been acting weird since you know who died," Craig replied.

"Captain Janeway," Zare said. She glanced behind her nervously, "or am I just close?"

"No you got it," Craig muttered. "The Tolg wouldn't be of any use regarding Lena."

Zare stared at him, "you don't think that he..."

Craig nodded slowly, "there's only one way to find out for sure."

### **Conference Room:**

Most of the joint senior staff had sat around the new table which had computer panels in front of a few chairs.

Tom swiveled on his new big black leather chair, grasping the arms tightly. "Um is everyone else's chairs a bit wobbly, or is it just mine?"

"I dunno, try leaning back on it," Harry replied.

Tom nodded, he began to lean back but thought better of it. "Ok, what have you done to it?"

Harry smirked at him, "nothing, I've only just beamed onboard you know."

"Ok fine fine," Tom muttered. He folded his arms on the desk, "now we're all here about the Crazy Horse search and retrieve mission. Anyone have anything to report?"

Faye sighed, "unfortunately I do."

"Don't tell me, it's bad or you're just not any good at talking to a group?" Tom questioned with a raised eyebrow.

Faye glanced around at the few senior staff members, "actually it's a bit of both."

"Hang on, why is my chief opps person not considered a senior staff member and yours is?" Tom grumbled.

"Well obviously you only need one," Harry replied.

"And Faye won, oh boy," Tom groaned into his hand.

James pulled a confused face, "if that's the rules, how come you two are here?"

Tom and Harry glanced at each other. Tom shrugged, "Harry's a first officer to me technically. I'm kind of the fleet commander, he's in charge of the Leda but in these situations I'm the boss."

Jessie groaned, "this is going to be a long season."

"Yeah. Does this mean I can go?" James questioned.

"No, Craig didn't bother to turn up," Tom replied. "Also you're third in line for the fleet, so that means you're senior staff. Or second in line for Voyager."

"Can we just get on with it please? I've left Annika in charge of Engineering," B'Elanna muttered.

"What, why?" Tom asked with his eyes widening in fear.

"Just to freak you out," B'Elanna replied. "I didn't really, I'm just getting tired of this."

"All right sorry, Faye," Tom said.

"Um right," Faye mumbled. "I know the reason why those aliens tried to make contact with us, and attacked too."

"Because Tom brassed them off," Jessie said.

Tom rolled his eyes. "Ok then partly I know then," Faye muttered.

"What's this got to do with the Crazy Horse?" Tom asked.

"I'll show you," Faye replied. She climbed out of her chair and made her way over to the wall panel. She keyed in a few commands, a star chart of the area appeared on the screen. "This is the alien's territory," she said, pointing a finger at the red line that appeared in the middle of the chart. Her finger moved to the commbadge standing next to it. "There's our ship."

"They wandered right into their territory," Tom muttered. "Great, we should try hailing them."

"We already have, there was no getting through. Instead we got a lot of tongue clicking and smashing sounds," Harry said.

Tom frowned, "all right, but what about the ship itself. What can you tell me? Is it damaged or what?"

"The alien's territory is surrounded by a barrier shield, it's preventing any other scans. That's probably why our transmission got sent to the alien ship instead," Faye replied.

"I guess the only way through is to chat with the aliens again," Jessie said.

Tom shook his head, "we need to figure out how to speak and understand their language first. How are we in the translation department?"

"It is similar to a language we encountered in the Delta, we got a vague translation of that," Jessie replied. "I think the guy's first words were something like 'what are you?'"

"Yeah I've always wondered that too," James muttered.

Tom narrowed his eyes, "I doubt he was talking to me. It probably was 'who are you', god."

"Guys let's focus here. The Crazy Horse crew need our help, we can't negotiate with a race we don't understand the language of and we haven't got the time," Harry said.

"What are we focusing on?" Faye asked.

Harry sighed, "a plan, we need a plan."

"Well why didn't you just say so?" Faye muttered.

"We need a new joint senior staff system for both ships," Tom mumbled.

Harry shrugged, "at least you don't have her in your Voyager only meetings."

"True. Has anyone got any ideas?" Tom asked.

Everyone glanced at their neighbours a few times before glancing back at him.

"I say go back, tell them what we want and for once let them do the translating," James said.

Tom frowned, "seriously, was my dad stoned when he decided this crew's manifest?" James narrowed his eyes, he quickly moved his chair further away. "I was talking about Damien, totally off topic."

"Yeah sure," he muttered.

"Damien yes, he can be a distraction. We can send off his body in an escape pod, the aliens can follow that while we sneak in," Kevin said with a smirk on his face. Everyone stared blankly at him. "You never said the ideas should be serious, did you?"

"Serious ones would be helpful," Harry said, rolling his eyes.

"Well I think James is right, if we can't translate then we should leave them to it. It's their territory after all," B'Elanna said.

Jessie pouted, "but we can, remember 'what are you'?"

"We couldn't really respond back, could we?" James said. "Damn."

"What?" Harry questioned.

"Whoever does the translating, it doesn't matter. The other side won't be able to respond, so either way it's pointless," James said.

Tom sighed, "it was your plan, it must be bad if you're faulting it."

"I wasn't entirely serious about it," James said.

Tom rolled his eyes, "typical."

"We should go back though, we might be able to translate a little easier if we heard more from them. They might want to do the same thing with us, that's if Tom doesn't attempt to speak their language again," Jessie said.

"All right, good idea. While we're there we should try and get another scan of the Horse," Tom said.

Faye groaned, "barrier shield."

"Yes I remember," Tom snapped. He groaned into his hand, "sorry. I just figured we could scan that, maybe we can penetrate it."

"So we're decided then, one ship scan while the other talks," Harry said. Everyone frowned at him. "Well you know, if Voyager did both then the aliens might notice somebody doing the scans."

Tom nodded his head, "true. Who's doing what?"

"I'd say Voyager should do the talking but Tom annoyed them last time," B'Elanna replied with a smirk. "Leda talking, Voyager scan."

Tom pouted, "fine. Dismissed, unless anyone else wants a go at making fun of me." Everyone remained in their seats, staring directly at him. "Ok everyone who wants to insult me dismissed." Groans or sighs filled the room as the senior staff all got to their feet and headed out.

Harry stopped by the doorway, "you forgot something, Tom."

"What's that?" Tom questioned.

"You know, our brig occupants for one thing," Harry replied.

Tom sighed into his left hand, "there's plenty of time for that, things get confusing when you mix more than one problem together."

Harry nodded, "that's true, next meeting maybe then." He stepped out.

**Brig:**

"What do you mean you let him go!" Craig exclaimed.

Charles stepped back nervously, "Mr Paris told me to sir."

"Must run in the family," Zare muttered.

"But we were in the middle of an investigation," Craig groaned. "Did he say why?"

"Something about B'Elanna wanting to get him acquainted with something. Probably Engineering duties," Charles replied.

**Engineering:**

B'Elanna leaned on one of the stations while Damien stood nearby. "Ok and then you remodulate the..."

"Um, you've got me in charge of a console that does nothing," Damien muttered.

"Until you can prove to be trusted, it'll remain that way," B'Elanna said.

"It's secretly linked to something, isn't it. You wouldn't have this station here otherwise," Damien said with a smirk.

B'Elanna rolled her eyes, "no, it used to do something until it blew up. This is a training station now." Damien's smirk soon faded. She turned around, intentionally elbowing him in the ribs in the process. "Oh I'm sorry, didn't realise you were that close." She walked away.

He clutched his stomach as he stared after her, "this is what I'm reduced to, great."

**Brig:**

"She's probably getting him acquainted with her fist instead," Craig said.

Zare sighed, "this is not fair. I wanted to assign him to a job where he has to put up with the person he hates the most."

"Don't, that person will probably be the person who deserves his company the least," Craig said.

"True," Zare shrugged. "So what do we do now?"

"I don't know. I don't want to talk to Chakotay right now. I didn't before, now it's just..." Craig said.

"Yeah I know," Zare said. "Though we don't know that's what he did."

"If he did, I can't wait to tell James about it," Craig said with a smile.

Zare frowned, "um why? Surely he would..."

"What, you serious?" Craig stuttered. "You really don't know him well. Giving his mother to the Tolg just to bring her back to life, when there's no chance really of retrieving her again. Yeah I'm sure he'll be really grateful and take Chakotay out for a drink or two."

"I get that, that's why I asked," Zare said.

Charles widened his eyes, "wha... that's some theory." The two ignored him.

"Oh, simple. If Chakotay wasn't being so selfish about what happened, there would have been one less reason for Lena to..." Craig said, trailing off. He glanced away with a sigh. "I know it won't do anything for her, but it'll make me feel better if he's beaten, even just a punch would do."

"Then do it yourself," Zare said. "You're being selfish by wanting to tell James, how do you think he's gonna feel when he hears this."

"Weren't you listening to me?" Craig snapped. Zare narrowed her eyes so he quickly backed down. "One less reason, maybe two and Lena would have fought back against Ylara. Chakotay avoided her and changed dramatically, James didn't tell her and wasn't exactly the comforting type."

"I was at the funeral, he was," Zare grumbled. "He lost his mother too, of course he wouldn't be in the right frame of mind to tell her right away."

"Oh here we go, the old crush kicking in again Zare?" Craig shook his head.

Zare's narrowed eyes turned into a full glare, this time he didn't really back down. "No, I'm just defending him because it's necessary. You're the youngest sibling, I was the eldest, like James. Being the oldest doesn't mean that you're immune to this stuff. Believe me I know."

"He contributed to it, I know," Craig said.

"How exactly, he was with her when it happened. Only he would have known. Ylara's not one for sharing, she'll never tell you," Zare said. "Stop blaming everyone Craig, in a way it wasn't anyone's fault. Ylara's an innocent victim, like I was when I lost my little brother."

"It was me too," Craig mumbled quietly.

Zare frowned, "what?"

"Ylara does share sometimes. Chakotay was a big help, that's a certainty. Obviously Kiara leaving did it too," Craig muttered, still a little too quiet. He walked away from her. "Ylara told me, Lena was tired of me and that's no surprise. I was like a stalker, she was seeing someone and I still tried to get her back. Lena's a good person, or rather she was, but..."

Zare stepped closer, "but what?"

"Before she left, we ended up kissing. That was my fault, I started it," Craig muttered.

"Oh," Zare said.

"Yeah, I pushed her into cheating on him. I think I was the worst one," Craig said.

Zare shook her head, "they only seemed to be close friends, I doubt that. I just think the whole trauma of losing her daughter and her mother was too much, I bet it had nothing to do with you."

Craig turned back around to face her, "no, we all did it. Chakotay went on Damien's side, Ylara you know what she did, James had his kids and partner to help him get over their mother, she didn't have that or him for that matter. She also felt like a cheater and I know that would have hurt her a lot. We all killed her, and that was before Ylara. She used to be so bubbly, full of life."

Zare opened her mouth to speak but the sound of Charles sobbing behind her stopped her, she glanced back. "It's so sad," he cried.

"Look Zar, the only kind of relief I'll ever have is knowing Chakotay will be in Sickbay with serious injuries. Call me selfish all you want, but it will be nice to see James look like he gives a damn after all, if you know what I mean. He recovered way too quickly for my taste, and that annoys me more than you can imagine," Craig mumbled. "I'm going to find out from Damien, and he's going to get told either way."

"You don't know if he did recover at all, both for Janeway and Lena," Zare muttered.

Craig shrugged his shoulders, "oh I know. You should get back to the Leda." He stepped out.

Zare sighed, she glanced over at Charles. "Oh come on, you didn't even know her."

**The Security Office:**

Jessie sat down in the chair behind the desk while James paced in front of it, he stopped by the window. "Well look on the bright side, you have less people to put up with," she said.

"For now anyway, they're hoping to recruit more," James sighed. "It's more work to do and possible overtime even if they don't. But this will prepare me for Duncan and Amy's training."

"I guess so," Jessie said. "Wait, overtime?"

"You know real patrols or missions, but that won't be for a while," James replied.

Jessie raised an eyebrow, "good. Which two out of your Security group has to train with you, instead of Craig?"

"Janet and Stewart," James replied.

"Great, two people who have hit on you," Jessie grumbled.

"Well actually only Janet did, Stewart just took advantage of a handshake," James meekly said.

"Is that why you don't like them?" Jessie asked.

"I'm that predictable, huh?" James muttered as he sat down on the desk.

Jessie smiled, leaning back in the chair, "no, well just to me anyway."

"Yeah well enough about me, what's it like being back at work?" James questioned.

"Well I'm hanging out here over half an hour after my dinner break," Jessie said. She put her feet up on the desk. "What do you think?"

"You could just be taking advantage of our new boss," James smirked.

"I wouldn't skive a job I liked, right?" Jessie said.

"I do it all the time, so yeah," James said.

Jessie sighed, "its taking getting used to again. I don't know how long I'm going to last with my sister with me all day."

James raised an eyebrow at her, "you spent more time with her than anyone else for the last few months." He gently patted one of her ankles.

"Ok ok," Jessie said with a pout. She put her feet back down on the ground, instead she settled for resting her arms on the desk. "That's exactly why, I don't need reminding of how bad I was."

"Jess only you seem to keep doing that," James said. "Oh and you didn't have to put your feet down, your feet were closer than anything else."

"Oh ok," Jessie sighed. "Trying to make up for lost time?"

"No, I seem to recall you were the one doing the not touching," James replied.

Jessie frowned, "see, you're reminding me."

James tried to keep a straight face, "yeah only cos you started it."

"Oh yeah, crap," Jessie muttered. "I'm so glad you find it funny, I don't."

"No, just what you said was funny. Sorry," James said.

The doors opened, a furious Damien barged in with Ylara not far behind him. "You can't be serious, I'm not your pet monkey."

"Yes you, wait, what's a monkey?" Ylara said, looking confused.

James and Jessie turned their heads to look their way. "Um, what are you two doing here?" he asked.

"She's trying to turn me into her slave," Damien grumbled.

Ylara rolled her eyes, "seems fair considering you had loads of those."

"And why should I care about that?" James questioned.

"Well she keeps following me and everything, she should be locked up," Damien replied.

"Lock me up yourself you big wuss," Ylara muttered.

"Why would anyone want to follow you around, apart from making sure you're not doing anything that is," Jessie questioned.

Damien pulled a face, "oh ha ha, very funny." He stood on his tip toes briefly, "huh, that's weird."

"What?" Jessie frowned.

"She's not knocked up, what's up with that. I thought that's all she did nowadays," Damien said. He turned to James, "what's wrong, trouble in paradise?"

Jessie jumped to her feet, "that's not all I do, take that back you rabbit hater."

Damien gasped, "how dare you call me that!"

"Yeah well I'm not a baby machine," Jessie grumbled.

"In that case I'm not the greatest threat this race has ever known," Damien muttered, rolling his eyes.

Everyone stared blankly at him, "um, you're not."

"Details, details," Damien said. "In time I will be again."

Ylara rolled her own eyes, "look you weird annoying excuse of a man, you owe me for warning you, saving your life and doing your assignment for you. Now you get your butt down to my quarters and start cleaning that bathroom."

"You're an Ancient Egyptian, you probably had muckier water to drink or dirtier beds," Damien grumbled. "Screw that."

"Guys, can't you argue somewhere else or just finish it with a punch up?" James groaned.

Ylara smiled, "good idea." She threw a punch at Damien, he ducked and started to laugh mockingly. She instead kned him in the face. He fell to the ground in a heap. "Honestly, I've seen more evil in a priest."

"Why did you save his life?" Jessie frowned.

"Isn't it obvious, I have no idea how to work all that crap in my quarters and there's no obvious way to clean everything," Ylara said with a shrug. "Why else would I save a worthless bit of crap like him?"

"Yeah but he won't do it," Jessie muttered. "There's nothing really much to clean anyway, the sinks and stuff clean themselves."

"No they don't, I saw a bit of dust somewhere," Ylara said. She grabbed Damien by the scruff of his jacket and dragged him out of the room, she glanced back at them, "oh and he will if he wants all of his parts intact." She disappeared out of the door.

"You know, I could grow to like her," Jessie said. She glanced at James with a worried look on her face, "if I'm allowed to that is."

"You don't need my permission Jess," James said.

"I know I don't usually, but this is Ylara," Jessie said.

"Again you don't, she's not evil anymore. Like away," James said.

Jessie smiled, "are you sure?"

"Yes I'm sure, she's no different to me is she?" James replied, shaking his head. "You only like her anyway cos she beat up Damien. You'd like Tom if he did that."

Jessie sniggered behind her hand, "it'd be a miracle if he did."

"True," James said. "Oh speaking of annoying guys, that new watcher wants to give all the Slayers a test in two days."

"What kind of test?" Jessie asked.

"Just to assess what level we're at. Yeah I know, it's a big waste of time," James replied.

"Hell yeah it is, you know what Zare's like with watchers and I'll not get started on Ylara," Jessie said.

### **The Leda:**

Harry stood in the centre of the bridge waiting impatiently. "Status."

"Stop that, you're giving me a headache," Faye grumbled.

"When have you not got a headache?" Bryan asked. "Oh we're there yet again. How many times are we going to go back and forth, we're using all the dilith... uh deuter... screw it, the petrol."

"Yeah, which is the fuel out of those two?" Daniel asked.

Harry groaned, "nobody in this series knows, maybe both. Ok Faye hail the aliens."

"Would that require switching the internet off or..." Faye questioned as she looked back at him.

Harry watched her with wide eyes, "internet, you still have access to that?"

Bryan glanced over at Faye's station, "you don't need to, it's one of those broadband packages."

Faye sighed, "fine, hailing. They're responding."

The viewscreen activated to show the hideous looking alien, Bryan and Faye backed away from their close up view in shock.

"Um what do we do now?" Bryan asked.

"Just talk, we have to hear more words from them and vice versa, then we can talk," Harry replied. "Ahem, my name is Harry Kim of the Starship Leda. We're here to retrieve one of our lost ships."

The alien hissed, then proceeded to click for a minute.

"Uh huh," Harry nodded his head. "It's similar to this one, it's probably standing still or something." More clicking ensued. "Can we go in to get it back or is there anything you can do?" The alien slammed its hand on the station, it continued clicking.

"Wow, you understand it?" Bryan questioned.

Harry shrugged, "hell no, it was worth a try though."

The turbolift door opened, Li'Chin strolled out. "Ah this is mighty fine bridge. Mr Kim may I ask..."

"Not now Li'Chin," Harry groaned.

The alien on the screen pushed a glass off its table while slamming the table with its middle arm. It clicked a few things and hissed violently.

"What did I say," Harry stuttered.

Li'Chin turned pale as he eyed the viewscreen, "oh the Zychiens. Let me handle them. What's the emergency?"

"One of our ships is stuck in their space," Daniel muttered in response.

Li'Chin glanced at him, "ah Mr Lavine, it's good to meet you."

Daniel shuddered, "can't say the same."

More angry clicking ensued. "Ok I'll try and calm them down," Li'Chin said. He began clicking his tongue too, he and the alien exchanged 'words' for a few minutes. The alien calmed down.

"Well?" Harry questioned.

Li'Chin smiled, "they'll gladly tow the ship to our location, for a price."

"What price?" Harry asked.

"I'll check," Li'Chin replied. He clicked at the screen. The alien clicked back. Li'Chin's smile faded, "they won't say."

Harry groaned, "so we have to guess?"

"Think of it as getting them a gift for their generosity," Li'Chin replied. "We'd better get a joint conference with Voyager."

"I don't know, Tom really annoyed them before by attempting to speak in their language," Faye said.

"No problem," Li'Chin smiled. He clicked for about a minute. The alien just clicked once and shook its head. "He said fine." The alien clicked again. "Um he said if he calls his mother a whore again he'll rip his head off, and let his kids play with it."

Faye hid a smirk behind her hand, "what are the chances of him saying a proper sentence, and that one specifically."

"Very slim," Harry smirked. "Ok, we'd better begin negotiating. I'll tell Tom first though." He turned to his chair.

## **Meanwhile**

### **Voyager, Mess Hall:**

Ylara sat at one of the small tables, picking at the food on her plate with the fork. Zare entered the room and headed over to her. Ylara gave up with the food, then shoved the plate out of the way.

"What's the matter?" Zare asked.

Ylara frowned, she looked up at her, "that cook's trying to poison me."

Zare glanced over at the kitchen, "oh, Neelix must be onboard after all." She turned back, "you should use the replicator."

"I don't know how to use that," Ylara muttered.

"It's simple, you just tell it what you want to eat or drink," Zare said. She sat down beside her, "ok, we need to talk."

"I thought we already were," Ylara said.

Zare sighed, "Chakotay attacked you the other day, as well as Damien. I was wondering if you know what happened between those two."

"No I don't," Ylara shrugged her shoulders. "He just wanted to kill him."

"Ok then but I have to ask. Why did you save Damien?" Zare asked.

"So he'd owe me, that's why," Ylara replied. She climbed out of her chair, Zare quickly got up too and stood in front of her. "Ok I promise not to do it again, now get out of my way."

"No, well ok that's good too," Zare muttered. "There's something more important I have to ask you."

"Then ask, don't get in my way," Ylara said. She walked around her, Zare quickly followed her.

"I want you to talk to Craig," she said.

Ylara stopped, "what?"

Zare quickly stood back in front of her, "he blames himself for what happened to Lena, no thanks to what you said to him."

"Oh so you want me to lie to him. I can arrange that I suppose," Ylara muttered, rolling her eyes. "It was his fault, and of..."

"Kissing Craig does not make you want to kill yourself," Zare said. She glanced behind her to check if anyone heard her, "ok it wasn't exactly nice but." She glanced back at Ylara who was busy smirking at her. "For Lena though, she wouldn't."

"Listen sweetheart. All she could damn well think about was what Daniel would think if he found out. She didn't want to hurt him, and she felt like a total mess in the end. She died because she couldn't stop thinking about it. She didn't give a damn about me," Ylara said.

Zare narrowed her eyes, "don't call me sweetheart."

"I call more or less everyone that, get used to it," Ylara muttered. "Face it Zar, he killed her with his stalking and mind games. She wasn't distracted by anything else."

"You're just saying that cos he hates you," Zare grumbled.

"No I'm really not. I couldn't give a camel's arse about him hating me, that stuff never gets to me," Ylara said. "But you know what does get to me? Him blaming me for killing the love of his life, when it

was really him. That's why I told him, in a very subtle way might I add, I'm surprised he understood me." She again walked around her, smirking to herself.

Zare slowly turned around, "you know I think it does get to you really. Or else you wouldn't keep trying so hard to make people hate you."

Ylara stopped again, "that doesn't make any sense at all. If it got to me I'd be nice all the time."

"No you thrive on it, why else would you act this way?" Zare said.

"You couldn't be more wrong," Ylara muttered, turning back to face her. "You don't know the first thing about me."

"No but I know what you've been through. All of this, it helps distract you from the hurt," Zare said.

"What would you know about what I've been through?" Ylara said.

"Because my little brother died too, in my arms. Don't think you're the only one to have gone through it," Zare said. "I thought you had Lena's memories anyway."

"It's hard enough to remember everything that's happened to me, let alone her. What I know about her is very small," Ylara muttered. "Now are we done?"

"Does it work?" Zare questioned. "You know, making people hate you so you feel less guilty about you've done. Does bringing other people pain distract you from your own?"

Ylara stepped closer to her, and looked down directly into her eyes. She backed off one step with a look of disgust on her face, "I'd hit you for that, but you're not even worth it." She walked away.

### **Voyager's Bridge:**

The viewscreen was split into two, the Leda Bridge on one half and the aliens on the other. Harry already looked a little frazzled.

"Well I don't know, Tom?" he stuttered.

Tom looked around the room, "um ok, we've suggested food, fuel, medical stuff..."

"I'd suggest technology but I know Janeway's ghost will just give me a lecture or something," Harry sighed.

Jessie glanced behind her, "nope, she's not here yet."

Harry turned a little bit pale, "ok if you see her, don't mention the coffee I left over night in my Ready Room."

Tom groaned, "oh stop it Jessie. Since '77 you say you've been able to see ghosts, but surely you would have seen another one after Crazy Foster, but you haven't, have you?"

Jessie pouted, "not so much no."

The alien on the other half of the viewscreen started clicking and hissing violently, while waving one of its arms in front of it.

Harry glanced at Li'Chin, "well?"

He tried to swallow a lump in his throat, "uh um, he said hand it over."

"Hand what over?" Tom groaned.

"The payment," Li'Chin nervously said.

"Ok ok," Tom muttered. He rushed over to his chair to pick up a PADD. After fiddling with it he raised it to show the alien, "you can have this if you want." The alien made a high pitched screeching sound, it swung all of its arms at the screen. Its half turned back to space view.

"Um it said something about the spawn of Satan," Li'Chin stuttered.

"What did you promise to give them anyway?" Jodie asked in a bemused voice.

Tom shrugged, he turned around to show her the PADD. On it was a picture of Annika trying to look cute and innocent in a revealing top, meanwhile showing off all of her teeth in one of those annoying grins.

"Good god, we're supposed to rescue the Crazy Horse, not get them killed," Jessie muttered.

"It was worth a shot," Tom sighed.

"We're lucky they didn't open fire on us. They won't hurt the other ship though or they'd lose their bargaining chip, right?" Harry questioned.

Li'Chin started shaking, "um I think they will as we have nothing they want."

Jessie frowned, "why are you shaking?"

"I'm cold, yes," Li'Chin replied, shaking even more than before.

Tom sighed, "we should withdraw until we come up with another solution." He pointed at Li'Chin, "you and I should talk though."

"I don't think that'll be necessary," Li'Chin stuttered.

"Oh but it is, I know it," Tom grumbled.

### **In the early hours of the next day**

#### **James/Jessie's Quarters:**

Jessie sighed as she opened up her eyes, she rolled onto her left side to snuggle into James. A light bang in another room in their quarters made her jump a little. "What was?" mumbling to herself, sitting up.

She quickly got out of the bed, then made her way through the door, into the dark, quiet living area. The door to one of the other bedrooms opened. The sound of Amy's muffled cries greeted her from the nearby crib. Her blanket kept getting kicked up by her little legs.

Jessie rushed over and leaned into it, "honey it's ok, what's the matter?" She lowered the cover, "what's wrong?"

"It's Sasha," Amy cried, keeping a tight hold of her blanket. Jessie caressed her wet cheek with her thumb.

"What do you mean?"

"Sasha, Sasha," she cried.

"It's ok," Jessie sighed. She stood up straight, slowly turned to face the direction of Sasha's bed. Her face turned a little pale as her eyes focused on the still lump underneath the blanket.

Meanwhile James abruptly awoke to her screaming. He quickly sat up a little and turned to face her. She was back in the bed tossing and turning, talking frantically in her sleep. He gently shook her, "Jess wake up." He leaned over her to get closer and hold her still. "Jessie, Jessie," he said into her ear.

Her eyes opened wide, "Sasha." She glanced at him with terror in her eyes. "James, what happ..."

"You just had a nightmare Jess," James said, stroking her arm. "Are you all right, you're shaking."

"No I'm not," Jessie stuttered. She turned onto her side so she could face him. "Can you check on Sasha?"

"She's probably fine Jess," James said. She stared into his eyes with a lot of fear in hers. "Ok ok I'll check." He kissed her on the forehead before climbing out of bed. He quickly left the bedroom, made his way toward one of the other rooms.

Duncan stepped out of the third room near the window in his pyjamas. Rubbing his left eye, he yawned, "dad."

James looked over, "what are you doing up?"

"I thought I heard something," he replied.

"Oh, it was just," James said. He knelt down next to him, "nothing really, just go back to bed."

"Ok can I have a drink first?" Duncan asked.

"Yeah just something like juice though," James replied, before stepping into the other bedroom. Duncan headed over to the replicator.

James' first stop was Amy's crib. She lay sleeping inside it on her back, her arms spread out with the blanket only half over her. Strands of her short blonde hair lay in her face. He leaned into the crib to pull the blanket up to her shoulders, and brushed away the hair with his thumb. Sasha's bed was next. She lay on her right side, her left arm wrapped around a teddy bear. She also had her right thumb hanging out of her mouth.

He breathed a sigh of relief before heading back out. Jessie stood in the middle of the living area, shivering as she didn't have a dressing gown on and was just wearing a nightie with straps and no sleeves. "Well is she..."

"Yes she's fine Jessie, they both are," James replied, heading over to her.

"Are you sure she's just sleeping?" Jessie questioned.

James stopped in front of her, "what's going on, what did you dream about?"

"No no, you'll think I'm sick, no, doesn't matter. I'm sorry," Jessie muttered while rubbing her own arms.

"We can talk about this tomorrow if you want," James said. He put an arm around her shoulders, "let's go back to bed, ey?"

"I dunno, you can. I don't know if I can sleep after that," Jessie muttered. Her shaking got worse as she looked around the room. James wrapped his other arm around her waist.

"You don't have to sleep. Come on, you're freezing."

Jessie pouted only slightly, "I'm not really in the mood."

"No, I didn't mean that," James said with a smirk. "We can just talk, like we used to, ok?"

"Yeah ok, it is pretty cold in here," Jessie mumbled. They both headed back to their room.

**Later that morning**  
**Ylara's Quarters:**

Ylara pressed her hand against her face, with a groan she pulled the cover over her head. A few seconds later she slowly lowered it with her eyes barely open, and a frown on her face. "What the hell?" She threw the cover off but immediately regretted it, a brief shudder made her pull it back up. Her eyes moved toward the door, she could hear strange music coming from behind it.

"You've got to be kidding." Growling she jumped off the bed, taking the cover with her. The door opened, her eyes soon turned colder than the room itself. "What the hell are you doing?"

Damien, in a shock dropped the advanced looking hand held hoover he was holding and turned his head toward her. He wasn't sure whether to laugh or run. Ylara had her most vicious stare fixed on him, but otherwise she looked pretty harmless with a quilt wrapped around her, her black hair in a big mess and shivering.

"What does it look like I'm doing, I'm cleaning like you ask... threatened," he replied.

"It's still morning," she grunted, moving just one step closer slowly as she had to avoid standing on the quilt. Damien backed off a step. "I'm freezing," again another step forward for her, and a step back for him. "Your machine is, or was making this weird noise."

Damien glanced down at the hoover, "you mean the sshhhh noise?"

"No!" Ylara snapped, making him jump. "That other noise, it sounded like cats being swung and strange music."

"That's called a song ok, and it's a very good one," Damien muttered.

Ylara grunted, she didn't waste any time in closing the gap another metre. Damien tried to back off but he bumped into the desk. "Why is it so cold in here?"

"It's not, it was too hot so I turned it down," Damien replied, trying not to snigger. "I like your hair by the way."

"You think complimenting me is going to get you out of this?" Ylara grumbled. "Turn it back up and get out."

"You said you wanted me to clean," Damien said.

"This is not cleaning, this is invading my space and making a mess of it," Ylara moaned as she walked away, almost tripping over the quilt at least once. "I don't want stupid music playing, I can't sleep in the cold." She turned around and pointed a finger at him. The vicious 'I am going to kill you' look reappeared on her face, "you're trying to kill me aren't you?"

"Hell no, if I wanted to kill you I'd do it in a way so the body's ok. I do have brains you know," Damien replied, smiling smugly. "Don't want to get old Chuckles and everyone else on my back before I've had a chance to..."

"Oh would you stop always acting like you have some master plan!" Ylara yelled. "You do not have brains, you're just my cleaning lady. I don't want to wake up cold and I don't want these weird cup things lying around on my floor."

"Well I get hungry when I work," Damien meekly said, trying to avoid looking at her.

"Ugh!" Ylara grunted again. She knelt down to pick up several empty yogurt cartons. Soon they were all airborne and coming in for a landing in Damien's face. "Fix the heat and get out, get out, get out!"

Damien raised his arms to defend himself from the attack, "woah, you really are not a morning person are you?"

The door chimed just as Ylara was raising her fist and moving toward him. He quickly ran into the bathroom nearby. Ylara groaned, "oh for, who is it?"

"You know some people just say come in," Craig's voice said from outside.

"Oh no, I haven't got the patience for this," Ylara groaned into her hand.

"When have you ever got patience?" both Damien and Craig's voices said at the same time.

"Good point, it's lost on me with you freaks around me all the time," Ylara muttered. "Come in unless you can't fix the heat."

The door opened, Craig stepped inside. "It seems fine to me."

"It's freezing," Ylara grunted, stamping her left foot.

"Ok ok," Craig groaned. "From now on just say 'computer, revert back to default' and it will." The room quickly warmed up, "damn, that is hot."

"Finally," Ylara sighed. "Now what do you want?"

"Actually I was looking for Damien. What's he doing here, is this the new Villains Club or Annoying Club. It's hard to tell the difference," Craig questioned.

"That isn't even worth getting angry over," Ylara said.

Damien stormed out of the bathroom, pointing fingers, "why do you want to join the second one, huh do you huh. You can be the leader." He stopped and looked a bit annoyed with himself, "ok even I know that was lame."

Craig raised an eyebrow, "um you're right about that. We need to talk, about Chakotay."

"Ah you believe me now huh?" Damien said with a smirk on his face.

"Outside," Craig rolled his eyes. He stepped back outside.

Damien's smirk faded as he glanced back at Ylara. She tapped her foot impatiently while using the trademark Janeway death glare on him. "Outside it is," he muttered, then he ran out.

"You're coming back to clean up this mess!" she yelled.

"Boy I hate to say it cos I really hate her, but it's funny to see her make you her bitch," Craig said, folding his arms.

"Oh that's where you're wrong. She only thinks that I'm doing as she says, it's the classic 'lower your enemies guard' tactic," Damien said smugly. "Did I ever mention how that was my creation?"

Craig groaned, "it's too early in the morning for your moronic rambling. Just tell me how and why you and Chakotay started talking."

Damien smiled, he waved one of his fingers in front of him. "Ah ah, what do you say first?"

"Um, look you annoying little s\*\*\*, just tell me," Craig muttered.

"No. You have to say 'Damien you were right, I should have realised your obvious greatness'," Damien said.

Craig clenched both of his fists, "Damien, you're an annoying little waste of a human being, or in your case a waste of several. However you were right, but I'm not going to even go near your ass let alone kiss it, now tell me or you will wish all I did was put you in the brig."

"Did I say that?" Damien said, pretending to look confused. "Oh fine, I'll humour you but remember I was not threatened. Somebody like James or that little witch, and I'm not talking about Jessie, cannot scare me. You don't have a chance."

"Oh really? Then why are you hovering that little witch's quarters? And I'm sure you've been scared of James at least once," Craig said.

Damien smirked at him, "speak for yourself Craigy. By the way, does he know about your last kiss with Lena?"

"How do you know?" Craig grumbled, turning a little pale. "She told you, didn't she?" he pointed at Ylara's door.

"In between her ramblings yes," Damien said. "And no I haven't been scared of him, and Ylara is not aware that I am the one playing her, not the other way around."

"Yeah yeah, that's bull. Now start talking about Chakotay. And by that I mean, don't just randomly say stuff about him," Craig said.

"Wow you do know me too well, way to ruin a way to annoy you," Damien muttered. "Ok at first he contacted me, asking how I was able to possess other people. He was looking for ways to bring back Janeway. It's funny that, he cares enough to go to extremes and you just try to act tough and stuff instead."

"You don't know a thing," Craig grumbled.

"I didn't tell him anyway, I thought at first he was looking for ways of killing me," Damien said. "I think I mentioned the whole Borg assimilating my first host thing and he got the Tolg idea. Surely if you listened to all of his transmissions, you'd know all this."

"A lot of them were heavily encrypted, I'm not really much of a hacker," Craig said.

"You have one don't you?" Damien asked, smiling deviously.

"Oh yes that's a brilliant idea. I know that I wanted James to find out and to beat Chakotay because of what happened to Lena, but finding out like that," Craig said, shaking his head.

"Ok you're forgetting that I hate you people, why do I care? If he turns evil then all the better, it makes him more interesting," Damien said.

"Point taken. Now is there anything else you can tell me?" Craig asked.

"Not really. The rest you must have gotten. We got to the Tolg ship, negotiations didn't go well but I did get what I wanted. My old host got assimilated, I escaped. Obviously Chuckles got assimilated too but escaped only recently," Damien replied.

"Ok if you escaped straight away, how come it took you so long to get to Earth?" Craig asked.

"Because unlike all of you losers, that wasn't my main destination. I only returned to find something evil to work on, yes," Damien replied.

Craig rolled his eyes, "no you probably came here for protection. Did you know Chakotay had escaped?"

"Really didn't on both accounts. Now you say you don't like Ylara right?" Damien replied. Craig only had time to nod his head. "That means you wouldn't give a toss if I ran away from here right now?"

"Whatever, just one more thing," Craig replied. Damien however had already ran off on the word 'whatever'. He sighed, "know what happened to Janeway's body. Great."

**James/Jessie's Quarters:**

Jessie rolled onto her left side, with the quilt over her shoulders. She sighed as she opened her eyes. "James?" moving her left arm out to touch him, but he wasn't lying next to her. She sat up, "James? Where, that's weird." Quickly she climbed out of bed and headed for the door.

**Meanwhile:**

Amy and Sasha were curled up on the sofa, both sloppily eating bowls of cereal. Duncan sat on one of the chairs around the table, stuffing cereal into his mouth while typing on a PADD. James leaned against the higher table next to the replicator, cradling a cup of coffee in his hands.

"Ugh why do teachers hate me?" Duncan groaned.

"They don't hate you. What are you stuck on?" James asked.

"Division. What's the point of it?" Duncan pouted.

"Finish your breakfast and wash up first, you'll feel more awake then, that'll help," James said.

"I can't, she wants it today and I'm the only kid there, she'll notice if I don't do the homework," Duncan moaned.

Sasha giggled, "then you should have done it yesterday."

Duncan turned to stare blankly at her, he stuck his tongue out. She did the same to him. Amy copied off them both at no-one in particular.

James shook his head and sighed, "I'm sure it'll be fine. As you're the only one there you won't fall behind."

"Oh ok then," Duncan said cheerfully.

"That doesn't mean you shouldn't do it at all though," James quickly said.

"Aaaw," Duncan moaned again.

Everyone heard a bang come from the main bedroom, and then Jessie's muffled voice. James frowned as he headed toward the door. It opened for him then closed behind him.

Jessie was still lying in bed, but right at the edge of it. He headed over to kneel beside her. Just then she slipped off the bed so she landed on him. She woke up startled, "my god. James?"

"Hey, are you ok, you just..." James said, placing a hand against her left cheek.

"You're ok, you're... how," Jessie stuttered, looking around the room with tears forming in her eyes. "Are the kids ok?"

"Yes of course. You must have had another bad dream right?" James replied.

Jessie stared at him, "it seemed so real. Ok this can't be right, what's wrong with me?"

"Nothing's wrong, everyone has bad dreams you know," James said. "Do you want to talk about it or..."

"No no," Jessie muttered. "Wait, why didn't you wake me up?"

"Well after last night I didn't really want to disturb you, you looked peaceful when I left," James replied.

"Oh, don't from now on," Jessie muttered. She shuffled off of him and climbed to her feet. "I'm going to be late."

"It's only Tom, he won't care if you're a few minutes extra late," James said.

"I know but I really need to get that dream out of my head," Jessie muttered. She stopped nearby the door, just staring at it like it was going to jump out and bite her. "Um, can you leave the room with me?"

"Um ok," James replied. He quickly got up onto his feet, and headed toward the door. It opened for them.

"And uh, can you keep the door open all the time?" Jessie asked.

"Jess whatever you dreamt about, it's not going to happen," James said.

Jessie turned to stare at him, "please."

"Ok but don't you have to get dressed?" James questioned.

"I'll do that next to the wardrobe, you can't see there from the living room," Jessie replied.

"How do you know?" James asked with a frown.

Jessie looked away blushing, "just a guess, um it's obvious really." She headed straight for the replicator.

James was about to step forward but something in his head told him to stop, he then looked down to find Amy standing directly in front of him. "You have to be careful honey, I nearly stepped on you."

Amy cocked her head to the side, "can I stay with you today?"

"I'm sorry you can't, I have to meet with boring watchers and new trainees. Tomorrow maybe," James replied. He walked around her to head over to Sasha. Amy pouted.

## **Later**

### **The Conference Room:**

All of the joint Senior Staff were sitting around the desk discussing the situation.

"Ok apart from going in and getting our asses kicked, do we have any other ideas?" Tom groaned into his hand.

"Maybe a shuttle would be able to slip into the aliens territory," Harry said.

"Yeah then we could have an awayteam on it, they can check out the Crazy Horse. They must have some problems onboard, if they didn't they would have left by now," Kevin said.

"How would a shuttlecraft get in undetected?" Faye asked with a frown.

"Their barrier system is really basic, it wouldn't be too hard to mess around with it. Of course the aliens would see it, we'd have to distract them too," James replied.

"All right then, more negotiating it is," Tom said.

"I think we're going to have to find something to negotiate with before doing anything," B'Elanna said.

Everyone sat in silence for a few minutes, most of which were trying to think of something.

In: "Li'Chin to Mr Stuart."

James groaned, "oh great." He tapped his commbadge, "what is it now?"

In: "We had an appointment didn't we?"

"No we didn't," James replied.

In: "I am sure we did, we have to discuss our new partnership."

Tom sniggered in his hand, he tried to hide it when James glared at him. "Oh dear, right in front of the wife as well."

Jessie looked up from the table and glanced at him, "what?"

"Oh well, you're good to go then James," Tom sniggered.

"Hmm I wonder when I'm going to get my first violent scene of the season?" James muttered.

In: "Oh now that won't do."

James tapped his commbadge, "I really hate that guy." He climbed out of his chair, "just get Tom to insult that alien again, then beam him over to their ship. Then they'll let us straight in." He left the room.

"Hmm that's interesting," Harry smirked.

"Screw that. We'll just send over Annika, that'll keep them busy for a few hours," Faye said.

"Ok we don't hate the aliens," Tom pointed out.

Faye shrugged, "yeah good point."

### **The Security Office:**

Li'Chin paced back and forth while James, Janet and Stewart stood in front of the desk.

"We simply cannot begin training without any possible future trainees. What can we do in the mean time," he said.

"Oh I don't know, their Security training maybe," James sarcastically muttered.

"I guess so but the time we have shouldn't be wasted," Li'Chin said.

"It wouldn't be. There's regulations and crap, phaser handling, you don't get that in Slayer training," James said.

"That wouldn't be wise either," Li'Chin sighed.

Stewart laughed, "I just realised your name is chin."

"Or I could put them in the nursery so the children can teach them," James muttered. "Why wouldn't it be wise anyway?"

"Wesley and I discussed visiting a few nearby systems. We've had Slayers recruited from here from the last two generations," Li'Chin replied.

"Oh god, I don't like where this is going," James groaned.

"We only managed to get two last time, that's why we never returned," Li'Chin said, ignoring James. "Anyway if we do the off ship recruiting they'll need a job, Security's perfect."

"You can have too many Security members you know," James said.

"And why not? The more the better right?" Janet questioned.

"The more there is, the more paper work for me," James replied.

"Ah, gotcha," Janet winked at him. He shook his head.

In: "Nursery to Stuart."

James tapped his commbadge, "yeah?"

In: "We have a problem. Amy managed to escape this time."

"What?" James snapped. "How on earth did you lose her?" Janet and Stewart backed off two steps.

In: "Um she must have snuck out when Scott decided to paint himself or when we were doing the treasure hunt."

"Great, that's just great. I'll look for her," James grumbled.

"But we have important matters to discuss," Li'Chin muttered.

James shot him his own inherited Janeway death glare, Li'Chin cowered and backed away. "My daughter's just gone missing, that is millions times more important than your stupid bimbo trainees."

"Hey," Janet and Stewart moaned.

In: "It wasn't just. We've had people looking for her for half an hour so far. We thought we should contact Security first before worrying the parents."

"What, I am Security," James snapped again. He headed for the door muttering to himself, he tapped his commbadge twice. "Stuart to Foster."

In: "Uhoh, pretend to act nonchalant. Yes sir?"

"That only ever works when you don't say it over the comm," James muttered.

In: "Uhoh. I don't know what you're talking about."

"Ok I'm guessing the nursery contacted you. How come you imbeciles can't find a one year old probably crawling around Voyager in half an hour?" James angrily asked.

In: "Well she's really very small and I never met her."

"All right Li'Chin, find your precious new alien trainees. With some luck we might get some half decent Security around here," James said. He continued toward the door, he stopped and turned around. The door opened for him. "If you don't want to waste time, take those two with you." He turned back, again his instincts told him to remain where he was.

Amy sat in front of him, looking up at him with wide eyes. She opened her arms out, "hiya daddy."

"Aaaw how cute," Janet cooed.

"I know, precious," Stewart cooed in a more girly way.

James breathed a big sigh of relief as he knelt down, "sweety you had me really worried." He gathered her up in his arms and stood back up. "What are... how did you get here?"

"I got lost first," she replied. "Missed you."

Janet and Stewart glanced at each other, "aaaaw." The two then stared weirdly at each other.

"You're a guy, stop doing that," Janet muttered.

"No I was imitating you, you girl," Stewart stuttered.

James turned around and stared at them with a raised eyebrow. "Make sure you abandon them somewhere Chin."

### **The Conference Room:**

Everyone were still in their original spots from earlier, all but one trying to think up a solution.

"Oh I know," Faye said, clicking or at least trying to click her fingers. Everyone stared at her, "what?"

"You know what, what's your idea?" Tom asked.

Faye blushed, "oh I was just trying to figure out what to have for lunch."

Everyone but her and Jessie groaned. "A tuna, ham and egg sandwich would be nice actually, with chips," Jessie said. Everyone stared at her looking very worried.

"No no, not again," B'Elanna muttered.

"No she might just have bizarre sandwich taste," Tom whispered.

"Yeah maybe," B'Elanna sighed.

"Oh, that gives me an idea for a distraction," Kevin said with a smirk on his face. "Why don't we offer the food supplies again, but this time have a massive list of stock."

B'Elanna raised an eyebrow, "or maybe we can just pretend to be offering weapons and technology. We narrowed that out cos we were negotiating, we're not this time."

"Ok finally, now we have a plan. We just need an awayteam, James to hack their system during the distraction, and a list of stuff to present to the aliens," Tom said. "Who wants to lead the awaymission?"

Harry raised his hand, "I never get to lead any."

"Um that talking bomb episode," Tom coughed.

"Oh yeah, this is FV though we can just insist that, that terrible episode never existed," Harry stuttered.

"All right then, it's your death," Tom said.

"Hey I'm not the same old killable ensign," Harry said. "Bad luck left me as soon as I got promoted."

Tom narrowed his eyes as he watched him lean back on his chair, "isn't this the cue for something horrible to happen to him? You know to prove him wrong."

Harry rolled his own eyes, "oh please Tom, they can't keep re-using the same old joke over and over. See I'll show you." He sat backwards on the chair, started to spin slowly on it while not holding on to the sides. "See, no bad luck."

"Hmm maybe chips and icecream," Jessie muttered to herself.

"Eugh," Harry moaned.

Kevin hit his fist on the table, Harry wobbled and fell off the chair. He fell into the table, hit his head and fell to the floor in an amusing heap. "Icecream, thanks Jessie," Kevin said. He of course didn't notice what just happened.

"What?" Jessie questioned.

Everyone else were busy smirking away at Harry's empty spinning chair. All they could hear was him groaning on the floor.

"That's the answer to the riddle I read on that Chinese takeaway I had last month," Kevin said.

"Oh ok, you're welcome," Jessie said.

Tom eyed the little dent on the desk with amusement, "you're paying for that by the way." He burst into a fit of giggles.

"What's so funny?" Kevin asked. Everyone pointed at Harry's chair, he looked over. "Oh, damn it." Harry pulled himself back onto the chair, looking really dazed with a nasty bruise on his forehead. "I missed it, can you do it again?"

"I'd put my finger up at you but I think I broke it during my fall," Harry replied.

"How long will it take to get back and get the list sorted?" Tom asked.

"To make a list long enough to distract them, a few hours. I'd recommend doing this tomorrow morning though," B'Elanna replied.

"Um why a full day?" Harry frowned, he cringed as it made his bruise ache more.

"Because some idiot decided it would be fun to defrag the shuttles' computers," B'Elanna said. "Yes we really need to upgrade them to a more reliable system."

"Ok then, Harry leads the mission, choose two to go with you, and two Engineers just in case," Tom said, still sniggering. "Ok dismissed."

### **Later that night**

#### **Deck Thirteen:**

It was obvious that the crew preferred the Mess Hall to the once 'haunted' Deck Thirteen. Not many crewmembers populated Voyager's Ten Forward and the ones that did either looked pretty nervous or are probably the types that don't really care what happens to them.

One of them was Craig drinking at the bar on his own, as soon as he finished his drink the only bartender rushed over. "Freshen your drink?" All she got was a small groan as a response. "Ok then." She replicated another drink for him then turned back to face him. "You're here every night, or should I say morning."

"Sorry, I didn't realise there was a limit," Craig muttered before taking a drink.

"There is, you're nowhere near it," the bartender said, smiling. "You're always here alone, drinking for a few hours. I'm guessing there's a story behind that."

Craig sighed, he got out of his chair then headed straight for the door. The bartender stared after him looking confused.

Damien meanwhile sat impatiently at one of the tables, after angrily glancing at her he marched over to the bar. "Excuse me, but doesn't this place have the waitress service?"

"Um yes, sorry, what can I get you?" the bartender said uncomfortably.

"One of those sundaes with the strawberry yogurt in. Those babies are nice," Damien replied. "Oh and some juicy gossip."

"I don't serve gossip," the bartender muttered.

"I just want to know what you and Anderson keep talking about," Damien said.

"He's not very talkative, now can you excuse me?" the bartender said. She turned toward the replicator.

Damien groaned while sitting on the stool. An icecream sundae was placed in front of him, moments later a shadow cast itself over him and it. "This'll complete my day."

"Actually it's way passed midnight so sorry about that," Ylara muttered. She sat down beside him. "You didn't show."

"I don't owe you anything anymore. The way you talked to me, and treat me for that matter, that makes us even," Damien said.

Ylara frowned, "no, the chores do."

"Me even bothering to show up and Hoover a little bit pays you back for saving my life. I wouldn't do that for just anybody you know," Damien grumbled. He span the stool seat around to face her, "you yelled at me, humiliated me and beat me. That more than makes up for everything you've done to me."

"But it doesn't," Ylara muttered.

"We're even, now don't come near me again," Damien said. He turned back to his sundae.

"I thought guys liked that sort of thing," Ylara said.

"Yeah I'm sure in pre-Christ times men loved to be humiliated and beaten up by women," Damien shook his head. "You'll have to find someone else to be your nanny."

Ylara pouted her lips angrily, glancing toward the back wall. "All right fine, but if you had just done the tasks I would have treat you better afterward." Damien frowned, he glanced at her again with a raised eyebrow. She glanced back at him, "but since you can't even honour an agreement right, why should I treat you with respect."

To her surprise he smiled, "you know, you and I would have made a good team. You think like me." She narrowed her eyes, he got what he expected, a nasty slap in the face.

"Don't ever compare me to you," she grumbled. Leaning forward she put her hand on the bar, and her other hand roughly grabbed the front of his shirt. "You swore to your stupid fake gods or whatever that you'd do as I said, for three things. I never told you to let me humiliate or beat you, you're not getting out of it like that."

Damien tried to back his head off but she had a strong grip on him, "ok ok, hit me where it hurts but ok."

Ylara nodded her head as she moved away, and let go of him. "See you tomorrow night, my quarters. You haven't finished the first one yet." She glanced at the sundae on the bar, "oh and for annoying me..." She brushed it away, it dropped onto Damien's lap. Then she headed back toward the door, smiling smugly to herself.

Damien glared at the doorway for about five minutes, his legs started to shiver however, this brought him back. "How long do I have to sit here with ice cream on my lap before I can get a cloth or something around here!?"

Naomi and Nikki walked over to the bar. "Ok just when you think things can't get weirder on this ship, they do," Nikki commented.

Naomi smirked at Damien, "uh huh."

The bartender handed him a cloth, he glared at her while he cleaned himself up. "That woman is crazy, surely there is no other woman on this ship that's more unpredictable and volatile than her."

"What woman, you were on your own when we walked in. In fact you were glaring at the door when we did," Naomi said.

"Ylara, I'm beginning to miss Lena," Damien grumbled.

"I thought you were evil and liked evil things," Nikki giggled as the bartender handed the two girls drinks.

Damien looked confused, "she's not evil, she's just crazy."

"Then you guys should be best buds," Naomi said with a shrug.

Damien narrowed his eyes at her, "isn't it passed your bedtime?"

Naomi pouted while Nikki giggled to herself. "Ylara is a bit weird yeh, I don't get her."

"Don't get her? That girl keeps managing to trick me into doing her dirty work. Me? How is that possible, I never do anything anyone says," Damien stuttered angrily.

Nikki shrugged, "she obviously knows what she's doing. Let's face it, you deserve it really."

"Yeah come on, you're on a ship filled with people you've messed with for years. It could be a lot worse," Naomi smirked.

"Oh yeah, how?" Damien grumbled.

## **Meanwhile**

### **James/Jessie's Quarters:**

Jessie lay wide awake on her back, staring at the wall, resting her head on her right hand. With a sigh she turned over to look at James. He lay right next to her on his side, he was fast asleep though.

Her face frowned as she fell back onto her back. She pulled herself out of the bed, grabbed her dressing gown, wrapped it around her, then headed for the door. Five minutes later the door opened, she shuffled back toward the bed with her eyes barely open. Moments later she was lying comfortably in bed, with her eyes closed.

The room got a little blurry as Jessie opened her eyes just a little bit. Her eyes refused to open any further. The bed creaked from where James was lying, she sighed and closed her eyes again. She heard him whisper her name, her eyes opened slightly again. Restless movement next to her helped her open her eyes a little further, but her vision was still a little blurry like she had been asleep for a while.

"No no, back to sleep," Jessie groaned, closing her eyes again. The restless movement got worse, she tried to ignore it. His hand then roughly grabbed her left arm, she jumped in shock. He didn't let go either, the hand seemed to get weaker and kept jumping every few seconds. She was now wide awake but now a little freaked out. Slowly she turned onto her back.

However to James it was her who was tossing and turning while she lay in his arms. She awoke abruptly screaming hysterically, with cold sweat all over her pale face. He tried to stroke her wet strands of hair that stuck to her face, "Jess it's ok, you're dreaming again, it's ok."

She stared at him with wide eyes, shaking violently. "You're... you're ok, oh god." She buried her head into his shoulder.

"Why do you keep saying that?" he asked softly. She didn't answer, she put a hand across her mouth. "Never mind, I'll get you a drink, we can sit outside for a bit while you..."

"Oh god," she mumbled like she had a lump in her throat. She quickly dashed out of the bed and ran out of the bedroom. James quickly followed her, as soon as he got to the doorway the door next to it closed. He stood outside it.

"Jess, can I get you something?" he asked, obviously feeling a little helpless by this time. All he got for a response was what sounded like her coughing.

Moments later Jessie slowly stepped out of the bathroom, still looking pale. She couldn't even bare to look up at his face, her stare was directed straight ahead of her. "I need help."

"Um, correct me if I'm wrong, but being sick during a pregnancy is normal," James said.

"No it wasn't that," Jessie mumbled. She looked up a little, but not at him directly. "I'm never sleeping again, ever."

"Jess you can't, it may..." James said.

"Every time I sleep I have nightmares about death and..." Jessie butted in, sounding both angry and disgusted. "Every time I sleep somebody dies." She finally looked him in the eye, "I'm sick and I need help."

"Maybe the Doc will know something," James uncomfortably said.

Jessie shook her head, "no, it's not just the dreams. I mean I'm sick, sick of all of this. This can't be me now, it can't." She stepped closer to rest against him, he put his arms around her, one around her shoulders, the other her waist.

### **Later that day**

#### **Holodeck One:**

Li'Chin stood with Wesley discussing something uninteresting. Zare and Kevin stood nearby exchanging weapons.

"No you have the knife, I'll have the axe," Zare muttered.

"No way," Kevin moaned. "You always get the cooler weapons."

"Maybe cos I'm so much cooler than you," Zare said.

Li'Chin sighed, "where is James, he's half an hour late?"

"Well I'm surprised he even turned up to the last meeting at all so..." Wesley replied.

"I expected that of Ylara, but not him," Li'Chin sighed.

"I thought we didn't need to do stuff like that with him. After your speech I figured you had already put him in the highest level," Wesley said.

"I want to see it for myself," Li'Chin groaned. "I was especially looking forward to finding out Ylara's level, and learning at least something about her. We don't know much about the Slayers from before the computer records, but it's interesting that we had Games Slayers all the way back then..."

"Ok you're even boring me. That's got to be a bad sign," Wesley said. Li'Chin rolled his eyes.

James walked in through the holodeck doors, Li'Chin turned to him and put his hands on his hips. "You are late. I expect you to be on time at least once, if you're not going to take any of this seriously you may as well not turn up at all."

James stared blankly at him, moments later the watcher was lying on the ground unconscious with a broken nose, and a massive bruise all around it. "Next time I won't."

"That was uncalled for," Wesley said.

"If you want I can do that to you," James said.

"Ok maybe it was then," Wesley stuttered.

"Woah, somebody woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning," Kevin commented.

"No I just woke up to a screaming hysterical wife who thinks she's mentally sick," James grumbled, glaring at him. "How's your morning anyway while we're on the subject?"

Kevin took a few steps backwards, Zare stayed where she was staring at James with wide eyes. "Ok usually I'd make fun of her but I don't hate anyone that much. What's wrong with her?"

"I've already said enough," James said with a sigh.

"Yeah I get that," Zare said.

Wesley frowned, "why was she screaming? Was she being attacked or something?"

"No, physically she's fine," James replied. "Now if you don't mind, I'm going to skip this useless little test thing and help her."

"You're not a psychiatrist though, you should..." Wesley muttered. He trailed off as James stared at him. "... go though, mental support is important during times like this."

"We don't have one onboard anyway," Kevin said.

"I know, there's a holodeck program for that," James said.

"Oh," Kevin sighed. He glanced around the room, "oh."

Wesley frowned, "oh no no, it's bad enough that you're skipping the test, but taking away the testing area." He crash landed on top of Li'Chin, also sporting a nasty looking bruise.

"Well that's sorted," James said. "See you guys later. Beam them out when you go."

"Uh huh yeah, see ya," Kevin muttered. "Good luck." He ran out.

Zare rolled her eyes, "you know by now he should be kinda even with you, you know Chosen and all." She shook her head, "he's a lost cause." She followed Kevin out.

Jessie walked in just as she got to the doors. Her arms were wrapped around her, she still looked really pale.

"Hey, hope you get better soon ok," Zare said before stepping out.

"Thanks," Jessie said, walking toward James. "Do you really think this is a good idea?"

"Well this way the person talking to you is impartial, you know neutral. Doc Jones wouldn't be," James replied.

"I guess," Jessie sighed.

"We don't have to..." James said.

"No," Jessie quickly interrupted him. "I want to get better."

"Ok. Computer activate program 13427 Beta Two," James said. The holodeck changed into a twentieth century doctor's office. "Huh, that's typical." A woman appeared behind the desk.

"Hello," she said politely. "I'm Mrs Robson, who might I ask is my next patient?"

"Ok I'm cured, can I go?" Jessie said with her eyes wide again.

"No it's ok, hang on," James said. He headed over to the wall, after removing some books a wall panel came into view on the shelf. The woman flickered slightly. "There, less freaky now."

"Please, take a seat," the woman smiled.

They both reluctantly sat down opposite her. "Ok it's still a bit," Jessie muttered.

"Ok who is it that I'm supposed to help?" the woman questioned. Her eyes focused on Jessie, "my guess is it's you."

"Um yeah, I er," Jessie nervously muttered.

"Ok then, if your friend here is planning on staying, it's going to be difficult," the woman said.

"Um, husband and I'd feel better if he stayed," Jessie said.

"I understand but it would be a good idea to discuss whatever's troubling you in private. Just the two of us. Unless it's marriage trouble, then I'd start with both," the woman said.

"No it's not, it's really just me," Jessie muttered.

"Then," the woman said, watching James intently.

He glanced at Jessie, "I'll be right outside ok."

"Ok," Jessie uncomfortably mumbled. He gave her a quick kiss on the cheek before getting up, then leaving the room.

"Now, let's start from the beginning," the woman said.

## **Meanwhile**

### **The Delta Flyer:**

"Are we ready then?" Harry asked the rest of his team.

A bunch of unenthusiastic 'yeahs' was all he got for a response.

"Great, energising," Harry muttered.

Seconds later the five awayteam members rematerialised in a dark Starfleet corridor. The red light lit up the area every two seconds.

"Ok what possible reasons do we have for the scan results we did?" Doctor Jones questioned.

Harry pulled out a tricorder, "an alien blocking field, or what it said."

"All right, the red alert I understand. Same with the hull damage," B'Elanna said.

Harry glanced at her, "what don't you understand?"

"Why you chose her," B'Elanna replied, beckoning her head toward Ylara. She was staring directly ahead of them, not really paying attention to anything.

"She has Lena's telepathy, if the sensors are wrong and there is a crew left she'll be able to hear some," Harry replied.

Foster shuddered, "it feels like death in here."

Ylara walked ahead of everybody, still staring at nothing in particular. Harry shrugged, "she'll have the death sensing thing too left over from the phobia. So it would seem."

Doctor Jones grew concerned as he watched her, he walked over. "What's wrong?"

"I don't know. I hear faint screams, yelling," Ylara muttered. "I'm not scared but I feel fear here, I can't explain it."

"I didn't know you recruited Troi," B'Elanna said.

Harry smirked, "yeah I wish."

Ylara glanced all around her, her balance became a little off. "Oh crap," she stuttered before stumbling backwards. Doctor Jones quickly caught her, he slowly lay her on the ground.

"What's wrong with her?" Foster asked.

Doctor Jones opened up his medical tricorder, he began scanning as Ylara drifted in and out of unconsciousness. "Yes she has Lena's telepathy, but it was a little too much for her to handle. Chosens probably develop this ability slowly, they get used to it, it's a little too advanced for her."

Ylara groaned, she kept her eyes closed. "Everyone, they're all gone."

"How can you be so sure?" Harry asked.

"I know, they were all afraid," Ylara mumbled. She passed out on Doctor Jones' shoulder.

"I don't know if I can trust that," Harry muttered. He headed over to the nearest wall panel.

B'Elanna stared blankly at him, "it was your idea to bring her."

The ship shook violently a couple of times. "What's that?" Foster stuttered.

Harry widened his eyes, "The Crazy Horse and Flyer are under attack."

"Great, let's just collect any remaining crew and get out of here," B'Elanna said.

Harry's face turned a shade paler, "she's right." He turned to glance at them, "we're the only lifesigns on this ship."

"You mean there's no sign of a blocking field?" Doctor Jones questioned.

"No, I'm sure of it," Harry replied, turning back to the panel. "Oh boy."

B'Elanna growled, "now what?"

"We have company," Harry stuttered.

**Voyager:**

Tom sat down in the Captains chair, "status?"

"You just have a cocky attitude and voice in all languages Tom, one tut is probably enough," Jodie replied.

Tom groaned, "that doesn't tell me anything!"

"It does actually. The aliens have opened fire on the flyer and the Horse, plus they've boarded it," Kevin said.

"Tactical, ready weapons. Kevin let us know when we're in transport range," Tom said.

"Yes anger them even more," Kevin groaned.

Annika pulled a face while staring at the Tactical station, "there is no ready button, how do you ready weapons?"

"Just hover your finger over the fire button," Tom groaned.

Annika grinned, "all right, gotcha."

Kevin glanced briefly behind him, "ok."

"Jodie, get the team out of there," Tom ordered.

"Aye aye Captain Tom," Jodie said, faking a salute.

"That's it, I'm retiring early," Tom muttered.

On the viewscreen everyone could see the alien ships firing on the Delta Flyer and Crazy Horse. The Flyer exploded, the Crazy Horse followed soon after.

"Oh great, that was a waste of time," Tom grumbled.

Jodie stared blankly at him, "oh yes I did get the team out in time, and you're welcome. Thanks for asking."

Tom ignored her, he muttered his way over to the Ready Room. "Stupid long episodes, and they're stupid rushed endings and they're stupid." He disappeared into the office.

Jodie glanced at the panels behind her, "ok that was the original ending for that part."

"What's the rest of the ending?" Kevin asked. "Do I hook up with anyone?"

"Don't look at me, I only see what I'm allowed to see," Jodie replied with a smirk. "But I don't need a plot to answer your second question."

**A little while later****Holodeck One:**

James was back in the office, sitting next to Jessie. The psychiatrist was busy talking.

"From what I've heard you are dealing with the marital problems the right way. However what was left of Jessie's self esteem was taken away by this Chakotay, I feel you're not doing enough to make her feel good about herself," she was saying. "This man made her feel unneeded, and of little use to the world, and just by not noticing that you've made her believe it."

"That's not true," Jessie said.

"You need to make her feel special again, spend more time with her and try to get her to talk to you more. I do believe what happened was caused by both sides. One side was unwilling to share, the other unaware at first then unsure of how to get the other to share," the psychiatrist said. "Like I said earlier, what you're doing with the children is a good way of helping her feel more important again."

"What about the dreams, did you talk about that?" James questioned.

"We did. The first nightmare vision of the eldest daughter being found dead, that would have been caused by the guilt from not being around as much as before. Like what happened with your son, there's the feeling that she shouldn't have wasted the time. With the youngest crying, being unable to settle her was probably there because she doesn't remember getting any attention from her, and cannot be settled.

"The other dreams follow a similar pattern. The worst happens, she is left to deal with the guilt and of course the grief all in those few seconds between the reveal and the wake up. It's her subconscious way of telling her to sort herself out, get better," the psychiatrist replied. "The best way to make the dreams less effective is to make them less realistic."

"What do you mean by that?" James asked. "I mean Jess never said what happened, not fully."

"For example if you wanted to stop the first happening again, before you both go to bed get one of those machines that let you hear everything in the children's rooms. What happened to the daughter wouldn't happen without you hearing anything. The second and third dreams disturb me the most, but I do suggest doing that and try to prevent these two as well," the psychiatrist said.

"With some regular counselling, I have no doubt in my mind that you'll feel better in no time," the psychiatrist said. "Just remember Jessie, that man does not know a thing about you. Whenever you think about what happened, try to remember who you really are. If you ever see him again, look confident in yourself and ignore what he has to say."

"Supposedly he's dead so I won't," Jessie said.

"Oh well, it's still good advice," the psychiatrist said.

James leaned in close to Jessie to whisper to her, "I think she missed out the end part. Ignore what he has to say, call me, let me beat him to death."

Jessie tried not to laugh, "so glad he is dead in that case." James smiled at her, he reached out to take a hold of her hand.

## **Later**

### **Leda's Security Office:**

Craig paced back and forth looking nervous, Zare and Foster stood next to the window watching him.

"You can't be seriously thinking of doing this," Zare muttered.

"Why not. The guy's just going to rot in the brig anyway," Craig said.

The door opened, James stepped in but stayed at the doorway, "who's going to rot?"

Craig jumped a mile, he turned around to face him. "Oh, as I'm in charge of the Leda Security and you Voyager I thought there's something you should know. You have a prisoner in the brig."

"Oh boy, back away slowly," Zare whispered to Foster. They both moved away quickly.

James raised an eyebrow, "ookay, who?"

"Um Chakotay, but..." Craig replied, but of course James had left on Chakotay's name so he just trailed off. "I didn't even tell him how to get mad yet, I didn't even have time to think it."

Zare walked over to pat him on the shoulder, "there there. You'll help bring him a lot of pain and ease yours someday Craigy. Don't worry." He stared blankly at her, "what?"

### **Deck Nine:**

A few unknown crewmembers walked out of the turbolift, they headed down the corridor. Going the opposite way were Naomi and Nikki. Everybody stopped as a light rumbling sound echoed all around them. It grew louder very quickly.

"Something's coming," Nikki stuttered.

Something then smashed through one of the walls, then collapsed on the ground in Naomi and Nikki's path. They backed off a metre in shock. Dust blocked most of their view, it started to settle quite quickly. Everyone else gathered around to see what had crashed through the wall.

The dust settled on what looked like a man lying on the ground, everyone's eyes had widened at that point. They heard footsteps come from the hole in the wall, but didn't dare to look.

The man groaned, he tried to lift himself up but couldn't. He let his body collapse again, all he could do was look up at everybody. His face badly bruised, pale, with strange technology on it and an Indian tattoo. Then everyone decided to slowly glance at the hole, which was now clear of dust.

"Sorry, the fat b\*\*\*ard didn't hit anyone on the way here did he?" James casually asked.

Everyone but Nikki at this point were staring with wide eyes in shock, unsure of what to do. Nikki just was unsure how to close her mouth as she stared.

**TO BE CONTINUED**