

## **B4FV Episode 3.11**

### **The Grove of H'Taria**

#### **Holodeck Two:**

Most of the crew were hanging around the holodeck resort program, most of them were wearing bright Hawaiian type clothes. There was annoyingly repetitive music playing that suited the theme of the party.

Kes took a drink off the tray a man in a mask was holding. "Thanks," she said with a smile. She made her way over to Jessie, who was one of the few that didn't have bright clothes on. She was all in black, and now her black hair was curly. "Jessie, hey."

"Yeah hi," she muttered.

Kes fiddled with a strand of her own brand new long curly hair, "ohno, what's wrong?"

"It's nothing," Jessie replied. "Oh you finally got your extensions, very nice."

Kes smiled, "thanks, I do prefer it like this but..." She looked around looking nervous, "but Neelix loves it, and you know the rest. You said you weren't going to do your hair like that."

"I know but I had something similar in the continuum, and James liked it so I had it done," Jessie said. She rolled her eyes as the song playing seemed to restart itself.

"You do realise this is a luau Jess, black isn't really the best colour for it," Kes said.

Jessie shrugged her shoulders, "black's slimming." She closed her eyes and clenched her fists, Kes took a step backwards. "Good god, if this song doesn't end soon I'm going to put one of those lei things around someone's neck and pull."

"Uh huh, still getting those mood swings?" Kes questioned.

"No, I haven't had any in ages," Jessie replied, she sipped at the straw in her drink. She pulled a face at it, then put it down behind her.

"Hmm yeah," Kes muttered, she walked away.

One of the guys with the masks on walked by, holding a tray of the same kind of drink Jessie had before. She tried to take one but he just ignored her, and continued walking. "Hey, come back," she grumbled, following him.

Tom stood on his own nearby, pouting. "Why would she choose a Vulcan over me?"

Jessie walked passed him, "because you're a loser."

"No need to be mean," Tom stuttered. He headed over to the bar.

Tuvok walked passed him, he stopped next to Kathryn and Chakotay who were sitting on a big sofa. "Captain."

Kathryn looked up at him, "Tuvok, I'm surprised you're here."

"I was following orders Captain. I also thought that I should keep an eye on intoxicated crewmembers' activities," Tuvok said. Neelix chose that moment to streak behind him.

"I was only suggesting," Kathryn said with a smirk on her face. Tuvok raised an eyebrow before walking away.

Kes came over, shuddering. "Somebody really has to ban him from alcohol."

"That would be an idea," Kathryn said.

Chakotay glanced at her then at Kes, "ok, did you both go to get your hair done together?"

"Oh," Kathryn and Kes both said, pointing at each other.

"Obviously not," Chakotay smiled.

"Jessie got hers done too, that's weird," Kes said.

Kathryn looked worried, "let me guess, curly?"

"Yes, how did you know?" Kes replied.

Kathryn put her hand over her face, "oh god." Chakotay shook his head.

Jessie meanwhile had blocked the guy with the tray's path. "I only wanted a drink, what's the matter with you!" She got a few annoyed muffled comments as he tried to push passed her. She grabbed a hold of the mask and pulled it right off him. He yelled out like it was stuck on. "Eeew, here have it back," she muttered.

Neelix ran passed her. Jessie threw the mask at him, it knocked him unconscious.

"Quick, cover him up!" Lisa yelled. Some people dropped a bunch of lei's over him.

Danny and Ian walked into the holodeck, Danny had her arm around his.

"Did you have to wear that shirt?" Danny asked.

Ian looked down at himself, and at the yellow t-shirt with a pineapple pattern on it, then back at her. "Everyone's wearing these."

"Uh huh," Danny muttered, she pulled Ian further into the masses of people dancing.

"You're right, everyone looks too drunk to remember the night," Ian said.

"Told you it would be a good idea to come later," Danny said, smiling smugly.

Ian wrapped his arms around her, while she placed her hands on his arm and shoulder.

"What about any sober ones?" Ian questioned.

"We'll just say we were drunk too," Danny replied. She rested her head on his arm. A few metres in front of her, Jessie and James were talking.

"He just wouldn't give me a drink," Jessie was saying. "It's the only stuff here that's not alcoholic."

"I'll get you a drink, I'll be right back," James said. He kissed her on the side of her forehead, then walked away. She smiled and blushed a little, then sat down.

Danny lifted her head back up, "ok Ian, I'm going to do this now."

"Do what now?" Ian asked.

"Talk to Jessie," Danny replied, beckoning her head.

Ian glanced behind him briefly, "all right, good luck. Believe me, you're going to need it."

Danny stepped away from him, "thanks for the confidence boost." She smiled at him then walked over to Jessie.

She sat back in the chair, then she spotted Danny.

"Hey Jess, can I?" Danny asked.

"Yeah but be quick, James'll be back in a minute," Jessie replied.

"Oh," Danny said, she sat down beside her. "Listen I want to apologise."

"Oh really? What brought that on?" Jessie asked.

"You were right, I thought about it and maybe I was being a bit over the top," Danny replied.

"There's a but isn't there?" Jessie questioned.

"Yeah," Danny replied uncomfortably.

James walked back over holding a drink, he also looked uncomfortable. "Danny, hi," he said, handing the drink over to Jessie.

"Thanks," she said with a smile.

"Do you want me to come back later?" James asked.

"No it's fine," Danny replied. She turned to Jessie again, "we'll finish this up later."

"No let's do this now. What was the but?" Jessie questioned.

"I still think it was a little too fast. You should be careful," Danny replied.

"Whatever," Jessie said, rolling her eyes.

"No I didn't mean," Danny stuttered, she glanced briefly at James. "What I meant was, well you know about that incident in the Mess Hall when you made up. If you're still trying to keep this a secret, you've got to be less public about it."

"Yeah, but we didn't really think, did we?" Jessie said uncomfortably.

James nodded his head, "no, luckily it's being treated like any other rumour."

"Yeah, um Jess," Danny said. "Can I talk to him alone for a minute?"

Jessie looked worried, she glanced at James briefly then at Danny. "Ok um sure, I'll be um, probably smashing whatever's playing that music," she said, pulling herself up from the chair.

James tried not to laugh, "good luck, I've been looking around for the source for ages." Jessie stood in front of him, and kissed him on the cheek. He quickly whispered in her ear, "code 147, then tell the computer to delete."

"Thanks," Jessie said, she walked away.

"So, too public for you?" James questioned, raising his shoulders.

"A little but she always used to do that before you got together," Danny replied. She patted the part of the chair Jessie was sitting before.

"You're right she did," James said as he sat down beside her. "I kept getting different answers everytime I asked, so I stopped."

"Yeah ditto, except I didn't stop," Danny said.

"All right, what's this about? Should I be worried?" James asked.

"Right, maybe a tiny bit. I dunno, I'll know when I'm saying it," Danny replied. "Ok first of all, I'm still kind of mad at you for what you did to Jessie."

"I think everyone but her is in that club, I'm not surprised," James said.

"Yeah, Jess has always been protective of you but I was still surprised she took you back so soon. Anyway, I want to apologise to you," Danny said.

James looked confused, "for what, you can be mad at me all you want."

"I'm not mad enough to hold any grudges, or be all rude and abusive towards you. It's just I said a few things about you to Jess, I went a little over the top," Danny said.

"She didn't tell me anything about the fight anyway, so it's ok," James said.

"That's not the point. I don't want to be mad at all. You were drunk, and even then you of all people wouldn't... um. If you'd wanted to do what we thought then, you'd have no trouble. Ugh, you didn't actually do that so then you mustn't have wanted to," Danny mumbled. She shook her head, "god, you can tell I haven't planned this at all."

"It's ok, it's not like I plan everything I say," James said.

Danny sighed, "I just thought, and still do that there's something you guys aren't telling me. Maybe I'll understand this better if I knew. You're a little more on edge and serious some of the time, and Jess she's... I dunno. I can't put my finger on it."

"A lot's happened recently; the whole turning evil thing and the chip, that planet with the vampire threat. As for Jessie, she's been well you know happier since New Earth," James said.

"No, I mean yes she has but that's not what I was talking about. She's been more into you than she used to be, you know she doesn't hold back as much or care about being seen," Danny said. "I'm going off topic, sorta. I get that you've been through a lot lately, and I totally forgot about it and said lots of stuff I didn't mean. Jessie may tell you."

"Do I want to know?" James asked.

"Probably not but it doesn't matter. While I was saying all that stuff, I just forgot who you even were. I know you would never hurt her, you seem to care about her more than anybody else does," Danny replied. The annoyingly repetitive music stopped abruptly. "I wouldn't even know Jessie if you weren't..." she then noticed the music had stopped.

"Weren't what?" James said.

Danny looked around with an amused expression on her face, "jeez, it was crap music anyway." She turned back to James, "oh, sorry."

"No it's fine, what were you going to say?" he asked.

Danny sighed as she looked down at her hands. "You're a great guy James, there's not another one of you out there that's for sure."

"Something to be thankful for," James said.

Danny shook her head, "you're wrong, there should be more like you. There's too many vain, rude, piggish guys out there. I should know, I dated a lot of them. You were the only guy in the entire school that I thought was good enough to be my friend. And probably the only one that I liked in the first meeting, and never asked out."

"What's your point Dan, a lot of girls didn't want to do that," James asked with a smirk.

"Oh I did, that's my point," Danny replied. "The only reason I didn't was because of Jessie. You are the only guy she has ever liked. I figured if you couldn't get her over the men fear, nobody could. And when I got over you, I was always hoping you guys would get together."

"Well in a way I kinda did too," James commented.

Danny smirked, "so that's kinda everything I wanted to say. I'm not sure if I said it but I'll say it again, sorry."

"You're forgiven, still not sure why you have to apologise though," James said.

"Do you think Jess is still mad at me?" Danny asked.

"It's hard to tell lately, she has been losing her temper a lot and it's..." James replied.

"Yeah, what's up with that?" Danny interrupted. Some proper music started playing from all of the speakers, a lot of people sighed in relief and continued dancing if they were before.

"It's people like you and Ian that's getting to her," James said, narrowing his eyes.

"All right, all right. Stop it with the guilt trips," Danny said with a pout.

Jessie rushed back over, "I did it, I got it to play my music collection." She blushed, "oh sorry, did I interrupt?"

"No, we have just finished," Danny replied as she climbed onto her feet. "Look Jess, I hope that we can forget about all this."

"Sure, it'll be hard to forget that phony excuse you gave me but I'll try," Jessie said.

Danny frowned, she looked down at James then back up at Jessie. "What phony excuse?"

"You told me to be careful because you still think he's going to hurt me or something. The whole public kissing thing was a lie," Jessie replied.

"No it wasn't," Danny muttered.

"Ok then you probably will mind if James and I go to dance to the next song, I really like this one," Jessie said.

James sighed as he stood up, "ok um. You know I'm terrible at that, right?"

"Yeah right, come on," Jessie said as she held out her hand.

"Jess I wasn't lying, I said I'm sorry. What more do you want from me?" Danny asked.

"I dunno, I'll get back to you. Come on," Jessie replied. She grabbed James' hand and dragged him over to what appeared to be the dancefloor. They passed Ian, who was making his way over to where Danny was.

"I take it didn't go well," he said.

Danny sighed, "no, I figured James would be the hard one. Again I'm wrong."

"It's ok, she'll come around," Ian said.

### **An hour later:**

B'Elanna, Craig and Vorik were standing next to the holodeck controls, B'Elanna was busy working on one of the panels. "This is strange, it looks like it's been deleted."

"It can't be recovered then, oh shame," Craig said a little too cheerfully.

Vorik turned to the controls, "actually there should be a backup." B'Elanna quickly keyed in something. "Maybe not," he said, raising an eyebrow.

Nearby James and Jessie were still dancing together on the dancefloor, only a few people were left behind. Jessie turned around so she could slip an arm around James' neck. "You don't think I was a bit harsh with her, do you?"

"I really don't know, I wasn't even around while you two were talking," he replied.

Jessie stepped back, "I'm going to talk to her. You don't mind do you?"

"No, you guys should sort it out," James replied.

"Ok, I'll come back," Jessie said.

James watched her walk away, she made her way through the crowds. She looked around as she walked around the resort. She turned the corner and stopped dead, her eyes widening.

"Now remember, we were drunk," Danny giggled as Ian played with her hair.

He put his arm around her, "yes ma'am." He leaned in to kiss her, she wrapped an arm around his neck and kissed him back.

"Oh my god," Jessie muttered.

### **The next morning**

#### **The Bridge:**

Tom stumbled into the room, holding his head. "Oh, what a hangover," he groaned.

"Oh Tom, you're just in time," Harry said.

"In time for what?" Tom asked.

Kathryn jumped onto her feet, "ok guys, I have a new song!" She cleared her throat, "I love coffee and I cannot lie, my sisters cannot deny. When a pretty little girl walks in with a big cup of coffee in your face, you gotta steal it and drink it."

Tom covered his face, "oh, stop it." He covered his ears.

Chakotay shook his head as he walked over to him. "Oh Tom, I've got something for you."

"Pain killers?" Tom questioned, looking hopeful.

"No better," Chakotay said with an evil look on his face.

#### **The Security Office:**

James looked up from the computer, eyebrow raised. "Jess?" he said with a smirk.

Jessie was too busy twirling a bit of hair around her finger, and looking out of the window to notice.

"Jess, anyone home?" James said.

Jessie jumped a little, "huh, what?"

"You've been quiet for a while, what's the matter?" James asked.

"Nothing, everything's good," Jessie replied.

"Uh huh, you said you were leaving five minutes ago," James said.

Jessie looked confused, "I did?"

"Danny, make up, ring any bells?" James said.

"Oh," Jessie said, she quickly got out of her chair. "Ok I'm ready, do I look nervous?"

"Just a tad," James replied.

"Great," Jessie said, she headed for the door.

"Good luck," James said.

Jessie turned back around, "yeah, I have to find her first don't I."

"You checked her location five minutes ago as well," James said. She bit her lip nervously, and raised her shoulders looking helpless. "Mess Hall, she's probably having a late breakfast."

"Oh late breakfast. Yeah, she was probably up all night kissing Ian I suppose," Jessie said. She stepped out of the room.

James stared after her looking bewildered, "what?"

### **The Mess Hall:**

Only a few people had populated the entire room. Three were sitting eating their breakfast, two others were talking by the window. One of the ones eating breakfast was Danny.

Jessie walked into the room, looking more nervous than before. She took in a deep breath before making her way over to Danny's table. "Hey."

"Jess," Danny said, looking up at her. "This is a surprise."

"Can I sit with you?" Jessie asked. Danny nodded her head. She sat down opposite her. "Look um, I'm sorry. You apologised and I was a real bitch about it."

"No it's ok Jess, it probably did sound like I was going to say what you thought," Danny said.

"Yeah it did, sorry again. Are we ok?" Jessie questioned.

Danny smiled, "yeah, why not." She pushed her plate aside, then folded her arms on the table. "I've got some catching up to do."

"Catching up with what?" Jessie muttered.

"You know, you and James," Danny said.

"All right," Jessie said, folding her arms on the table too. "But first you owe me something."

"Um, I do?" Danny said.

"You and Ian last night, how long has it been going on?" Jessie asked.

Danny's eyes widened, her cheeks turned a little pink. "Um, what er..."

"Let me guess, you were drunk," Jessie said. "Nice excuse."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Danny stuttered.

"I decided to go and find you so I could apologise last night, but I saw you and Ian. You were telling him the drunk excuse, then you started kissing," Jessie said.

Danny put her hand over her face, "oh damn it."

"So, how long? Why, plus all the other questions you ask me," Jessie questioned, smiling evilly.

Danny looked back at her, eyes narrowed. "You're loving this aren't you?"

"Oh yeah," Jessie said with a grin.

"All right, it's been over two months," Danny replied.

"And?" Jessie said.

Danny groaned, "why, um I don't know where to start."

"It's ok, I have time," Jessie said.

Danny muttered something under her breath, then covered her face with her hand again.

### **The Shuttle Bay:**

Tom stood around the doors, arms folded and pouting. "Stupid Chakotay, I don't even remember what I even did while I was drunk last night. Why punish me for it?"

An unknown crewmember shrugged, "you were yelling at a lot of people."

Tom stared at him, "me? I'd never yell, and Neelix streaks everytime he's drunk so he should get punished for once."

"Oh you were yelling, I remember you yelling at the wall at one point," the guy said.

Craig and Lee stepped into the room. Tom groaned as he glanced at them, "don't tell me you guys are on the team."

"Oh man, there's no girls coming?" Craig moaned. He put his PADD in his back pocket.

"Yeah can I ask, what's up with that thing?" Lee asked.

Tom rolled his eyes, "it's best not to ask. Chakotay said there are two others, where are they?"

The doors opened again, Johnny and Tim stepped through them. "Reporting for the awayteam," Johnny cheerfully said.

"Oh god, I must have yelled at Chakotay a lot last night," Tom groaned.

### **Sickbay:**

Kes walked over to the station in the middle of the room, she started working on it. The Doctor stepped out of his office with a big smile on his face. "Kes, would you mind being in charge of Sickbay while I go on my first housecall?"

Kes smiled as she turned to face him, "no problem Doctor. I'd say enjoy but, what's the house call about?"

"Ensign Vorik has food poisoning, he refuses to leave his post," the Doctor replied.

"Ok, I'll pass on the *enjoy* comment then," Kes said. The Doctor just smiled at her before stepping out of the room.

A few minutes later Jessie walked in slowly, with her hand on her stomach. "Hey Kes, I have a bit of a problem."

Kes glanced at her looking concerned, "what's the matter, go sit down." She picked up a tricorder.

Jessie walked over to sit down on the nearest biobed, Kes followed her and began scanning. "I think I ate something funny last night."

"We've been getting these all day," Kes said, smiling weakly. She picked up a hypospray off the equipment tray, then pressed it into her neck. "The Doctor believes it was the toasted cheese sandwiches."

"Probably was, it was the only kind of food there that didn't make me feel sick," Jessie said.

"Oh, so what else is..." Kes questioned.

"Well after last night there's only fish, salad and bread I guess, left that I can eat," Jessie replied.

"Look on the bright side, all of that's good for you," Kes said.

James rushed into the room, he went over to the girls. They both stared at him blankly.

"Let me guess, cheese sandwich?" Kes questioned.

"What? No," James muttered, frowning. He turned to Jessie, "what's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong. I just wasn't supposed to eat those cheese sandwiches. How did you know I was here, and so quickly?" Jessie questioned.

"I just asked the computer where you were, it said Sickbay so I panicked," James replied.

Jessie smiled and shook her head, "it's ok, I'm fine." She reached out to stroke his hand. He stepped closer, then sat down beside her.

"You didn't actually touch those cheese toasted sandwiches, right?" Kes questioned.

"No, if I remember right Jessie snatched mine out of my hands," James replied, he put an arm around Jessie.

She smiled as she rested her head on his shoulder, "it's true, I did. I bet you're thankful now."

"No, not really," James said.

Jessie lifted her head back up, "were you looking for me for a reason other than just seeing me?"

"Actually yeah, what was the Danny and Ian comment all about?" James questioned.

"Oh right. They've been secretly seeing each other for two months," Jessie replied. "Don't worry, I just found out today."

Kes' eyes widened, "really? I didn't see that coming."

"No, oh well I guess that's good," James said.

"Good, they're copycats," Jessie said, resting her head on his shoulder again.

In: "Tuvok to Taylor."

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

In: "Why are you not in the office?"

"I'm on break ok," James replied.

In: "Your break isn't until ten thirty hours. Please report back."

"All right, Taylor out," James groaned, tapping his commbadge. "Sorry, gotta go."

Jessie took a hold of his arm, "no don't, he knows you skive anyway right?"

"Yeah but I don't really want to work night shift again, sorry," James replied. He got back onto his feet. "Maybe you can stop by later, if not I'll come by during my break. That's if you'll be on the bridge."

"Probably, but I think Janeway's too hungover to care," Jessie said.

"Hungover? I didn't know she even drank," Kes commented.

"Ok hungover on coffee," Jessie said.

"Well either way, I'll see you in an hour or so," James said. Jessie nodded her head, pouting her lips a little. He put his hand through her hair, stroking it and her face. "That's all right isn't it?"

"No, we really have to start working in the same place," Jessie replied.

"I'll see what I can do," James said, he leaned in to kiss her before walking out.

She sighed, "oh god." She groaned into both of her hands. "What's the matter with me, you'd think I'd be used to this by now."

Kes smiled as she sat down beside her, "you have been taking it harder than you used to."

"Do you think it's the pregnancy hormones?" Jessie questioned. "Cos that may explain why everyone keeps acting weird around me."

"Well you do keep getting irritated, that is the hormones hopefully," Kes replied looking uncomfortable.

"Maybe, I dunno," Jessie muttered.

"While we're on the subject, we'll have to think of an alibi if you still want this as a secret. People will start guessing right the more they see of your mood swings," Kes said. "Not to mention your aversion to most food, and weird cravings."

"Can I still play the *I am just sick* card?" Jessie asked.

"I doubt it, the Doctor will probably be told to examine you," Kes replied. "I know the Captain knows but people will get suspicious if she didn't do anything."

"Right, I'll just discuss it with James, we'll think of something," Jessie said. Her face lit up as she glanced at her, "hey, that could be my excuse for going to see him."

"What now?" Kes questioned.

"Uh yeah, it would be just silly to go if I had no reason," Jessie replied.

Kes developed a smirk on her face, "uh Jess."

"Did you see that though, he rushed into Sickbay as he was worried about me. I was barely here a minute," Jessie said. Kes shook her arm and stared at her intently. Jessie finally looked at her, "what was that for?"

"I'm curious, did you start being more well, obsessed with him before or after you got pregnant?" she questioned.

"Obsessed, there's that word again," Jessie muttered.

"Jess I don't think it's the hormones that's making you feel this way. Your moods keep switching, but that one seems to stick around constantly," Kes said.

"It's not like I'm just getting a crush on him now, that would be stupid," Jessie muttered, shaking her head. "That's been there for ages. What I feel for him hasn't changed it's just, you know."

"You two are more at ease, and comfortable with your relationship now. You don't care about people like me or Danny seeing anything. You both seem happier together than before, and it's almost like you've fallen for him again," Kes said.

"Nah, it's just easier to talk to him than before," Jessie said as she got off the biobed. "Of course it was always easy to talk to him, obviously. I just mean that we were always uncomfortable talking about *us*, now it's simpler. I also feel less restrained, I'd usually hold back just in case I'd get embarrassed or something. I just thought a while ago, why am I like that?"

"You're just saying that you feel this way because you have more freedom with him?" Kes questioned, staring blankly.

"Yeah, I was so sick of holding back As soon as I stopped, it was much better," Jessie replied. She sighed, "thanks for that, I never would have thought about that if you hadn't of. Thanks, I'll see you later ok." She stepped out.

"Huh, wow, she has no clue," Kes muttered to herself.

### **The Bridge:**

"Captain, we're receiving a recorded message from the shuttle," Harry said.

Kathryn sat up in her chair, "already? Let's hear it."

"You sound surprised, they are going to a planet," Chakotay commented.

In: "Get your hands off that you nutcase! Ahem, Paris to Voyager. We've ran into a local storm, I'm going to attempt an emergency landing. You know how badly those go by now, right? Ok to cut that short, we're so screwed. Paris out."

"Harry can you locate them?" Chakotay asked.

Harry worked at his station, "the storm is blocking all of my scans. Once it's cleared I might be able to get their location."

"Great, keep an eye on them Harry," Chakotay said.

Kathryn climbed out of her chair, "how come you losers didn't notice the storm until now?" Everyone stared blankly at her. "What?"

"It seemed to come out of nowhere Captain," Harry replied. "I'll run an analysis."

"Sure, then you'll be too busy working on that to notice anything else," Kathryn muttered. She headed for her Ready Room muttering quietly to herself.

"What's up with her?" Danny asked from the helm.

Chakotay sighed, "I don't know."

**Meanwhile, on a lush green planet:**

Tom, Craig and Lee stepped out of the shuttle looking confused. "Um, I thought there was a storm," Lee said as he blocked the sunlight getting to his eyes.

"There was, it cleared up really quickly," Tom said. "Weird or what."

Craig glanced back at the shuttle, then back at the others. "Er guys, want to hear something weirder?"

"Why not, there's always something," Tom muttered in response.

"Those FDA guys are gone," Craig said.

Tom turned back to the direction of the shuttle, "hey you're right, we only just opened the doors." He walked back into it, he had a quick glance at one of the consoles. "Mystery solved, they did an emergency transport."

"If we could do that, how come we didn't do it!?" Lee snapped.

"Don't look at me, I was busy piloting the shuttle," Tom replied.

"Great, so where did the newbies transport to anyway?" Craig asked.

Tom sighed, "just twenty metres away from the crash site. They should be around here somewhere." Right on cue he heard a lot of rustling coming from the trees. "See, they found us."

About ten men wearing tattered old clothes, holding big bits of wood, charged out of the trees and quickly surrounded the team.

"Ok something else has," Tom stuttered.

"Um I thought this planet was uninhabited, typical of our luck. What's next?" Craig muttered.

Tom groaned, "never ask that, there's always something worse."

**Voyager**

**The Bridge:**

Chakotay made his way over to opps, "you got something Harry?"

"Yes Commander, and you're not going to like it," Harry replied. "I think I know what's causing the storms. There's two advanced colonies on the northern continent."

"I thought there was no lifesigns," Chakotay said.

Harry glanced at them, "there is now. A storm must have blocked the scans, these storms appear undetected at first."

Danny turned her chair around, "ok, what has the colonies got to do with the storms?"

"There's only one lifesign near one colony, both colonies are however empty. Each one shows signs of nuclear type blasts, most of the storms are located above these spots," Harry replied.

"One lifesign, is that our team or the natives?" Danny questioned.

"A nearby storm is still blocking scans for the area they went down in. They should be nowhere near the northern continent," Harry replied.

"So a survivor then," Chakotay said.

Harry nodded his head, "it appears so." His console started beeping. "Commander, we're receiving a hail."

"Where from?" Chakotay asked.

Harry frowned as he read the readings on the console. "It appears to be coming from a small building outside one of the colonies, where the lifesign is."

"Good, let's hear it," Chakotay ordered.

Harry nodded, "yes sir. Channel open."

Chakotay made his way over to the centre of the bridge. "This is Commander Chakotay of the Federation Starship Voyager."

In: "Greetings Commander, my name is Thy Siln."

"Can we be of assistance?" Chakotay questioned.

"Dumb question," Danny commented.

In: "Actually yes Commander, however it would be difficult to explain over a comm channel."

Kathryn came out of her Ready Room, "what did I say about contacting aliens when I'm not in the room?"

Chakotay shrugged, "um, it's ok?"

"Yeah right. Who are we talking to?" Kathryn asked.

"Thy, would you like to come aboard and we can discuss it?" Chakotay said.

In: "Yes, thank you Commander."

"Harry, let the transporter room know," Chakotay said.

"All right fine, you get to make all the first contacts," Kathryn grumbled. "I guess you would want to go and greet him too."

"We both can if you want," Chakotay said.

Kathryn's face lit up, "then what are we waiting for?" She rushed towards the turbolift.

"Strange," Chakotay muttered, following her.

### **The Conference Room:**

Kathryn, Chakotay and a dark haired tanned man walked in, Kathryn stood nearby the window, the men stopped nearby.

"So you're saying you destroyed each other?" Kathryn questioned.

"Exactly. The missiles themselves were at an unmanned launch bay outside each colony, both were sent on the same day. Nobody had time to evacuate as there wouldn't have been much time between the launch and the explosion," Thy replied.

"So how did you survive?" Chakotay asked.

"I was visiting my family on the homeworld when it must have happened, I returned in my shuttle but one of the storms made me crash land," Thy replied.

"Oh, that must have been, difficult," Chakotay said.

"It was, I had lived there for five years. What I found strange about it was the buildings, objects, they were undamaged. It was just everything that was living was gone, most likely vaporised in the blast," Thy said.

"I hate to sound insensitive but how can we help you?" Kathryn questioned.

"I don't know if you can yet, all visitors so far haven't been able to," Thy replied.

"I don't understand, I thought what you'd want is to get off this planet," Chakotay said.

"It is but there's some unfinished business I have to attend to, I owe that much to the people who lived here," Thy said.

Kathryn sat down on the edge of the table, "I see, what is it?"

"I have to perform the ancient death ceremony. It allows any of my people's spirits that get trapped in the sky after their bodies die, to go on into the after life. As you can tell I'm not much of a firm believer of it," Thy replied.

"You have to do a ceremony for each person or..." Chakotay questioned.

"No, every four days a Chien would perform it to release any souls. I just need to do it once," Thy replied. "However the ceremony needs two different subjects to perform the three rites on the day and during the time the ceremony is done."

"I take it you need something specific," Kathryn said.

"You take it right Captain, I didn't think it would be this difficult. Five vessels have been here before you, and not one pair have been able to help me. Two species were incompatible for it, one couple completed the second one and decided to quit, and the last two completed it but nothing happened," Thy said.

"How do you know when it happens?" Chakotay asked.

"Actually I'm more concerned about the incompatibility part," Kathryn said.

"When it happens the clouds light up in a variety of colours, even though it's always performed at night," Thy said. He glanced in Kathryn's direction, "I was told that a lot of species are not compatible because of the third rite, a lot of species have different customs, beliefs and some would do it too differently."

"What is the third rite?" Kathryn asked.

"I'm afraid only Chiens and the subjects are only allowed to know, the subjects will only find out before it's supposed to be performed. I never got the reason why either. I had to research it obviously," Thy said.

"Ok can I ask if it's dangerous, if there's any lasting effects or anything?" Chakotay questioned.

"No, why would a ritual that's done every four days be dangerous?" Thy replied.

"I didn't mean to offend, it's just if we're going to attempt to help you, we need to know as much as we can," Chakotay said.

Thy nodded his head, "I understand. You don't have to worry Commander, the only problem that could come up is the incompatibility issue."

"How will we know if we are compatible or not?" Kathryn asked.

"Maybe I could speak with a physician, or if you have any information on your species in a database," Thy replied.

Kathryn nodded, "tell me, if you told a hologram about the third rite, that wouldn't be breaking the rules right?"

"It would yes," Thy replied.

"Our doctor is a hologram, I just don't know how you're going to find out without revealing what the rite entails," Kathryn said.

"Well as long as he wasn't aware of who's performing it, and doesn't tell anyone it should be ok," Thy said.

Kathryn smiled, "we can wipe his memory of it afterwards."

Chakotay sighed, "it doesn't seem right to do that to him."

"I know but we don't have a choice," Kathryn said.

"We haven't even found two candidates yet," Chakotay said.

"One thing at a time. I'll take you to our Sickbay," Kathryn said. She headed back the way she came, Thy glanced at Chakotay briefly before following her.

### **The planet:**

Tom, Lee and Craig were lead into a clearing near a cave by the men, then lead inside the cave. In the distance they could hear chanting. Eventually they reached a dead end, there were about twenty more of the aliens kneeling in front of a primitive looking statue.

"We have prisoners," one man said. Everyone kneeling got up and turned around to look at the newcomers.

An elderly man turned back to the statue, "is this who you spoke of, oh mighty Thar."

"Oh great, they follow a statue," Tom muttered quietly.

"No doubt, I'd recognise that moany voice anywhere," a familiar voice said from behind the statue.

"Wasn't I Thar, and you were Shiy," another familiar voice muttered, also from behind the statue.

"I'm not shy," the first voice snapped.

The awayteam groaned. "Oh brother, it can't be," Tom muttered.

Johnny was pushed into sight by an arm. "Hey, don't push your god," he muttered. He blushed as he glanced at the people in front of him. They quickly got back down on their knees to continue bowing.

Tim stepped out to stand beside him, "remember young one, Thar is the more powerful and wise one, that's me."

"Just because you beat me at arm wrestling doesn't mean you're more powerful," Johnny grumbled.

"Twice," Tim said.

"Yes twice, but you cheated," Johnny muttered.

Tom shook his head, "ok guys, enough's enough. How did you convince these people that you're gods?"

"How dare you speak to our gods directly," the elderly men snapped. "Who are these men anyway?"

"They are the um, Voyeurs. They do nothing but cause trouble wherever they go," Johnny replied.

"What should we do with them, oh mighty Thar and Shiy?" one man asked.

"Execute them," Tim replied. Johnny stared at him with wide eyes.

"We can't do that!" he snapped. "We'll get into trouble," he said quietly.

"Thar has spoken," Tim said. "It should be public as well, I miss the good old days of capital punishment."

"Wow, I didn't know you were that old. Of course I knew you were old but wow," Johnny muttered.

"You heard him, tie them up. We should execute them at dawn," the elderly man said.

Five of the men who brought the team here, picked up some tattered material from the floor. They forced the team to sit down, then tied their hands behind their backs.

"I do believe it's time for the hunt, your gods are getting hungry," Tim said. A lot of the people rushed to their feet and ran out of the cave.

"Yes gods cannot miss their lunch," Tom sarcastically said.

Johnny made his way over to the team, "please don't be mad at me, I don't want you to get executed."

"You just don't want to get into trouble with Damien," Craig commented.

Johnny shrugged, "ok you'd feel the same way in my place, he can be really mean when he wants to be."

"All right, how did this happen?" Tom asked.

Lee pouted, "and why didn't you transport us down to the surface as well?"

"Well we rematerialised nearby a hunting party, because they saw it they think we have magical powers," Johnny replied.

"Great, there shouldn't even be anybody here. The sensors picked up no sentient life," Craig said.

"There isn't, only a dumb race would think Johnny and the old guy are gods," Tom muttered.

"They're primitive Tom, if you didn't know what a transporter was and saw that, you'd think it was magic or something," Craig said.

In: "Voyager to awayteam, Tom can you hear me?"

Tom looked nervous, "Johnny, tap the commbadge."

"Ookay," Johnny muttered, he knelt down and gave Tom's commbadge a brief tap.

"Paris here, Harry can you get us out of here?" Tom said.

In: "Yes unless another storm appears, prepare for transport."

"Uh we can't do that. We're stuck in a cave with a primitive race," Craig said.

In: "Oh, can you get away?"

"No, we're kinda tied up," Tom replied.

Johnny sighed, "I'll try and talk to him, surely he'll miss using his contracts to get unwilling boyfriends." He walked away.

"Ok that's dodgy," Lee commented. Tom and Craig nodded.

### **The Ready Room:**

Kathryn picked up a coffee cup from the replicator, she made her way over to the desk. Chakotay stood by it.

In: "Sickbay to Janeway."

Kathryn put the cup down and sat in her chair. She tapped her commbadge, "go ahead Doctor."

In: "Mr Siln and I have determined that most of the crew are compatible for the rite mentioned. The only ones who are not are Kes, Tuvok, Vorik and the other Vulcan woman."

"Ok, so what else do we need for a suitable candidate?" Chakotay asked.

In: "If you have any couples on board then they would be excellent for the ceremony."

Kathryn sighed, "I see, anything else?"

In: "If it's possible, I'd like to get the couple who is the closest, any ones in love would be perfect. The ritual can only be done that way."

Chakotay glanced briefly at Kathryn, "interesting. The ceremony that allows souls to pass onto the afterlife, can only be done by people who have the highest chances of creating new life, am I right?"

In: "That's exactly right Commander."

"Um I hate to burst your bubble but we don't pry that much into our crews personal life. There are very few couples I know of, and I don't know where they stand with each other," Kathryn said.

"We'll have to start prying a little. We do have something going for us, this ship is notorious for rumours. I'll go and walk around the ship to see if I hear anything," Chakotay said.

"Good idea, keep me up to date," Kathryn nodded her head. Chakotay turned to walk out.

In: "I apologise if I am sounding demanding Captain."

"No you're not, this is important anyway," Kathryn said. "How long have we got until we can perform this, or can it be anytime?"

In: "If we get the candidates within an hour, then we'd still have plenty of time to do it today. If not we can always begin tomorrow instead."

"Very well. I'll keep you informed, Janeway out," Kathryn said, tapping her commbadge. She sighed into her hand, "great, this should be fun." She moved the computer so it was directly in front of her, then started working on it.

The door chimed, "yes?"

Jessie stepped inside, she stopped in front of her desk. "Ok, we need to talk."

"Um, is it important, I'm really busy?" Kathryn questioned.

"Yes it's important," Jessie muttered. "I was wondering if you told anyone about our conversation in the Continuum."

"Why would I do that?" Kathryn asked.

"I dunno, I just wanted to know," Jessie replied.

"You can rest easy, I wouldn't do that," Kathryn said.

"Yes I'm resting easy. I can't believe I told you all that, it must be the pregnancy hormones again," Jessie said.

"You can't honestly be embarrassed about that," Kathryn muttered.

"Yes of course I am. I barely know you, you don't even like me and well because of that incident on New Earth, I don't like you," Jessie said. "Though you were nice in the Continuum, but that's not the point."

"You shouldn't be embarrassed I've always seen you as someone who always lost her temper, was rude to people and I did think you were a little crazy at first. That conversation made me see another side of you, a selfless and caring side, a side that I didn't not like," Kathryn said.

"Ok, um can you still just forget it though," Jessie said, fidgeting slightly.

"All right I'll try and forget that you can act human once every now and then," Kathryn said, shaking her head.

"Hey, I don't act not human, or whatever. I was just scared that I was going to die so..." Jessie muttered. She gasped, and put a hand just below her stomach. "Ok that was really weird."

Kathryn climbed out of her chair looking concerned, "what, was there a pain or something?"

"No, something um moved and hit me," Jessie replied, shaking slightly. She looked over at the sofa, "can I?" Kathryn nodded her head. Jessie walked slowly over to it, then sat down.

Kathryn walked around the desk and followed her over. She knelt down in front of her, "let me see." She put her hand out, "can I?"

"Ok, do you know what it is?" Jessie questioned.

"I think I do," Kathryn replied. She gently placed her hand where Jessie had it before. They both jumped slightly a few seconds later. Kathryn sighed in relief as she stood back up. She tapped her commbadge, "Janeway to Taylor, can you come to the Ready Room now?"

In: "Um, why?"

"Jessie's here, just come as quick as you can," Kathryn replied.

In: "Got it."

"What, what is it?" Jessie asked.

"Relax, the baby is just kicking. Obviously this is the first time," Kathryn replied.

"Oh good, thanks for calling James," Jessie said.

Kathryn smiled, "it's all right, I just didn't think he should miss this." She walked back over to her desk.

"Isn't it a little early for it to be kicking, I didn't think it would have much of its legs yet to do it," Jessie said.

"I don't know, I'm not a baby expert," Kathryn said. The door chimed, "come in."

James stepped into the room, "what's going on?" He caught sight of Jessie sitting on the sofa, he rushed over to her.

"It's ok, the baby's kicking," Jessie said.

James knelt down in front of her, she took a hold of his hand and place it where the small bump was. "Two scares in one day, you got to stop doing this," he said. They both jumped slightly.

"Did you feel that? You can tell our baby's going to be just like you," Jessie said.

"Right, you say that like you don't punch and kick yourself," James said with a smirk developing on his face.

Jessie pouted a little, "I didn't start doing that until I was seventeen anyway, it's definitely you."

Kathryn watched them with a sigh, then turned back to her computer.

## **Later**

### **The Conference Room:**

"I'm sorry but I don't feel right about asking them this if I don't know what happens," Kathryn said, pacing nearby the window.

"I can assure you Captain, it's not dangerous at all," Thy said.

"I feel bad enough that I suggested them," Kathryn sighed.

"I'm sure you picked the right couple, Captain," Thy said.

Chakotay walked over to stand nearby Kathryn, "do you think they are the right ones?"

"You said that the perfect ones to do this are ones that will create life, they already have," Kathryn whispered. "Anyway I don't know any couples that are closer than they are."

"All right," Chakotay said. "But if you're so concerned we can keep a constant lock on them, any sign of trouble and we'll beam them out."

"That's if the area doesn't become stormy," Kathryn muttered.

"The grove hasn't had any of the nuclear storms," Thy said. "I wouldn't worry about it."

"That's easy for you to say," Kathryn said.

The doors that were closest opened, James and Jessie came through them. "No offense but, shouldn't we wait until the last awayteam returns before sending another one?" James questioned.

Chakotay's eyes widened, "oh god, Tom's team. I totally forgot."

"It's all right, you go and deal with that," Kathryn said. Chakotay nodded and rushed out. "Anyway. James, Jessie this is Thy."

Thy walked over to James and Jessie. "It's nice to meet you," he said.

"Um yeah you too, what's this about?" Jessie asked.

Thy's eyes widened a little as he looked at her, he took one step closer. "You're with child."

"What, no," Jessie stuttered. She glanced at James. "Can you see it already?"

"No, there's barely a bump Jess," James replied.

"Then how?" Jessie muttered.

"I can tell by a number of things, I wouldn't worry. They're not too obvious to other people," Thy said. He turned around to face Kathryn, "you chose well Captain, they will be perfect for the ceremony."

"Ceremony? What ceremony?" James questioned.

"Why do I suddenly feel the need to run and hide?" Jessie muttered to herself.

Kathryn stepped forward, "hear us out first. His people were all killed in a war. He needs to perform a ceremony that'll put the dead to rest, and he needs you two to help him do that."

"Um, why us?" James asked.

"The three rites must be done by a couple that shares a lot of respect, trust, friendship," Thy replied. "In order for us to put the dead to rest we need to prove that life goes on, that's what the ceremony is about."

"Ok, so because I'm pregnant we have to do this?" Jessie muttered.

"No, that just makes it more certain for it to work," Thy replied.

"So what do we have to do exactly?" James asked.

"I'm afraid I cannot tell you until you have to do it. It's the rules," Thy replied.

"Oh comforting," Jessie said.

"It's ok Thy, if they're not willing we can find another couple to perform it," Kathryn said.

"Oh great, she's going to start guilt tripping any second now," Jessie muttered.

"Ok hold on, is this ceremony dangerous?" James asked.

Jessie turned to stare at him, "what, hey."

Thy quickly butted in, "no it's not. It's performed every four days by a different couple each time."

"Ah, a different one each time," Jessie said. "That doesn't sound very reassuring."

"That's only because they'd know what happens, and it's against the rules for the couple to know beforehand. And what you were suggesting is that they die during it, there wouldn't be many people left to kill off in a nuclear explosion if that were the case," Thy said.

"Ok," Jessie said with a pout. She sat down in the nearest chair. "Would our child be harmed though?"

"No I've heard that every pregnant woman that takes part, the child would be blessed by the gods with good health. A lot of couples decided to volunteer because of that," Thy replied.

Jessie sat up a little, "oh really, interesting."

"Ok Jess, you don't really believe that do you?" James questioned. He glanced briefly at Thy, "no offense."

"Oh none taken, I don't really believe it anyway," Thy replied.

James frowned, "then why are you even asking around for volunteers?"

"I have no proof that it's not true, or proof that what I believe is true. I still haven't proved why the clouds light up in different colours at night after the ritual," Thy replied. "If it is true and I left without doing this..."

"Oh, that sounds pretty," Jessie giggled.

"So it's not dangerous, it's almost guaranteed if we have a baby, and something seems to happen everytime," James said. "Ok, anything else we should know? Like has any of the volunteers had weird illnesses, split up afterwards, has any couple not succeeded, and if so what happened?"

"James, this is starting to sound like an interrogation," Kathryn said in a warning tone of voice.

"I'm sorry but I just want to make sure this ritual thing won't affect us badly," James said.

"It is all right Captain, I'll answer the questions," Thy said. "If you mean by weird illnesses, unexplained then no. A few couples, well one of them probably did get sick but that's not unheard of on this planet. Most of the planet is woodland after all. Every illness that can be caught has a quick cure as well. I don't know about splitting up. A lot of couples didn't succeed yes.

"Ones that didn't succeed either quit, or they weren't good enough. By that I mean they were in an unstable relationship, weren't meant to be anyway, was in love with someone else and or didn't have strong enough feelings for each other at the time."

Jessie giggled, "so if we do this, and we don't succeed we're in for one hell of a quarrel, right?"

Kathryn looked at her strangely, while Thy and James stared blankly at her. "Jess sweetie, did I mention that I really like your hair now," James said.

Jessie stopped giggling, and looked up at him with her hand across her chest. "Aaaw, you called me sweetie, how cute."

"Ok, that worked differently," James said.

Kathryn raised an eyebrow, "what were you expecting, her to lose her temper?"

"Yeah," James said with a shrug. "Maybe I should have said something else after sweetie."

"Hmm, saying her hair was a mess would have done that," Kathryn said.

"I know, I wasn't brave enough," James said.

Jessie's eyes widened, "oh my god, what's wrong with it?"

"Ok, we're getting off track here," Kathryn muttered. "So, should I look for another couple or are you two doing it?"

Jessie jumped to her feet and pointed her finger at her, "you really have to stop asking questions like that!"

James stepped closer to put a hand on her shoulder, "she meant the ceremony."

"Oh right, sorry," Jessie muttered, blushing a little. "Damn, these mood swings are getting worse."

"You're telling me," Kathryn sighed.

"So, do you want to help?" James asked.

Jessie glanced at him, "yeah I do, it's a good cause and you heard the good health part right? What about you?"

James sighed, "why not."

Thy stepped forward, "I'm grateful, thank you."

"So, what do we do now?" Jessie asked.

"It has to be done at a certain time, we should go down to the grove as soon as possible," Thy replied.

"How long will we be down there, do I have to pack anything?" Jessie asked.

"If we're down there for more than two hours, you'll probably have to," James replied with a smirk. Jessie elbowed him gently, narrowing her eyes.

"If you do the entire ceremony, you should be ready to return here in the morning," Thy replied.

"Oh, then I do need to pack," Jessie said. She glared again at James, "no more jokes."

"I'll try," James said.

## **Later**

### **The Grove:**

Three figures rematerialised nearby a wooden cottage, that stood next to a small waterfall. The cottage stood in a small clearing, it was mostly surrounded by large trees. Nearby there were a few chairs that looked like park benches.

Thy turned to James and Jessie. "You can stay in my cottage tonight, if you want I'll put that bag in there now."

James lifted the bag he was holding, Thy took it off him. "I will discuss the first rite with you when I come back," he said. He walked towards the cottage.

"I can't believe we're doing this, you know," James commented. "We don't know what's going to happen."

"Relax will you, it might be fun," Jessie said, she stroked his arm and placed her hand on his chest. "Think about all of those couples who've done this, it can't be that bad."

"Well we'll find out won't we?" James said.

Thy stepped back out of the cottage holding a bag, he made his way over to them. "Ok, why don't we sit down and discuss the first rite." He beckoned his head towards the benches. All three of them sat down.

"We don't have to do any weird dancing do we?" Jessie asked.

Thy developed a little smirk on his face, "no. The first rite purifies the water in the area of the ritual. The second rite purifies the air. The third I'm not entirely sure of, it's the one that doesn't have any scientific value in it, the other two kinda do. It unleashes the spirits, we can't do that until the air and water are purified."

"Let me guess, you're more of a science guy than a spiritual one," James said.

Thy smiled, "you could say that. Science isn't my major, but it explains more things than religion does."

"Right, if the first two rites have um scientific value then I feel better," Jessie said. "The third one has me worried."

"You told me to relax," James said.

Jessie raised an eyebrow, "I am, I'm just. Ok, what do we have to do?"

Thy stood up, he knelt down to look inside the bag he'd brought out with him. He took out a large light blue stone, and a book. "We use the stone to purify the water," he replied. He beckoned his head towards the stream, "we can do it here, it's good enough. Both of you have to hold the stone while I read a certain passage in this book. After that you both hold it then you both put it into the water, I read another passage and that's it."

"Oh, at least I don't have to go in the water," James said.

"Not exactly. We should be within a metre away from the stream," Thy said.

"All right, let's do this," Jessie said as she got up. James followed suit, they both got closer to the stream.

"Sitting, standing or..." James questioned.

Thy followed them over, "sitting I'd think."

Jessie sat down with her back to the stream, "who's first then?" James sat down next to her.

Thy sat opposite them. "Ladies first," he replied, he handed the stone over to Jessie. "Just hold it in the palm of both hands and close your eyes."

She cradled the stone in her palms then closed her eyes. He opened the book, and started reading something from it. The stone started glowing white, James grew uncomfortable as he watched it. Thy finished reading and looked up from the book, the stone stopped glowing.

"Ok, what happened, is that supposed to..." James stuttered.

"Did the stone glow?" Thy asked. James nodded. "Yes, that's supposed to happen. It's your turn."

"Oh, I missed it," Jessie said. She handed the stone to him.

"It's just the same thing so you'll see it," Thy said. "Whenever you're ready." He waited until James had put the stone into his palms, then he started reading from the book. The stone started glowing white again, it stopped when he finished reading.

"Ookay, that was cool," Jessie muttered.

"Now you both hold it, close your eyes and gently hold it in the water," Thy said. "Don't let go of it."

James and Jessie got up to turn around, Jessie took a hold of the stone. They both knelt down in front of the stream, and put it into the water. Thy again read from the book.

James shuddered a little, Jessie glanced at him. "Are you all right?"

"No it's ok," James replied.

The stone started glowing again. The sun peeked it's way out of the clouds, and shone on the stream. The water started sparkling, and the colour changed from a light blue to a light purple colour.

Thy stopped reading then looked up from the book. His eyes widened a little as he watched the stream. The stone turned back to normal, but the water didn't. "That was..." he muttered.

"Yeah, it was a little intense," Jessie sighed. They took the stone out of the water.

Thy sighed, "obviously the first rite was a success."

**Meanwhile:**

"We're screwed if we have to rely on Johnny," Craig commented.

Tom fidgeted slightly, "yeah, we'll just have to think of our own plan to get out of here."

Craig closed his eyes, "we're so so screwed."

"Ok we know nothing about Tim, we can't exactly lure him away from this new god life," Lee said.

"We do know something. Stand by," Tom muttered, he lowered his chin and pressed it against the commbadge. "Paris to Voyager."

In: "Chakotay here. Tom, are you guys away from the natives?"

"Not yet, but I have a plan," Tom replied.

**The planet:**

James stood nearby the door to the cottage, leaning on the wall. Thy walked over to him.

"So, did you live here before the incident?" James asked.

"Yes, I've never been a big fan of cities. That's why I moved to the grove," Thy replied.

"Didn't it get a little lonely here? Living on your own," James questioned.

"A little, but the colony wasn't that far away," Thy replied.

The door opened, Jessie stepped out. "So, is it time for the second rite?"

"Yes, I'll quickly run it through with you, and then we should get to the top of the waterfall," Thy replied.

"Oh god, we're not going to jump are we?" James asked, smirking a little.

Jessie gently elbowed him, "what did I say about the jokes?"

"You said not to joke, I figured you just meant not to joke about your overpacking habit," James replied.

Jessie smiled as she put an arm around his, "anymore and I'll push you."

"Sure you would," James said in a teasing voice.

Jessie pouted, "seriously, I can't help it. What if I forgot something. Why do keep teasing me?"

"I'm sorry, I don't mean to," James replied, he put an arm around her and kissed her on the forehead.

Jessie smiled, it quickly turned into a little grin, "I can't believe you fell for that."

"Uh Jess, you really," James muttered. "And you call me too teasy."

Thy smiled and shook his head. "And I thought guys were the only ones who teased people they liked."

"It's called revenge Thy, it's sweet," Jessie said. "Are we going then?" She walked away.

"And so is she," James smiled and said through gritted teeth. He followed her, Thy shook his head and did the same.

**Meanwhile, elsewhere on the planet:**

"I thought Johnny was unreliable, god. I need a better word than screwed," Craig muttered.

Tom raised an eyebrow, "trust me, I know what I'm doing."

"Yeah you do, you're sitting. Everyone knows how to do that," Craig said.

Tom pulled a face and pretended to laugh, "oh that's a good one, very good." His face quickly turned serious.

A group of men charged into the area, dragging in Damien and Justin. "Thar, these men were sneaking around. They say they know you," one said.

Johnny turned around to look in their direction. "Uhoh, we're in trouble," Johnny stuttered.

"Why, what's wrong?" Tim's voice said from behind the statue.

"Oh yes you are," Damien said. He pulled out something from his pocket, "I'm afraid the mighty Thar will need this."

"What, what's he got?" Tim's voice stuttered.

Johnny glanced back at him, his eyes widened and he pulled a face. "Oh my god, dude you seriously need a face lift, you look about eighty in this light."

"No what he really needs is his Miracle Hide Your Wrinkles cream," Damien said, smiling evilly. He raised the jar he had in his pocket.

"Crap, Johnny go get it," Tim's voice muttered.

Johnny pulled a face as he backed away, "oh my god, hide your wrinkle cream? How old are you really?"

"Johnny," Tim's voice grumbled.

"No way, you wouldn't let these guys go, why should I listen to you?" Johnny muttered.

Tim stepped out from behind the statue, pointing a finger. He looked a lot older than he did before, everyone gasped in shock. "Johnny, in my day youth listened to their elders."

"Now Timmy, you really should get the cream before it's unable to help you," Damien said.

Most of the natives started to surround Johnny and Tim. "He can't be our god, our gods do not age," one grumbled.

"Uhoh," Tim stuttered. He stood behind Johnny. "You should protect me."

"Only if you agree that I should tell them to let Tom and everyone go," Johnny said as he turned to face him.

"No, they're our enemy," Tim muttered.

"All right," Johnny said. "Go boys." He walked around the horde and stood nearby Damien and Justin. The horde charged at Tim. "He fooled us all, I say we should burn the traitor at dawn."

"How did he fool you, oh mighty Shiy?" Tom questioned.

"Obviously he hid his age from us, so he must be a sorcerer," Johnny stuttered.

"Yes a sorcerer! Let's burn him!" the horde yelled. They grabbed a hold of Tim and dragged him away.

Damien walked over to some of the other natives. "Oh by the way, that guy," he said, pointing at Justin. "He killed an animal that's half my height and had horns on it's head, on the way here."

All of them gasped in shock. "Oh, they're our sacred animals. Lock him up!" one yelled. Some of them grabbed Justin and dragged him away too.

Damien smiled deviously, "now, Johnny. Are you going to leave, or do I have to expose you as well?"

Johnny turned pale, "no sir. I'll leave, we just need to get Tom and them out of here."

"Oh I know that, I'm getting paid for this," Damien said with a smirk. He made his way over to where Tom and company were.

## **Voyager**

### **Danny's Quarters:**

The door chimed, Danny rushed out of the bedroom. "Come in."

The door opened, Ian walked in. "Hey Dan."

Danny's face lit up, "hey gorgeous." She walked over to him. "What are you doing here, we're not meeting for another few hours."

"There's something I have to talk to you about," Ian replied.

"All right," Danny said. She sat down on the sofa, Ian sat down next to her.

Ian looked nervous, "ok um, this is going to take me a while. It's really uh embarrassing."

"Don't worry," Danny said with a smile. "You can tell me anything."

"Ok but it's not just anything," Ian muttered.

Danny took a hold of his hand, "you still can tell me. Take your time, we have plenty of it."

## **Meanwhile**

### **The Grove:**

James stepped out of the cottage, he looked around and spotted Thy sitting by the stream side. He closed the door, then headed over to him. Thy glanced up at him briefly.

"The third rite won't start until midnight," he said.

"No I know," James said.

"Is Jessie all right?" Thy asked.

James smiled as he folded his arms. "She's a little tired from the hike, she fell asleep on that sofa."

"She's tired now? Oh, it's a good thing she's having a nap before the third rite," Thy muttered quietly.

"Why? Is it tiring?" James questioned.

Thy shrugged his shoulders, "depends really."

James frowned, he knelt down beside him. "Why does it depend?"

"You ask a lot of questions," Thy said.

"I don't usually, at least I don't think so," James said.

Thy sighed, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend."

"You didn't," James said. "I was wondering something though. If this ritual is so unknown to the public, until they have to do it that is, how were you able to research it?"

Thy glanced at him, "I was hoping you wouldn't notice, let alone ask."

James glanced down at the ground, "oh, you've done this before."

Thy nodded, "just two years ago. I didn't believe in it, but my girlfriend was insistent as her grandmother died just two days previously."

"Oh right, she lives on the homeworld right," James said uncomfortably.

"No, she was the real reason I moved here," Thy muttered.

"Oh god, I'm sorry. I'll shut up if you want," James said.

"It's ok. If what she believed in is true, I'll see her again someday. It's what keeps me going," Thy said.

"But you don't believe it," James said.

"No, but I really want to. This is why I'm doing this," Thy said.

"Now I get why you really want this done before you leave," James said. "You don't want to abandon her."

Thy glanced at him, "would you abandon Jessie?"

"No," James replied.

"You know I really thought she and I would be together until we were really old people, with grandchildren," Thy said, smiling weakly. "You know, you two remind me how we used to be, it's weird."

"How do we remind you?" James questioned.

"As she was an old school friend we used to mess around a lot, tease each other. Well I teased her. That's how," Thy replied.

"You knew her since school, how long?" James asked.

Thy smiled and shook his head, "I dunno why I said friend. I met her when we were kids, she wouldn't even give me the time of day but I fell for her instantly. Years later she started talking to me, and then we were dating. You know my parents brought me here to go to the best school, but I had to go back to the homeworld someday."

"And that's what you did?" James said.

"Yeah, after a few years I returned to find her. I knew she would have moved on but I just wanted to see her. I was surprised that she actually waited, so I decided to move here. My folks weren't at all impressed with the idea but I was happy," Thy said.

He looked over at the waterfall, "I took her on lots of dates here, she loved coming here. I wasn't lying when I said that I hated city life. She hated it too, so we decided to live here. If she had only stayed here that day, she'd still be here."

"I'm really sorry," James said.

"Thanks, I just hope you don't have to go through what I did. You hold onto her, she seems really nice after all," Thy said. "A little crazy but nice."

"To be fair if the pregnancy isn't making her lose her temper, be too flirty, easily upset, it'll be making her *crazier* than usual. Plus I'm not exactly sane either," James said.

The cottage door opened, Jessie stepped out trying to dry her eyes. "Oh god."

James and Thy glanced behind them, James quickly got onto his feet and made his way over. "Jess, what's the matter?"

"I'm going to get so fat, none of my clothes will fit," she cried.

"Jess you're not going to get fat. Just think of it like this, in a month or two I'll be buying you some nice maternity clothes," James said.

"Oh yeah," Jessie smiled, she wiped a few tears from her left eye. "You mean on my birthday?"

"Yeah, that and I'll get something else that's more of a keeper," James replied.

Jessie's eyes narrowed, "just don't get me a dress or a skirt, I don't care how fat I get, I'm not wearing them."

"You should know by now that I'm not suicidal anymore," James said.

Jessie's face lit up, "yey, I can't wait then." She gave him a quick hug. "Oh, I'm back. When will these mood swings end?"

Thy pulled himself to his feet, he clasped his hands together. "Ok then, I think it's time we discuss the third rite. Remember you can easily back out if you don't want to do it."

"I don't know, it seems a bit stupid to get this far and then back out," James said.

"Ok, please sit down then," Thy said.

"Hmm, this is even more ominous. This third rite's going to be really horrible and or embarrassing right?" Jessie said as she sat down on the bench. James sat down next to her.

"All right, ahem," Thy cleared his throat. "Like I said earlier, I don't understand how this rite ties in with the actual ceremony. At midnight I begin reading from the book, while doing a cleansing ritual. I won't bore you with that as you don't help me with that."

"So what do we do?" Jessie asked nervously.

"I'm not sure how to put it so a human would understand it, and not offend them either," Thy said. "Ok I don't think you'd have to worry about it, as you have done it before so I'm hoping you won't back out."

"Ok the entire ceremony is dependant on a couple who will probably will or already has created new life, as you know. It's so the dead can rest easy knowing that life continues, or something to that effect. This is why the third and final rite is looked at as a test for the couple, you know to see if there's trust and l..."

"A test? Surely we don't have to do a quiz or something," Jessie muttered.

"What on us? We haven't done that before," James replied, smirking slightly.

"Yes we have, Danny always asks stuff," Jessie said.

Thy sighed, "ok I'm not explaining this right so I'll just say it. You both have to consummate the ceremony. I'll stay out here, you can use the cabin."

James and Jessie's eyes were now wider than usual, they glanced at each other. "Um, right now or..." James muttered.

"At midnight, just before would be preferable," Thy replied.

"Well at least it's not horrible or embarrassing," Jessie said.

"Um, if you don't mind, can we discuss this in private?" James asked.

Thy nodded, "of course, you can use the cabin. If you're still not out of the cabin by about ten minutes before midnight, I'll assume you're going to do it and I'll prepare."

"Right," James said as he stood back up. Jessie got up looking confused, she followed him into the cottage.

"Ok I thought you said it would be stupid to go this far only to back out," she said as they got inside.

James closed the door, "you did hear what he said, right?"

"Yeah so, we have done it before," Jessie replied.

"You don't think this is weird?" James questioned.

"Yeah it's weird, but it is for a good cause right?" Jessie replied. She sat down on the sofa, she made a quick glance at the clock standing beside it on the table. "If I understand this planet's time then we've only got ten minutes before Thy assumes we're going to do this. Just give me one good reason why we shouldn't do it."

"All right. One you're pregnant, two there was that incident that I'm not supposed to mention, but I think it should be now," James said.

"We've slept together twice while I've been pregnant, true we were drunk one of the times and we didn't know the other time," Jessie muttered. "I've talked to Kes about this already, it won't hurt the baby. It's actually perfectly healthy to do it while pregnant. Second that incident has nothing to do with this."

"Jess, people have been giving you a hard enough time, just because you took me back after it," James sighed as he sat down next to her. "Doing this will..."

"I don't care about what everyone else thinks," Jessie said. "I'm sick to death of hiding us from everyone, wondering what everyone who knows thinks about it." She turned to face him, "I'm also tired of holding back, I wasted too many years of my life doing that and I'm still doing it."

James took a hold of one of her hands, "what are you talking about Jess, what are you holding back?"

"My feelings for you, you know everything. I cannot count how many times I wanted to kiss you, even just touch you when we were teens. Even though I can do those things now, I still instinctively try to hold back a lot of the time. I don't understand why," Jessie replied.

"Why haven't you told me this before?" James asked.

"Because I get embarrassed talking about us, it's another thing I hold back from doing. I don't understand it, what's wrong with me?" Jessie replied, she covered her face with her free hand.

"It's probably because we were close friends, I used to hold back too. I guess I still do sometimes," James said.

"Can't we be both?" Jessie asked. "Can't we be close friends who are a couple?"

"I'm sure we can. You've got to admit though, we've both been doing that less and less over the last few months," James replied.

"Fine then why are you using the chip incident last month as an excuse not to do this?" Jessie questioned. "It sounds to me like holding back."

"It isn't, I just think it's a little fast. Won't you freak out, I mean..." James muttered.

"No I won't," Jessie replied. "Look I don't know if this ceremony does a damn thing, but if it does we'll be helping at least a few thousand people. That incident is just another thing that makes us hold back for no real reason, you know like the pretend and practise relationship excuse and other little things we've made up. If we're going to be a real couple, we're going to have to stop doing this to ourselves or this won't last much longer."

"You're right, but it's not going to be a quick fix," James said.

"It will, we just have to stop being so afraid of us. Look it's as simple as this," Jessie muttered. "Do you want to be with me?"

"More than anything, I always wanted that," James replied. "Do you want to..."

"Just as much as I want this baby," Jessie replied. "See, there isn't any good reason why we shouldn't do this. What do you say?"

James sighed, "I say if we can't help those people, nobody else has a chance."

Jessie smiled as she put a hand on his shoulder, "damn right." They both moved in closer to kiss each other. They separated by only a centimetre, "no more holding back?" He just shook his head slightly, he moved back in for another kiss. They put their arms around each other.

## **Meanwhile**

### **Voyager, Danny's Quarters:**

Ian was busy pacing back and forth, looking really nervous. "Oh god. You think I'm a freak don't you?"

Danny shook her head, "Ian stand still." He did as he was told. "Look I don't, I think it's really sweet."

"But don't you find it a little weird that you've slept with people, and I haven't?" Ian questioned.

"No, but it wasn't people it was just someone," Danny replied. "I only went with Terry, after him I got put off."

"Because he dumped you and was a complete ass?" Ian said.

"Yeah that and it wasn't exactly the best night of my life," Danny said.

"Oh really?" Ian said, face lighting up a little.

Danny raised an eyebrow, "you don't have to be so happy about it."

"Sorry," Ian muttered. "You really don't mind that I'm a..."

"No, it doesn't put me off or anything," Danny replied.

Ian smiled as he went over to sit down next to her. "You're the best Dan."

"Aaw, I'm not really. I just don't see what the big deal is. It means that I might have you all to myself, and I like that idea," Danny said.

"Might? I'm really hoping that you will, I mean you're the only girl I've ever loved," Ian said.

Danny placed a hand across his cheek and smiled at him. "All right, forget I said that word."

"Wait, you didn't freak when I said the word loved," Ian said.

"No, when I was in that coma I heard you say it," Danny said. "It's not so freaky, it seems right to me."

"Yeah it does, I just wish we didn't waste all that time," Ian said.

"Let's not waste anymore," Danny said. She leaned in to kiss him.

### **A little while later**

#### **The Bridge:**

Tom stepped onto the bridge, closely followed by Damien. Everyone were watching the viewscreen which showed a close up of the planet. Parts of it were covered by a cloud that was filled with lots of different colours.

"So what exactly are you getting paid with?" Tom asked.

"I don't have a job on this ship so rations, pea brain," Damien muttered in response. He walked over to Chakotay and held out his hand.

"Pea brain, sometimes words hurt," Tom sarcastically muttered as he headed towards the helm. He stopped midway to look at the viewscreen, "woah, what's that?"

"If I understand correctly that's the death ritual being completed," Chakotay replied.

"Um, I didn't get any of that," Tom muttered.

"I'll explain later, maybe," Kathryn said. She sat down in her chair, "it's beautiful isn't it?"

Chakotay sighed, "it really is."

"Ahem," Damien cleared his throat.

Chakotay finally noticed him with his hand out. He took a hold of it and shook it, "yes well done."

"Hey no, when am I getting paid? I don't know how much longer I can eat that crap that rodent cooks," Damien grumbled.

"Relax, just look at the viewscreen for a little while," Kathryn said.

"Why it's just some crummy planet," Damien muttered. He glanced briefly at the viewscreen, his eyes widened a little as he turned back to it to watch it. "Oh, that is pretty."

"Oh by the way guys, we're invited to a public execution at the primitive natives' dawn," Tom said.

Kathryn looked horrified, "that's horrible."

"Why? It's only Tim and he tried to kill us," Tom meekly said. "I wasn't going to go anyway."

"Oh and Justin is getting it too," Damien sneered.

"I'm there," Harry blurted out.

"Me too," a lot of unknowns chimed in.

"But but..." Kathryn stuttered.

"It's ok, he dies all the time and comes back remember," Tom said.

Damien groaned, "I keep forgetting about that. Hopefully his ashes can't regenerate."

### **The next morning**

#### **Danny's Quarters:**

Danny woke up, she turned over onto her side. Ian lay beside her just watching her. "Oh you're still here," she said quietly.

"Where else would I go?" he asked.

Danny smiled and then kissed him. "How long have you been watching me?"

Ian shrugged, "I don't know, I lost track of time."

"Oh, then you don't know the time?" Danny questioned.

"No, but who cares if it's late or early," Ian replied.

In: "Janeway to Scott, where the bloody hell are you! Get your stupid blonde binty ass to the bridge, NOW!"

Danny's eyes were now wide, "my god, that was scary."

"Yeah she's been acting weird for a day or two now," Ian said.

"I'd better get ready, ugh I don't want to," Danny groaned as she sat up. "I may not come back alive."

"I'll tell you what, I'll come with you. You could use my body as a human shield," Ian said.

"Oh you're so brave," Danny just giggled.

"Not even a little bit," Ian said.

### **Meanwhile**

#### **The Grove:**

Sunlight meekly came through the crack in the curtains, it was still enough to light the room up a little. Jessie was lying on her left side, with her elbow resting on the pillow, her head resting in that hand. James was lying next to her, also on his side but was facing her.

He opened his eyes, "Jess, you're awake?"

"Yep, for quite a while now," Jessie said. She rested her left arm on the pillow, she used her right hand to fiddle with strands of his hair. "So, do you think we did it?"

"I think we did," James replied.

"Yeah, you should always assume that I'm right and listen to me straight away," Jessie smiled. She turned over to lie on her back.

"I'll try to remember that," James said.

Jessie put a hand on her stomach, "ow, what's that?"

James' eyes widened, he quickly sat up. "What, what's the matter?"

Jessie glanced at him with a smirk on her face, "wow, twice in a row. I'm getting good."

"That's not funny, you can't joke about that," James muttered, with his eyes narrowing. "You know how paranoid I was about this."

Jessie sat up, taking the cover with her. "Oh come on, I was just playing around."

"Hmm, good thing I was as well," James said.

Jessie's mouth dropped open in shock, "you." She pushed him back onto his back, he had pulled her down with him. James developed a smirk on his face, this made her start giggling, he soon joined in. He brushed a few strands of her hair back behind her ear with his left hand, she passed him a quick smile then kissed him. His hand moved to the back of her head as he kissed her back.

In the next room they could hear something knocking on the main door. They pulled away from each other. "I'll get it," he said. He then sat up and climbed out of the bed. Jessie moved so she could rest her back on the wall.

Meanwhile Thy stood patiently outside the cottage. The door opened a minute later. "Hey, morning." James said.

"Morning," Thy said. He held out his right hand, "I'd like to thank you and Jessie."

"Oh," James said. He took a hold of it and shook it. "I take it, it worked then."

"It really did," Thy replied with a smile. "I hope your ship managed to capture a space view of the clouds, it was really beautiful."

"Really? I'll have to check with them when we get back," James said. "They haven't tried to contact us yet, have they?"

"Not so far," Thy replied.

Jessie appeared behind James, she slipped her arms around him. "Hey Thy, how did it go?"

"Well thanks to you the ceremony was a success," Thy replied. "I don't know how to thank you, I'm really grateful."

"You don't have to, really," Jessie said.

James smiled, "yeah, you kinda helped us too. We're even, ok."

"How did I help you?" Thy asked.

"We worked a few things out," James replied. "It's a long story."

"I still feel I owe you though," Thy said. "I mean your Captain has said that Voyager is going in the homeworld's direction, and she is letting me come aboard."

"Then it's the Captain you owe then, don't worry about it," James said.

"We should be going back soon anyway," Jessie said.

Thy nodded, "I'll need a little while to collect my stuff." James and Jessie got out of the doorway, Thy smiled and stepped in.

James took a commbadge out of his pocket, and tapped it. "Taylor to Voyager."

In: "Chakotay here. Are you all ready for transport?"

"Just about, we're just waiting for Thy," James replied.

Thy stepped out of the bedroom, holding a bag over his shoulder. "I'm ready to go, more or less."

"More or less?" Jessie questioned.

James stepped closer to Thy. "She's ok now you know."

Thy smiled, "I do know. It's just this place, it reminds me of her every day. I don't know if that's making me want to stay, or leave."

Jessie looked confused, "who are you talking about?"

"I don't think it matters where you are Thy, I doubt you'll forget her for a long time," James said. He glanced at Jessie, "I'll explain later."

"That's true, at least I know I'll see her again one day," Thy said.

"You know, you said you just wanted to believe," James said.

"Last night I saw it for myself, of course I'm not a firm believer of it yet but maybe one day I will be," Thy said. He took one last look around the room, "I'm ready."

"Ok Chakotay, we're ready for transport," James said into the commbadge.

In: "Acknowledged."

### **The Transporter Room:**

Instead of the usual transporter people, Danny was manning the station. James, Jessie and Thy rematerialised on the pad. "Hey guys, welcome back."

"Danny?" James said, stepping off the pad. "Since when do you do all the transporting?" Jessie and Thy also stepped off the pad. A crewmember walked up to them.

"Since this morning. I was late and Janeway literally screamed at me, so I'm working here instead," Danny replied.

"Mr Siln, I'll show you to your quarters," the crewmember said.

"Oh," Thy muttered. He turned to James and Jessie, "again, thank you."

"It's really ok," James said.

"Yeah, it was our pleasure," Jessie said as she took a hold of his arm.

Thy nodded his head, he turned to follow the crewmember out.

"Pleasure's the right word for it, ey?" Jessie said quietly into James' ear.

"Shh, Danny has good hearing for comments like that," James whispered.

Danny made her way over, "what was that?"

"Oh nothing," Jessie replied as she walked over to stand in front of James. "Did that awayteam get back?"

Danny shrugged, "beats me. Did you guys have fun?"

"Yeah, we did, didn't we?" Jessie replied, as she slipped an arm around him.

In: "Chakotay to Taylor. Tuvok wants you to come straight to work."

"Oh great," James groaned. He tapped his commbadge, "ok, I'll be right there."

Jessie pouted, "oh, I was hoping we could skive for a while. I'm starved, we could go to the Mess."

"No I'd better go, you should go though," James said. He was about to leave, but Jessie stopped him.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" she asked. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him. "Better."

"Sorry, I'll not forget next time," James said. He walked away, then stepped out of the room.

Jessie turned around to look at the door, smiling with a blush on her cheeks. She turned back half way only to get Danny more or less in her face.

"Oh my god, can you guys get anymore *get a roomy?*" she said with a smirk on her face.

"Ugh Danny," Jessie groaned.

Danny narrowed her eyes as she stared at her. Her eyes quickly widened again, her mouth dropped in shock. "Oh god, you guys did it didn't you."

"What, no, of course not," Jessie blurted out, her blush was getting redder. "Why do you think that?"

"You've got that glow, I'd recognise it anywhere," Danny replied, folding her arms. "Well did you?"

Jessie sighed, "all right, all right, yes we did. It was part of the ritual."

Danny's face quickly lit up, "oh wow, really? You must tell me everything."

"I'm not going to tell you anymore than that," Jessie muttered. She headed for the door. Danny wasn't far behind her.

"Ok who came onto who, what was he like, how long, was it any good?" she rambled on as they both went through the doors.

## **Later**

### **The Security Office:**

James sighed as he dumped one PADD onto a pile next to the computer, he reached out to pick another one off a different pile. The door opened up, Ian casually strolled in.

"Hey," he said.

James looked up, "Ian? I'm kinda busy, you can chew me out later." He glanced at the PADD again and pulled a face, "on second thought be my guest."

"No no, I'm not here for that," Ian said, he leaned on the chair on the other side of the desk. "Well not today anyway."

"Then what do you want? Security problem?" James questioned.

"I just want you to know that Danny and I didn't want to keep it a secret for so long. Now that it's out, I thought it would be fair to keep you, Jessie and Kes up to date," Ian replied.

"Ookay then," James muttered, looking confused.

"Danny and I are catching up with you and Jess," Ian said. "Of course it took you guys a year and a half to get this far, so it's not really a big accomplishment."

"One and a half years," James muttered to himself. He raised an eyebrow, "New Earth time and, oh." He looked back up at him, "you and Danny, slept together?"

"Yeah don't worry, she actually asked me to tell you," Ian replied.

Right on cue Danny ran into the room, she smiled cheekily at James. "Hey you."

"Um, the one you're after is there," James muttered, pointing at Ian.

"Well I'm done here," Ian said. "What are you doing here Dan?"

"Oh, I'm just here to annoy James for a little while," Danny replied, smiling sweetly.

Ian shrugged, "all right then." He stepped out.

"What's up Danny?" James asked.

"Oh nothing, I just wanted to tell you something," Danny replied. She sat down on the desk, "congratulations in getting over the fear."

"Which fear?" James asked.

"You know," Danny replied, smiling cheekily again. "So did you have a good time last night?"

"Um, why would you want to know that?" James questioned, raising an eyebrow.

"I was just wondering cos Jessie really did. Supposedly you're very good for a newbie," Danny replied, winking at him.

### **Not long later**

#### **The Bridge:**

Everyone present were in their usual places; Tom at the helm, Harry at Opps, Tuvok at Tactical, Chakotay in his chair and Jessie at the Engineering station.

"I have to say, that was the best execution I've ever been to," Tom said.

"And I have to say, you're sick," Harry muttered.

"Oh relax, the one that was fun will come back from the dead anyway," Tom said.

James stepped out of the turbolift, he made his over to where Jessie was working. "Jess, we need to talk."

Jessie looked up at him, "um, now? Here?"

"Yeah here and now," James muttered. He sat down on the station. "Why did you tell Danny about last night?" he asked quietly.

"I said I was sick of hiding us and holding back, I just thought it was about time she knew," Jessie replied just as quiet.

"Oh that I understand perfectly," James muttered.

"Then what's the problem?" Jessie asked.

"You told her a few details of last nights and the first time, that's what the matter. What were you thinking?" James questioned.

"Details? They were barely details. I just said how it started and that it was good, that's all," Jessie muttered in response. "Stop overreacting."

Tom turned his chair around, "do you know what they're arguing about?"

Harry shrugged his shoulders, "nope, you're closer to hear them anyway."

Tom shook his head, "it seems like all they do lately is argue." He turned his chair around again to watch them. They both were still arguing very quietly. "For crying out loud," he got out of his chair.

"It's Danny, you just don't tell her stuff like that about me," James said.

"I barely shared anything with her, she's probably just making it seem like that," Jessie said.

Tom stopped next to the station, "ok I've had enough. You," he said, pointing at Jessie. "You've been really weird lately with all your little mood changes, what's especially annoying is those times when you insult everybody and ramble on about crap."

"I don't think..." Jessie said.

"And you," Tom said, pointing at James. "For the love of god. When she's not too busy mouthing off at everyone and making people cry, she's a great girl. If you're just her friend then fine, just stop moping around for whatever it is and talk it over with her. If you are dating her, get a grip. She's gorgeous and everything, you've got nothing to whine or angst about."

He moved his finger back to Jessie, "and you again, surely you should have talked to him by now. He's been all moody and everything, and a lot of stuff's happened. For crying out loud talk to him and sort it out. You obviously haven't. Jeez you two just, you're hopeless lately. Work it out, I don't like talking this way!" He stormed back over to the helm.

James and Jessie glanced at each other briefly, then back over at Tom. "Um, he has strangely got a point," Jessie said.

"Hmm yeah, weird huh," James said.

"Yeah I'm sorry, I shouldn't have told her that stuff," Jessie muttered.

"That whole speech made you want to apologise? Why?" James asked. "You were right, I was just overreacting."

Jessie smiled and took a hold of his hand, "ok we were both wrong then, deal?"

"Deal," James said.

Tom glanced over at them briefly, he smiled to himself. "Damn I'm good, I should be a counsellor."

Kathryn stormed into the room from the Ready Room. "All right, who drank that last drop of coffee from my cup?"

Chakotay glanced over at her, "that was you. I remember you cursing at it for ten minutes as it wouldn't come out."

"Oh," Kathryn said. She looked around the room, "as you were." Her eyes focused on Harry, "Harry, you really should see someone about that. It looks like somebody stuck your head in one of Neelix's pans." She stepped back into the Ready Room.

Harry pouted, "that was mean."

"Yeah, kinda like Jessie mean when she's in one of those moods," Tom said.

Chakotay's eyes widened in horror, "oh god." He glanced to his left and then the right, he sighed in relief, "oh wait, that's impossible." He relaxed in his chair.

**\*\*\*\*THE END\*\*\*\***