

## Episode 1.08 Collective Instinct

Kathryn was busy reading the rest of the original Voyager's Season Four's episode guide after Unforgettable, when Chakotay sat down beside her. She quickly hid it as he smirked at her.

"So what's next?" he asked.

"Chakotay gets another fourth wall smack in the face. It's a two parter," Kathryn muttered.

"It must have a lot of filler," Tom commented.

"With all this talk of original Voyager episodes and before they were rebooted FV episodes, I think we should rename the series," Harry said.

Tom nodded, then pulled a disgusted face. "Fourth Voyager just doesn't have the same ring to it."

"I have the strangest sensation to beat Tom until he cries," Kathryn grumbled. Tom tried to pretend he didn't hear it, but he started to shake.

Chakotay smiled to himself, "save it for when he dares to start a plot."

"Oh I will," Kathryn snarled as she was up to the Demon entry. A tiny whimper calmed her down, so did the slight movement on her lap. The little girl lying in a ball there had rolled onto her back and was stretching her arms and legs.

Chakotay smiled at the sight of her, "maybe not in front of her."

"Oh I don't know. I quite like the thought of her beating him up alongside me," Kathryn sighed. Tom's eyes widened.

Kiara sat up with another whimper, a large pout appeared on her tiny face. When she looked up at Kathryn though that turned into a smile. "Mummy?"

"Aaaw, I'm sorry. Did nasty Tom wake you up?" Kathryn cooed at her.

Tom's mouth dropped open. "Wha... I'm not doing anything."

Kiara shook her head. "Voyager bang," she tried to explain. Her head shook again. Her right hand went fingers first into her other hand. "Bang."

"Tom," Kathryn growled.

"Again!" Tom threw his hands up in the air. "I swear if someone picks on me for no reason at all, I'm going to lose it."

"Voyager fast, bang into white stuff," Kiara said.

Chakotay quickly leaned over to stroke her still short hair before Kathryn could accuse Tom again. "Did you have a bad dream, sweetie?"

"No, was real," Kiara protested.

"White stuff?" Kathryn pondered. "You didn't give her some of that so called ice cream Neelix made, did you Chakotay?"

"Wow, it wasn't me. There's a shock!" Tom grumbled.

Kathryn's eyes narrowed in his direction, the force of it he could feel burning into his back.

Chakotay meanwhile looked a little offended. "Neelix couldn't even eat it, he spent three days in Sickbay."

"Good," Kathryn shrugged. "What's the status of our supply shuttles?"

Tom only huffed in response. Harry quickly decided to answer for him, just in case, "shuttle one will reach the dilithium source in a couple of hours. We still have quite a lot left though. Shuttle two is on its way back, but Neelix says it'll be a day or two. Apparently he's loaded it up so much he can't go full speed."

"That makes no sense," Chakotay commented to himself.

Kathryn growled, the Demon part of her PADD wasn't helping. "We never find any dilithium when we do need it. If we have to, we can store it in the Deck Thirteen remains."

Chakotay's eyes couldn't help but widen. "Is that wise?"

"There's nothing there but rubble, who cares?" Kathryn just groaned.

For a moment it was peaceful, quiet. The strange shaped ship glided into orbit to cast a dark shadow over the small world below. It turned, almost span on the spot before edging away out of orbit again. As if it changed its mind it stopped suddenly. Without turning it shot straight towards the planet, the atmosphere swallowed it whole.

## **Two Days Later**

### **Sickbay:**

The Doctor looked a little annoyed when he picked up the regenerator. As if it was a huge effort, he sighed loudly as he started to use it on his patient.

"I'm telling you, there's something there," the crewmember protested. The gash on his cheek disappeared after one more wave of the regenerator.

"Of course," the Doctor said to his relief. "There's plenty of things there that you could have tripped over or walked into. Thirteen is little more than a corridor of rubbish."

Another crewmember stood nearby, she raised her eyebrow and smirked. "Corridor? More like open field."

The first crewmember darted his head between them both. "I'm telling you, I didn't trip. Something flew out and hit me."

The doors flew open to allow half of Security Team One inside. As usual Thompson was talking the other member's ear off.

"Something could have fallen from the damaged ceiling. That is also possible," the Doctor said.

"Hmph, that deck was the problem central of Voyager for years. Now that it's destroyed we're all supposed to believe it's okay?" the crewmember groaned.

Thompson stopped talking long enough to wince slightly. "Another Deck Thirteen accident?"

The team stopped nearby the biobed, the Doctor sighed in their direction. "It's all right, he's another paranoid rubble tripper."

"So got hurt, claims something was there but no one saw it? That same deal?" Foster questioned.

The second crewmember nodded. "I was with him. I didn't see anything."

"Of course you didn't, it's pitch black down there!" the first crewmember spat.

"So how do you know it was a something?" Foster asked, trying badly to hide his nervousness.

The first crewmember glanced at him, then Thompson and finally at Foster again. "It felt like an arm. It definitely wasn't made of metal."

Thompson tried to laugh his own nervousness off. "Maybe Janice here got a bit sick of you."

The girl crewmember scowled at him. "My name's Rachel."

"I'm telling you. Thirteen is as active as ever. Why won't anyone believe me? I'm not the only one who thinks so," the male crewmember snapped. He pushed himself off the biobed to storm out.

"That's the third repair personnel accident in two days," the Doctor sighed. "Perhaps it does warrant another Security visit."

"Nah," Thompson laughed, waving off his suggestion. "It's dark, everyone's creeped out, there's rubble everywhere. Accidents happen and they don't like to admit it. Believe me, I know..." Foster nodded furiously. "Foster's an expert in that field." He stopped nodding and narrowed his eyes at him instead.

"Still..." the Doctor said.

"Relax Doccy, it's just paranoia like you said," Thompson said.

The Doctor let himself sigh, "perhaps, but why now? Repair crew have been on that deck for months now."

Triah sighed as she looked at the state of her quarters. There was a piece of dust of the wall. She couldn't believe it, her room was now a mess. She picked up a cloth and wiped the dust of the wall. The room was perfect again. The door chimed.

"Come in," Triah said happily.

The door opened, Craig walked in. Triah immediately made a little squeaking noise and put her hand out. Craig stopped walking abruptly with a groan. He'd forgotten again. His feet scrapped across the mat over and over until Triah looked happy enough.

"It's only been three, almost four years little bro," she said with a smile.

"Uh huh, do you want to go or not?" Craig asked with a sigh

Triah didn't look so sure. "Hmm, Security seems like a messy job. Maybe..."

"It's not," Craig quickly butted in. "With James gone all Thompson wants to do is play cards."

"Oh so no Deck Thirteen patrols? Good, that place gives me the heebie jeebies," Triah smiled in relief.

"Yeah I'd say that's normal, but your reasons for it aren't," Craig commented.

Triah gave him a funny look, she then got it and scowled. "Worrying about explosion residue and black soot getting all over you is definitely normal. Worrying about ghouls and goblins isn't."

Craig smiled, then laughed. "Yeah you're not wrong about that part."

"I assume James is all work and no play, hmm?" Triah questioned. "I didn't think you'd befriend someone like that." She headed for the door.

Craig looked a little confused. "No, why... Oh. No, Thompson is a sore loser. James beat him once and he's never wanted to play him again." Triah giggled as the pair left her quarters. "Although if something happens, James is more likely to actually work. Thompson's a bit of a pansy."

Triah gave her brother a playful shove, then checked her hand afterwards. He only rolled his eyes. "If you're calling him that, he must be."

### **Cargo Bay One:**

"Captain, this is Arturis, he was a huge help..." Neelix cheerfully said.

Kathryn panicked for some reason, "ew, I don't think so. We've already got our quota for weird ugly assed aliens on this ship!" She shoved the alien visitor to one side on her way out.

"But," Neelix whimpered. "He's good with languages and junk. Perhaps he can help with the scrambled messages from Hunt..."

Kathryn stomped back very quickly, she quickly grabbed Neelix by the scruff of his shirt. The alien standing beside him didn't look surprised. "Don't make me call Security."

"I'll pilot him back to the planet," Neelix continued his whimpering.

"Don't bother, he's probably got a disguised ship nearby," Kathryn said towards the alien. "You can take Seven with you. I'm sick of her Borg boobs always being in my face." Again she stomped off.

Nearby Chakotay had overheard this and was covering his embarrassed face with his hand. He quickly hurried after her. "Captain."

"Ugh, what now?" Kathryn groaned once she had stopped.

"Hand over that damn PADD," Chakotay ordered her. Oddly she didn't seem mad at that, she just tried to look innocent. "Nothing has happened. Everytime something may happen, you somehow know how to solve it."

"Name one time that happened," Kathryn snarled with her arms folded.

### **Obvious flashback:**

"Captain there's a Hirogen ship nearby, it's adrift and..." Harry reported. An airborne teaspoon flew into his face to interrupt him, it batted him right in the eye. "Ow!"

"Do not ever mention the H word or anything related to it ever again!" Kathryn screeched at him. "Keep us on course."

### **Another one:**

"... Apparently he's a weapon specialist. With the Hir... er big tall aliens annoyed with us, we could do with a little upgrade," Chakotay said.

Kathryn thought about it for a moment. Her gaze went over to Seven sitting in a nearby chair, then went back to her first officer. Eventually she climbed out of her seat, clutching it tightly. Everyone was shocked when she pushed it as hard as she could towards Seven. The force of it knocked the ex drone flying to the ground.

"Problem solved," Kathryn said.

### **Yet another flashback:**

"Hey Neelix, want to come with us on the shuttle mission to the nebula thing?" Tom asked cheerfully. Chakotay beside him just groaned.

Neelix grinned, "sure!"

Kathryn meanwhile was sweating buckets. "Aaaw man, this is a tough one."

Chakotay looked over to her, eyeing her suspiciously. "As long as the Captain is okay with it, I am. I'm sure it won't be *dangerous* or *life threatening*."

Kathryn made a little sad squeak. It sounded almost cute. Suddenly her sad face was gone and she was happy again. "Forget Neelix, take Seven."

Nearby Seven raised her eyebrow.

### **I bet this is already getting old:**

"Man, I love fixing cars on the Holodeck," Tom said to himself as he walked down the corridor. He had not noticed Kathryn sneakily following him. "Oh well, at least I can fix that perfectly nice guy's ship and totally not be jealous enough to have some life crisis for him to take advantage of."

Kathryn screamed as she tackled him to the ground. It happened so suddenly Tom could only just curl up in a ball as she started smacking him.

"Nooo stop! Captain please!" he cried.

"I'll teach... you to have... sucky episodes!" Kathryn growled, pausing each time she hit him.

"No! This doesn't involve Seven. Please," Tom cried.

Kathryn stopped. He quickly threw his hands over his face just in case she continued. He saw his chance to escape when she pulled a PADD out of her pocket. When the anger started to once again form in her face he knew he had little time to do so.

"Liar!" Kathryn screamed at him.

Tom scrambled to run but in his panic he got half way up and tripped over his own feet. Kathryn found it easy to beat on him again.

"I... hate... possession... like incidents!" Kathryn shouted with each hit. "And I hate..." she stalled to gear up for one last blow, or more accurately a kick. "Woe is me Tom stories!" Once the kick was delivered she had to stop to get her breath back. "Oh I'm so bored, Starfleet's boring, B'Elanna doesn't get me, oh a nice ship. Oh look I'm possessed or brainwashed. This has made me realise I was taking things for granted. The End. God! I thought Seven's crap were all the bloody same." She stomped off, leaving poor Tom in tears.

### **One more for the road:**

Kathryn was busy having some sort of staring contest with her computer. The computer seemed to be winning though as she was getting more and more irritated.

Eventually the computer found out that winning only earned it a fist in its screen. Kathryn charged out of her Ready Room after five minutes faffing around with the replicator. When she arrived she actually looked relieved to find Seven on the Bridge, standing behind the command chairs.

"Uh, what was that strange symbol that appeared on our screens?" Harry asked.

Kathryn made her way over to Seven's side as the ex drone worked on the station there.

"Oh just some virus, or something. Or a game, I dunno," Kathryn badly tried to cover. Everyone looked shocked as she put a hand and hanky over Seven's mouth. She struggled but eventually she passed out. "Phew, that'll keep her out for a few hours. Lets go get that Omega thing sorted before she wakes up."

**Present:**

"Well that still happened, so it doesn't count," Kathryn argued.

"Uh huh, how do you explain the rest?" Chakotay smirked.

**Yes, I lied:**

"We'll all have to go into stasis, except me of course," the Doctor beamed.

"You can't run the ship on your own," Chakotay pointed out.

The Doctor nodded, "yes, but one crewmember was also immune to the effects."

The console nearby beeped loudly when Kathryn shouted something, it managed to just drown her out. She marched off ranting and raving.

"I was wondering how we were going to interrupt-censor one swear worded sentences," Chakotay said nonchalantly.

Voyager was hanging around just outside a massive nebula. Suddenly it veered around almost 360 degrees to get away from it.

"We still went through it," Kathryn protested.

"Yes, after you threw Seven into your stasis pod and chucked heavy objects on top of it," Chakotay said.

Kathryn tried to look innocent, "no I didn't. Somebody else did."

Chakotay cleared his throat, "you did give the order to, so that counts."

"Hmph," Kathryn grunted.

"Remind me what happened at the Demon planet again," Chakotay said.

Kathryn rolled her eyes, "oh for god's sake. Nobody liked the original and its sequel, only the damn writer did. That's a bad omen on its own. The Fifth Voyager *sequel* without the original was just as stupid. You should be thanking me for that one!"

"We all thanked you for that," Chakotay nodded. "You can't keep relying on the information you found. You don't even know where it came from. We've missed out on so many opportunities; new weapons, allies, shortcuts. It's not funny anymore, if it ever was."

"Please! That alien with the bean shaped head was going to be nothing but trouble," Kathryn protested.

Chakotay shook his head, "perhaps, but you're not supposed to know that. Besides I hardly think his interference would have shattered the space time continuum."

"Ah ha, what about The Killing Game? I wasn't responsible for that not happening," Kathryn said smugly.

Chakotay shook his head and smiled smugly. "Only cos you didn't know how that started, nobody does."

"Good, cos five back to back Seven centric or Seven saves the day incidents and I may have to chain her up to her alcove again," Kathryn grumbled. Chakotay laughed nervously, quietly hoping that she wouldn't do that again. "She's an ex Borg, so what? We both know its her other assets that get her the attention, the Borg stuff is just an excuse."

"Kathryn, you were the one that told me to avoid fourth wall talk and jokes. Just give the PADD back and we'll do what we usually do, forget it ever happened," Chakotay said as he held his hand out.

"Fine!" Kathryn snarled. Once he held it he smiled in victory but was surprised to see Kathryn doing the same. She ran off laughing, "joke's on you, sucker. This was the last entry."

Chakotay sighed and his shoulders slumped. "Looks like the Borg ones are done for then."

"What do you mean she kicked you out?" a deep booming voice yelled. All the alien Arturis could see was a humanoid shadow in front of him, he expected that when he read the sign on the door he went through. It also made him wonder who he had really gotten mixed up with. This *Boss* character was a little colourful to say the least.

Arturis smiled meekly in front of him. "I think she knew. Typical Janeway."

"That's my line," the deep voice muttered in contempt.

"I can still make it work. I'll bring the bait closer to Voyager so they'll discover it themselves," Arturis sneered. "She won't expect something that doesn't happen in the original ti..."

The shadow appeared to stand up. "Oh so she found my little parting gift, did she?" Arturis was surprised when he started to laugh. "I didn't expect her to skip everything on that little list, but no... this can still work."

"Why, why would you give her information about my plan?" Arturis demanded. The desperation in his voice made the man in the shadows chuckle again. "Captain Janeway, no Voyager deserve to be slaves to the Borg after what they did to my people. You've ruined that."

"Relax," the Boss said once he had stopped laughing. "I know Janeway and she's not one to pass up a ticket home. Do as you said, keep the bait hanging. I in the meantime will give her a little nudge towards it."

### **Voyager:**

"You know, I have the feeling we've forgotten something," Harry said.

Tom was standing next to him at Opps, he gave his friend a frown. "Like what?"

"I don't know, but it seems important," Harry said.

"Maybe Chakotay crashed another shuttle and we've just left him behind," Tom replied.

"I don't think so," Harry said.

"Why?" Tom asked.

"He's on the Bridge right now," Harry said as he pointed at the command chairs.

"Oh, yeah I knew that," Tom muttered.

The turbolift doors opened. "Commander?"

Tuvok glanced back over his shoulder, he saw Craig, Triah and the rest of the Security team step out. "Yes?"

"We were in the middle of a... um," Craig stammered.

Foster shrugged, "patrol."

"Yes, that and Thompson brought something up," Craig said, smirking towards Thompson.

He grunted and folded his arms in a huff. "I don't cheat." Foster elbowed him. As it was usually the other way around, the pair's faces looked like Foster had just stolen a cookie straight from Thompson's hands. "We erm covered that whole deck, I didn't skip any part of it. See, no cheating."

Tuvok's eyebrow raised. "So Mr Thompson brought something up when you were playing cards again. What was it?"

Triah smiled while the boys each turned bright red.

"It was Craig's idea," Thompson blurted out. The others stared at him. "Fine! I remember James saying he'd beat me... at patrolling, tomorrow. Well today is *tomorrow* and well..." His hand gestured to the rest of the team.

Foster rolled his eyes, "yes cos that's the only thing he could beat you at." Thompson paid him back for the elbow before.

Tuvok looked a little concerned. "Mr Taylor didn't report for duty?"

Harry's eyes widened, he then looked across at the empty Engineering station. "Oh! Neither did Jess."

"Does that explain your feeling?" Tom asked. Harry nodded. "Now that you mention it, I haven't seen her for days."

"The shuttle," Chakotay said quietly.

Kathryn leapt out of her chair. "All stop!" she screamed at the top of her lungs.

Tom cringed as he ran towards the helm. Unfortunately the person who was there already took her command a little too literally. Voyager stopped so quickly, everyone who were standing lost their balance. Harry was unfortunate enough to bump his head during the ordeal.

He wasn't the worst off though. Tom's run had turned into a somersault, then into a roll towards the front of the bridge.

"Oh, next time, do it a little gentler Tom," Kathryn groaned.

With his back on the floor and his legs sticking up against the viewscreen, Tom was hardly in a position to reply. All he did was groan as to him the whole bridge span.

"Yeah Tom," the helmsgirl tried to cover as she discreetly manned the Engineering station.

"Not that, that wasn't fun..." Craig said as he picked himself off the floor. He groaned when he spotted Triah looking a little panicked at her clothes. "The floor's not dirty!" She shook her head. "But what's going on?"

"Jessie and James took a shuttle to a nearby system. Tom said that they had docked," Chakotay replied.

"Sure," Tom said in a dizzy voice.

"Then why aren't they on the ship?" Kathryn asked.

Tom glanced at Kathryn, or Kathryns to him. He wasn't sure which one was real. "Uh, must be Captains."

Harry cringed. "Didn't he go off in a huff when Janeway yelled at him for breathing the same air as Kiara?"

Chakotay laughed as he glanced over to Kathryn. She had recently picked herself up off the floor and her hair was a mess because of it. He quickly made that smile disappear.

"Well he was!" Kathryn snapped.

Tom shook his head, but that just made it worse. "Woah, someone needs to slow the ship down." He started to crawl to the helm.

"Well who was at the helm when the shuttle apparently docked?" Kathryn asked. Almost everyone's heads went to the ex helmgirl at the Engineering station. She chuckled nervously. "Great. Reverse course. We have to find them."

"But we're already going backwards," Tom stuttered. He was about to tap the helm controls when Kathryn grabbed his wrist. "Oh, so that's the real one." He tried to get up but wobbled doing so.

"Chakotay," she said. Chakotay got up to take over. When he got to the helm she gave him a warning scowl. "Try not to crash!"

"I'm not Troi you know," he said.

Kathryn nodded, she smiled apologetic. "That's true. Tuvok scan the area. Maybe we can still detect them from here."

"There is no sign of a shuttle anywhere in the area," Tuvok said.

"Hold on, I'm detecting transwarp signatures. I think a Borg Cube was here, two days ago," Harry said.

The crewmember laughed nervously. "I think I'm gonna skedaddle." She did as she said she would, run.

"Oh great, does that mean they've been assimilated?" Triah asked.

"You don't have to jump to conclusions," Chakotay said.

Triah frowned, "why not? I can do what I want."

Chakotay groaned, "I meant you shouldn't, the Borg being there could be just a coincidence."

"Yeah, lets hope they haven't. Can you imagine Jessie without hair?" Tom asked. His hand went to the nearby banister to keep him straight.

Everyone thought for a few seconds, a few of their faces turned pale.

"She'll either commit suicide or she'll kill us," Craig said.

"Oh well, there's no chance that James has survived then," Tom joked. Everyone gave him the same blank stare. He shrugged. "What? Imagine if it was Janeway. The idea of Janeway as a Borg gave me nightmares every day while we were in Borg Space."

Kathryn's hand went to her own hair. She shook her head angrily. "As if I would be a bloody Borg!"

Chakotay glared up at the ceiling as if he was complaining silently to his animal guide. Craig frowned and looked up at the ceiling as well, then at Triah and his team. They shrugged.

"Er, I hate to interrupt the glaring but I think that Borg ship is in a nearby system," Harry said.

"Set a course," Kathryn ordered.

"May I remind everyone that there's no proof that the shuttle even encountered the cube, let alone been assimilated," Tuvok said.

Triah nodded, "yeah and they're the Borg. You don't wanna mess with them."

**Meanwhile, Unimatrix 01 (the one after the forest):**

The Borg Queen stared at the image of Voyager jumping into warp on a round screen in front of her. She smirked evilly. "That's right. Take the bait. It will be your last."

"Oh great, she's talking out loud to herself again," Seven's dad said. "Beats the whole point of a hive mind if you ask me."

Seven's mum nodded, "I miss the Alice Krige Queen, she had style."

"And she wasn't a melodramatic nut job who talks to herself," Seven's dad laughed.

The Queen's head twitched to the left, a holographic screen appeared there. On it was just an image of empty space. She hadn't seemed to notice that yet or was expecting it. "This time we'll have our revenge, thanks to our new... friends."

"I've noticed ever since she joined drones have been slipping up on the futile pronunciation," Seven's mum said.

Seven's dad looked a little shocked, "I know! I accidentally said it wrong the other day. It just doesn't sound intimidating. It sounds like I'm announcing that there's a lack of tills."

"Wait," the Queen grumbled as she spotted the screen. "What happened to Cube 37?" Her eyes closed.

"See, there's no reason for that, we're all supposed to be one mind," Seven's dad whispered.

Seven's mum laughed quietly, "we *were* anyway."

The Queen swung around to glare at them. "What is this, how long have you been disconnected?"

"Uh," the two only had time to reply before they were connected again to the insane queen.

"Why does this keep happening?" The Queen said. Her attention went back to the empty screen. "Cube 37 I can't hear them at all. Our connection has been damaged since... What has Janeway done this time?" she hissed the last few words, especially the Janeway part.

"We've arrived," Chakotay reported

"Harry, where's our cube?" Kathryn asked while pacing the centre of the Bridge.

"The power on that ship has been seriously drained. It's on the fourth planet in the system," Harry said.

"On?" Chakotay asked.

"Yeah, the readings are coming from the planet's surface," Harry said.

Craig looked a little worried, "it must have crashed."

"Stating the obvious again, Craig?" Triah asked.

"No, it could have landed," Craig rolled his eyes.

"Are there any lifesigns?" Kathryn asked.

"Only a few," Harry said.

"Are any of them Human?" Kathryn asked.

Chakotay shook his head. "Again, big leap. The shuttle could have easily gotten lost or crashed somewhere else. A Borg ship in the same area and time doesn't mean..."

"I've found two human lifesigns and remains of a Federation shuttle alongside the cube's readings," Harry said. Chakotay gave him a glare, "sorry."

"Forget it," he sighed.

"Chakotay, prepare an awayteam. Bring weapons," Kathryn said.

"But why? There are only a few Borg lifesigns, they won't pose a threat," Harry questioned.

"No, but Jessie without hair will," Tom said.

"Exactly," Kathryn said.

"Tom, Tuvok, you're with me," Chakotay said. He looked towards the Security team, every one of them were shaking their heads. "Nah, I've got enough fodder." Tuvok stepped into the turbolift first, Chakotay joined him seconds later.

"Oh god, this is suicidal," Tom muttered as he stood up. He then frowned, "wait. Who's the fodder?"

"I wouldn't like to be them," Craig muttered once Tom had gone into the lift as well.

Kathryn raised her eyebrow, "why did Chakotay pick Tom of all people? One smart remark and he'll be killed faster than a Killing Game parody."

Chakotay popped his head through the turbolift doors, not literally of course. "Ah ha, fourth wall joke Captain?"

Kathryn cursed under her breath. "So close!" She stomped off to the Ready Room, "I haven't a coffee in minutes, this is ridiculous."

Chakotay, Tuvok and Tom dematerialised on the surface. The whole area was covered with debris from the cube. Dead drones were scattered all over the wreckage, most of them burned beyond recognition.

"Tuvok, scan for the human lifesigns," Chakotay said.

"Aye Commander," Tuvok said and he brought out a tricorder.

"I wonder how many Borg drones we are going to have in the main cast?" Tom asked.

"I don't know, three for the time being. Probably by the end of the season all of us will be drones," Chakotay replied.

"Commander, I think I've found them," Tuvok said.

Chakotay walked over to his position. Tom slowly followed. Tuvok and Chakotay pulled some silver wreckage away. Underneath were two drones without as much technology on them. Like the others they were injured but not as badly.

"Geez, the Borg can assimilate people way too quickly now," Tom muttered.

"Their lifesigns are fading, we'd better get them back to Sickbay," Tuvok said.

Tom knelt down and he picked up Jessie's arm. Chakotay and Tuvok looked at each other, Chakotay with a puzzled look and Tuvok with a Tuvok look. Tom stood up after he finished what he had done.

"See look, even when they're Borg, they're still all over each other," Tom giggled. Chakotay and Tuvok looked at the pair then back at Tom.

"Tom, you need help," Chakotay said.

Tom just grinned. "Thanks."

"Chakotay to Voyager, we've found them. Five to beam up," Chakotay said.

**Sickbay:**

"It is very strange. They are already disconnected from the collective," the Doctor reported.

Kathryn felt a little relieved, she looked back at the two patients. She noticed Tom finishing treating Jessie's burns at arms length, then go over to James to do the same exact thing.

"I assume whatever happened to the cube happened almost immediately after they captured the shuttle. Considering what we know of the Borg, it still doesn't explain why they're not connected," the Doctor said.

Kathryn shook her head. "I'm grateful they're not. Having one Seven is bad enough."

The Doctor smiled but he was a little offended for Seven though. "Seven was a special case, assimilated as a child and with the Borg for twenty years. Assimilated for five minutes may be traumatising yes, but it shouldn't change their entire personalities."

"Hmm, more than just a burn wound," Tom muttered, he moved a regenerator over James' forehead.

The Doctor nodded. "It looks like they were still in the shuttle when the Borg was attacked or damaged. It likely protected them from the crash. That's also further proof they weren't captured for long."

"How long will it take to remove their technology?" Kathryn asked.

"I'm not sure, it'll take a lot longer if Jessie wakes up," the Doctor replied.

Right on cue there was an ear piercing scream. Tom soon ran over in a panic. He tried to look calm once he had joined them.

"So I was thinking about it and I figured that I'd concentrate just on James. He's like my best friend ever," he said.

Obviously Kathryn and the Doctor weren't born or activated yesterday and weren't stupid either. They just stared at him until his shoulders slumped.

"I'm still not going near Jessie, I'd like to keep my parts," he muttered.

"Doctor," Kathryn said when the screaming picked up again.

The Doctor quickly picked up a hypospray from the nearby tray. He made his way over to one of the biobeds. On it Jessie was sitting trembling, staring at her arms and the glass panel back and forth. One hand rushed to her head, it shook horribly when she felt her own scalp. "My hair, it's gone..." Again she looked at the glass panel. "Look at my face..."

"Jessie," the Doctor said softly to try and soothe her.

"It's horrible and grey, oh god look at this crap they put on me," Jessie stammered, her fingers inspected every bit of machinery on her head.

"Sooo just a guess, five hours for Jessie and one hour for James," Tom said.

"I take it four of those hours will be spent trying to sedate her," Kathryn sighed.

"You take it right," the Doctor replied.

While she was still too busy panicking to notice, he approached her to press the hypo into her arm. Just at the wrong time she checked the implants on that arm and noticed him. Another scream and she ran over to the medical tray.

"Come here, Crewman, the quicker you're sedated the quicker you'll be better."

"Shut up baldy!" she yelled. That sentence alone made her even madder, one hand flew to her head again. She picked up a hypospray from the tray and ran out of the room.

"Oh great. Make that six hours," the Doctor said.

"Janeway to Security, Jessie has escaped Sickbay. Try to find her and make sure you're armed," Kathryn said.

"Armed, we're not trying to kill her," the Doctor said.

"Maybe you should have mentioned the Borg part," Tom meekly said.

"The phasers should just be on stun, we need to stop her if she starts attacking crewmembers," Kathryn said.

"I suppose," the Doctor muttered.

"She wouldn't, would she?" Tom asked. He felt embarrassed when the pair turned to look towards him. "I mean yeah she's wiggled out but..."

"She's *wiggled* because she looks like a Borg, yet she ran away from the people who could help undo that. I hardly think we're dealing with someone thinking logically," the Doctor pointed out.

"Oh," Tom sighed.

"Just get to work on James," Kathryn said. "Quickly, he might be the only one who can calm her down."

"Lately?" Tom said warily. "Those two haven't been best cuddle buddies for a while now." Kathryn narrowed her eyes. "Just saying it as I see it."

### **Deck Two:**

Craig turned a corner and he bumped into a familiar Borg Drone.

"Oh, Jessie, you look different. Have you done something with your hair? Never mind you still look lovely to me."

Jessie screamed in rage and she knocked him over with one little shove. Unknown security officers appeared and one fired a phaser blast at her. It hit her in her arm. The other officers fired as well but a Borg shield blocked the attack.

"At least there's another advantage to being Borg," Jessie muttered. She pushed the security officers out of the way and she ran around the corner.

### **Sickbay:**

James had woken up, luckily for the crew he wasn't in the same mood as Jessie.

"I don't understand why she would run away. It'll be quicker if she was treated without resistance," Seven said.

"She would never admit it, but she's afraid of medical stuff. Probably the thought of you taking implants out of her scared her," James said.

"Speaking of which, we'll have to start on you," the Doctor said as he held a laser scalpel. Once it was active it looked a little menacing.

James looked a little shocked that it did, "yeah I don't know why she ran either."

Tom snickered to himself. As he expected he got a glare. "Just laughing at your joke, honest. I wasn't laughing at your grey look." He cursed inwardly as the last sentence was meant to be just in his head. "Sooo er, what happened?"

The Doctor gestured to James that he should lie back down. He did so while the Doctor collected a hypospray.

"Perhaps we can discuss that later," he said.

"They came out of nowhere, five maybe six beamed aboard," James said, his hand went to check his forehead which still hurt a little. The Doctor noticed that, then gave Tom a little look before sedating James. "The shuttle was tiny, not exactly much room to..." he was already starting to doze off.

"Resist?" Tom suggested.

James lightly shook his head, Tom swore he saw a smile starting to form. "Play."

The Doctor raised an eyebrow and smirked. "It's a heavy sedative, he'll say anything. It's necessary."

"I didn't say anything," Tom protested.

"I know, but you had that comment on something look," the Doctor said. "Let's get to work."

"What if I'm wrong? What if he's the only one to calm her down and we're wasting time?" Tom said in a worried voice.

The Doctor briefly glanced at him, "then we shouldn't waste anymore time."

### **Deck Three:**

Somehow, Damien and a group of rabbits had gotten onto Voyager. They or rather he appeared to be planning an invasion.

"This time they won't get away from us, right rabbits?" Damien cackled.

The rabbits ignored him. He handed out tiny guns to them, but they just sniffed them. One of the rabbits tried to eat theirs.

### **Deck Two:**

Thompson and Foster, both armed with phaser rifles, stared ahead of them with the same panicked

expression. A groan from the floor made them jump until they realised that it was just Craig regaining consciousness.

"Jesus, don't do that again!" Thompson yelled at him. Foster shushed him angrily.

Craig tried to glare at him but it hurt too much. "Ow, I landed on my face." He climbed up to his feet. "Do what again?"

"Go wandering off without us. Without a main character on the team, we might as well be named Red Shirt One and Two," Thompson stuttered.

Foster smirked, "you mean Gold Shirt."

Thompson glared at him, "who's side are you on?"

Craig rolled his eyes. "I had to drop off my sister cos apparently Borg drones are too sweaty and that's contagious or something. I ran into Jessie on the way back."

"Oh god, is it as bad as people are saying?" Foster stuttered.

Craig nodded, "yeah. I haven't known Jessie long, but I thought complimenting her would calm her down." He gently rubbed his sore chest, "obviously I was wrong."

"Yeah, rookie move man," Thompson sniggered. "Only our fourth knows how to do it right, and even he's been smacked for it a few times." Foster nodded. "Though I don't see how you could compliment a creepy and gross mechanical bald woman." Craig's eyes went inhumanely wide. Thompson just continued to laugh, "unless she's got Seven boobs or something."

Craig cringed as Thompson's head came into contact with the wall. Foster nearly peed his pants when he noticed somebody new standing beside him instead of Thompson. Instead he ran for his life. Craig didn't dare try again, he ran too.

### **Sickbay:**

The Doctor smiled as he had successfully removed another piece of technology without any problems. He placed it carefully on the tray.

"May I?" Seven questioned, gesturing to the piece.

"Oh? Why?" the Doctor questioned, briefly glancing toward her.

Seven's eyebrow flickered up for a moment. "You do not trust me yet?"

"No that's not it, I'm curious," the Doctor answered. He began to work on the tiny implants surrounding his patient's eye.

"The assimilation progress was incomplete, that means the ship was destroyed minutes, perhaps an hour after the shuttle was captured," Seven replied. "I would like to know how." She picked up the piece of technology anyway.

"Um yes, sure but..." the Doctor said in response to that. "You think it was our people that did it?"

Seven stared at him with surprise in her eyes, he could only just make it out as she kept her usual straight face. "Yes."

"I don't see how," the Doctor shook his head. "From what I can make out from Mr Taylor's scans, the connection wasn't even complete."

This time Seven showed her surprise on her face. Her eyes flashed. "Impossible. The connection to the hive mind is instant."

The Doctor gestured to the technology she was holding. "I originally assumed that's why you wanted that. I thought you saw what I did." Seven only blinked. "His transmitter wasn't taken away or damaged like yours was, I checked. From what I can make out of it, it was sending and receiving like it should."

Seven stared down at what she was holding. "Then how do you know the connection wasn't complete?"

"I noticed it when I scanned them both on arrival, there was a huge difference. The nanoprobes do a lot of the work, correct?" the Doctor started to answer. Seven didn't reply, she kept her gaze fixed on the device in her hand. "Well it looked like something weakened them, halted them in their path as it were. The Borg obviously had tried to compensate but..." He stopped when he noticed the ex drone starting to shake, it took him by surprise.

"It destroyed them," Seven said quietly.

"I wouldn't go that far," the Doctor said with a worried look on his face. "One faulty connection with one drone wouldn't bring the collective to a screeching halt."

"No, it would do the opposite," Seven said. The Doctor's frown grew. "This has happened before."

"Really, what happened exactly?" he asked.

Seven stared intensely at the technology in her hand, she raised it a little. "The Borg were unable to determine the cause. One assimilation disrupted the hive mind on two cubes for nine point seven seconds..."

"That's not so bad," the Doctor said.

"Hundreds of thousands of minds were no longer in perfect harmony. Imagine going from that to the sound of thousands of people thinking about different things at once," Seven said, her attention slowly moved to the biobed. "Confusion, anger, fear. Nine seconds was all it took to destroy both cubes."

The Doctor understood, "oh."

"If this happened here too, she wouldn't allow that to go on for long," Seven said quietly. "If the drones didn't destroy that ship in their confusion then she would have."

"Who?" the Doctor frowned.

#### **Meanwhile:**

"Janeway," the Borg Queen hissed. She then threw something straight ahead of her. It reached the target she was aiming for and she smiled triumphantly. "I know this is all your fault, you can't hide the truth from me."

One drone behind her jumped as his connection was severed. "I'm free!" he giggled. Then he realised that was a big mistake as the drones he was working with were twice his size. They dragged him off kicking and screaming. "Damn it, what are the odds!"

"Cube 17 has also been disconnected while on approach," the Queen said, her smile faded. Again she threw something ahead of her.

The poor drone standing in front of her suddenly became aware as well. He could not see anything ahead of him. All he could feel was something stuck to his forehead and a couple of nagging pains around his face.

The Queen glowered at him as she approached, only she wasn't really staring at him, just the picture taped to his face. Harshly she yanked the two darts she had thrown into it, it made him yelp, blowing his cover. "Another... re-assimilate him."

Two more drones charged forward to grab the newly disconnected drone and drag him away. The Queen growled, "I know it is you, only a Janeway could cause this much damage to us."

### **The Mess Hall:**

"I hear that Jessie's become a Borg and she's running amok on the ship," little Naomi Wildman said.

She was sitting with Kiara as they played with blocks. Neelix sat in a chair nearby, carefully keeping watch of them.

The younger girl pouted. "Want hide. Borg are ew, look at Seven."

"Yeah, Seven's scary," Naomi nodded. "We should hide."

Neelix shuffled out of his seat and lowered himself down to kneel next to the girls. "Now, don't worry. She'll not come here. There's too many people around that'll see her, catch her."

"Are you sure? Whenever people say things like that the same thing happens straight away," Naomi said.

"That's not true," Neelix said.

One crewmember nearby stupidly took a bowl of Neelix's broth, his friend looked worried. "Hey, I have no rations left. It's not going to kill me, you know."

"Man eating crap," Kiara said when she spotted that.

Neelix looked a little confused. "You must stop saying that word."

There was a thud nearby. The man from before was lying on the ground, choking on something. The bowl he held lay on the floor, the contents somehow managed to stay in it despite that.

"Oh dear, he must have forgot to chew," Neelix stuttered. He hurried over to tend to him.

"Yeah that's why," Naomi said. Kiara nodded.

*"Security to all hands on Deck Two. Secure your positions, a Borg Drone is on the loose. For the love of god, don't make any bald or hair jokes."*

*"Dude, really... she'll hear that!"*

*"Uhoh."*

"You right," Kiara stuttered.

Naomi sighed, "yup."

"Oh my god, will you just shut up!" they heard Jessie scream. Everyone in the room slowly turned towards one of the doors where she now stood. None of them really knew what to do. "Ugh... so sick of this," she stammered as her hand flew to her head.

"Uhoh," Kiara stuttered.

Naomi sighed, "why am I always right?"

Jessie's hand accidentally brushed one of the implants on her head, where some of her hair should be. It started to tremble. "No, no... that's not me. I'm not here. This is somebody else," her voice also started shaking.

Neelix slowly climbed up, then began his approach. Everyone thought he was more nuts than usual. "Jessie..."

"No," Jessie laughed bitterly. "It seems like I'm everyone, they... won't stop yelling, for god's sake!" she screamed again. Tears started falling from her eyes. "Stop it."

Neelix stopped walking towards her. "What do you mean? Do you hear the Borg?"

"Borg? A bunch of whiny misfits," Jessie muttered. Her jaw clenched, the pain in her head was getting intense. "Don't they get it, I can't hear a word they're saying. It's all jumbled."

"Um, that doesn't sound right. Why don't we go back to Sickbay and..." Neelix carefully said.

Jessie's head shot up, her eyes flashed in his direction. "No! Then it'd be true. I'd be Borg, ugly and hairless. A nobody!" Neelix dared to continue his approach, but very slowly. "Stay away from me, hairball!"

The people in the room that knew her or about her all cringed at that last word. Jessie did as well.

Security chose that moment to rush into the room, all of them armed with phaser rifles. Jessie pushed the Talaxian to the floor before turning and rushing back for the door. They quickly fired at her, forcing her to duck down to the floor. Unfortunately a lone crewmember was on his way inside and took one of the hits.

"Damn it, every time!" the person who shot him complained. The others rolled their eyes as they rushed forward to chase after Jessie. She meanwhile scrambled back onto her feet and ran off.

Once they were in the corridor they couldn't see any sign of her. They carefully headed down the corridor, being extra cautious at the corner. They had a feeling she was, but none of them were really prepared for her to be waiting on the other side. The first one to turn the corner were elbowed in the ribs, forcing them to drop their rifle. Jessie quickly picked that up and ran off again.

Back in the Mess Hall Naomi sat next to Neelix, she pouted as she pat him on the shoulder. "Neelix, you okay?"

He groaned, "yes, I'll live."

Naomi gasped as she saw Seven enter the room from the door the Security came through first. She quickly ran into the kitchen to hide.

Seven only raised her eyebrow at that. "I assume Crewman Rex has been through here."

Neelix nodded. "Uh huh. You just missed her." He pointed towards the other door.

Seven nodded, "I should hurry."

Kiara scowled at her, the ex drone was suddenly reminded of Kathryn. "I tell mummy."

"Tell *mummy* what?" Seven was confused. She shook her head, "never mind, I have to hurry." She dashed for the opposite door.

Kiara pouted, "mummy be mad, scary." Neelix looked on with worry, he knew she was right.

Kathryn paced the centre of the Bridge, impatiently tapping her fingers across her folded arms. Chakotay watched, he feared the hands would go to her hips any second.

"In English Doctor," he said quickly.

*"Um, Seven believes that the malfunction severed the connection between the hive and that cube, but the drones themselves were still connected together. Imagine a collective chaos of terrified people who aren't used to making decisions anymore. We're lucky that all they did was crash their ship."*

Kathryn rolled her eyes, "I got that part! How does that help us now?"

*"It doesn't."* Kathryn growled in response. *"Uh it does explain why they were disconnected from the hive before we found them, and why Jessie reacted the way she did."*

Harry frowned, "no hair seemed like a reasonable answer. Why change it?"

Everyone heard an impatient sigh on the other end of the comm. *"I haven't."*

Chakotay looked a little confused. "All right, so Jessie flipped because she's hairless and hearing voices. That I get. There's two parts I still don't though."

Kathryn nodded, she sighed as her arms fell to their sides. "Most of the drones are dead, who the hell is she still hearing and why didn't you detect it?"

"Exactly, and why is James relatively normal... his version of normal anyway?" Chakotay questioned.

*"Um that's going back into the not English territory you were complaining about."*

Harry looked very worried at this point, he decided now was a good time to speak up. "I think I know the answer to the first part." Everyone turned to him. "Twice I've picked up very distant transwarp signatures. I mean very, as in just within our long range sensors."

"That's okay Harry, it's not your job to tell us these things," Kathryn said in a fake sweet voice.

Chakotay quickly figured he should rescue him. "Perhaps the problem is in this particular area. Any cube going to retrieve or destroy this cube probably gets affected as well."

Kathryn groaned, "and Jessie gets more friends."

"And more bonkers," a voice they didn't expect sneered from behind.

Everyone glanced back towards the turbolift to find Damien standing in front of it. The doors were still wide open.

"Oh crap," Kathryn groaned. "I hoped he was dead."

Damien laughed, "oh I bet you do. I knew you would come here." He outstretched his arms, "this time I'm ready for you and I'm not alone. My army will destroy you."

Everyone stared blankly at him as he appeared to be alone. Tuvok's eyebrow raised high when he spotted something in the corner of his eye. He looked down to see a few rabbits hopping out of the turbolift.

"Is this the cue to be scared or to laugh out loud?" Kathryn said mockingly. She hadn't noticed the invasion, not yet anyway. Her nose began to feel like something was tickling it.

"Captain, Mr Damien is not alone," Tuvok warned.

Damien smirked at the Vulcan. "That's Master Damien to you." Harry and the people at the back stations started to notice the rabbits leaking onto the Bridge. Most of them still had their guns, they were either chewing on them or were managing to hold on to them like they would a carrot.

Kathryn couldn't take it anymore, she sneezed about five times. Chakotay looked on concerned, then he glanced back to see what everyone else was seeing. "Oh you've got to be kidding."

"Yeesh Harry, since when did you start using *odour de rabbit stink!*" Kathryn snapped towards Opps. She finally saw the problem when she did though. "Oh."

"Mwahahahahaha, I can see my army has rendered you all frozen in fear," Damien laughed.

"No, just confused," Harry said as one rabbit managed to get onto his station. He reached out to pet it.

"Mmmhmm, that's it, lower your guard," Damien chuckled.

Kathryn sneezed another four times as she marched over to confront him. Unfortunately about twenty rabbits were in her path. It forced her to retreat a few steps backwards. "Are you freaking serious? An army of rabbits with little pistols. I can't believe I'm saying this to you as I figured you already did but, have you lost your bloody mind!?"

Chakotay nodded, "even more so."

"Of course not, I made it onto your bridge didn't I? Your Security didn't even dare approach me," Damien cackled.

Harry winced, "yeah they're a bit busy." Kathryn rolled her eyes and then sneezed again.

"No matter. I can take over while you're all shaking in fear," Damien smiled.

"The only thing I'm terrified about is if those rabbits crap all over the carpet," Kathryn grumbled. Another two sneezes came afterwards. "You can't honestly think this will help you or anyone, I mean look at them!"

Chakotay smirked as two were already near his feet, one of them had dumped its gun to chew on his boot. He quickly moved his foot away.

Everyone jumped as a scream came from the back of the bridge, they quickly looked to the source.

"Rabbits... oh my god, what the hell... why are they here!" Jessie screeched, she quickly tried to go back into the other turbolift but got the wall instead.

Damien frowned at the state of her, then he smirked. "Now there's someone who appreciates the true nature of the rabbit."

Kathryn covered her face with her hand. "She's barely a Borg, why has no one caught her yet?"

The rabbits still at the back of the bridge seemed to take Jessie's screams as an invitation. All of them clambered around her, some were even jumping up at her.

"Aaah, oh god, oh god!" Jessie screamed, her body shook violently. She tried to veer off to one side but they had surrounded her. "Get these disgusting things away from me!"

Damien laughed, he walked towards her. "Okay rabbits, you've surrounded her. Now attack!" The rabbits ignored him. A few of them were rubbing their heads against Jessie's leg.

"Why would they get so affectionate around a Borg?" Harry wondered out loud.

Tuvok carefully approached Damien from behind, he then grabbed his arm. "No! What are you doing! You're supposed to be attacking!"

Jessie couldn't take it any more and she jumped over the rabbits to get back to the turbolift. "Help me," she stuttered as she ran straight into Seven exiting it. Before she could really do anything about it Seven pushed a hypospray into her arm. It didn't take long for it to take effect, Seven kept a hold of her so she wouldn't fall.

"Well, for once Damien had a use," Chakotay smiled.

Damien tried to pull himself away from Tuvok. "No, rabbits.... attack!" The rabbits took that command as go to sleep, so they curled up and did just that. "No!"

Harry smiled at the one still on his console, "they're kinda cute."

Kathryn glared at him, but the cuteness he was seeing made him immune to it. That didn't make Kathryn any happier, at all.

"Rabbits, wake up!" Damien yelled. All of them did, they looked very angry. "Good, now attack!" Damien yelled. They did, they attacked him. Tuvok had to back off a little to avoid it as well. After five minutes of biting and scratching he eventually disappeared in a transporter beam.

"Oh for... well done Security Chief," Kathryn groaned.

"I should be able to track him," Tuvok said, he rushed back to his station.

Kathryn narrowed her eyes, then she sneezed again. Chakotay smirked as that one sneeze turned into ten. "First, lets find somewhere to put these rabbits."

Seconds later they were transported away as well. Chakotay looked to Tuvok. He looked confused, "interesting. I cannot trace the source correctly. Sensors claim they are still on Voyager."

"Ugh, he's probably been here this whole time," Kathryn said in between sniffs. With an angry groan she stomped off to the turbolift. She changed her mind as a few more sneezes happened when she got there, instead she went for the one Jessie and Seven were nearby. "I'll kill him for this myself."

"He's been gone for a year and this was the best he could come up with?" Harry said with a smile. "I don't think we need to worry."

Chakotay nodded, "you're right but something tells me we really should find him anyway."

*Captain's Log Stardate 51940.3: The Doctor has finally finished removing the Borg implants from James and Jessie, as well as disconnecting Jessie from the crazy hive. That should make her a tad saner and little less unbearable than usual. I've asked the Doctor and Seven to investigate how that even happened and why it only happened to her, that should keep Seven out of trouble and scenes. Heh.*

*Tuvok meanwhile claims there's no sign of Damien on Voyager. He only could have gone to the planet surface, which he definitely didn't do. I hope that I never see that little crazy pansy ever again. It took me an hour to stop bloody sneezing.*

"Did it work?" James asked.

The Doctor briefly glanced in his direction, he looked a little offended. "Of course, who do you think you're talking to?" Both of them swore they saw a tiny smirk appear for a second on Seven's lips. "The only thing I'm uncertain of is why your assimilation didn't work. Did you hear any voices?"

"No more than usual," James smiled. The Doctor just sighed in annoyance. "Yeah I did. The voices were talking together for a moment and then they weren't."

"Weren't talking together or talking at all?" Seven questioned.

"At all," James replied.

"Hmm." The Doctor reached for a hypospray which he then immediately pressed into Jessie's neck.

"I do remember the drones in the shuttle acting a bit... strange is probably the best word. After that," James said, shaking his head.

The Doctor pulled out a tricorder to scan his patient. "There must have been something wrong within the cube itself. There's nothing in your scans that show you're any different to other Humans they've assimilated, I doubt it was because of you." James spotted a puzzled eyebrow raise from Seven, he ignored it for now. "It's likely whatever it was didn't take effect until after your assimilation."

James glanced down to the floor. "No, they got me first."

"Hmm. You didn't by any chance have any of Mr Neelix's food or Leola root on the shuttle, did you?" the Doctor smirked.

"We weren't on a suicide mission you know," James answered.

The Doctor shrugged, "well my ideas have been exhausted."

Jessie lightly groaned as she started to wake up. She jumped out of her skin and then bolted upright.

"Keep those things away from me!" she screamed.

"What things?" the Doctor asked.

"Oh thank god, have the rabbits gone?" Jessie asked.

"What rabbits?" James asked.

"A man referred to as Damien and fifteen rabbits tried to take over the Bridge. If it wasn't for them we never would have caught her," Seven said.

James tried his best not to laugh. "Really, so he wasn't lying when he said he'd find better *people* to enslave."

Seven didn't understand but the Doctor did, he chuckled. "Yes, Damien is quite a... character. A rabbit army though, that's a new low."

Jessie frowned as she stared towards James. "Wait, you're normal again." The Doctor resisted a laugh but everyone still heard the throat snort. "Am I?"

"Take a look," the Doctor said. He picked up a small mirror from the tray nearby to hand it to her.

"No keep it away!" Jessie screeched as she squeezed her eyes shut.

"It's okay, Jess, your implants have been removed too," James said.

Jessie reluctantly took the mirror away from the Doctor and she had a look. A big grin grew on her face.

"Look at that, I'm not hideous anymore," she giggled.

Seven's eyebrow twitched. "She has odd priorities." The Doctor cleared his throat.

"Yeah, that's not..." James said, but he was interrupted by a surprise hug from Jessie. He looked shocked, he just stood there awkwardly.

Tom and Harry arrived as soon as the hug started, Tom couldn't help but snigger. "See, what did I tell you. I leave for five minutes..."

"Tom, do me a favour," Harry butted in.

"What?" Tom said.

Harry gave him a light elbow into his arm, "shut up."

"What are you two doing here?" the Doctor asked.

"Er, to see the patients," Tom muttered.

"He means to tease the patients," Harry said.

Jessie pulled out of the hug, her face was bright red. "Sorry..."

"It's okay," James shook his head.

"No it's not, I was just happy that nightmare was over," Jessie said. She sat back on the edge of the biobed.

Tom nodded, "we're all happy Jessie has hair and no longer hears voices." As he expected he got a glare. "Well that was nice while it lasted."

"Mr Paris, isn't your shift over?" the Doctor muttered.

Harry gave Tom a smirk as he slowly developed a pout on his face. Both the Doctor and Jessie were staring at him, which made him feel like he was shrinking. He mouthed a fine and walked out. Harry followed him.

"Crewman, why were you so afraid of those creatures? I find it hard to understand," Seven asked.

Jessie shuddered as the memory of the rabbits jumping at her came back. "Eugh... those things are meaner than they look." Seven's eyebrow raised again. "Everyone's like aaw how cute, but in reality they bite little kids fingers." As she spoke her attention went to her hands, her whole body shook as she noticed there was still some Borg technology there. "What..."

James looked a little uneasy, the Doctor more so. "Oh, the assimilation tubules. I didn't want to risk doing any permanent damage to your hand to remove them. Perhaps when I learn more about Borg technology..." the Doctor said.

"Oh god, so much for not looking like a freak," Jessie muttered to herself.

The Doctor was about to say something but James shook his head at him. He nodded and walked away, Seven glanced between the two before doing the same.

"Crewman Rex seems awfully fixated on her looks," she commented.

"You've noticed?" the Doctor pretended to be surprised. "It's a little more complicated than that I think."

"Jess," James said as softly as he could.

Jessie shook her head, "no, don't. I know it's a big fuss over nothing."

"I don't think so," James said.

Jessie sighed deeply. She glanced at him, paying particular attention to his hands. "You don't have them."

"No. The Doc said they had trouble assimilating me. Apparently it explains the cube crash and the out of sync voices you were hearing," James said. He frowned, "no I don't get it either."

"Lucky you," Jessie sighed again, her good hand clutched the one with the tubules still in them. "These things just make me look even more odd than I did before, what does it matter?"

"You don't," James quickly said. Jessie looked up at him, a frown appeared on her face. He shook his head, "I mean you don't look odd. Not now and not before."

Jessie smirked as she didn't believe him. "What about as a Borg?"

"Not even as a Borg," James replied. "Even with the Borg stuff you're better looking than most." He cringed, his cheeks turned a little red. "Crap, I mean..."

"I agree," a voice from the door said.

Jessie groaned, "ohno, it's not..."

She and James turned their heads to the door to see Craig walking in. He looked redder than both of them put together, but he had a smile on his face. "That's what I was trying to tell you when you knocked me over," he said. "Then I thought..."

"Ow?" James questioned, resisting a smirk for now.

"No," Craig replied. "Well yeah that too. I never actually got round to asking, um..." His smile was gone, he looked a little nervous. Jessie meanwhile was staring at him blankly like she had no idea what he was going to say. "I have this program right, and..."

The Doctor chose that moment to walk out of his office and almost collide with Craig. He took one look at his blushing face and pushed him towards the door. "No flirting in my Sickbay."

"What, since when!" Craig stuttered as he disappeared outside.

"He's a weird kid sometimes," Jessie muttered. "I don't get him."

"You don't? I thought he was pretty straight forward," James said, still resisting a smirk but failing. "I'd better go..." Jessie grabbed his arm to stop him before he did leave.

"No he wasn't, but you were," she said.

"Huh?" was James' only response.

"You said I looked better than most girls even when I was Borg," Jessie said, ignoring the heat building in her cheeks again. "Why would you say something like that?"

"I... I was trying to cheer you up, sorry," James stuttered nervously. He pointed towards the door, "I should go before..."

Jessie shook her head. "Why do you have to say that, do you know how really awkward that makes things?"

Little did either of them know Tom had walked back in, and was watching this by the door.

"No, I used to say that stuff all the time, didn't I?" James said.

Jessie sighed, "yeah you did, but now it's..."

Tom had raised his hands in front of his face, he was slowly bringing his palms together. In his perspective his hands were behind the two people he was watching's heads. "Now, kiss. I've got ten days rations riding on this."

The pair turned their heads in his direction. He suddenly felt a little light headed as he backed away to the door.

"I don't remember ordering a punch bag," Jessie said, her eyes narrowing.

James smiled, and it was a one that Tom felt was dangerously familiar. "Think of it as a get well present."

"Aaaw," Jessie smiled. Tom squeaked as she lunged for him, he ran for his life.

**THE END**