

Episode 5.13

Unforgiving

With only a single light shining dimly from the window he stood in the shadows. His head turned towards the stars streaking past them. "It was so long ago. At least it felt that way." He sighed as his head lowered, his chin almost touching his chest. "A lifetime ago, it felt like. A whole different person ago."

The man waited, as if he expected a response. His head shook timidly. "Everything changed that day. *He* changed that day." A small smile appeared on his face, not that anyone could see it in the dark. It was a sad one, but it made him feel guilty anyway. "He didn't really. All the fool did was lock away his very self in a protective shell so no one could see it. It seemed easier to deal with the pain that way."

The man walked towards the window. "It had been so long, he'd forgotten it even existed. He did things, said things that his old self wouldn't. He didn't care. What did it matter? She was gone and was never coming back."

"Yawn. You'll talk people to death if you go on like that," Damien complained.

Chakotay managed a smile but it wasn't a nice one. "I can only hope."

Damien smiled back. "If you do, I'll tell your Missus what you've been up to while she's gone, shall I?" He faked a worried expression, "oh wait, I can't, cos she's stuck in Tolgsville. Damn my memory." He shrugged and returned back to what he was doing before, smirking smugly.

"Right, cos you're not going to annoying tosser's hell where they'll serve you barbecue rabbit everyday," Chakotay retorted. Damien tried to restrain a gasp. "Now maybe you can tell me what I want to know, and I'll stop boring you so much."

Damien shrugged as overdramatised as he could, he even stuck out his bottom lip and widened his eyes. "Beats me. We've gone from pointless parodies of original episodes, exclaimed's and Pokémon battles, to pointless rewrites of those parodies, boring internal monologues and sappiness. Fifth Voyager died years ago, we're dancing on her grave."

"Yet you're still here," Chakotay muttered.

"That happened before it died, but it's still the only good thing she has going for her," Damien sneered.

"Since when has a fanfiction series been classified as her and she?" Chakotay muttered to himself, shaking his head. "I mean it's still the silliest, most badly written proof of insanity next to sparkly vampires and goth wizards. It just has plots now. You're the proof of that."

"Wow, we're at least better than the goth wizards," Damien actually seemed more offended at that. Chakotay nodded, he agreed with him. He then noticed Damien looked a little worried for once. "Are we ripping off the sparkly vampires?"

Chakotay tried not to laugh in his face. "No, why?" Damien shakily pointed his finger in front of him, and behind Chakotay. He turned his head to look over his shoulder. Before he could really see what he was pointing at he was roughly shoved to one side, so hard that he slammed into the wall. As he didn't go through it he had narrowed out James or Ylara from his suspect list.

Damien didn't have time to fully react either, he could only whimper as his arms were grabbed. "Let's not play these games. You can't fight me off or even run away, you should stay away from me."

"Finally," he squeaked. He was about to do what his captor said when his whole body was yanked forward. There was nothing he could do. A horrible, sloppy kiss was forced on his lips and it wasn't a brief one either.

Chakotay tried his best not to hurl at the sight, he had to use the remaining energy he had to get back to his feet and escape. Of course that wasn't much as anyone who would see this would be ill for the rest of their lives. All he could do was try to keep his balance and watch Damien struggle to push his attacker away. This only spurred her on more. In the end he seemed to give up or pass out, Chakotay wasn't quite sure, all he saw was his arms fall to his sides and his body slump.

The woman sighed happily as she finished her assault. As she was the only thing holding him upright, he tumbled to the floor, dry heaving.

"I'll see you tomorrow baby," Annika purred. She blew her victim a kiss before skipping off.

Chakotay tried not to think about what he'd just seen as he opened his mouth to speak. Damien's reaction wasn't really helping with that either. He decided to walk away before he did the same thing as him.

"I'll ask about his time travel adventure later," he thought aloud, fighting the lump in his throat.

Lieutenant Commander Paris' Log Supplemental: Voyager and the Leda have arrived at the Krralef homeworld, where we've been welcomed warmly for once. After the Leda assisted a ship of theirs, they extended an invitation for us to spend shore leave with them. However we can't stay too long as Harry's, acquaintance, claims to have a lead for us on our... um current predicament.

Tom had just sat down in his desk chair when the door chimed. "Come in!" he said just as he noticed one of his Captain Proton figures lying on the floor. He quickly shoved it under his desk with his foot.

The door opened, allowing Harry and the alien captain Tira to step inside. They stood in front of his desk, their shoulders were so close they would overlap if they moved. Tom made a mental note to pat his friend on the back when she left, for now a knowing glance was sent his way. The woman hadn't noticed, she was too busy looking around his office.

"Tom, I'd like you to meet Tira Levaugn. Tira..." Harry beamed.

Tira quickly turned her head Tom's way, "Mr Paris, I've heard so much about you."

"Same to you," Tom smiled, passing another knowing glance at his friend. "Welcome to Voyager."

"Thank you," Tira smiled back. She briefly looked around the office again, "I'm very impressed you managed to get your vessel back into space, despite her condition. It's true what they say about her."

Both Tom and Harry did the same as her, Tom seemed a little confused. Apart from the warp core still being a bit random, Voyager was in perfect shape. Harry however smirked, the Ready Room looked a lot different to when Kathryn used it, she used to store her stuff on the shelves for one. "Tom's office is always like this," he whispered to her.

Tira chuckled as Tom's face went bright red. To him the Ready Room was tidy, he had picked up all of his models off the floor thanks to the crash. The TV he liked to keep in the corner had been replaced and put in a safer spot. PADDs cluttered his desk but that wasn't untidy, it made him look busy.

"I see, well that just makes it more impressive. Voyager's a tough little ship," Tira commented. Harry looked outside at his smaller ship flying alongside them, his shoulders slumped. Tira glanced at him, apologetic at first but the pout she saw made her laugh again. "Nothing wrong with a little ship, Harry."

Tom cleared his throat, a smirk snuck onto his face. "I'm not touching that one. I must be growing up." Harry passed him a scowl.

"Anyway you're welcome to stay on our world as long as you like," Tira quickly changed the subject. "I understand though you're on a mission, so we won't be offended if you have to leave abruptly."

"I'm sure our crew will be more than happy to take you up on that. They could do with some time off," Tom nodded. "You are right though, we can't stay too long. Not that we had anything to really go on or a place to go for that matter."

"I'm afraid that my information may give you a direction to go, Mr Paris," Tira said sadly. She turned to Harry. "Though perhaps only one ship could investigate, while the other remains with us."

Tom smiled sneakily, Harry matched it with a narrowed eyes glance in his direction. "Well the Leda still has a warp drive that works ninety nine percent of the time instead of twenty, so..."

"You don't know if we even need it," Harry butted in.

Tira's eyes cast downward. "While you were gone we had a visitor to our world." She looked back up, glancing between the two men as she spoke. "They didn't answer our hails, or transport anyone down. They scanned the surface and left."

Tom looked very uneasy, he looked towards Harry again who was feeling the same as he was. "Hopefully it wasn't a Soft scouting party," Tom commented.

"I doubt it," Tira said.

Harry frowned at her. "Do you know the *Soft's*?"

"No, but it's safe to say they're not your *Soft* friends," Tira replied.

"Why?" Tom dared to ask.

"Our sensors got an image of the ship as it left orbit," Tira said as she fished a small PADD like device from her jacket pocket. She gave it to Harry first. His face whitened when he saw it. That only piqued Tom's curiosity.

"What? What is it?"

Harry slowly glanced towards Tira before turning his head back towards Tom. "It still could be Softmicron, it would explain a lot." Tom stared at his friend like he was holding back a juicy rumour, the suspense was killing him. "Did you get any scans of your own?"

"No, their shields were in the way. I don't think our sensors are as good as yours, Harry," Tira replied.

Tom made a squeaking noise as he grew more and more impatient and curious. The pair either were oblivious or they were doing it on purpose.

"Hmm, perhaps we should send a ship after it after all. Do you know where they went?" Harry asked.

"Yes but they have a two day head start," Tira replied.

Harry nodded, "warp?"

"No, but after two days they probably used it later," Tira replied.

Tom tapped his hand on his desk, "oh come on. I'm the fleet commander."

Harry snorted into laughter, he couldn't help it. Tira remained serious. "You said it yourself, the Leda is the better ship to handle this. Don't worry about it." Tom made that squeaking noise again. "All right,

all right, I was kidding. Here." He walked over to hand the pad over to Tom, he snatched it away as soon as he could reach. Tom's face did the same as Harry's when he looked at it.

"It definitely looks like shore leave is cut short," he said. Harry nodded sadly, he then glanced at Tira who looked a little sorry for giving the pad to them.

Craig felt like he had been awake for hours as he rolled over for the hundredth time. His eyes were definitely trying to force themselves shut, but it wasn't happening. Something was different though. Through the tiny cracks he saw a darker patch beside his bed. His eyes flew open.

Loud beeps pierced his eardrums, they were getting louder. It took him a while to figure out they were coming from behind him. He rolled over once again. The computer panel beside him was flashing and beeping at him. His hand instinctively reached out to press a button on it, shutting it all off. He lay there on his back for a few minutes before it occurred to him.

It was the fastest he'd probably ever sat up, it even made him feel dizzy. His attention went straight back to the panel, all he could see was the time on the display. "Crap, not again."

Voyager's Security Office:

All but one of the remaining trainees stood around waiting, some impatiently glancing towards the planet. James sat at his desk, drumming his fingers across the surface.

The doors opened, everyone looked at them expectantly but immediately sighed in disappointment.

"Hello all," Wesley greeted them cheerfully, obviously not noticing their reaction to seeing him. "Are we all accounted for?"

"No, we're missing Nathan," Jach replied.

"Oh well..." Wesley sighed. He perked up instantly, "perhaps we can have a brief quiz about the fighting tactics you all used from..."

"Somebody can update Nathan later, it's no big deal," James interrupted him to everyone's relief. "After the events of a month or so ago, I thought it would be a good idea to make sure everyone's still interested in the training before it continues. I wouldn't blame anyone here if they want to opt out."

Most of the group looked towards Jach, he looked nervous at first until he thought about why they probably did that. He sighed huffily and shook his head.

Wesley meanwhile looked a little upset himself, he directed it in James' direction. "We're a few trainees down and you want to lose more? If the towers incident proves anything, we're going to need more fighters, not less."

"You don't have to answer right away. Have a think about it and let me know. After shore leave we'll continue," James said in the trainees' direction. Wesley huffed as well, quickly stepping into his view. James groaned, "you can't force people to fight, Wes."

"But..." Wesley tried to protest. He felt the angry stares the trainees were giving him. "What if we lose them all?"

James shrugged, "then I'll have more time to do other crap, won't I?"

"Hmph," Wesley huffed again. He leaned on the desk, James of course glared at him for it. "I see what you're doing. You had trainees doing the job of a Chosen, your job, and you want more time to train yourself so you don't fail again." Most of the trainees winced and took a step backwards, Jach side stepped towards the exit.

James smiled, but not in a nice way. It was almost a Janeway smile. Only Stewart knew that was really bad news, he soon joined Jach. Wesley however smiled obliviously to this, in his head he was trying to be understanding. "You're right," he said, surprising everyone else. "Trainees, you can go. Wesley... perhaps you can tell me what I should have done."

Wesley smiled proudly. Meanwhile the trainees knew better, they left the office as fast as they could. Halfway down the corridor the trainees passed Nathan going the opposite way, Stewart stopped in front of him.

"Dude, don't. Run," he warned before rejoining the trainees.

Nathan stood for a moment, his head turned in the direction he was going and then back at the others. He made his decision quickly enough and headed in that direction.

Just as he turned the corner the nearest door swept open. He was about to walk inside when something human sized went flying through them and into the wall. Luckily it wasn't literally into it.

Nathan stared at nothing in particular with his eyes wide, his head slowly turned towards the open door.

"How about it Wes, are you up to bombing three towers on your own!?" James' voice yelled from the office.

Wesley only groaned his response before passing out.

"Didn't think so," James' voice said.

Nathan walked over to stand in between the door frame, thinking twice about what he was going to say. "I thought you were supposed to be a lot less angry and violent than you used to be."

"I am," James shrugged as he put his feet up on his desk.

Nathan's eyes widened briefly and he sighed loudly. "Wow, okay." He dared to walk inside the office. "So erm, dare I ask?" he asked as he pointed behind him.

"Just making a point," James said, shrugging again.

"Right," Nathan mumbled awkwardly. "So what else did I miss?"

James turned his attention to the computer on the desk, he dragged it closer to him so he didn't have to put his feet down. "Training is optional."

Nathan nodded, sighing loudly again. James rolled his eyes and started to work on the computer. "I thought it already was."

"Not to Wesley," James said.

Nathan walked closer to the desk, he had a feeling that it probably wasn't a good idea. "Are we going to talk about this?"

"Wesley got the point," James shook his head.

"That's not what I'm talking about," Nathan sighed again. James sighed instead, he shook his head. "Would you have preferred it if I didn't tell you that I was your sister's best friend?"

That got his attention, he looked up with another Janeway like stare and this one didn't have a smile on it. It actually made Nathan a bit nervous, but he stood his ground anyway and tried not to show it.

"I didn't realise that was a crime. Should I be mad at you too, cos at least I didn't..." Nathan said, quickly clearing his throat to cut himself off. "Come on. Are you mad that I told you, or mad that I was around when you were tiny?"

As he expected, he didn't get a vocal answer, he just continued to be stared at to death. He expected that to be literal soon enough.

"Or are you mad that I've brought up crappy memories?" Nathan sighed. "If it's that, I'm sorry. I didn't want to keep something like that to myself. I thought you would want someone to talk with, I know I did." He was starting to think that James was frozen in time, his deadly stare hadn't budged. He laughed nervously, "wow, I remember when Debs and I fell out one time and I came round to the house. Your dad looked at me just like that... luckily I'm not as wimpy as I was then."

The next thing Nathan knew the laptop was in pieces on the floor, the desk was broken in half and he had an extremely close up view of the stare that was making him so nervous. It happened in seconds and it scared the hell out of him.

"Out," was all James said to him.

"Right," Nathan tried to hide the stutter but it was no use. He quickly left as fast as his trembling body could take him. Once he was outside he realised he was very lucky to have made it out in one piece.

"This is the third time this week," Harry reminded him.

Craig rolled his eyes, which he felt was a big effort to do with how tired he was. He definitely looked it too. "I know."

Harry sighed as he leaned back in his chair, resisting the urge to put his feet up on his desk. Unlike Tom's Ready Room, his was neat and tidy.

"Take the shore leave Craig. Seriously," he said.

Craig frowned, had he missed something? He hoped he hadn't just nodded off while he was standing, he had already slept in. "What shoreleave?"

Harry pointed behind Craig at the window, he slowly turned around to see the planet they were orbiting. "Nobody told you? We're staying here for a few days. I was just going to ask you to come to the meeting at 1300, but we'll already have a Security guy there anyway."

"Oh. That's okay, I don't want any time off," Craig muttered.

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "Tough, it's not optional."

"But... wouldn't it be better if I went to the meeting and James had the time off. He has kids and..." Craig tried to protest.

"Everyone's having time off, the meeting's not going to take up that much time. Besides, you look like you'd nap your way through it anyway," Harry smiled.

Craig sighed, shaking his head. "If it's important, I'll be there." He turned to leave before Harry argued with him. "There's nothing else to do," he said as he went through the doors.

"You're an idiot. What else can I say?" Jessie mumbled. She sipped at her glass but kept her judgmental eyes on the person sitting in front of her.

"I know," Nathan whispered. His still trembling hand reached for his own cup, he tried to stop it as he brought it to his lips.

"How did you think that was going to go?" Jessie continued to chastise him.

Nathan gave up trying to keep his hand still and put his cup down before he spilt anymore of his tea. "I wanted a reaction, any reaction to the news. I just wanted to know where I stood." Jessie shook her head at him. "Maybe the dad part was like poking a Rottweiler, or maybe a shark."

Jessie waited for him to let go of his tea before she reached out to slap his arm, and hard too. He jumped a mile when she did it and stared at her with innocent eyes. The look in her eyes gave him a brief flashback to earlier. "You think? When did you figure that out?"

"Somewhere between the desk being stamped in half and the too close for comfort bit," Nathan replied.

"Only you would actually answer that question," Jessie grumbled after another head shake.

"I realised it as soon as I said it. At least your reaction tells me you know about it," Nathan said.

"Of course I do, you told me. Are you sure he didn't hit you?" Jessie asked with a raised eyebrow.

Nathan stared down at his hands, one of them went for the cup. "I saw him do it once." Jessie looked confused to say the least. "His dad. James cut his hand on a glass, that broke and he..." he sighed and shook his head. Jessie's eyes were a little wide at this point, she didn't know what to say now. "I should have told someone. The look his father gave me when he noticed I saw everything, well... I didn't dare. I wasn't just poking when I said that it reminded me of him." He looked back up at her. "You don't hit a kid that hard, not ever. How he got out of that without a mark, well I guess I have an idea but it was still a nasty..."

"Nath. If you knew then why did you bring him up? It's bad enough that you keep nagging him to talk about his older sister's death," Jessie asked him.

"Keep?" Nathan raised his eyebrow. "This is the first time I tried."

Jessie shrugged, "fine. I did warn you though."

Tom paced back to his chair, he leaned against the back of it. "I know we've all been looking forward to some time off, so I won't nag you to do this. However we do need a skeletal crew to man the Leda. All we need is three bridge crew, an engineer and possibly somebody trained in first aid, just in case."

"Yes cos that worked so well the last time," the Doctor joked. Nobody laughed.

"What are we looking for exactly?" Craig asked right after a yawn. Mostly everyone turned their heads his way. "What?"

Tom cleared his throat, "anyway, the Leda will only follow the trail we were given by Tira's people. From there we'll do long range scans, send out probes. I don't want to be lead into another trap, but we all need answers. As I said earlier, I won't order anyone to go. If you or any of your departments are interested in giving up holidays temporarily, report to the Leda's bridge at 1500. I promise you that whoever does will get their leave later."

"Even two days ahead of us we should be able to get a trace of their warp trail, if they went into warp at all. If we can catch up..." Harry suggested.

Chakotay shook his head. "I wouldn't. If it is a trap, the Leda will end up lying in a ditch for a month."

"Yes, that's what I said before," the Doctor huffed.

"That's a best case scenario," B'Elanna said. "Voyager may just hold up against it if it turns on us, but the Leda? You might as well get Tom to challenge an Evil James to a fist fight, and give him an old gay insult to top it off. The odds are the same."

Tom pouted angrily, "hey!" Almost everyone smirked at him. "The Leda's better than that. I still don't like being used as an example though."

"So what's the point of following them? By the time it goes back to Voyager, and they're both ready to go they'll be long gone," Jessie asked.

"It doesn't matter. We just need to know where they went after this planet. They have to stop again sooner than later," B'Elanna replied.

Harry nodded. "It would be pointless to do nothing and sit on a beach for two weeks. Besides..."

Craig quietly sighed and leaned back in his seat. His eyes shut for a few seconds. Harry's voice was fading into the background to him, that suited him fine. He turned his head to the side so he could watch the planet in the window. In the corner of his eye he saw someone walk behind the chairs parallel to him. As his eyes began to droop again muffled voices seemed to overlap one another.

Suddenly they stopped. Craig realised that he let his eyes close all the way, with a heavy sigh he struggled to open them once again. He could no longer see the planet, all he could see was a woman standing directly in front of him. He breathed in sharply, his heart skipped a few beats at how sudden she appeared. His chair recoiled backwards.

Doors shot open, footsteps stomped across the floor.

"Great, now I have to explain all over again," Tom complained.

Craig's eyes flew open, his head turned to the right to the source of all the noise. His heart was pounding and he could feel his forehead sweating.

"Just send me a message instead," James said while rolling his eyes. He turned back around and walked out.

Tom sighed into his hand, he looked to Jessie for help. "Fine, I'll tell him," she groaned.

"Great, so again 1500 on Leda's Bridge. We need to get going as soon as possible," Harry reminded everyone. Mostly everyone groaned and climbed to their feet. "We'll still have to figure out a shift system as we'll be gone for a few days." Almost everyone was gone at this point. "Perhaps a *one person takes a few hours break* system. What do you think Tom?"

He turned to look in Tom's direction, only he wasn't there anymore. "Huh?" The only person still there was Craig, he hadn't budged an inch and was still staring towards the window, with a look of shock on his face. "Dismissed," Harry whispered as he quickly shuffled out.

There wasn't a cloud in the pale turquoise sky, not that anyone could see that. The star shone brightly it hurt peoples eyes to even look up slightly. Despite that the heat wasn't harsh and a strong but warm gust of wind would fly by every now and then. It seemed like everybody was out and about today, each one of them enjoying the warm weather.

Kiara followed the crowd of people down a wide street filled with market stalls. She was starting to regret picking this town to visit. It was too busy and the street she was in was shaded from the sun. The occasional gust of wind was the only thing keeping her warm. She had overheard a few crewmembers talking about this infamous sun trap town with a couple of alien visitors, so she had dressed accordingly. As soon as the wind died down, goosebumps quickly reformed on her exposed arms.

Jessie had invited her to join her, James and the kids the following day. Kiara had decided to beam down early and have a look around. She hadn't decided if she wanted to or not, she felt like she'd be in the way, an outsider.

The crowds in front of her started to thin out, she could see more than just heads and shoulders ahead of her. Finally she felt some heat that didn't come from a gust of wind. The sun was able to reach her, the warm rays made the goosebumps on her arms shy away.

Now that it was quieter Kiara could see where she was, the path split into two, each one sloping down on to the golden beach in front of her. Most of the people she had followed were walking down the right path. She took a few steps forward, as far as she could, to rest her hands on the chest high stone wall ahead, separating her from the beach. A few other people were doing the same thing, chatting excitably to the people they were with.

A small smile tried to force its way through as she took in the view. The beach appeared to be a mile long before it reached the water. The crystal clear blue ocean seemed never ending and peaceful. Even the strong wind wasn't disturbing it. Kiara could just make out dots splashing around in the shallow waters.

"It's beautiful here, isn't it?" a man's voice beside her said. "When you live on a starship you forget, don't you? Makes it much more special when you see it again."

Kiara turned her head to the right to see if the voice was talking to her. It came from a tall man leaning his folded arms on the wall, a relaxed smile planted on his face. The gust of wind blew through his already wavy brown hair. His head tilted to the left, she saw his eyes glance towards her. For a moment she felt embarrassed, she worried he was talking to someone else and he had caught her looking at him.

"I usually come here when I have a lot on my mind as well," he continued. His head turned her way. "This'll be your first time here, huh?" Kiara nodded shyly, she had no idea what to say to this man or if she should at all. "I thought so. You're not carrying a coat."

Kiara frowned, she tried to look up at the clear sky but was almost blinded for her trouble. "Why would I?"

The man chuckled, "on a day like this the weather can turn in an instant." He lifted one of his arms to point towards the beach, "I'll bet none of these people are locals. Sure I'll come out and enjoy the sun while it lasts, but the last place I'd be is on the beach."

"Um..." Kiara mumbled, her eyes shifted side to side. He was making her a little uncomfortable. As if he sensed that he nodded and his smile faded away.

"Sorry. You just seemed like you needed someone to chat to, even a stranger," he said sympathetically. "And I thought you needed a warning."

"When you say a day like this, you mean?" Kiara asked in a wary tone.

Another gust of wind blew passed them, the man smiled again. "Warm strong wind, cold morning. Yeah sure the sun will come up and it'll be hot in the places it can reach, but later..." His right hand raised up to his head, he kept it flat and lowered it again for emphasis, "whoosh."

Kiara looked down at the clothes she was wearing, then back up at the man. Behind him she could see the cloudless sky, she shook her head in disbelief. "I'll be fine."

"I know, no one believes it until they see it," the man nodded. He straightened up so he could turn around to face her. "You're from Voyager," he stated. Her eyes widened a little. "Relax, I've met your ship before. Besides you're the only alien vessels in orbit."

"Oh, you were on that vessel the Leda helped," Kiara said.

The man shook his head, "no, I mean I met Voyager before. Long ago." Kiara blinked and stared blankly at him. "It must be ten years now. Your Voyager rescued me from a devastated colony, they brought me home."

"I see, well I wasn't bor... around then," Kiara carefully said.

"It's okay. I didn't expect you to remember everyone your ship has dealt with, let alone one from so long ago," the man smiled warmly. "It's just nice to see Humans again, they did so much more than save my life." He turned to walk back the way Kiara came, "I'm sorry I'm boring you. Enjoy your holiday, and don't forget to get a coat or something before the storm hits."

"What did we do?" Kiara asked him, stopping him in his tracks. He turned around with a surprised look on his face.

"Surely you've got better things to do than listen to me babble on further," he said.

"It's just my uncle mentioned something about it when we were on the Leda. He called some of you a bunch of obsessed stalkers," Kiara said, immediately widening her eyes afterwards. "Oh god, sorry. I didn't mean..."

The man approached her, laughing behind his hand. His eyes sparkled. "Your uncle said that? I'm sorry to him for that. My people as a majority are very superstitious and spiritual, so I should have known they'd make a fuss over what they did."

"But not you?" Kiara questioned.

"Well not exactly. What happened opened my eyes a little, but I'm still as skeptic as they come," the man answered. "If he's not sure why they made such a fuss over him, I can explain. A group believe that our planet will be in danger one day, and we'll be saved by the descendant of two aliens performing such a common ritual that it's a part of every day life. It's ridiculous."

"A common ritual?" Kiara said to herself. "Is this the much more you mentioned?"

"Ah you caught me, I guess I made a fuss as well," the man smiled. "Don't get me wrong, I'm grateful to your uncle for helping me out, but I'm not one of the people here who believes in doom prophecies and planet saving babies." He laughed at Kiara's raised eyebrow and wide eyes expression. "I wish I was joking. My people are petrified of death, they'll think of any little thing to calm themselves down, and one of them's believe in magic funerals."

Kiara seemed lost in thought. All she murmured was, "magic."

"Is your uncle still with the girl he did the ritual with?" the man asked carefully.

Kiara didn't answer right away, she was still thinking about what he said. She noticed him looking at her quickly enough, "huh? Oh... Jessie? Yeah, married now." Her eyes seemed to light up a little, it was subtle but the man noticed it.

"With kids no doubt," he nodded. "Dumb question. My people wouldn't have bothered him recently if he didn't."

The wind seemed to pick up, Kiara shivered as the temperature seemed to be a lot lower than the last gusts. The man gestured for her to look behind her with a nod, she turned around. The sky behind her was no longer clear, it was filling up with black clouds. Kiara looked back around and was blinded briefly by the star.

"I'd get to shelter if I were you," the man said. "I know a good cafe just on the corner." He turned to point behind him. "Take care of yourself... uh..."

"Kiara," Kiara said.

The man smiled, "Thy. I'll show you the way." His eyes darted up to the sky again, "we'd better hurry." He lead her back the way she came, she followed deep in thought.

Leaving Voyager behind in orbit, the Leda strayed to the right and immediately jumped into warp.

"Are you sure this is okay?" Tira asked from the First Officer's seat.

Harry beamed at her, "of course. I'm the Captain, remember?"

Tira looked around the Bridge, first she looked towards the helm. Naomi was busy humming and painting her nails. Tactical and Opps didn't look much better. Jodie was too invested in her bacon and unknown mulch sandwich to worry about her station. The Tactical officer looked like he was about to doze off. Tira directed a smile back at Harry. "I mean sending a small crew on the science vessel to investigate."

Harry's smile fell off his face. He looked a little offended. "Why do you keep insulting my ship?"

"Sorry," Tira just giggled. "If this ship is as battle hardened as you say it is, it just seems a little dangerous."

"Not really. The plan isn't to confront, it's to scout," Harry said. "We should be able to find out where it is heading. Then we can figure out what it's up to, we hope."

"Hmm, it seems very odd," Tira mumbled. "Perhaps you can tell me the full story."

Harry's smile returned, "why not?"

Craig mentally slapped himself awake, his head tried to shake the sleep out of him. His hand reached for the flask beside him but he quickly realised it was already empty.

"Whrl thaa," Jodie mumbled with her mouth full. She quickly swallowed it, her spare left hand went to the station. After a sneaky glance to see if anyone was looking, no one was, she wiped a few crumbs away from the display she wanted to look at. "Uh Harry, long range sensors are picking up a warp trail directly in our path."

"Yeah it doesn't make sense," Harry finished saying to Tira. He turned in his seat so he could look to his left. "Does it belong to *our ship*?"

Jodie glanced again at the display to make sure. "Yep it matches, no doubt about it."

Harry's shoulders fell, his skin began to tingle as dread settled in. "Okay, send the co-ordinates of the start of it to the helm, we'll match their exact course for now."

"Already done," Jodie said.

Harry's eyes shifted towards Naomi, she seemed to be focused on blow drying her new pink nails. He shook his head. "How long until we'd have to go to warp as well?"

"Fourteen hours," Jodie replied.

"Maybe then she'll be done," Harry tried to hide his worries with a smirk. Tira smirked as well and laughed quietly. "Maybe we should start the shifts. Who wants what? I definitely want to be here when we go to warp mind."

"Just in case Naomi's too busy doing her hair or make up instead?" Jodie questioned seriously.

Harry sighed, "yeah that too." He looked around at every one of his bridge crew, paying particular attention to Craig as he checked his empty flask again. "We'd have shorter shifts if we each take the

shorter two hours breaks, but that's not enough time to get a decent meal and some sleep." He sighed, "maybe having a five *man* crew wasn't the best idea after all." Tira smiled at him sympathetically. "Okay everyone. We get a three hour break one at a time, so that's twelve hour straight shifts..."

Naomi looked backwards towards Jodie, "is that good or bad?" Jodie shook her head.

"When it's Nathan's turn, someone's going to have to go to Engineering and cover for him, I'll cover bridge crew. The other problem is picking a commander for when I'm off..." Harry said, trailing off. He took another look at his bridge crew with a little worry on his face, Naomi was busy sticking her hand up with a hopeful look on her face. "Looks like it's Craig, if he can keep his eyes open."

"Aaw bummer," Naomi pouted.

"Okay, who wants the first break?" Harry asked everyone. He sighed in annoyance when nobody volunteered. "I know it's only 1600 and that would mean you probably won't be sleeping until seven-ish in the morning, but someone has to take the hit."

A clatter behind him made everyone turn their heads to the source, Craig looking around his station for something. He groaned and knelt down on the floor, emerging seconds later with his flask.

"Craig, see you at 1900," Harry smiled.

Craig frowned, he hadn't been paying any attention and didn't know what he was being volunteered for at all. "What?"

"Go home; sleep, eat, throw water in your face, or heck drink like a Janeway. Just come back in three hours, okay?" Harry smiled.

"I'm fine," Craig protested. He felt too tired to really get angry over it, but not enough to go home in the middle of the day.

Harry shook his head, "do you feel up to commanding this lot right now?" He may as well have been speaking German without a universal translator on, Craig shook his head to show his confusion. "These two don't want to be off, if Nathan goes then I'll have to cover him. Unless you want Naomi *hasn't got a clue how long twelve hours is* Wildman or Jodie solo in Engineering."

"Hey, why doesn't Jodie get an insult?" Naomi pouted angrily.

Harry glanced towards Jodie, she was busy pouring what looked like salad cream over a few slices of pizza. Harry had to look twice to make sure, not just because of the salad cream. "Where did she get that from?" He shook his head to try and forget about it, "cos you don't insult a pregnant lady, especially a related to Jessie one."

Naomi's eyes widened, "she's pregnant?"

"Ooh minty," Jodie giggled as she dug in. As if on cue the smell of the mint spread across the bridge, it definitely clashed with the bacon smell she had brought in at the beginning of the shift.

Harry groaned into his hand while Tira looked over at the girl at opps, her eyes were horrifically wide. "I'm guessing crazy cravings is just a Human issue, huh?" Harry said when he spotted that. She slowly nodded her head. "Lucky you." His head turned back to Craig, he had stubbornly remained at his station. "Craig please. I don't want you to be in dreamland if something happens while I'm in Engineering, covering Nathan. Go."

"Fine," Craig groaned. He stomped off into the turbolift, shaking his head. He had volunteered for the Leda mission to avoid having time alone with his thoughts, he wanted to keep busy. What really annoyed him though was he wasn't getting much sleep anyway. As the turbolift doors closed he felt his heavy eye lids do the same.

Craig figured he must have the route to his quarters memorised, as he didn't remember the walk to it. He didn't even remember lying down on his bed, he had only just realised he was lying there, staring at the ceiling. His head rolled to the left, his eyes catching a glimpse of the time. "I must put an alarm on," was the last thought he had before his eye lids fell again.

The first thing he saw was the digital clock directly in front of him as if it was staring back at him. 1702. He groaned as his right hand reached up to wipe the permanent sleep from his eyes. Like every night all it did was make his eyes even drowsier. Giving up once again he dropped his hand back on the bed by his side. As it did it brushed something cold, startling his hand enough back up.

"What, that's not right," he thought aloud. His hand reluctantly edged back down to his side. There it was again, his hand began to tremble. He dared to move it further to the right, his finger tips lightly brushed something cold and soft. *It can't be.* His head swung to the right. They were staring right at him, two white eyes within an inch away from his own. The face, frozen in a terrified gaze.

Craig barely suppressed a scream. All he could do was clamber backwards, get his feet on the ground and back away from his bed as far as the wall would let him.

"Excuse me?" he heard a voice call to him. Instinctively he turned his head back to follow it. Instead of the wall he could see a long stretch of corridor and a familiar blonde girl waving in his face. "Wakey wakey!"

"Wha... what?" Craig stuttered. Still shaking he looked around to where his bed was. All that was there was a turbolift wall. "How?" he whispered.

"Oh you're awake? You know people usually do that in their bed," Naomi's voice scolded him.

Did I fall asleep standing up, in the turbolift? That would explain why I didn't remember getting to my quarters. He sighed in relief, although his body still trembled violently. *Those eyes.* He grimaced. *That face.*

"You should go back to the bridge sometime today," Naomi groaned at him.

Craig nodded. He tried to get the image of the face out of his head. Knowing that his break was already over and he could do some work was a relief, it would make that so much easier.

He turned back around to face Naomi, she was scowling at him. "Sorry." With a tiny nod he stepped back a little to let her in the turbolift, she stepped inside while rolling her eyes. When he looked back he noticed somebody else standing much further down the corridor, staring directly at them. "What's she doing here?"

Naomi narrowed her eyes at him. "I'm standing right here."

"Not you," Craig shook his head as he glanced her way. She continued her judgmental stare anyway. "Forget it." He turned his body back to face the turbolift doors, expecting them to have closed by now. That's not what he saw. The door was still wide open, the person he saw at the end of the corridor stood directly in front of him now, staring up at him with her intense white eyes. Her long black hair tumbled to her shoulders lifelessly, it made her extremely pale white skin even whiter. She didn't move, she didn't need to.

One blink and she was gone. The corridor and turbolift too, he was back in his quarters, only they appeared sideways. It only took a second for him to figure it out, he pulled himself up to a sitting position. His head darted around, he quickly noticed he was on his sofa. He remembered now walking back to his quarters and sitting down. He glanced down at his shaking hands, he could feel his whole body trembling as well. His hands covered his face, for a moment he was afraid to lower them just in case he was still dreaming.

He was so tired of this. *Haven't I been punished enough?*

It felt like the whole ocean was falling out of the sky. Rain poured out of the black clouds relentlessly like water gushing over a waterfall. People in the streets were running for cover, most of them summer dressed tourists. There were few people wandering the streets dressed for winter and carrying around umbrellas, even they were rushing for the nearest shop, cafe or market stall.

Kiara seemed to be the only one walking around. She had only just left the cafe that Thy had shown her to and she was already drenched. Her clothes clung to her already cold skin, making her feel worse. At that moment she didn't care, she had somewhere to find. Ignoring the stares she was getting from passing runners, she carried on down the street.

Her body was shaking by the time she found what she was looking for. She only knew she was there when a few people ran inside carrying things like she needed. Kiara followed with a determined smile on her face.

"No that's okay, I'm not ready for a break," Nathan answered. His visual attention was all on an engineering station, he heard an irritated sigh behind him. "Twelve hour shifts with only three hours in between them; I'd get all the shut eye I could."

"I'm not tired," Craig countered impatiently.

Nathan finally pulled his attention away from his station, he turned around to look his guest in the face. The first thing he noticed was the large flask in his hands, reeking of strong coffee. The second was the bags under Craig's tired eyes. "Could have fooled me."

"I always look like this," Craig rolled his eyes, which was a bit more of an effort than he thought it would be. "Can I at least help with something?"

Nathan smiled at the younger man, the look of desperation in his face made him feel sorry for him. "I think I was the only person who worked here that knew what this place was for. Looks like no one's done anything in here since I left for Bridge work. I'm sure you'll find something to fix."

Craig quietly sighed in relief. "Great. Thanks." He moved off to find a station to use.

Nathan thought about asking him why he was wasting his break, but after his last heart to heart he decided against it. He turned his attention back to the station he was using. His finger was barely touching the panel when something clattered behind him, he quickly turned around again. Craig growled at himself, his hand slammed down on the station. Nathan wasn't sure what happened until he realised that he was no longer carrying his flask. He soon spotted it on the floor, lying in a coffee puddle.

"God, why do I keep doing that?" Craig grunted. "Idiot!"

Saying nothing to him would be the opposite of what Nathan usually did. Even with his encounter with James earlier fresh in his head, he decided to talk to Craig anyway. He felt he knew what the kid was going through. "Don't worry about it, here..." he rushed over to join him as Craig knelt down to pick the flask up. His head shook, telling him to not bother.

"I thought I was making some progress, but no, I still can't do anything right," Craig grumbled.

"Hey man, it's just some split coffee. It's not like Kathy's still around," Nathan tried to reassure him.

Craig continued shaking his head as he stood back up, his spare hand went to massage his forehead. "Forget it, just talking to myself." His attention went towards Nathan, a frown replacing his annoyed expression. "Kathy?"

Ooops. Nathan didn't mean to bring her up, he just wanted to stop Craig berating himself further. It worked for now at least. "The ex Captain of Voyager. Sorry, I'm used to calling her Kathy." Craig's stare continued, Nathan laughed nervously. "Spilt coffee. No? Did she finally kick that habit?"

Craig almost laughed, but he was too tired and angry to manage it. "Yeah right. You weren't even on Voyager when she was alive." His shoulders managed to slump even further, remembering Kathryn reminded him of how all of this anguish started. *You idiot, it started a lot sooner than that.* He shook his head again. "I'll clean it up later, okay."

"I was a friend of the family, sort of. Long story," Nathan said, wincing slightly. "Do you want to talk?" was all he could muster up.

"We already were, weren't we?" Craig muttered as he turned back to the station he picked.

Nathan sighed deeply. "Don't you remember? I've been through what you have, I told you. If you need someone to talk to or at, I'm here."

"I really doubt you've been through the exact same thing," Craig mumbled, he regretted saying that immediately. "It's just a few sleepless nights, hardly something you chat about."

"Girl best friend murdered, murderer getting away with it, difficult to get over. Sure, it's not the same," Nathan said. Craig didn't respond to that, he kept his back on him. "It's not like both girls share the same brother we both have to see all the time or anything. Oh wait." As he expected that got Craig's attention, he turned around with his eyes a little wider than they had been in a while.

"Mind saying that again? I have been hearing and seeing strange things lately," he said.

Nathan forced a smile. "Debbie was my friend who I lost, she was my Lena. Though I never did date her. I get it though, okay." He stopped talking when Craig's expression got even more confused. "Of course, you don't know who I'm talking about, do you?"

"Really don't. James only has two sisters and last time I checked Yasmin was still alive," Craig answered.

"Put two and two together, Craigy. I said that I knew how you felt," Nathan said.

Craig's eyes drifted to the left as he thought about what he was saying. He shook his head. "You're making stuff up. If James had another sister, surely he would have said something to hint at it." *Has he?* Craig quickly thought about it again. "Of course I don't hang on his every word..."

"It was a very long time ago. I was just a kid. I didn't know what to do with myself. I found myself snapping at everyone, I was so tired of people asking me if I was okay," Nathan explained. Every word was just making Craig more and more uncomfortable, he turned around like it would shut him up or block his voice out. Obviously neither happened.

"I blamed myself for not being there to stop it," Nathan continued. Those words stung him deeply, his heart ached. "I thought if I had said the right thing, or done something then things would have been different. I didn't want people to know, I didn't feel like I deserved to be felt sorry for. It was so easy to be this angry kid lashing out at the world. I couldn't be me anymore, I felt if she couldn't be here then I shouldn't either. I had to pay for letting her down."

"That... that doesn't sound familiar at all," Craig lied to him. He hoped he would buy it, he wanted this conversation to end. It was only keeping his nightmares fresh in his head. *She was staring at me, why was she staring at me? Why did she look...*

Nobody who had seen Craig over the last few months would believe him, even if they had only met him during that time. "It took my old man to quite literally slap me out of it before I started to see it another way. She was my best friend, she'd want me to be happy. I knew I wouldn't want her to be sad if I died instead. What happened had nothing to do with me, I was never going to be there to stop it. I had to move on for her as well as me. I wouldn't be the man I am today if nobody helped me. You shouldn't suffer alone."

"Yeah well my *old man* died before I was born, he can't help me! He never could," Craig snapped at him. He turned his head slightly to see if his outburst made Nathan back off, but he still had that same smile on his face. "I'm not a helpless little boy anymore, and I certainly didn't ask to be lectured. Okay

so back..." A hand slapped him across the back of his head, it wasn't hard but it still shocked him. "What the hell?" he swung around to face the culprit.

Nathan shrugged, "I did say literally."

Craig stared at him bewilderedly. Everytime he shared a room with this guy he did something that would convince him he had lost the plot. It was definitely hard to take the man seriously, no matter how close to home his story was. He thought about returning the slap when he saw movement in the corner of his eye, almost like somebody walking by. He turned his head quickly, noticing immediately that he and Nathan were still alone. Nathan looked in the same direction as him, frowning.

"You saw it too?" Craig thought he'd ask, but he knew the answer already.

"Saw what?"

Craig sighed, that was what he was expecting. He hoped for a different answer though. "You know what, I'm probably more useful on the bridge. See ya." He quickly walked away towards the exit.

Nathan followed him until he disappeared through the door, his sigh echoed around the empty room.

"You're early." Kiara's shoulders slumped, she turned to leave. "No, no... come in," Jessie sounded concerned. Kiara didn't have a clue why, she hadn't said anything yet. Jessie turned to go back into her quarters. "I'll get a towel," she heard her say.

"Oh," Kiara understood now. Her hand went to her soaking hair. The reminder made her shiver. She walked in, clutching something behind her back with her other hand. The quarters were empty, which she was surprised at. She expected at least one of the kids to be hanging around the living room. "Where is everyone?"

"Ugh, don't get me started," she heard Jessie's voice groan from another room. Kiara quickly had a look around the room she was in while she had the chance, she was glad she did as Jessie walked back in once she was done. A towel was passed to her, she nodded a thanks. "First Damien tried to beam down with tiny cages, probably rabbit look alike hunting," she shuddered at the thought. "Then apparently two morons thought it would be fun to go to Deck Thirteen and play hide and seek."

"The second one really that bad?" Kiara dared to ask as she tried to dry her hair.

"It is if they trigger the Thirteen and Red Alert alarms," Jessie sighed. "The kids are on this field trip so it was the first time in many years we've had a day alone."

"I see," Kiara nodded.

"Sorry, he should be back later. Of course that's counting on this crew behaving for five minutes," Jessie said.

Kiara fidgeted slightly, the object in her other hand was feeling a little heavy and it was awkward to hold it behind her back any longer. "I wanted to see you too."

That took Jessie by surprise, "me, why?"

"Well you're a witch, right," Kiara stated.

Jessie tried her best not to laugh, "barely. If you want to age quicker or borrow Slayer power then I'm your girl."

"I just wondered if anyone's tried..." Kiara wanted to ask directly but changed her mind half way there. She shook her head angrily, her hand was starting to ache. She instead brought the object she had been hiding to her front and hovered it in front of Jessie. "Dumb question, forget it."

Jessie looked down at the object, which was a large and old dusty book. Noticing that the girl's grip was shaky she took it away for her. She only then noticed the title of it. Her eyes drifted up to stare at the girl in front of her, she saw the determination in her eyes but the rest of her looked worried.

"Where did you get this?"

"Does it matter?" Kiara avoided the question. She couldn't for long as Jessie's stare reminded her of a strict mother, she imagined her using it on her kids and she shuddered slightly. "The Krralef homeworld, in a library."

"It's in English. At least the title is," Jessie didn't believe her.

Kiara shook her head, "it is now." Jessie kept that gaze on her, Kiara knew she was no match for it. "New month, five times to use my powers again. Translating seemed minor enough."

"Why would the Krralef's have a book like this?" Jessie questioned as she glanced back down at the book. She didn't dare open it, the cover alone gave her the creeps.

"You of all people must know why. They believe in souls and afterlives," Kiara answered. "I mean you did do a ritual to transfer souls to another place, didn't you?"

Jessie sighed as she placed the book down onto a nearby table. "I don't like where this is going." She turned back to her. "It was a funeral rite more than anything else, and I was told I can't do the same thing again."

"Neither can James, right?" Kiara seemed disappointed, her head dropped.

Jessie nodded, "right."

Kiara's disappointment faded away like it wasn't real, she looked back up at her with optimism in her eyes. "Yet you're here."

"What does that mean?" Jessie almost snapped, but she kept her voice calm.

"He did a ritual to swap you and Unu when you died," Kiara replied.

Jessie's eyes widened and her head shook slightly. "It's not the same thing at all. It was a completely different ritual."

"Exactly. There isn't just one way to do things," Kiara said.

"Maybe, but it doesn't mean that another way is right," Jessie stuttered. "I don't want to hurt you, but you can look at your grandfather for an excellent example of that."

"It also doesn't mean that it's wrong either. Why can't you do this so called funeral rite or the resurrection spell again? Who decided that? What harm is it to try?" Kiara argued, her voice rising with every sentence. "Those rules are only there to stop people doing them over and over again. If it was actually impossible, there wouldn't be other ways of doing the same thing."

"But they're not the same thing! The ritual itself was different, the end result was also different. If they were the same those two colonies would be habited again, or I'd have stayed dead," Jessie tried to convince her.

"How do you know the ritual to bring you back was different, and how..." Kiara tried to ask.

"Because if James did the same thing as that first ritual, I've got a few questions to ask him," Jessie muttered. "And a divorce to organise."

Kiara didn't understand what she meant by that. "Huh? What the hell do you do in that ritual?"

"Something I'm sure your mum wouldn't want you to do bring her back, or ever," Jessie awkwardly replied with a shrug. "How old are you now?"

Kiara shook her head, she thought she got it. "That explains the sired by death prophecy... anyway! My main point was how did you know for certain what that first ritual did?"

"I'll never know, but that's besides the point. The whole idea of it was to help dead people move on, not move back," Jessie answered.

"Well I do," Kiara said. "They have a lot of books on the matter, and Thy was right, this is a species that is afraid of death. They've thought of everything." She reached for the book, but Jessie got in her way just in case. "That so called funeral rite transfers a soul from their body to the next life, whatever the hell that is."

"So? That's of no help to you unless you're just after revenge," Jessie pointed out. "Besides you're too young for that ritual, and I doubt you have anyone to pair up with for it, it can't be just anyone."

Kiara's face fell, she looked down sadly. "You're not listening to me. I don't want to do the exact ritual."

"Then what do you want? You bring this *death and resurrection* book to me, ask me all these things and..." Jessie said.

"I miss her," Kiara butted in with a hoarse voice. Her throat tightened and throbbed. "This Ylara girl gets to get on with her life and what happens to me?"

Jessie's eyes closed for a moment, her head slumped down a little. She stepped forward to place a hand on the girl's shoulder. "I know it's easy to blame her, but she's just as innocent in this as you are."

Anger chased away the tears before they even formed. Kiara scoffed and turned away. "Oh boo hoo, she gets to live again. My heart bleeds."

"Live in a strange, alien environment with people, like you, who blame her for something she did when she wasn't herself," Jessie tried to say softly. That didn't work, Kiara bit her lip and her eyes flashed. "Nobody will blame you for that. I just want you to think about what you want to do."

"What does it matter? You're not going to help me anyway," Kiara muttered angrily. She dumped the towel Jessie had given her onto the nearby chair and headed for the door. "I figured you would, you wouldn't be here if it wasn't for people who loved you so much they'd do anything. Anything to save you. Twice. I guess you don't owe them anything."

Jessie quickly chased after her, she grabbed her arm before she could leave. "Don't you dare!"

"What?" Kiara snapped.

"Guilt trip me. I just don't want to see you get hurt, and I especially don't want you getting mixed up with something as dangerous as that," Jessie answered, pointing back at the book on the table.

"Don't worry about it, I can't. Without a witch it's just an idea," Kiara spat. "I'll find another way." With that she pulled her arm away and stormed out of the quarters.

Jessie sighed and shook her head, her hand reached up to her commbadge.

"Ah ha!" Everyone in the room jumped out of their skin. They quickly turned around to see who it was, they all groaned when they did. Annika stood at the doorway with her hands on her hips, staring fiercely at them. It was hard to take seriously with a white tank top and extremely tiny black skirt on. Her blonde hair was tied up in a very loose pony tail there was barely any point in it. She turned her

head to one side and then the other, swishing her hair around purposely. "Has any of you seen my schmookums?"

Harry quickly shook off the horrible image, "what are you doing here? This is a skeletal crew only."

"Schmookums?" Craig muttered. It was the first time in a while that he was wide awake. Right now he preferred the alternative.

"Mmm hmm," Annika giggled. "Not you darling." Craig tried his best not to dry heave. Annika posed with her right hand level with her chest, as if it was waiting for someone to hand her something. "I'll just take a look around."

"There's no one else here," Harry tried to stop her. It was no use, Annika was already investigating every nook and cranny on the Bridge.

Tira wasn't sure why everyone was panicking at this point, she did though wonder why a member of the crew was wearing a belt with nothing underneath it.

"You know what," Naomi complained just as Annika walked up to her. "Can I start my break early after all?" Her eyes widened as the crazy ex drone bent over and looked underneath the console.

"If you don't, I'll steal it from you," Harry stammered. Naomi didn't wait for him to finish, she was already running for the turbolift when he had. He sighed and looked over at Craig. "Bet you wished you took your three hours." He nodded.

Annika peeked under Jodie's station. She struggled to swallow the food she was eating as the drone had decided to do it right next to her, giving her a horrible view. "Oh!" she jumped up, that didn't help Jodie's nausea either. "How silly of me."

She ran for the Ready Room so fast it was like a blur. Once Harry put the two and two of Annika disappearing and his door opening together, his eyes widened in horror. "Oh god no!"

"We're not capable of having a completely serious episode, are we?" Jodie asked once she forced her food down.

Craig nodded and weakly smiled. "I'm okay with that, sort of." Jodie shook her head in disbelief and returned to her pineapple and mushy peas icecream. He meanwhile pulled a disgusted face, he was very grateful that the smell of it hadn't wafted over to him yet.

James paced the quarters while Jessie looked on with worry. Her eyes kept averting to the book still on the table. Every time she did it filled her with dread.

"Do you know exactly what she was going to do?" he asked.

"No. She mentioned the death ritual, the Halaliyla or whatever it was called. Either way it's not good," Jessie answered. "She said she needed me for it."

"I wonder if the Q's knew about this before they sent her back here," James thought outloud.

Jessie felt even more uncomfortable, she folded her arms tightly. "You think that her minor powers is all she came back with?"

"Hope yeah," James nodded.

"Why train her to avoid causing calamities when she's upset if they were going to take her bigger powers?" Jessie questioned. She winced, she wish she hadn't thought of that.

James stopped his pacing, he turned to look in her direction. He mostly matched her worried expression. She inhaled through her gritted teeth, pulling a face as a silent sorry. "You said that she came back here against their will."

Jessie nodded, "they struck that five minors a month bargain, so hopefully that's all she gets after all. They didn't expect her to leave on them after her training."

"True," James sighed a little in relief. "We still have a problem though."

"She'll probably accuse you of being a hypocrite if you try to stop her," Jessie pointed out.

"She'd be right. The thing is her and I are very different," James said. "If she succeeds she's got to live with killing someone. I was already way ahead of her on that one." Jessie shook her head and rolled her eyes. "Unu and Ylara are not the same. Ylara can't be tossed aside for someone else, even if it isn't her body. She didn't plan to take it in the first place."

"Either way one of them will be dead. Kiara is obviously going to pick her mum," Jessie said, glancing down at the floor. "Wouldn't you?"

James sighed, his eyes squeezed shut as he slowly nodded. "I don't know. If it was another case of an evil and mad person stealing her life intentionally; no hesitation. Killing Ylara though, someone who was forced into this mess, how is that any different to Chakotay's different attempts?"

"You could have gotten yourself killed in your attempt to bring me back, leaving at least Duncan an orphan," Jessie quietly reminded him. "We all have a price, a different line to not go over. Whether a person crosses it, depends on them. I doubt you'll convince her to stop with your line hopping experiences."

"Not doing it would have made Duncan and Sasha orphans later on anyway, and turned their lives into an endless battle for survival," James said, wincing slightly. "At least that's how I justified it then. Obviously I did want you back, that was a factor but..."

Jessie smiled as she climbed to her feet. "You don't have to convince me, I know that. Kiara might not, and even if she did she'd have her own reasons. Just like you did."

James smiled as well, he laughed bitterly and briefly. "Do you ever miss the days when our biggest problems was Damien or other idiots like the Kazon?"

"Don't tell me you do," Jessie laughed behind her hand. James lightly shrugged in response. "Are you still going to talk to her?"

"I should but after this, I haven't a clue what to say to her," he replied. "I can't let her do this. I miss Lena too but the price is too high. I know better than anyone that those regrets are not easy to live with. Right now Kiara probably thinks that it's worth it but she won't later." His head turned towards the window, "would Lena want it this way? Would she even want to come back? She didn't enough to fight it in the first place."

Jessie sighed sadly as she slowly walked up to him. "Maybe you should say that." James' attention went back to her. "Kiara didn't know what pain Lena was in after she left. Maybe if she knew she'd think twice."

"I don't want to hurt her though," James said quietly.

"Yeah but if you don't, it won't be just Kiara who'll be hurting. They both will and so will you," Jessie whispered back.

James shook his head. "I can't even talk to you about some stuff, how can I talk my niece out of doing something like this."

"You mean Debbie?" Jessie asked carefully.

"Yeah," James nodded slowly. "And something else. I can't keep it from you but I don't want to hurt you either."

Jessie looked a little confused, she couldn't think of anything. Randomly her chat with Kiara popped into her head, "what you had to do for the bringing me back ritual?"

James frowned, "no." His eyebrow raised, "huh? Why would it be that?"

Jessie could feel her cheeks burning a little, she shook her head. "Stupid brain," she muttered to herself. "It was just something I was talking about bef... forget it. You wouldn't have done that." James' eyes drifted to the right as if he was checking to see if anyone else was witnessing this. "Ugh, somebody got me thinking that the ritual was the same as er... another one. I blame the hormones."

"Ookay," he said in a worried voice. "No, it's nothing like that."

"You don't even know what the *like that* was," Jessie commented, sighing in relief. "Thankfully."

"No, I definitely haven't a clue what's going on," James honestly said. "I don't know if I can tell you now."

Jessie groaned more at herself than anything else. "It sounds important though."

"It is," James said.

Jessie returned her attention towards the book. "It can wait. Go, talk to her." She turned her head back. "I'll have a look at that thing and see what she wanted me to do, at least then we can rule out her trying to get someone else to do it. I mean I'm not the only witch on the ship, am I?"

"No, that's my favourite picture of my mommy....er and dad," Harry complained.

Annika tilted her head at the large photo frame hanging on his wall. She soon got distracted by something else nearby, much to his relief. Once again she was so fast he didn't really see her until she reached her target, this time his desk. All he saw to his misfortune was the barely covered by a skirt bum sticking out behind it.

"Ugh, why did I ever like her again?" he gagged.

Annika dashed over to the nearby wall, gazing intensely at it. Her hand curled into a fist and tapped the wall a few times. Next thing he knew she was at the bookcase nearby, using her finger to poke every book in it.

"What did you say you were looking for again?" Harry dared to ask.

"My shmooky pooky," Annika cooed at him.

Harry tugged his collar nervously, "er, is that your pet hamster or something?"

Annika frowned at him like *he* was the one that was insane. "No, my honey bun. My one true love!"

"I doubt you'd find him in my book collection," Harry stammered. Annika continued her stare, she even continued it as she turned completely around to leave. It freaked him out. "Or in this universe," he said very quietly.

Ylara rolled her eyes just before the door *slammed* in his face. He immediately went to press the door chime again.

"Go away!"

Damien didn't take orders from anyone, he gave them. At least that's what he told himself. His finger hammered the chime over and over again. Finally the door opened again. Damien opened his mouth to speak but a fist flew into it instead. He heard and felt his jaw crack as the corridor span around him.

The next thing he knew he was waking up on the floor with a headache and an audience.

"Ten minutes, pay up," Tom cackled, holding his hand out.

James rolled his eyes, he just slapped the hand instead. Tom's lip trembled as it felt like all the bones in it shattered, he looked at it to check.

"That was more like fifteen and you know it," James said with a smile.

Damien groaned as he pulled himself up into a sitting position. "Voyager's command team doing what they do best? Sod all."

"Ooph, big talk for the villain lying on the floor with a boo boo," Tom tried to gloat, one movement of his hand made him wince in pain. "Jesus, why?" he growled in James' direction.

"What did you do this time?" James asked, ignoring Tom's whimpering.

"Typical girl, still stropping over nothing. Obviously she..." Damien decided to answer.

James nudged him out of his way with his leg, making him topple over again. "Don't care." When he pressed the door chime, both Damien and Tom moved a bit further back. "It's not Damien."

The door quickly opened and Ylara stepped to stand in the doorway. Her arms folded and she did a Janeway scowl in Damien's direction. "He's still here? I thought I sorted that out an hour ago." Tom tried his best not to laugh but he may as well have been trying not to throw up Neelix's stew.

"Forget him. Have you seen Kiara?" James questioned.

Ylara's scowl disappeared and was replaced by a concerned frown. "No. Why?"

"Good. I'd avoid her if you see her. I have no idea what she's capable of," James said the last sentence hushed. A laugh behind him told him it wasn't hushed enough.

"Oh don't tell me you're protecting your sister's murderer," Damien snickered. He pulled himself back to his feet, wobbling slightly. "I misjudged you, you're a piece of work."

James didn't even bother turning around to glare at him, he just shook his head. Both of Ylara's eyebrows raised and she nodded with a *now you know how I feel* smirk on her face.

"He's got a point," she said with disgust in her voice. "Surely you should be taking your sister's daughter side."

"I am," James said. Damien was about to speak again when Tom elbowed him in the ribs, shutting him up. Ylara nodded a thanks. "I'm doing this for her own good as well. I don't want her doing something she'll regret."

"Says the master," Tom blurted out. Blurting that out earned at least a glare but he got nothing. He knew better than to think it was never ever coming. Slowly Tom slinked away before anything happened.

"I'll watch out for her, but I have no idea what a half Q can even do. What should I expect?" Ylara questioned.

"Well, that's the problem. At the moment I'm not sure either," James replied honestly.

Damien snorted to himself, "trouble. Big trouble. I'd be afraid if I were you. Not that I would be either you or afraid." Both James and Ylara directed their own deadly death glares in his direction. He shrugged and walked off.

Harry's hair stood more on end than usual. It seemed like he hadn't noticed yet but the rest of his bridge crew had. He wondered why Naomi had come back from her break and immediately laughed in his face.

"Did you take Craig's hours as well as yours? It's 2200," he tried to ask over the noise.

"Duh!" Naomi giggled, her hand reached up to fluff up her hair. "Some of us try to look presentable."

"Some of us don't need five hours to do that," Harry retorted. Naomi continued laughing as she returned to her station. Only then he noticed chuckling coming from elsewhere. "What?"

Once his body swung around to face the two other stations, the noise stopped and the one responsible put her serious face on. "What, what?" she asked innocently.

"Hmm," Harry wasn't buying it. "I'm taking my three hours now. Craig, you're awake now right?"

Craig shrugged his shoulders. "After what I've seen I'm never sleeping again."

Harry's whole body shuddered at the memory. It certainly must have scared Tira off as she had left while he'd been keeping tabs on Annika. "Yeah," was all he could muster.

Jodie burst into giggles again, this set Naomi into another fit of her own. "What happened while I was gone, did she take her top off or something?"

Jodie tried to calm herself down so she could answer. "All I know is his hair was a lot, shorter, when he followed her into his office."

Craig briefly looked up from Tactical and back again. He was confused when he saw a tuft of black hair barely peeping out above the command chair. "I thought you were going on break now, Harry."

No answer.

Craig glanced up again, this time the chair appeared empty. *Maybe he's going now.* To make sure he looked around the bridge but all he could see were the two girls. They both were blonde so it couldn't have been them he saw. *Great, I must be dozing off again.* Without looking he reached for the flask, thankful he didn't knock it onto the floor this time.

Steam greeted him once he opened it. He didn't care, he had to stay awake. The contents burned his mouth, even singeing his throat. Half of the large flask was gone within seconds. The caffeine was going to take a lot longer than that to kick in so he tried to concentrate on his work.

Even with his head down Craig sensed one of the girls approach the front of his station. "What is it?" Once again nobody answered him. A groan escaped his lips. "If you want something to eat or something, just go, I really don't care."

"We wouldn't even ask Harry's permission, right Jodie?" Naomi laughed. Craig frowned, her voice seemed too far away to be in front of him.

"Totphly," Jodie mumbled back through a mouthful of food. *My left. Then who's... ohno.* He didn't dare look up to see who really was standing in front of him. He could still see the shadow of them looming over his station and feel someone watching him. His hand quickly reached for the flask, desperately hoping that finishing it off would wake him up. It wasn't where he thought he left it, his hand continued to feel around for it.

Just as his fingertips brushed the side of the flask, it was gone again. A light clatter to his left and slightly in front of him confirmed that. The feeling of being watched grew more intense, he swore he saw the shadow grow. His eyes closed tightly, hoping that when he opened his eyes he'd be awake again.

His head raised, he dared to open his eyes. Nothing. Everything appeared to be normal. The first thing he checked was the spot he had put the flask. To his relief it was where he left it. "Thank god," he whispered to himself.

Now that, that was over he returned to the very little work he had to. His attention went a little to his left to monitor the trail they were following. Something black higher up caught his eye. He didn't move his head, his eyes slowly looked up. That little tuft of hair above Harry's chair was back. This time he couldn't tear his eyes away, he hated himself for it as it began to turn. Now he could see flesh; a nose, then lips... slowly turning towards him. They definitely didn't belong to Harry.

His body trembled, he tried to force his head down but it wasn't obeying. All he could see were those eyes, those penetrating white eyes looking right at him. He tried to close his own again. He had to wake up, he had to. *Why is she doing this to me?* He opened them again. Nothing had changed. The sound of the flask hitting the floor again was deafening, every other sound around him sounded distorted. His eyes felt like they were burning as the face seemed to get closer and closer, the surrounding scenery blurred. The eyes were the only thing he could see as it rushed at him in a flash. Suddenly it all went black.

"Do you think he'll snore?" Naomi's voice asked over the darkness.

"He's not sleeping, he was talking to us before," Jodie's voice groaned.

Craig reluctantly opened his eyes, he kept his head down just in case it wasn't over. He tried to speak but his voice seemed to get caught in his throat. He wondered what he had to do to stop whatever was happening. A sigh managed to get through the frog in his throat as he thought, *"do you really hate me that much?"*

She had wandered the town for hours, her mind raced back and forth. Without realising it she had found herself back where she started the day; standing behind a wall, staring out into the vast ocean. Only this time the sky was dark as well as clear, the stars sparkled over her head. A cool breeze brought her back into reality. The calm ocean and serene beach didn't make her feel better, they both seemed hollow to her now.

Once again someone approached her, this time she decided not to humour them by even looking whoever it was in the eye. She was in no mood for anything anyone had to say. The person leaned over and folded his arms across the wall. Something told her that if she wanted peace and quiet, she'd have to leave.

"Neelix wants his commbadge back," a familiar voice confirmed her thoughts.

Kiara shut her eyes with a sigh. She still wasn't going to talk back.

"It would have been a clever idea if you didn't leave yours behind," the voice continued. He waited for a response, but he wasn't going to get one, she thought. "Maybe next time pick a Human girl crewmember. Talaxian commbadge, Human lifesign, big give away."

"I want to be alone, James," Kiara muttered. She regretted saying it but she knew he wouldn't have given up talking at her anyway.

"No you don't, that's the problem," James said.

Kiara groaned, she really couldn't be bothered to talk to him or anyone. Every word seemed annoying to her, and it was just as painful to say something back. Suddenly she knew what to say that would

hopefully annoy him to leave. "Are you going to tell me that you've already tried to find a way to bring your sister back, and failed cos your wife can't even magic a rabbit out of Damien's hat? Cos if not, I don't want anything to do with you."

She waited, even moved her eyes to the right to see his reaction. She was quite annoyed to find him trying not to laugh instead of either leaving or getting angry. "God!" she growled, forcing herself to turn around to see if she was imagining it. She wasn't. "What's wrong with you? This is Lena we're talking about, it isn't funny!"

"No," James tried to go back to being serious. "No it's not."

"I'm glad you're okay with your sister's murder, but us Human's have feelings you know," Kiara grumbled as she turned back forward.

James sighed, he tried to pretend she didn't say the last part. "Has anyone told you the story?" He spotted her roll her eyes. "I don't want to make you feel bad, or to assume I'm pointing blame. That's the furthest from the truth, I just want you to understand something."

"Don't bother. The spell was a long shot anyway," Kiara cut in.

"You still need to hear it," James said. "It started the moment you left for the Continuum. Lena, she... she was a different girl." Her head dipped, he fought the urge to stop telling the story, it was for her own good. "You remember the time she found out who she really was? Her whole identity was stolen away from her, she struggled to figure out who she was before..."

"That wasn't my fault," Kiara hissed back.

"I told you not to think I'm blaming you," James shook his head. "My point is that you were the reason she was here in the first place. The only reason she existed. Then you were gone. Once again the Q had stepped in and stolen her life away from her. While she tried to cope with that her mother was taken as well, and then her father."

"So she only had you left. I can see why you'd think she wouldn't want to come back but..." Kiara cut in again.

James ignored that comment too, well at least some of it. "She wouldn't want to come back. It's not like she didn't have a choice. She wasn't the only one possessed by Evil Slayers; Jessie, Kevin, Sandi... they all came back from it." Kiara frowned, her head slowly turned his way. "Evil Slayers are weak, they're already lost when they turn. They turn cos they don't have anything to fight for. Each one of their victims fought to get their body back," James said. He tried to swallow the lump in his throat, "Lena didn't."

Kiara tried to blink away the tears forming, she also felt a lump in her throat as she tried to imagine the scene he was talking about. "I didn't... Why didn't anyone tell me that?"

"You didn't need to know. It seemed cruel," James replied. "But if you are searching for a way to bring her back, you need to know." He straightened back up, leaving one hand behind on the wall. "I dunno if it's easier for you to imagine that nobody has tried because they don't care. If it helps, go ahead. At the very least remember what I've told you before you do anything else."

"I wasn't..." Kiara stuttered. "I wasn't going to go as far as my granddad, you do know that right?" James nodded slowly. "I just wanted to make things right. We very rarely got on, we fought each other. I thought you of all people understood that."

"I do," James said. "This may sound a little sappy but bare with me." He cleared his throat and looked up at the stars, one of the large ones was moving slowly. He figured quickly that was Voyager circling the planet. "The Krralef's funeral rites are performed every few days to send the dead off to whatever comes next. The ritual itself is all about life." His head slowly turned back to look at her, "the dead can't rest until the living can prove it can go on without them."

Kiara sighed as she looked up as well, her eyes followed the moving light. "You're right. That was sappy."

James smiled and nodded, "damn right, but that's what they believe."

"Uh huh, but it was your sappy words," Kiara almost smiled. Something deep inside her stopped it for now. "You're probably right. She wouldn't want to come back to me."

"I never said anything like that," James disagreed.

"But you said the reason she didn't fight was 'cos I left. I'm back now, so..." Kiara argued but quietly.

James smiled sadly, "you two are a lot more alike than you think. She said something very similar to me."

The memory flashed in his head. *"Do you think she'll even want to come back after training?"*

"Of course she will, what kind of question is that?"

"That's what I thought, but then I figured I was just kidding myself. I was horrible to her, why would she come back?"

"You were both chucked into a really strange and unique situation. Lena thought she was a future you, you decided to be sisters instead. Then suddenly Lena discovers her real life was erased and replaced with yours, and her *sister* was really her daughter. I know Lena didn't handle it well, who would? I doubt she ever really hated you or blamed you for it. It was probably easier to lash out the way she did."

"Are you trying to make me feel worse cos of the stuff I said to you?" Kiara interrupted him.

"No," James replied. "Despite everything that happened between you two, you both loved each other. She didn't want you to go and would have fought the Q continuum to stop it. You're willing to kill someone to bring her here." Kiara shook her head as she bit her bottom lip. "I just don't want you thinking that she would hate being back 'cos of you. I think the opposite would be true. The real question is do you really want to be her only reason for being here again?"

Kiara didn't answer, she didn't have one. She had a lot to think about. James could tell by the expression on her face that it was better to leave her be for now, he turned to do just that. He stopped a few metres away with his back to her, "you're still welcome to join us tomorrow. I hope you will, but I wouldn't blame you if you didn't." Kiara slowly turned her head to look over her shoulder, he was already gone by the time she could see.

"You know you were a lot cuter when you were blond and less... grrr!" Naomi said. Her arm leaned across the station, she directed a wink towards him.

"More like snore," Jodie muttered. Naomi frowned, she didn't get it.

Craig however got it, he shook his head and rolled his eyes. "Shouldn't you be manning the helm. The ship won't crash itself."

"Oooh meow," Naomi giggled, her playful eyes continued to stare him down. "You should shave too. It just makes you look ten years older."

"You're one to talk," Craig groaned as he glanced back down at his station.

Naomi's eyes shifted side to side as her brain slowly tried to understand what he said. Her hand rose to check if she had any facial hair. Craig peeped at her briefly, he knew that thinking face would keep her quiet for ten minutes or more.

"She does have a point," Jodie commented. Craig's head turned a little so he could see her in the corner of his eye. She chose that moment to walk away from her station and over towards him.

"It's no big deal, the ship can look after itself. Who needs bridge crew?" Craig complained. He waited a bit to see if she'd notice the sarcasm and turn back. She didn't. Ignoring her he returned his attention to his station. "Shouldn't you be stuffing your face with some pregnant rubbish by..."

"You were a lot more interesting when you had your own personality," Jodie interrupted him. Craig only rolled his eyes and got back to work. "Not this fake tough guy act." He tried to concentrate but he noticed her walk around behind him. It was odd, but he figured pregnant woman can act strangely sometimes.

"You're not fooling anyone, you know," a different but familiar voice whispered in his ear.

Craig swung around with his eyes wide. What he saw definitely wasn't Jodie.

"Excuse me!" Annika's voice pierced through him. He was roughly pushed to one side so hard he fell onto his console. He then noticed Jodie back at her station and Naomi looking his way with dismay on their features.

"Did you see that?" Craig stuttered. They both nodded. He wasn't expecting that. In the corner of his eye he could see someone next to him, moving. It wasn't the same though, this movement seemed to be humming. "Oh," he groaned when he realised it was just Annika feeling up the walls next to him.

"Hmm," Annika sighed. Her leg lifted up slightly, everyone watching averted their eyes just in case. As they did they heard a loud thud. Annika put her foot back down. The poor wall now had a permanent heel imprint embedded in it.

Annika turned around, waving her right arm out. "Sorry to bother you!" Nobody knew what to say as she strolled into the turbolift like nothing happened.

The following morning:

It had been a long night for Kiara. She hadn't slept, she had tossed and turned for a couple of hours before giving up. The next few hours her mind had been racing through everything that happened yesterday.

Kiara looked around the quarters she had been given. She had arrived with nothing and she'd leave with the same, there was nothing for her to do here but walk out the door.

Her mind was made up.

"Well well, another room I haven't checked. Guess I'd better have a look around," Annika said with suspicion tainting her voice. Everyone on the Leda Bridge had gotten used to not reacting to whatever she was doing. Harry though couldn't help it as he heard his Ready Room doors close at the same time as another door inside it open.

"My bathroom!" he stammered. Abandoning opps he ran to stop her.

Tira stared after him with a bemused look on her face. "Dare I ask?"

"He probably hides porn in there," Craig replied.

Tira looked confused, she turned her attention to Naomi. She had the same look on her face so she shrugged.

"I mean the blonde girl trashing the ship to look for something," Tira said.

"I figured it was obvious," Naomi was still confused.

Craig groaned as he rubbed his tired left eye. "Let's just say if she had it her way, the series would be called Seventh Voyager. Just ignore her."

"Oh, I thought she was just batty," Naomi shrugged again.

"Please, she knows acting like her old boring Mary Sue self wasn't getting any scenes. Now that's she's crazy she's in the series a lot more," Craig pointed out. Naomi's eyes widened in horror. "She knows exactly what she's doing."

Harry screamed from the next room, "oh my god. Don't put your head in there!"

Everyone on the bridge cringed and pulled the same disgusted face. Each one shook it off more or less at the same time.

"Really?" Naomi had to ask.

Craig winced a little, "hmm, maybe it started out that way."

Voyager:

Tom strolled onto the bridge, his skin was a bright and sore red. The grin on his face was spread so wide it threatened to fall off his cheeks. "Ah, nothing like an early morning stroll on the beach."

James looked over his shoulder from the captain's chair, he burst out laughing and turned back around. Everyone else soon followed suit.

"What?" If Tom had blushed, no one could possibly be able to tell.

"Forget something, Tom?" James sniggered.

Tom frowned a little, right then he felt a burning sensation across his forehead. "Crappy... sunscreen." He tried to ignore the laughter directed at him and get to the point, anything to shorten his time there. "Anything to report before I go back on holiday?" James turned his head back around, a smirk still on his face. Tom had a feeling what he was going to say so he quickly butted in, "other than my sunburn!"

"Why would I, I've already done that," James said.

Tom groaned into his hand, the heat coming from his face made him pull that away quickly. "Why are you still here? I thought you were going to the planet."

"I am, but not at 0400. I wouldn't dare wake up any of my family at that time," James replied, his eyes widened slightly at the thought. Luckily though Tom was still in his sight, he couldn't help but snigger at him again.

"Ha ha, joke's on you Mr *Paler Than I Am*. Wait till you go down there," Tom huffed. "Wait, 0400? Why did Miral wake me up then?"

Several Hours Earlier, the planet:

The Torres-Paris family were sleeping in a tiny cabin they'd rented, which was only one bedroom. The sun was just peeping up through the cracks in the curtains.

Tom rolled onto his back, his mouth open so wide he was drooling. The noise that came from it would have woken the entire planet. Miral lay nearby in her cot, sending a deadly glare his way.

Present time:

"I don't know, babies do that," James groaned, he didn't really care.

Tom smirked back at him, "says the master."

James frowned as he turned his head back at him. "What, I'm a baby?"

Tom immediately got a little bit nervous, it made his skin cool off a little but his forehead felt a little clammy. "No er... I said that before, last night. Er the master part, not the baby. I just meant..." He stepped backwards towards the turbolift, "that you'd know about that, right. Hummm, bye!" James rolled his eyes as he disappeared into the turbolift.

"He has the same amount of kids as me," he muttered, shaking his head. "Idiot."

The second door to the Bridge opened, an extremely nervous looking Wesley stepped through them very slowly. He decided to remain next to opps. Nervous sweat started dripping from his forehead as he plucked up his lack of courage to say something. All that came out of his mouth was a squeaky, "James."

James turned his head around slowly, resisting the urge to laugh at the noise he heard. When he saw who it came from anger took over quickly. "What do you want?"

"Um," Wesley continued to squeak. He tried to clear his throat and relax his shoulders, but the next words he spoke sounded like a teenage boy's voice breaking on and off. "Miss Ylara said she would meet me two hours ago, she said it was urgent. Something about a powerful vampire."

"A powerful vampire?" James said, the anger was long gone. Now he was a little worried to say the least. He climbed out of his seat, this made Wesley take a step backwards. "Where is it, and what...?"

Wesley shook his head, "do not worry, she believes it escaped the ship during the crash. That's not what I'm here for." He cleared his throat again so he'd sound normal again, but it wasn't working. "She didn't show up." He didn't notice James' face turn a shade paler, he continued. "I went to her quarters, she definitely wasn't there. I then checked with the computer, it said she wasn't on the ship."

"Ohno. She wouldn't," James mumbled to himself. "Computer, locate Kiara Janeway."

The computer swiftly responded, "Kiara Janeway is no longer onboard Voyager."

"Damn!" James quickly headed for the turbolift, Wesley panicked and rushed through the door he was next to as a result. When he realised he wasn't going after him, he sighed in relief and stepped back out. "Ensign Redshire, keep an eye on the bridge while I'm gone."

"It's Reddshert, sir," the ensign at Tactical piped up.

"Of course it is," James groaned as the turbolift door closed on him.

The Leda:

The turbolift seemed to take forever. Craig sighed as it passed by another deck, tapping his foot impatiently. When the lift finally stopped and the doors opened he quickly stepped out of it, and began his journey down the corridor.

A few corridor turns later and he started to think something was wrong. The last time he had gone to Engineering the door was just around the first bend. He hadn't run into any doors yet, and only now he was starting to think about how strange that was. Shaking his head he turned on his heel and went back the way he came, eyeing each wall on both sides of him.

He swore he turned more corners than he had before, the corridor never seemed to end. Even on the opposite side to where he expected Engineering to be there were no doors.

Craig thought it would be best to stop where he was and calm himself down. His head was probably playing tricks on him or he was dreaming again. Once he stopped and closed his eyes the lights along the corridor turned themselves off, one by one. When he opened his eyes again he couldn't tell that he had.

The lights flashed on for less than a second, highlighting a figure in the distance. Craig shook his head, his whole body shook as well. The lights flashed again. This time the figure was further away.

"Stop it," he muttered, anger filling his voice. He had enough of this. The lights flashed on again revealing a face right in front of his own. His heart skipped a beat as the lights went off again. His heart continued to pound, the shaking throughout his body grew more intense. "Please, stop doing this," he begged.

As if they listened, the lights flickered back on. He knew it wasn't over, he could hear footsteps slowly approach behind him. There was no need for him to turn and have a look, Craig knew what he would see. It terrified him. Instead he kept on walking.

The presence behind him faded the further he went. He began to notice there were doors after all. *I knew it. Tricks. God, what do I have to do to make it stop!*

He chose the first door he came to. It groaned instead of opening for him. "For god's sa..." he groaned as well. His eyes then fell on the text printed on the door. *Deck Ten, Section Eight. Science Lab Five.* "What the? Ten? I asked for Deck Eight." It being the wrong room still didn't explain why the door wouldn't open or the doors suddenly appearing. He wasn't asleep. The gallons of coffee, that didn't end up on the floor that is, had saw to that.

Am I hallucinating? Or are these things really happening? Why do I keep seeing...

The doors finally opened, interrupting his train of thought. He wished they hadn't. Standing on the other side was the same familiar girl, staring at him intensely. Craig stumbled backwards, crashing into the wall. The girl slowly followed him. She turned her body around as she reached the centre, whilst still keeping the stare transfixed on him, blocking one of his escape routes.

Craig tried to look away, hoping that when he looked back she would be gone. His head wouldn't move though, all he felt he could do was stare back. Her lifeless eyes had only a tiny subtle hint of colour left in them, he hadn't noticed that before. They seemed to drift to her right as if she was looking down the corridor. Her right arm began to rise, just then Craig's head obeyed and he turned it away. His hands flew up to his face as his back slid down the corridor's wall, he couldn't take anymore of this, he badly wanted it to stop. For now his body all but had given up as it collapsed to the ground, head buried in his arms, on the cold floor.

"I'm sorry," was all he could say.

She had waited for far too long, time was a factor. The wait had left her a little impatient.

"Hmm it's been a long time. How's things?" a man's voice spoke.

Kiara rolled her eyes, she turned around to the voice's source. "What took you so long?"

"Forgive me. I still have to sneak around. Some people just don't forgive or forget that easily."

"Fine," Kiara groaned. "So do you know why I called you?"

The man smiled, "oh I have a good idea."

Nathan tapped his commbadge again as he entered the turbolift. "Andrews to Anderson." No answer. "Deck Ten," he told the turbolift.

It only needed to go down two decks so it didn't take long. The doors flew open, Nathan rushed out of them. He kept walking until he found what he was looking for, then he picked up his pace.

"Craig, what happened?"

Once again he didn't get an answer. Craig kept his head buried in his arms. Nathan could see that his whole body was trembling, he didn't want to startle him further by touching him. He knelt down in front of him to wait for an answer.

"It's all right, I understand. Sometimes it can be a bit too much..."

"No," Craig mumbled behind his arm.

"I don't mind skipping my break. You don't look well enough to cover for me," Nathan said with a supportive smile. Not that Craig could see it. "Do you want me to leave you alone?"

"No," Craig's mumbled reply was.

"You shouldn't be so hard on yourself. It can take a long time to get over someone you cared about," Nathan said. "I shouldn't have been so pushy before, I'm sorry."

Craig's head lightly shook within the confines of his folded arms. It lightly lifted up so his chin was resting on them instead "I was doing fine. Sure I was still barely sleeping but I was hating myself a lot less. Maybe that's why."

"Why what?" Nathan questioned as he moved to sit down beside him.

"She was suffering and all I did was make things worse for her. It makes sense that I suffer now," Craig mumbled. Nathan disagreed, he was about to tell him so but Craig continued before he could. "Maybe not right now. Why is this happening now and not months, a year ago?"

"Why is what happening?" Nathan had to ask, he wanted to help him.

"You wouldn't believe me," Craig said.

"I'm sure I will. I've been there," Nathan smiled sympathetically.

"I really doubt it," Craig muttered, his head turned slightly towards him. "I keep seeing her."

Nathan didn't look surprised, "yeah you will. It's your brain trying to re-adjust I think, make it easier. I'd see her in a crowd at school or..."

"No!" Craig butted in harshly, his head shook. "I actually see her."

"You mean Ylara?" Nathan winced. "Right yeah, that is different."

"Forget it," Craig sighed.

Nathan wasn't going to give up that easily. "When did you see her? Just now?"

"I said forget it," Craig muttered.

"You think she's haunting you or something?" Nathan smiled.

Craig turned his head and tried to glare at him. He was too tired, to Nathan there wasn't any difference. "Are you making fun of me?"

"No," Nathan responded. "I woke up one night and saw Debs standing at my window. I thought I was dreaming. The next morning I went down the stairs and there she was, standing on the bottom step. I remember running down the stairs to greet her but she vanished. My parents made me see a counsellor, they said it was just grief and lack of sleep."

"But you think it was a ghost?" Craig wasn't taking him seriously.

"No. The last thing Debs would want to do after dying is spy on me through my own window. She wouldn't have done that while alive," Nathan allowed a smirk, but Craig's stare made that disappear immediately. "It's like I said. I was missing her and my brain tried to cope by tricking me. Maybe that's what's happening here."

"So you weren't scared or anything?" Craig asked as quietly as he could. He didn't really want to admit to it.

Nathan allowed himself to frown. "Scared? No. It made it harder for me to get over her. First it was nice to see her but later it just hurt."

"Everytime I see her she's..." Craig said. "She's staring at me." Nathan nodded. "One morning I woke to find her..." he started to stutter. "Her corpse lying next to me." Nathan's nod stopped abruptly, his eyes widened and he stared at the other man bewilderedly. "Her image lunges at me, she appears suddenly. Her face is deathly, her eyes... her eyes are dead. She's dead."

"This isn't some nice vision of her that my brain's conjured up to make me feel better. If it is, my brain wants me to suffer."

"God," Nathan stuttered. "If that's the case then giving up and going with it isn't going to help."

"You ridiculed the idea of a ghost, but I know they're real. What if Lena saw me trying to recover and came back to stop it?" Craig stammered.

"I didn't ridicule the idea of ghosts. I just thought that Debbie would want me to get better, and appearing would make it worse. Surely Lena would have noticed what her presence was doing to you, and stop. She'd know not to *nap* in your bed, I mean jeez," Nathan said. He could tell Craig wasn't convinced. "What could you have done that was so terrible?"

"I..." Craig wasn't sure how to answer. "I loved her. She was with another. I didn't trust her and... I pushed her to him. She had lost her mother, her daughter and her father had lost the plot. She needed my support not my jealousy. I put my feelings before my friendship with her." Nathan sighed sadly, some of what he said was familiar to him as well. "I didn't kill her, I know, but I didn't help. I should suffer for that."

"Sounds to me like you already have, over and over again," Nathan commented. "I doubt these visions will stop if you continue. You'll stress and or scare yourself into an early grave. You don't want that." He placed a comforting hand on Craig's shoulder. He climbed to his feet. "At least I hope you don't."

Craig slowly looked up at him. There she was again, standing at a distance behind Nathan, staring towards him. Nathan noticed his eyes widen slightly, he quickly turned around to look behind him and back again.

"Again?" Nathan asked. Craig lightly nodded. "Definitely not a ghost cos I didn't see anything." She turned around and started to walk away. "What's she doing?"

"She's..." Craig scrambled to his feet. She stopped again, slowly looking back over her shoulder. She continued walking away. Craig slowly walked towards Nathan who was looking backwards again. "That was different."

"Do you get it now? I don't want it to go wrong."

"Of course. I just wanted to see if you're sure about this. The consequences can be disastrous."

"I have nothing to lose," Kiara sighed.

"But you will if it works, my dear. Have you thought about it?"

"Every damn day since I returned. Since when do *you* care about consequences and ethics?" Kiara argued.

"Hmm, since I've suffered from their wrath," the man answered.

"I've made my choice. Now will you help me or not?"

"Of course! I'd do anything for my little girl," the man answered with a smile.

Voyager:

Tom paced the bridge back and forth, trimming his fingernails with his teeth. He was still very much red but it didn't bother him that much. He didn't notice the new arrival to the bridge, so when she tapped him on the shoulder he jumped out of his skin. "Holy crap! James, why can't you stomp your feet or something..." he stuttered as he turned around. He was greeted by a glare.

"Do I look like a man to you?" Jessie snarled. She quickly looked at her hands, "they're tiny. How could you think..."

"No, I wasn't thinking. I just, he's always sneaking up on me," Tom stuttered. He tried to calm down, averting his eyes from Jessie's deathglare helped a little. "Any news?"

"James said something about the planet. Kiara was there yesterday," Jessie replied.

Tom looked a little confused. "Kiara? I thought it was Ylara that was missing."

Jessie was still a little annoyed about his mix up earlier. "Put two and two together Tom. If it's easier, try adding one and one."

"Okay, but surely Chakotay would be a suspect too," Tom said.

"Against Ylara, hardly," Jessie groaned. "Look Kiara's threatened to do the swap and we can't find her. Catch up sometime today!"

"Oh," Tom sighed. "It's not my fault nobody tells me anything!"

Jessie's eyes narrowed, "did you just snap at me? Remember what happened the last time you did that?"

Both of Tom's hands leapt up to protect his ears, he frowned as one switched to his nose and back again. "Oh god, too many grabbable things." He panicked and his hands went somewhere else.

Jessie pulled a very disgusted face as she had followed his hands movement. "I'm not going there, don't you worry."

"Your knee might," Tom said with worry.

"Stuart to Voyager."

Tom quickly turned to nod at the person at opps, which was Faye. She nodded back and pressed one panel. "Voyager here. Give me some good news."

"Well, I've found Ylara."

Tom and Jessie glanced at each other, she looked relieved but Tom didn't look so sure. "Are you sure?"

Meanwhile on the planet:

Ylara rolled her eyes as she lay back down on the beach. Unlike everyone else doing the same thing, she was wearing a dress and didn't have a towel with her. Her back, shoulders and legs were covered in sand. James stood beside her shaking his head.

"I don't know. I can't tell the difference between my sister and Ylara, you'll have to help me," he said.

"Idiot."

"It was a reasonable question after what you told me, okay!"

"She just lost track of the time," James said.

Ylara sat back up slightly, spraying his leg with some of the sand she brought with her. "I told him that I haven't learned your stupid English times, but he didn't listen."

"Why don't we just go with what I said. It's less embarrassing," James said to her in a hushed voice.

Ylara groaned and fell back again. "I came here to avoid all of this crap," she muttered to herself.

"Hang on. Surely you've attended meetings and stuff at particular times," Tom's voice stuttered.

"I doubt that," Ylara sighed. "I have to rely on your computer to tell me when lunch is, so knowing when to go to a meeting..."

"Would be exactly the same."

"Who cares? Only a nitpicker would and nobody reads this anyway," James complained. He tapped his commbadge and turned to look down at Ylara. "You notice the difference between you and everyone else here?"

"Yeah, they don't have someone pestering them," Ylara muttered her response.

"Fine," James said as he walked away. "Just remember..."

"If I see Kiara, I'll call. I know," Ylara groaned.

James stopped in his tracks and sighed. He turned back around to toss her his commbadge, she caught it with ease without even looking. "You'll need this. I'll be back later after I've looked around."

"Take your time," Ylara barely called after him, her eyes dozing off.

James shook his head and continued on towards the town.

"I'm afraid my powers are not what they used to be."

Kiara's eyes widened a little, "what? But you said you'd help."

"I will and I still can. I just need your help with something, otherwise the Continuum will catch me quicker."

"If I could do it myself I wouldn't have asked for you," Kiara grumbled.

The man opposite her gave her a chirpy smile. "It's a minor power, and it can be explained away to them later. You just have to do that one little thing and I'll take care of the rest." Kiara sighed, she looked very worried now. "Do not concern yourself, I'll take the wrath for you. What kind of dad would I be if I didn't?"

"You violated my mother by forcing her to have me, you killed one of my cousins out of jealousy, you caused the paradox that led to Lena's death in the first place. Not once have you apologised or even bothered to see me," Kiara rambled. "Yeah you're dad of the century."

The man winced, "well the last one wasn't really my fault. They banned me from seeing you."

"Ok so all the worst ones you have no excuses for?" Kiara said. "Never mind, I just want this over with. What do I need to do?"

"My powers are limited in range as well as in scope. Like I said, you could just tell the continuum that you only wanted to talk to her and suddenly..." He smiled again, "whoosh, oh what a surprise!"

"Right," Kiara nodded. "I wish I knew that sooner."

The man nodded, "I'll just prepare a little something we'll need when you do it. The less powers I use the chance of the Continuum noticing me will drop. Perhaps when I return I'll finally be referred to as my name." He was about to click his fingers when he remembered something, he quickly put his hand down and walked out.

Meanwhile:

Craig continued down the corridor, twisting his neck slightly so he could look around the corner he was about to turn into. He picked up his pace to get around it. Once he was he just caught sight of the girl he kept seeing standing at a doorway. She turned her head to look at him and vanished immediately.

Quickly he rushed over to where she had stood. He had no idea if he was supposed to follow her or not, or if what he was seeing was even real. Nevertheless he figured he'd get some answer if he went through that door. It only harshly beeped at him when he tried. That wasn't going to stop him, his hand reached up to the panel beside it and tapped in his Security code to override it.

As soon as he stepped inside he had more questions than answers. He asked the first one that popped in his hand, "Kiara?"

The planet:

James walked back down the beach to where Ylara was lying earlier. He kept turning his head side to side just in case he remembered wrong or she had moved. Once he reached the spot he was aiming for he found a crowd standing around instead.

"What's going on?" he asked.

A few people turned his way and back again. One woman decided to approach him. "The girl that was here, she just vanished."

"What?" James felt his blood run cold. "Vanished how?"

"It wasn't like any transporter beam I had ever seen," another person said without turning.

The woman nodded, "it was like a white flash."

Without really thinking James' hand flew up to tap his commbadge, which he didn't have anymore. He groaned as soon as he only tapped his chest. "Crap."

Annika was back staring at the photo on Harry's Ready Room wall, her hands back on her hips. "Scuse me." Before anyone could stop her she snatched the frame off the wall and tossed it to the floor. As expected the only thing there was a hook. She dusted off her hands and took another look, slipping her hands on her hips again.

Poor Harry reclaimed his photo from the smashed frame, sighing sadly. "See, I told you there was nothing..." A loud bang interrupted him, he looked up to see what she did now. As if frozen in time, Annika had her fist touching the wall and her upper body was slightly crouched. "What now?" To answer his question a crack slowly formed from her fist and spread across the entire wall. Harry started to wish he had took another break.

Annika peeked through the cracks, waving her head side to side to get a better look. She turned fully around to face Harry with a distraught look on her face. Sighing sadly she shrugged and raised her palms into the air. Like she had done nothing wrong she waltzed out, pouting like a child.

"God, is anyone in a worse kind of hell than me?" Harry groaned.

Kiara spun around, gasping in shock. "What are you doing here?"

Craig's eyes were wide at this point, "that's what I was thinking."

"I... I fancied some alone time. I figured the Leda would be mostly empty," Kiara stuttered a lie.

"You... you weren't here when the Leda left Voyager," Craig said.

Kiara tried her best to laugh it off, but her laugh just sounded nervous. "Of course I was. Why would you say that?"

"You were going to the Stuart get together on the planet, that..." Craig replied.

Kiara butted in quickly, "I changed my mind. And that was today, the Leda left yesterday."

Craig shook his head. He didn't believe her but he had no idea why she was lying to him, or why she was so nervous about it. "There have been only five people on the Leda the whole time I was on duty." He frowned when he remembered Annika's many visits, "which raises another question. You were definitely not one of them."

"I changed my mind and transported myself here with my own powers, does it really matter?" Kiara continued to stutter. She looked desperately at him. "Please, I need to be alone," she pleaded with him.

Craig stared at her desperate eyes, he felt that he should do as she asked but something was still bothering him. *Why did she lead me here?* The girl he kept seeing was acting different, she didn't seem to be trying to scare him. All she did was walk away and stop at this room, why?

"Craig please! I figured you of all people would understand," Kiara continued to beg.

That comment set alarm bells ringing his head. It shouldn't have, she could have easily been just comparing her want to be alone with his own. *Why did she keep appearing in the first place? Was she trying to tell me something else? Was she really trying to lead me here. Why? What's going on?* Craig remembered his attempt to get to Engineering earlier. The turbolift brought him to this deck, then his head blocked out any doors so he kept on walking. When he realised something was wrong he tried to turn around and there she was. *My god.*

Kiara glanced around, she was getting even more anxious than she was before. Craig didn't think it was possible. "Why won't you leave me alone?"

"What's going on?" Craig had to ask.

"I told you," Kiara tried to snap, but her voice shook too much.

"You could have gone to the planet, taken your commbadge off and walked around some quiet spot to be on your own. You could have just gone to your quarters and told everyone to not bother you," Craig said. "Why waste one, possibly two if you decide to go back early, of your five minor powers a month to *be alone?*"

Kiara tried to appear annoyed with herself, she faked a groan. "Yeah I could have done that. You're right. Well, may as well stay here until the Leda gets back. Go away now please."

"You're a terrible liar, Kiara. I've known you since you were a baby, you can't fool me," Craig said sternly.

Kiara bit her bottom lip, now she was genuinely getting annoyed. "Then you'll know I make stupid mistakes, I'm just a kid after all."

"You're up to something. What?" Craig asked.

Kiara cringed as a bright white light appeared and disappeared quickly on the other side of the room. In its place was the man from before. "No, still just a man. Ok fine." He walked over to the girl, not noticing the newcomer. "I've put her somewhere secure, sweetie. Shall..." he then noticed Craig standing there, looking at them both with his eyes even wider than before. "We er... go feed your new kitty cat before she eats her way out."

Kiara's eyes shut tightly, "why don't you go and do that."

"Q? Why are you here?" Craig snapped.

"Finally!" the man sighed in relief, then he grew annoyed that he was still being referred to as *the man*. "I told you, kitty cat. My sweet daughter was feeling lonely so I brought her a pet." He lightly elbowed Kiara in the arm, winking at her.

"Yeah, great cover story," Craig muttered. "Why was Kiara so desperate for me to leave then?"

"Oh, and my lie was perfect as well," Q complained.

Kiara rolled her eyes and then glared at him. "It doesn't matter now. Haven't you got something else to do?"

"Oh good point, it's not like he'll stop me," Q laughed. He went to click his fingers again but stopped himself. "Shoot, did I transport here?" Kiara barely nodded, but he got the message anyway. "Oops, better hurry before Q notices." He disappeared in another white flash.

"You're not doing what I think you're going to do?" Craig asked her.

Kiara shrugged meekly, "I don't really have my mother's telepathy. That was just a ruse Q did until the truth came out. Stupid really cos hers was a Slayer power, and I wouldn't get that too."

"Lena. You're going to bring her back," Craig said.

"No," Kiara answered, her eyes narrowed in his direction. "One of the conditions of me returning was to forfeit my larger powers. I'm not even allowed to abuse the ones I do have."

Craig groaned, "don't play this game Kiara. He is going to do it."

"The Continuum crippled his powers as well for screwing up the timeline and creating me. He couldn't," Kiara grumbled. "Don't you think I would have thought of that?"

"Then who has he really secured? If it is who I think it is, why would you bother?" Craig interrogated her.

Kiara shook her head furiously, "stop assuming I know what you're thinking."

"Well stop trying to accuse me of being stupid enough not to see what's going on here," Craig said.

"Why would Q have to secure someone or even kidnap them if he was doing what you think?" Kiara smiled bitterly.

"I don't know, but I do know that nothing else fits," Craig said.

"If it was what you thought it was there's nothing you could do about it," Kiara mumbled. "It's just a stupid cat, okay?"

Craig tapped his commbadge, "Bridge, how many people are onboard the Leda?" Kiara rolled her eyes and shook her head.

"Should be six now that mini skirt and wall smasher is here, let me check," Harry's voice answered.

"Yep six. Us on the bridge, Nathan Deck Ten for some reason, you, and..." Jodie's voice trailed off. "And James in the brig? What the..."

Craig was about to smile smugly when he realised what she really said, "James?" He noticed Kiara looked confused too, and then angry.

"Can't he do anything right?" she grumbled quietly.

"Right thanks. Maybe someone should go to let him out," Craig said in a confused voice.

"Check, I'll get Nathan," Harry's voice said.

Craig slowly tapped his commbadge, he noticed Kiara pacing in front of him muttering under her breath.

"Q! Back here now!" she snarled into the ceiling.

"Kim to Anderson. We're reading seven life signs, not six. The extra one without a commbadge signal is in front of you."

"Yeah it's Ki..." Craig was about to answer. Kiara shot him a glare and waved her hand in front of him. Communication clicked off. "Another power wasted," he reminded her.

"It doesn't matter. Not anymore," she said.

Voyager:

Tom felt like his head was going to explode, he looked at everyone else on the bridge for help. "Can you say that again?"

On the viewscreen Harry sighed loudly. "Kiara and James are onboard. As we're way out of transporter range, I just thought I'd ask how the hell is that possible?"

"I... well, she's a Q so maybe..." Tom stammered.

Jessie shook her head, "why would she take James with her?"

"I don't know do I! Just cos I'm the Captain doesn't mean that I know everything," Tom complained. He quickly covered the ear in reach of Jessie's hand just in case.

Everyone but Harry saw Jodie's hand pop up in the background. "Nobody expects that Tom," he said. Tom pointed behind him. "Or me, I know. Though we both know that I was picked for the Leda as I was the brains of the two of us."

"Ahem!" Jodie cleared her throat. Harry quickly stumbled around to look at her. "I checked again, the lifesign in the brig isn't James."

"But you said it was!" Harry groaned.

"No, I said his commbadge signal was there. The lifesign isn't him," Jodie rolled her eyes. "Oh and snap at me again and it's crotch kicking time... again."

Harry swallowed hard, Tom nodded in sympathy while Jessie just nodded in approval. "How do you know?" Harry dared to ask.

"I'm sure Jessie would have told me that her hubby was really a woman, but hey, it may be something she wants keeping private," Jodie answered.

Tom snorted briefly, earning Jessie's glare directed at him. "I told you he was gay... oh sorry, she was gay."

"Ha ha," Jessie said sarcastically before stamping on his foot. He yelped out so loud the Leda would have heard him without the viewscreen, all he could do was hop on his good foot.

"Okay so who would Kiara take with her to the Leda?" Harry asked himself.

Jessie rolled her eyes. "Helm, get us to the Leda. Maximum warp. It shouldn't take long since they're still at impulse right."

"Not since an hour ago," Harry said. "And no it shouldn't."

The helmsman turned his chair around, "er you're not..." He spotted Tom hopping around on one foot whimpering, and then Jessie scowling towards him. "Yes ma'am!" Everyone who knew Jessie cringed.

"I'm sorry, what?" Jessie's eyebrow twitched.

Faye came to the guy's rescue, "uh if James' commbadge signal is on the Leda, but he's not actually there, where is he?"

Tom hopped over to his chair and sat down. "Probably still on the planet looking for Kiara... oh! Ylara was there too, right." He smiled, "I figured that out before, really."

"Uh huh," Jessie muttered.

The Leda:

"Why won't you leave me alone? If you're that convinced of what I'm doing, why are you..." Kiara said.

"We've heard stories about the Q's punishing other Q's, even killing them, for things a lot tamer than this," Craig explained. "Lena's already a sore point with them, what with the not supposed to exist rubbish they spouted. I don't want anything to happen to you."

"Please, you really believe that?" Kiara scoffed. "Q's are a bunch of overzealous, high up their own asses, screw ups. They wouldn't want to admit that they made a mess of the timeline."

Craig was confused, though the Q and Lena paradox was a one that still gave him a headache when he thought about it. "But they did already. That nutty Q, your dad, went after Lena, decided to have a kid with her and the continuum took that chance..."

"To use me to fix the timeline. The keyword here is fix," Kiara butted in. "It was already broken to begin with. It was broken long before Kes did what she did. The Q's were not happy that she fixed more than they ever did, why else would they blame her for it? They even claimed to have manipulated her into it at one point."

"How do you know this?" Craig stuttered.

"Please Craig. It's been what, two years since they relocated me to the Continuum," Kiara groaned.

"It doesn't matter. Whether they wanted Lena or not, they would definitely object to you raising the dead," Craig said.

Kiara shook her head, "I told you that I can't and neither can he."

"I don't believe you. You just don't want me to stop you," Craig said.

"How could you stop me?" Kiara laughed bitterly. "All it would take is a click of a finger."

"Yeah," Craig nodded. "But your dad's so hopeless he brought the wrong person here, so I have time."

"I've thought about it, I admit that. James told me though how miserable she was, and that was why she didn't fight Ylara off," Kiara said.

"Then if you really believe that it would be wrong to do it, why try to kidnap Ylara?" Craig questioned.

Kiara turned her back on him, rolling her eyes as soon as he couldn't see it. "Only you say that, I never did."

Craig sighed through only his nose, he smiled lightly. "I never hated anyone so much in my life. I wanted her dead. I even thought about trying, despite it killing any chance of Lena coming back." Kiara rolled her eyes again. "I'd understand if you wanted to get revenge on her. Lock her away, see how she likes being trapped and isolated. You don't have to lie to me, I never wanted to help her."

Kiara frowned as she slowly turned back around to face him. She studied his face, he was serious and he even looked a little angry. She nodded. "She thinks she's untouchable, that she can get away with murdering my mother. She won't."

"I know," Craig nodded back. "I can help you. All you have to do is tell me the truth."

"What is this? Who the hell are you?" Ylara spat from behind the forcefield.

Q cackled away, "enjoy your final minutes, my dear. You will go back to where you belong."

Ylara's face turned a little white, she narrowed her eyes a little. "You're that Q thing." He nodded. "Fine, do it. I don't care."

That threw Q off, he pouted slightly. "But it's no fun if you don't beg for your life. What's up with that?"

"I died a long time ago," Ylara answered. "She should be here instead of me. Do what you must."

"Aaaw, stop it. You're throwing me off my game," Q whined. "First my beloved daughter demands my attention, now you won't plead for mercy. Whatever will be next?"

A flash of light appeared behind him, answering his question. The person who appeared in its place clicked his tongue over and over. "Oh Q, will you ever learn?"

Q groaned, his shoulders slumped. "Q! You couldn't have given me one more minute?"

"Hardly. Kathy would never forgive me if I did," the new Q, which was the regular one, answered. Q groaned as he was renamed Q2 to accommodate.

"But surely it would make her happy if her daughter was alive," Q2 tried his luck.

"If the tyke brings her mother back the Continuum will rain down vengeance on her, you know this. Or at least you should from experience," Q explained. "Somethings are better left alone."

"This never would have happened at all if you had left Kiara and Lena in their own timeline," Q2 growled.

"No. Kiara would be dead along with the rest of the Voyager crew, and Lena would be alone adrift in the Delta Quadrant," Q said bluntly. "Do not try to understand things beyond your comprehension, Q. It doesn't suit you."

Q2 shook his head, then he realised that Ylara hadn't budged since he last saw her. He turned back to Q. "I thought the whole point of you fixing the timeline this way was to..."

"What did I just say?" Q interrupted. "For once again trying to ruin everything you'll be chucked into the punishment comet."

"But... that Ylara chick is a distortion in your perfect little timeline. Surely I should be rewarded," Q2 whimpered. Q shook his head. "You're not allowed to sentence me."

"Would you prefer that I leak this to the Continuum? I'm sure they will be a little less biased to the Janeway family than I am, but it's up to you..." Q said with a smile.

Q2 sighed sadly. "Fine, I'll go."

"First good choice you've made all eternity," Q chuckled. He clicked his fingers and the pair disappeared. Ylara suddenly started moving again, she looked around to find she was alone.

"Why didn't you just tell me the truth when I guessed it?" Craig asked.

Kiara groaned loudly, "cos I knew you would fight it."

"Fight it? I hate her, it's a no brainer," Craig stuttered. "Did you really think that I was the one that would disagree with you. Me?"

"Yes," Kiara answered honestly. "Because you're a good guy, Craig. Even if it's what you want you won't do it."

"I've changed," Craig said.

Kiara shook her head, "not that much. You still want to stop me, but what I don't understand is why you think keeping Ylara is the good option."

"It's not about that. I care about you. Without Lena here I feel like I should be looking out for you, in her place," Craig replied. "She wouldn't want this."

"The Q won't do anything to me. They'll blame *daddy*," Kiara muttered.

Craig shrugged, "maybe they will. Maybe they'll drag you back to the Continuum, break Lena's heart again, and that's the best case scenario."

The anger on Kiara's face fizzled away, that stung her a little. "It doesn't matter," she stuttered. "They won't and she'll be back. James told me I was the reason she was too depressed to fight back. If I'm back and so is she everything will be fine."

"Did he really say that or is it just how you've interpreted it?" Craig frowned. "It's true that she was unhappy you were gone, but it was more than just that. Janeway will still be dead, Chakotay will still think it's fun to dig up corpses and try to drown stepsons..." Kiara's eyes drifted to the side as they widened. "And I'll still be the pathetic loser pining after her, that continues to accuse her of crushing on her own brother just to cover up my insecurities."

"Fine, but at least there will be one thing. One thing may save her. You don't know!" Kiara snapped.

Craig glanced down sadly, he was losing the argument. There was only one thing he could really say to her, but it was definitely a gamble. Kiara interrupted him by grunting loudly, "damn it Q, why won't you answer me?"

"Maybe he's been caught," Craig answered.

"Fine, then I'll do it," Kiara hissed. She raised her hand, Craig panicked and quickly grabbed her hand to stop her.

"I thought you couldn't!" he stammered.

Kiara tried to pull her hand away, "I lied!" She went to use her other hand but hid it behind her back, he tried to stop that as well. "I knew the Continuum would punish me. My father is a monster, I didn't care about what happened to him. Lena's more important to me, far more!" She kicked him to try to coax him away. He wasn't going to let that stop him, he managed to get her other hand back to her front and keep a hold of both of them. "I don't need to click my fingers."

"Then why are you struggling?" he said.

Kiara screamed at him and tried to push him backwards, he tried to keep his footing but her fury gave her a lot more strength. He stumbled back but kept a hold of her, pulling her forward with him.

He knew now was better than never, it was the only weapon he had left. He took the gamble. "Kiara, you're better than this. If you do this you'll be no better than your father." Her mouth dropped open in shock, her eyes glazed with fury. "Or your grandfather." She growled and pushed harder.

"Think about it. Somewhere out there Janeway is hooked up to the Tolg Collective, just because Chakotay decided he knew best. He didn't. We may never find her, and she'll never be at peace. She will be forced to only watch. A prisoner in her own body."

"It's not the same thing," Kiara argued.

"Basically it is. Your father wanted a Human girl, so he forced her to have his kid. As a result the girl's life was erased. Eventually that left her so miserable she wouldn't even stop an Evil Slayer who wanted to destroy Earth, using her own body. If that wasn't enough the same guy tried again, but since she was already pregnant he killed the baby."

Kiara shook her head, "I'm not like them, stop it!"

"Prove it. Don't do this," Craig begged her. "You're so much better than that. I know it, we all do. It's so much easier to do the wrong thing, but you're strong enough to resist it." Kiara continued shaking her head but timidly, it was almost like she was shaking. "You're a Janeway, aren't you? Fight, live. It's what Lena wanted for you."

"I... I want her back. I don't care!" Kiara snapped. She managed to pull herself away. Her eyes filled with tears, she struggled to blink them away. "I don't care if they kill me or take me away. You said it yourself, her life was ruined, replaced by mine. I'm just giving it back to her."

"But it's not just you who will suffer," Craig wasn't done. "Are you really willing to kill someone? Someone who lost their mother the same way as you." Kiara just stared at him, she had no idea what he meant. "Ylara's mother was taken over by someone else, a vampire. She had to flee with her own brother, who she later had to watch die as well."

"Did she tell you that?" Kiara muttered.

Craig shook his head, "no. I saw one of them with my own eyes. Ylara was so much like you then. She didn't want to fight but fate made her, experience made her bitter."

"How could you possibly... she's ancient," Kiara didn't believe him.

"Time travel's a bitch," Craig replied, hoping to keep his recent paradox fixing experience vague. "My point is she's innocent. I only hated her as I couldn't see her without seeing Lena, but I know now that's not her fault. If it wasn't her it would have been someone else, someone who may not have recovered. And what then? Evil Slayers can't be left to run around and kill people, someone has to stop them. Only a few can. At least with Ylara we have a Slayer on our side."

"Even if I believed you, why does it give her more of a right to live instead of Lena?" Kiara questioned.

"You know the answer to that," Craig replied, a lump started to form in his throat. He didn't want to say it. "Because Lena didn't fight for that right. She gave it up. She wouldn't want her own daughter to give up hers, she'd want you to let her go." He saw Kiara's bottom lip start to tremble, she was no longer fighting the tears, they rolled down her cheek. "If you love her, you have to respect that."

"But... I... it's so hard," Kiara stuttered.

Craig nodded, he dared to step a little closer to her. "I know." He gently placed a hand on her shoulder, she quickly rolled her shoulder to push it away. He didn't resist, he let her storm out of the room without another word.

Voyager:

"But we've only just got here," Tom complained.

Harry shrugged, he glanced back at his bridge crew briefly and back again. "Yeah sorry, Craig said he sorted it. At least I can tell you something while you're here."

"What?" Tom was intrigued.

Harry couldn't help but smirk, "nice tan." The viewscreen switched back to show the Leda flying at warp in front of them.

Tom's hand instinctively went up to check his face, "I'm going to Sickbay. Who has the Bridge?" He looked around at the unknowns, Faye and then Jessie. "Maybe later."

Jessie scowled back at him, "shouldn't we ask if their new crewmembers want to come back?"

"Something tells me one of them won't want to," Tom muttered. He glanced over to opps, "get Ylara back, and if you can, find Annika too." Everyone looked at him like he was nuts. "I think Kiara should be left alone for now. Helm once we've retrieved them, head back to the Krralef's homeworld. I imagine one of our crewmembers will want to be picked up soon before he burns," he ordered, pointing at his face.

Jessie tried not to laugh at the image of James trying to hide under any shelter he could find, slowly turning red in between them. "Yeah definitely."

"I think I got Annika, there was an energy mass around her size in the Cargo Bay," Faye said with a cringe.

"Well no else is her size," Jessie commented. Tom nodded.

"Finally I have you all to myself, no more stupid Twilight like stalking," Damien sneered. "She was too stupid to know the difference between the Leda and Voyager, but no matter. If she did she'd have a hell of a job getting back here, mwahahahahaha!"

"Damien!" Annika's voice called from outside.

"Crap!" Damien grunted, he quickly ran out of the Mess Hall in the opposite direction, carrying a Muller yoghurt in his hand. Most of it spilled all over the floor as he did.

"Who could possibly think that those two were a couple after seeing that?" Neelix asked a smirking Chakotay.

"Shippers," they both said.

"Damien will just have to find someone else to 'ship with," Neelix grinned.

Chakotay chuckled, "as if that would solve anything. Besides who on earth would deserve that?"

"True," Neelix smiled. "I'm glad to see you're feeling better, or at least look like it."

"Well what can I say, I couldn't really get any worse," Chakotay sighed.

"I meant everything I said that day. Every word. I couldn't let her make such a fatal mistake." The man paced back into the darkness, glancing away towards the wall. "She thought she had nothing to lose, but she was wrong. It wasn't her responsibility, it wasn't her fate."

Jessie walked into her quarters, quickly followed by her three children. The girls ran straight to their favourite toys while Duncan jumped onto the sofa to collect the computer sitting there. Jessie stared straight at the window and watched the stars streak passed. She remembered there was something she had to do, that book had to go. Her head turned towards the coffee table.

"What? I left it right there," she stuttered. The table was bare and she was so sure she left it there. What could possibly have happened to it?

"It was mine."

THE END