

## Episode 1.14

### Timeline

#### **The Mess Hall:**

Neelix walked over to Tom's table with a jug of very odd smelling coffee.

"Do you want some coffee? It's my new blend," Neelix asked.

"Er..." Tom muttered as Neelix started pouring coffee into his still half full cup.

*"Chakotay to all Senior Bridge Staff, please report to the Bridge."*

"On my way, gladly," Tom said. He jumped up and actually ran out of the Mess Hall. "Maybe next time, Neelix!"

Neelix sighed and headed towards Craig's table with a big grin. "Do you want some coffee?"

"No, I was just leaving," he stuttered while getting up with his nose pinched.

"Hmm, only one taker so far," Neelix said as he passed by another table. The man there was happily drinking from the hideous coffee, somehow oblivious that his lips seemed to be blistering at a ridiculous speed.

Neelix meanwhile stopped besides his next victim. "Would you like a cup of my new coffee?" he asked without pause or mercy. The sludge was plopping into the man's cup.

"Um, no Neelix. I don't need any," the man answered.

Neelix was confused. Not because his coffee was apparently not needed, it was, the man had a cup waiting for a top up. His main source of confusion was the man said this while fiddling with a rope in his hands. "Why?"

"You'll see," the man replied. The rope now had a knot in it. As Neelix shrugged and walked away, he threw a loop of rope around his neck and stood up, as if to tie the other side up to something. A few crewmembers rushed over to stop him.

#### **The Bridge:**

"Something horrible is happening," Kathryn reported as soon as Tom entered the Bridge.

He looked around at everyone to get a feel of the situation, everyone but Tuvok's faces were an odd shade of white.

"What is it? The Borg, Species 8472, evil clones, time travel that makes no sense, power cut?" Tom stuttered. His eyes went frighteningly wide, "another Holodeck episode?"

"Dear god," Chakotay groaned in despair, even though he knew it wasn't that. "You got it on the first try." Tom grinned proudly. "Don't get used to it."

Kathryn sniffed the air, her eyes narrowed towards the helmsman. "That prick is ruining the coffee isn't he? I knew it!"

She was about to stomp off into the turbolift when Chakotay grabbed her arm. "Borg."

"What? The last thing we want is the Borg assimilating a deadly weapon," Kathryn said.

Tuvok shook his head. "The Borg's behaviour is unusual. They're not pursuing us, they've sent out a distress call."

Kathryn rolled her eyes. "Oh god, if we're bringing in the Borg kids I'm gonna top myself."

Chakotay bit his bottom lip to not only stop himself from laughing, but from making a sarcastic comment. He knew Tom would fulfill the second one anyway.

"There's a guy setting up a noose in the Mess Hall," Craig said helpfully not long after stepping out through the other entrance.

"I'll remember that for the next time Tom decides to comment on my hair," Kathryn hissed.

Tom cringed and hurried over to his station. Once he was sitting down he muttered under his breath, "it was cropped one episode, and in a tight bun the next."

Chakotay turned towards Opps, which Jessie had taken over, to hint for more information. "It looks like they've lost their connection to the hive. That may be why," she said.

"How did they send a distress call then? Surely they'd be too busy running around looking for their hair, screaming like the drama queens they are," Kathryn commented.

Jessie's head swung to one side to scowl at her, her eyes narrowed. Kathryn responded with a faked polite smile.

"Are you senior bridge staff, Lieutenant?" Tuvok asked in Craig's direction.

He was definitely confused. Tom meanwhile smirked, "place your bets."

"Why are you here?" Tuvok said, hoping he'd understand that instead.

"Oh," Craig immediately blushed. "Guy making a noose in the Mess Hall. I thought that was self explanatory. Oh and Neelix has killed Sid again."

Tuvok's eyebrows flickered up, despite all the effort he had put in to not doing so all day.

"Sounds like a normal day to me," Tom commented.

"Make yourself useful for once Paris and set a course for the Borg ship," Kathryn ordered.

"Yes ma'am," Tom stammered.

"You did not try to stop him?" Tuvok said.

Craig didn't answer right away. He seemed oblivious that Tuvok was talking to him. When he noticed, he laughed nervously. "Who, me?" His face turned a lot whiter, "oh Security do that stuff."

"Yes indeed. They also work in teams of three or four," Tuvok reminded him.

"Oooph, well in my defence my team doesn't work... with me," Craig said. Tuvok stared at him blankly. Craig felt he would snap at any moment. He darted back into the turbolift even if it was very unlikely.

"Are you sure about this? You said it yourself, this isn't going to end well," Chakotay asked Kathryn quietly.

Kathryn shrugged casually, "best case scenario we'll get some new crewmembers. The more Borgs we have, the less special Seven think she is."

"And worst case?" Chakotay said.

"There's plenty of space now on Deck Thirteen," Kathryn smiled maliciously.

### **The Mess Hall:**

"I'm bored," Thompson complained, muffled into his hand which his chin was buried in.

Foster sat next to him, shaking his head. James had chosen to lean on the back of one chair, with his arms crossed.

"Here's a crazy suggestion. Work; do some," he said.

Thompson overexaggerated a hmm, all while staring at the table. "No, that's not it."

Foster pulled a face, then he had a quick look around. "This is the same table you had before we split up."

"You didn't think he'd move, did you?" James asked.

"Sissy's right, this is a fine table," Thompson said as he tapped the table like a pet. He ignored or didn't notice James' confused and a little irritated expression. "Next to the window, furthest away from the kitchen."

"No, I thought... didn't he get up when...?" Foster stuttered. He groaned immediately afterwards, "you and Craig have been here all morning, guarding a table, while we patrolled Deck Six?"

"Craig," Thompson bellowed, then he gave Foster a shoulder slap. "That's why. Where is the little weirdo?"

Right on cue, Craig sneaked back into the room on his toes. Luckily Neelix didn't see him. James and Foster did though, they each watched him with a confused expression as he tip toed over to them.

As soon as he arrived he stood normally and acted nonchalant. "Hey," he said casually.

"Hey," James imitated him. "What were you saying about a little weirdo?"

Thompson pointed a pet lip toward him, "jealousy is an ugly thing. Keep it up, it suits you."

To his disappointment James laughed at his insult. "Not bad. Been thinking of that one all morning, have you?"

"Oh please, I'm quicker than you," Thompson grunted in offense.

Foster had been taking a drink when he said that, he almost spat it back out. Instead he quickly tried to swallow it, while sniggering with his mouth shut. The rest of the team looked at him curiously. "Just me who went there? Shame."

"What was with your mission impossible walk?" James asked while glancing at Craig.

"What?" Craig said, baffled by the question for a second. "Oh. Neelix has been looking for guinea pigs for his new coffee blend that smells like peas." That reminded him of something, "oh, the rope guy."

"I dunno how you managed to get from coffee to a guy swinging from the ceiling like a drunk Tarzan, but he's been dealt with already," James said.

Foster sniggered again, "he was like two centimetres off the ground. Could've let go."

"Oh," Craig sighed in relief. He spotted Neelix gunning for them, naturally as soon as he did he imagined him walking in slow dramatic motion. "Ohno. If he asks, tell him I lost my sense of taste."

"I dunno, that'd probably encourage him," James cringed slightly.

Neelix arrived at their table, already about to pour into Thompson's cup. He was so terrified he even put his hand over the top of it to stop him.

"Hello everyone. Do you want some of my new coffee?" Neelix asked cheerfully.

Everyone else's no's were drowned out by poor Thompson's painful cries, as the smelly and scalding hot liquid splashed onto his hand.

### **The Bridge:**

"The Borg vessel is significantly smaller than others we've encountered. Spherical in shape. A dozen lifesigns are registering," Tuvok said as he scanned his station. "They are hailing us."

"On screen," Chakotay ordered.

The viewscreen changed from a close view of the sphere shaped Borg ship, to the interior. They were surprised to see a young, only partially assimilated girl waiting to greet them. Her still colourful eyes sparkled a little on seeing them.

"Voyager? I thought you'd never come," she said in a relieved tone.

Kathryn was immediately suspicious, she wasn't the only one. "Excuse me, but do we know you?" she hissed.

"Oh of course not, why would you?" the Borg said, sounding slightly discouraged. "You do realise the name Voyager is on your hull, right?"

"Oh of course, that's why," Tom commented.

Chakotay shushed him, then directed his attention back to the girl on the viewscreen. "It's not that you know about us, it's how and why you were expecting us. We're a long way from our last encounter with the Borg."

"Well like you say, we know of you and we spotted you coming a dozen lightyears away," the Borg answered hesitantly.

Tuvok sensed there was more to it than that from her response. "You're Human," he stated.

The Borg nodded lightly, "that's right."

"What do we call you?" Kathryn asked.

The Borg chuckled nervously. "My name is Morgan."

"Morgan?" Tom almost snorted into laughter. As usual his comments earned him a small back of the head slap. He had an idea where it came from, but not why. "I'm sure it has some sort of awesome significance, or something. It's very femin..."

The drone rolled her eyes, drawing attention to some that she didn't have a full array of technology on her, including the fake eye. "Shove it Tom," she snarled.

Tom was instantly taken aback. Most of the bridge found it amusing enough though.

Tuvok however remained suspicious. "You know Mr Paris?"

"Well," Morgan hesitated again. "Know of."

"How?" Kathryn asked.

"It's okay, okay Tom's on the case," Tom stammered nervously. "Morgan who?"

Tuvok's eyebrow attacked the ceiling. "Really?"

"Morgan Janeway," she answered.

Tom couldn't resist. "Dun, dun, dun!" he bellowed out. The next smack he received knocked him out of his chair.

"I beg your pardon," Kathryn said harshly. The room temperature dropped a few degrees, most of the bridge considered evacuating.

The only one seemingly unnerved by Kathryn's instant bad mood was the girl drone who caused it. She had a little smile on her face in fact. "It's a little confusing. If I can come aboard, I'll try to explain everything."

Chakotay dared to look in Kathryn's direction as she seethed a few feet beside Tom. He discreetly signalled Jessie at Opps to mute the transmission. He carefully stepped closer and lowered his voice to a whisper, "distant relative? You never said that's where you got the..."

Kathryn turned her head abruptly in his direction, "no. I don't have anyone in my family with that name."

"The plot thickens," Tom whispered while clambering back up.

"No, that's just your ear," Kathryn said, making him wince in advance. Luckily she didn't carry out her threat, yet.

"Three of the Borg lifesigns register as Human, Captain," Tuvok chimed in.

"Oh then she must be telling the truth," Kathryn barked in his direction. She turned towards Opps, gesturing to put the audio back, all while muttering, "idiot."

"We'll transport you to our Sickbay," she said after a short uncomfortable silence.

Morgan seemed surprised, she still kept her smile up. "Thanks," she managed to say before the viewscreen changed back to the sphere.

"Captain," Tuvok said urgently.

Kathryn nodded, "yes I know Tuvok. I want a Security team with her at all times, as well as a couple in the surrounding area."

"Aye Captain," Tuvok said. He disappeared into the turbolift. An unknown crewmember quickly took his place.

Chakotay sighed despondently, "if she's not a relative of yours, what do you think...?"

"If it's a trick, the Doctor will find out pretty quickly," Kathryn answered. She cast her eye towards Opps once more. "Another Borg ship disconnected from the hive, thousands of lightyears from the previous one. Something's going on, and I want to know what."

"Seven said the last time that the collective destroy problem vessels like this, if they don't do it themselves first," Chakotay said.

"Tom," Kathryn barked, she paused as he was still climbing back into his chair. "Safe distance. Jessie, keep an eye out for company."

"Aye, aye," Tom responded.

"Chakotay," Kathryn said. She made her way to the turbolift. Chakotay knew better, he quickly followed her.

**Sickbay:**

When the command duo arrived, they found their Borg guest already being scanned by the Doctor and dressed in a medical gown. Both of them behind a forcefield.

Kathryn gritted her teeth firmly as she saw no sign of a Security team inside like she ordered. The two teams outside looked to her like they'd lose a battle with a toddler.

Thankfully, the Doctor thought to speak first, preventing her from snapping at someone yet. "Some of these implants are going to take a while. I'm unfamiliar with some of them. It seems like the Borg have learned a few new..."

"Nobody told you to do that Doctor," Chakotay said before Kathryn could say something worse.

The Doctor looked toward them, startled and alarmed. He gave the girl a worried but brief glance. "She's a child, Commander. I... she..."

"Who are you, really?" Kathryn cut in harshly.

The pair stopped close to the forcefield, Kathryn stared at her the whole time, making the young girl uncomfortably laugh and fidget.

"I'm from the future, we..." she replied.

"No," Kathryn said, her gaze intensifying. "That doesn't answer my question."

Chakotay cringed from her tone. He turned his head toward the girl, expecting her to be affected by it too. To his surprise Morgan seemed to find it funny instead.

"It was going to, kinda. I can't really go into details, because I'm from the future. I shouldn't have mentioned my surname, so oops on my part," Morgan replied. "You have that Time Directive thingy, so..."

Kathryn only blinked in response, apparently rendered speechless.

"I guess we do," Chakotay said, chuckling slightly. Kathryn shot him a withering glare, strong enough to melt his insides. He tried his best to avert his eyes. "The cat's out of the bag though. So you got to tell us something."

Morgan looked around with a frown on her face. "Okay?" She shook her head and stared at him quizzically. "I don't get what a bag's got to do with it, but yeah I realised that I still needed to explain something."

"All you could give us was; from the future," Kathryn muttered.

Morgan stared down at the floor, "no." She bit her lip nervously, "things need to change. You're not safe if you keep going." She reluctantly lifted her head back up to meet their curious gazes. "I hoped we'd run into you at some point, so I could stop it."

Kathryn felt her throat start to close up, her shoulders tense. "Stop what?"

"I don't know when. Since you don't know who I am..." Morgan said with a small stutter. "It's probably years away from now. You'll run into an anomaly, or maybe a wormhole. You'll be trapped, then they'll come."

"The Borg Sphere?" Chakotay said, his voice quieter than usual.

Morgan nodded grimly. "It's a trap. Voyager will be damaged. I don't know what happened after. I wasn't..." she shook her head timidly, "there. I was already, you know."

Kathryn studied her carefully, all while the lump in her throat throbbed. "You found a way to come back and warn us?"

"No, that's why I don't know what happened to Voyager. We lost the link, we were pulled into something, probably the anomaly slash wormhole. We were in the past and in some unfamiliar bit of space," Morgan replied.

"Let me guess. Most of your ship's inhabitants destroyed themselves in the confusion. You and the other two Humans were the few that didn't, because the assimilation was fresh," Kathryn said.

Morgan pulled another confused face, which she pointed at the Doctor first, then at Chakotay. Once she got back to Kathryn it fizzled away into realisation. "Oh, no. The other two Humans aren't from Voyager. I was the only one assimilated."

"I see," Kathryn frowned. "And you introduced yourself as Morgan Janeway because...?"

Morgan's shoulders fell, "you don't believe me. Maybe that's for the best, I suppose."

"Would you? I mean you can't tell us when this happens, what kind of anomaly we should avoid. How only one member of the crew, a crewmember we don't have, was captured," Kathryn said, her patience wearing thin.

"Kathryn," Chakotay said softly, hoping to calm her.

It stilled her for the moment, allowing her to see the dejected look on the teenaged girl sitting opposite her. She sighed, the anger left behind a bitter taste. "I'm sorry, but you're asking a lot of us here."

"All of the survivors were in the maturation chamber when this went down," Morgan said in a much lower and harder voice. "I was only a little kid. A frightened kid being bungled into an escape pod, the only escape pod picked up by them. I don't know what anomaly it was because I was playing in my room when we ran into it. I don't know what year it was or how old I was as I hadn't yet learned about times or dates. I'm sorry if my confusion is such a pain to you." Once done she turned her body away so she couldn't see either the Captain or the Commander.

The words punched Kathryn in the gut a couple of times. She noticed Chakotay turn his head her way, she turned her own away slightly. "I see," she could barely get out through her closed throat.

The Commander watched her walk away towards the office. As soon as she entered it, he stepped to one side, closer to the Doctor. "We need you to run a DNA test, if she's stable," he whispered.

The Doctor grimaced, but nodded anyway. He walked over to the tray to pick up a hypospray.

"So, is the name you gave us your real one?" Chakotay asked in a gentle voice.

Morgan didn't answer, she kept her back facing him. He thought he heard a huffing sound come from her. The Doctor walked back over to her to use the hypospray on her arm.

"You don't go by any other name?" Chakotay said carefully.

Morgan waited a few seconds before answering him with a simple, "no."

"I see. Time travel and the Borg, both make for a tense situation on their own. Don't take it personally, most of us don't," Chakotay said.

"Right," Morgan mumbled, turning her head back away.

Chakotay paused for a moment in case she said anything else. He began to walk away slowly, towards the office. Half way there the Doctor resumed what he was doing when they first entered.

"This has to be a trick. It's got to be," Kathryn grumbled as soon as he arrived.

Chakotay nodded slowly. "She doesn't claim to be Kiara, if that's what you're worried about."

Kathryn stared at him intensely. It didn't have the same effect it usually did on him. He figured her heart just wasn't in it. "Nobody said that. Why would you even bring something like that up? It doesn't help anyone."

"You're thinking it, so am I," Chakotay said. Kathryn grunted while rolling her eyes. "Whether or not she is, the implication is still that in the future someone's daughter will be lost to the Borg. We don't know how far into the future she's from."

"No, not now that we know about it," Kathryn said.

"Do we? Are we supposed to avoid every kind of anomaly for the rest of the journey? Can we afford to ignore wormholes?" Chakotay questioned.

"All we have to do is not chuck every kid into escape pods during a Borg attack," Kathryn sniped at him. "I doubt I would have ordered that."

"You don't know the situation, Kathryn. Voyager could've been doomed anyway," Chakotay countered. He shook his head, "that's the point, we can't second guess ourselves."

"So we continue on our merry way with our hands covering our ears, singing tralalah," Kathryn hissed. "Not a chance, Chakotay. If she's not some Borg trick, or a disconnected drone losing her marbles, then we know what's coming. We can avoid it. And if you mention it could be the old *us knowing it causes the event* closed loop crap, I'm demoting you to Neelix's assistant."

"Do you really think the Borg would come up with something so convoluted to capture us?" Chakotay smirked at her.

Kathryn thought about it, then she scrunched up her face. "The same idiots whose master plans involve assimilating us in the twenty first century, instead of simply sending a hundred cubes to Earth in the present. Yes, yes I do."

"True, but it's not. I'm sure that sphere could handle us. It already did," Chakotay said.

The Doctor joined them, all while clicking his tongue and mumbling to himself. The pair stared at him quizzically. "I really hope you don't want me to leave her in that state," he said in a frustrated voice.

"There's very little technology on her, Jessie even had more during her stint. What's your problem?" Kathryn said curiously.

"The problem is I already knew she was assimilated at an extremely young age before she mentioned it," the Doctor huffed. He waited for a reaction, but didn't get one. "This isn't another Seven of Nine case."

"Of course not, nobody thinks that. She's already shown signs of a personality," Kathryn grunted.

The Doctor's eyebrow shot up whilst twitching, Chakotay tried not to laugh.

"Implants she received as a toddler are still there. Clearly some unqualified moron has tried to take some of the more damaging ones out of her as she's grown around them, leaving internal and external scars behind. Then there's some pieces that have clearly replaced what was there before, so clumsily I'm going to assume a blind person did it," the Doctor said.

Chakotay's mirth was long gone. Kathryn grimaced and folded her arms once more.

"I can remove most of them, but like Seven's it's going to take some time," the Doctor finished.

"If you have her consent, I don't see why you can't," Chakotay pointed out. "We needed to make sure..."

"It doesn't matter. She's Human, she sought us out. Get started Doctor," Kathryn said.

The Doctor nodded, he still looked a little angry at the situation as he walked back out of the office. He passed the door as it opened, allowing a Security team to finally arrive.

"Why do we always get the Borgs?" Foster whined.

"Beats me. Maybe even with only half of a hot stuff team, we're better than the rest," Thompson said, prompting the other three to stop and stare at him blankly. He sniggered at their almost identical expressions. "I was being generous, quarter."

Foster was the first to shake it off. "I hear it was because someone on our team has a Borg punching habit. Considering how beefy they can be, I'm not sure if I'd believe that rumour even with a good team. But us, nope."

The team parted slightly so James and Thompson could remain near the door, while the other two were to go through the office to guard the other.

"Seven of Nine isn't beefy, she's br..." Craig smirked. He turned slightly so he could walk away. He stalled completely when he spotted the new arrival. "...Amazing."

Thompson and Foster turned their heads to cringe in his direction.

James' eyebrow twitched, "she's no longer a Borg, and she was violently coming onto me. I'd hardly call it a habit."

The two stopped their cringing to turn their heads in the opposite direction, towards James. This time their eyes were a little wide, Foster's jaw threatened to drop.

Kathryn chose that moment to step out of the office, and so she almost walked straight into Craig. On seeing him and the rest, she armed herself with a scowl. "It's about time. You need to work on your punctuality."

"Oh sorry," Craig said without even looking at her. He handed a PADD to her which she took off him with a puzzled look.

One glance at it made her jaw visibly flex. "Jessie being *cute* is debatable, but you still having a chance is laughably wrong," she said huffily. She headed out, not before tossing the PADD back at him.

"Ow!" Craig cried out as it bounced off his head, and brought him out of the trance. It also got the rest of his team's attention again. He rubbed his head, pouting for a short time until he realised what he'd done. His face turned very red. "Oh... no."

Thompson and Foster struggled to keep a straight face as they glanced between him and the girl he had been staring at. James followed their glance and back again.

"Really Craig?" he said, bemused.

"Why are you complaining? Less competition for you," Thompson sniggered.

"What, she's the girl of my dreams," Craig said defensively.

"Who, Borg girl or Jessie?" Foster asked, genuinely confused.

James couldn't help but laugh at them all. "Wow, you guys get your girl obsessed wires crossed far too easily. They're not around just for your staretastic fun, you know."

"Yeah yeah, I'm sure the feminist douche routine gets you all the Borg gals. But still, let me know if it works and we'll throw a Not A Virgin Anymore party," Thompson said in a patronising tone. His hand went to pat James on the shoulder, but the almost blank stare he got for his comment put him off. Instead he walked over to place it on Craig's. "I'll get the other door." He hurried through the office, colliding with Chakotay on route.

"What's so bad about Borg girls? Jessie and Seven used to be Borg," Craig questioned.

"I think er, that wasn't the point of the joke. Seven made a move..." Foster laughed very nervously while accidentally catching a glimpse of James' still blank and yet unnerving expression. "You know, we're supposed to guard both doors." He hurried off too.

James shook his head, his face softened back a little. He spotted Craig sneaking another glance at their guest. "You even like Seven? Is it the implants?" he asked him like nothing happened.

"I can see through them, see their real face," Craig replied.

"Okay, that's not what I meant," James said, cringing slightly.

"On the other side of those implants she's the girl I've been dreaming about all my life," Craig almost swooned.

James felt a little second hand embarrassment for him. He quickly tried to throat clear it away. "Maybe tone it down a tad, I feel like a side character in a Disney film."

"Yes please," Chakotay butted in as he joined them. He picked up the dropped PADD. "Can we hold off on the drooling over a child, it's wrong enough."

"She's not a kid," Craig protested.

"She could be, there's also a chance she might not have even been born yet," Chakotay said to him, frowning slightly.

"Yeah," James agreed, then he looked confused, "what?"

Craig didn't react, he was too busy staring with worry at the PADD in the Commander's hands. Chakotay keyed in something on it and handed it back. Craig's face fell as it was now completely blank. "Now that your schedule is empty, you can do your job without distraction."

"Um, yes sir," Craig squeaked.

Chakotay smiled darkly, "good." He followed the Captain out of Sickbay.

Oblivious to the conversation nearby, the Doctor gestured for his patient to lie down. She did so with a nervous look in her eyes.

"It's all right. We'll warm up with a few of the smaller implants," he said gently. He brought over a small pen shaped tool towards the little metal pieces surrounding her left eye. "The ocular implant frame should be quick and painless without the ocular piece itself. How's your vision in that eye?"

"Fine, I mean same," Morgan replied. She closed her right while keeping the left open, then did the same with the left. "Yeah same."

"Good," the Doctor smiled. "We'll remove the frame first."

"Thanks, it gets on my nerves," Morgan said.

The Doctor chuckled, "yes, that's the problem. Might I ask who maintained your implants?"

"Um, a few of the older kids did. We tried to take them off ourselves, but we'd have to replace them. We didn't really have the data banks on assimilation handy," Morgan replied with a grimace.

"I understand. Don't worry, I should be able to make you good as new. It'll just take a while and some patience. Okay? There's going to be some scarring from the old and newer implants, but it's only temporary," the Doctor said, oblivious to his patient tensing up and further face scrunching. "Some implants might not..."

"Doc, bedside manner," James butted in.

The Doctor winced when he noticed his patient's discomfort, "yes, good as new."

"Okay," she said with a small smile.

James sighed as he backed off a few steps to guard the door. Doing so he caught Craig still standing next to the office, his mind a few lightyears away. "Craig!" he hissed. The younger man jumped, startled by his voice, he looked across his shoulder. "At ease or you'll sprain something."

"What?" Craig stuttered in confusion. James' eyes gestured toward the patient and back again. Craig's face flushed bright red, he hurried over to join him on the opposite side of the door. "I was guarding, keeping an eye. It's my job."

"If I knew drooling was a job requirement, I'd have stayed on the Bridge," James said.

Craig assumed he was only teasing him. Even so he felt a little paranoid, his hand reached up to check his mouth. Thankfully it was dry. Unfortunately James saw him do it and was struggling not to laugh at him again.

### **The Bridge:**

"Report," Kathryn ordered as she stepped out her Ready Room.

Tom's shoulders tensed. Luckily for him Jessie replied first, "sensors picked up an energy build up off our starboard bow."

"On screen," Kathryn said, turning her attention to the viewscreen. For some reason it wasn't focused on the Borg ship, it seemed to be off. She waited patiently for her order to be fulfilled. It didn't. "I said..."

"It is," Jessie snapped back. "That's what the energy build up looks like."

Kathryn clenched her jaw. Chakotay rose from his chair to stand beside her. "Whatever it is, it clearly hasn't shown its face yet."

"Back us away, Tom," Kathryn commanded.

Tom shuddered, "that's the thing. Backing off was my first instinct. I can't."

"Why not?" Kathryn frowned.

Tom tried again for the tenth time. The console responded with the negative bleeps. "Helm's not responding. Engineering reports no problems."

Kathryn swung around to face Opps. "Reroute."

Jessie shook her head while she worked on it, "same problem."

"Engineering," Kathryn called as she tapped her commbadge.

*"Seven of Nine here Captain. The commands from the Bridge are reaching the engines, however there is a tremendous drain on the power relay emitters. We are attempting to repair them now. I recommend no further helm commands to be sent until we determine the cause."*

Chakotay's brow furrowed, "emitters."

"Is this build up causing us any other issues?" Kathryn asked.

"Negative Captain," Tuvok replied.

"Nothing, yet," Jessie also answered.

Kathryn sighed, she headed over to her chair. "Keep a close eye on whatever the hell that is, but don't forget to keep an eye out for further company."

"Speaking of which, the sphere is hailing us again," Jessie said.

Kathryn nodded, hoping she'd know that meant to open a channel. The viewscreen changed from the eery black to the interior of the Borg ship. This time a man in his mid twenties greeted them. He faired a lot less than Morgan, he still looked very much Borg in comparison.

"I assume you're having trouble moving as well, Voyager," he said.

"Captain Janeway, Starship Voyager," Kathryn said icily.

The man's lips curled slightly, though his eyes gave away a little concern. "Sorry, Tiran... of the Borg Ship."

"Great, can we meet somebody who isn't snarky for once?" Kathryn growled.

"You started it," Jessie pointed out.

"Our systems aren't what they used to be. Without the collective, barely anything works, but we have managed to pick up faint temporal signatures from it," Tiran said.

Kathryn's face quickly drained of colour. "Temporal? You mean..."

Tiran sighed, "no, I don't think it's the same anomaly."

"I don't think isn't reassuring," Tom said. "Wouldn't you know, you were there?"

"No. When we were in the maturation chamber, we weren't aware of what was happening," Tiran answered. "Also the moment your ship loses the connection, it's lights off metaphorically. No sensors, no flight control, shields. No windows. We're as in the dark as you."

"So why can't it be the same anomaly?" Kathryn asked.

"We've detected a few of these on our way here. Also, from what archived data we've recovered from before the disconnect, the details don't match," Tiran replied. "I'm sure a second errant Borg Sphere would've been mentioned."

"Not necessarily. Miss Morgan explained that she wanted to avoid the catastrophe. Our encounter may have already altered our path," Tuvok said.

Tiran didn't look convinced, his eyebrow raised and his mouth twisted a little. "I don't believe in that. Fate is fate."

"Is that why you let her do this? Because it doesn't matter," Chakotay said.

"You're kidding?" Tiran laughed dismissively. "Once that girl sets her mind to something, you've got two choices; surf the wave, or struggle against it and drown."

Chakotay glanced across at Kathryn. He knew all too well that feeling. His fears were growing.

"Are you sure?" the Doctor asked, his paranoia controlling him for the moment.

Morgan narrowed one of her eyes, her other eye still a little numb from the operation. She smirked at him, "I thought you were supposed to be the medicine king, thee greatest of them all?"

The Doctor chuckled, his pride grew to the ceiling and through it. "Of course, I'm not only programmed with..." She reached out to snatch the mirror from his hand while he was distracted. He stammered as soon as it vanished from him. "Your treatment isn't complete yet. I don't want you wiggling out like Jessie did, perhaps you shouldn't..."

His warnings were ignored. Morgan brought the mirror up opposite her face. He winced, expecting the worst. As she inspected her brightened skin tone, she gently traced a few of the scar lines left behind on her bare scalp.

The Doctor was ready to call the Security team over, having flashbacks of Jessie's freakout again, when the girl genuinely smiled. He instantly felt relieved.

"I've removed the worst of them. I recommend we take it easy for the more benign implants, as we don't want to risk further trauma to your body. Perhaps we can schedule an appointment once a week," the Doctor explained.

Morgan lowered the mirror and passed him a grin, which was the last thing he was expecting right now. "I look less like a sweaty robot, and more like a person. Thanks Doc."

"You're welcome," the Doctor smiled back. "I can accelerate your hair growth if you wish."

"You still think I'm going to go all *eeeeh* on you?" Morgan asked playfully.

Next to the door Craig laughed, prompting James to stare blankly toward him. He rolled his eyes when Craig's laugh ended with a dreamy smile. "Craig, stop that. The creep level's already way too high," James whispered.

"She doesn't care that she isn't *girly* yet. She's funny," Craig whispered and snapped defensively. He folded his arms in a huff, "you're just jealous."

James' eyebrow raised higher than normal, "okay, you're not really my type, but okay. Whatever helps you sleep at night."

Craig turned a little red and started to bluster, "no that's not... no. Jessie flipped out, Morgan's like *whatever*."

"So was I. You need to look up jealous in the dictionary," James whispered whilst shaking his head.

The Doctor meanwhile pressed a hypospray into his patient's neck. After doing so he did a side eye glance towards the two whispering Security officers. "I can replicate you a change of clothes now that we're done. I'll ask them to step outside, then update the Captain with your progress."

Morgan's eyes seemed to widen a little in a panic, he wasn't sure why. She pulled herself from the biobed. "No, no, I'll pick something. I vaguely remember your style."

"Um," the Doctor said, momentarily speechless.

"I don't fancy a one piece thingy, with these stuffed and up in my face so..." Morgan said, gesturing towards her chest.

"I um... replicator is there," the Doctor mumbled while pointing. "Wait one minute though." He walked towards the door, blinking rapidly.

"I'm nineteen, it's not creepy," Craig protested in a hushed but annoyed voice.

James was about to make another comment when the Doctor approached them. "Can I have you two step outside for a few minutes? My patient needs some privacy," he said mostly in Craig's direction.

"Sure," James nodded. He turned to leave.

"Hmm?" Craig didn't seem to get it. When he did his eyes brightened which worried James and the Doctor. "Oh, I see." Thankfully he started to leave as well, but stopped half way through the door. "Don't put her in a catsuit too. Maybe something normal, red maybe..."

James grabbed his arm to pull him the rest of the way out. He whined all the way, "heeeey, why, I was going!"

"Nobody should care what the fifteen, sixteen year old girl is wearing Craig," James said as the door shut behind them.

"Two down," the Doctor muttered. He stepped into his office.

The doors parted for Seven as she made her way into Astrometrics. Distracted by her PADD as well as her thoughts, she didn't see the path of toys she was about to enter. Two bundled together made her stumble to a stop.

"Hey," Kiara whined while sitting cross legged on the floor next to the door.

She reached out to grab the now separated toys. "Don't split them up, mean..." the girl snapped while looking up at the culprit. From where she sat, she couldn't see the ex-drone's head, the chest being so high up and large it blocked her entire view of it. "Eep!" she squeaked during her escape.

Seven scanned the entire floor ahead of her so she could navigate a path to her station. Then she realised Kiara wasn't here on her own. "Captain?" The image of the Borg Sphere on the screen was instantly replaced by scans of an area of space they weren't in.

Kathryn drummed her fingers across the station impatiently while looking over her shoulder. "Weren't you supposed to be hibernating after your multiple personalities?"

"The incident was two months ago. I've fully recovered," Seven said, raising a curious eyebrow. She approached carefully despite Kathryn's eyes telling her to do the opposite. "I wish to assist you in this mystery."

"It's no mystery. I sometimes get a little wiggled out when I look up at you, and I'm fortunate enough to not be looking at them from below," Kathryn said, turning her attention to in front of her.

"I do not understand," Seven said.

Kathryn sighed, smiling lightly. "There's nothing to assist us with."

"The disconnected Borg vessel. Everyone is discussing it," Seven said.

"Right," Kathryn groaned as she reluctantly brought the image and data of the sphere back up. "Of course you mean that."

"I'm not interested in rejoining the collective, or betraying you. Why did you try to hide it?" Seven questioned once she finally reached the station.

Kathryn pointed a skunk eye towards her, "it wasn't that long ago when you declared you were leaving the ship."

"Yes, and I re-evaluated my options and my opinion. If I didn't, I wouldn't have aided your escape from the Dauntless brig," Seven argued. "The Doctor proved I had nothing to do with the slipstream error. I was also not in control of my actions two months ago."

"Fine, sorry," Kathryn said and to Seven's surprise sounded like she meant it. It threw the drone completely off.

"Really?" she asked.

Kathryn smirked at her. "Yes, don't inspire me to take it back."

"I won't," Seven said. She waited for the Captain to look forward at the screen before allowing a small smile.

"Now onto more important things," Kathryn said.

"The girl from the sphere?" Seven questioned. Kathryn didn't answer and instead focused on the darker patch next to the sphere.

"I wonder if they're related," Kathryn mumbled to herself.

Seven glanced over her shoulder toward Kiara. The little girl tried to pair up the two toys she accidentally kicked away, pouting all the while. She'd move one, and the other would fall over. Seven was sure she didn't break anything. It seemed unlikely to her that the fluffy bear and doll dressed in a Starfleet uniform were meant to go together.

The child huffed and left the bear behind to play with the small model of Voyager, and pile of large lego bricks.

"This girl might not be who she says she is," Seven said.

Kathryn frowned as she turned to stare at her once more. "What?"

"She is clearly hiding something. It's likely this could be a ruse to manipulate your actions, or simply to get on board this ship. She may have presented herself as a Janeway to hide her true identity," Seven replied.

"I was talking about this temporal anomaly being related to the Void ones, not the girl in Sickbay," Kathryn said impatiently. "Kiara's only here because my usual babysitters are busy."

"Where the child is will not stop the Borg from attacking us," Seven said.

Kathryn's frown gradually changed into the death glare. Seven had time to look away. She stubbornly chose not to.

"It doesn't matter who she is or was. No one's getting assimilated. Not today, not tomorrow, not ten years in the future, or whenever the hell it is. Her being here has given us the chance to change things," Kathryn hissed.

Seven's eyes drifted to one side. "Perhaps," she said with some doubt in her voice. "If our knowing changes the outcome, the girl, whoever she is, will not be assimilated. Thus she won't be able to meet us today to warn us."

Kathryn's head started to throb, she caressed her right temple. "I have considered that, yes. That's why I'm focusing on the anomaly trapping us first."

"Indeed," Seven said, sounding impressed for some reason. "Once we are free, do you intend to liberate the other drones?"

"That's entirely up to them. Now..." Kathryn replied tiredly. "Are you actually going to help me like you said, or are you going to keep prodding my migraine?"

Seven answered her by starting to work on the neighbouring station. Kathryn let out a sigh of relief.

It was short lived. A suspicious tint appeared in Seven's eyes, she had to voice it immediately. "Curious."

Kathryn resisted a painful groan for the time being, "what?"

"The sphere, I do not recognise its design," Seven replied.

"It's a 3D circle instead of a square, does that help?" Kathryn quipped.

"No, I have seen spherical vessels before," Seven said with some offense. "The hull structure is made up of alloys I have not seen before. Its interior design doesn't match any of the spheres that existed whilst I was in the collective."

"Okay," Kathryn said lightly to mask the dread she was feeling. "We know this ship possibly attacks us in the future. We have no idea how far in the future it does. You probably haven't seen it because it doesn't exist yet."

"Perhaps," Seven said uneasily. "Or it has been built since I was liberated. If this *Morgan* is telling the truth, both assumptions are still unsettling."

Kathryn nodded. Seven looked at her, expecting the still worried expression to be there. Instead she saw the stubborn smile that usually meant trouble. "Well, it's a good thing they showed up early then, isn't it?"

"Are you suggesting that we use the sphere's technology to defend ourselves from it?" Seven said with her eyes wider than normal. "Wouldn't that cause a similar paradox than simply avoiding *Morgan's* assimilation?"

"Oh, so you are not on board then?" Kathryn said cheerfully. "Then I'll just have to ask another ex Borg to work on this project."

Seven stared at her with a blanker face than usual. "You assume she is lying, but you will still trust her to help us?"

"I was going to enlist James and or Jessie, but you're right. *Morgan* knows this ship well, they don't. Good point," Kathryn said with a sly smile. She noticed a little fire in Seven's eyes, it only made her smile grow. "What's your problem? It's almost as if you dislike having other Borgs around."

"I... no. Taylor only heard the disconnection chaos, not the collective, he shouldn't know anymore about the Borg than you do. Rex spent most of her time connected to equally traumatised individuals trapped together. In her few seconds or minutes, she may have learned something but lacks the capability and mental capacity to store any of the Borg's vast data..."

Kathryn started to tap on her station, "hang on... mental capacity." Seven's piercing eyes managed to get even wider as she watched her.

"*Morgan* will likely have similar experience to Rex, but since she was an infant she would've acquired less data than her. I'd decree her usefulness to that of Taylor's. As it's likely she was the youngest of the Borg Sphere's crew, the girl will not have handled, if any, of the Borg systems during her time

there. It would be inefficient, likely dangerous even at her current age," Seven continued, her voice raising slightly every few words.

Kathryn finished working, then took a quick peek at the drone. "Are you done?" The stony silence she received answered that. "Okay. I'm sure Jessie will appreciate the feedback."

"I... I never understand you," Seven said.

"Superiority complex. Look it up," Kathryn said. "Can you really not handle even just the idea that someone may know something you don't and or be smarter than you?"

"So you only suggested the girl help us to teach me a lesson in humility?" Seven said in a bewildered tone.

Kathryn shrugged casually as she turned away from the console. "Sure, if you take that from what I said, great. I look forward to the results." She crouched down to pick up her daughter. "It's daddy time, cutey. Grab what you want to play with and we'll go."

"Can I be Captain?" Kiara asked, smiling innocently.

"I'll tell you what. I'll let you sit in my chair while I'm away, if you keep Tom in line," Kathryn replied while picking up a couple toys beside her.

Kiara made a little hmm noise and held her chin. "Toughie." She sighed overdramatically, "okay, the things I do for you mummy."

Kathryn chuckled, "I know, I'm cruel." She stood back up to leave. Seven finished nodding barely a second before Kathryn looked back at her. "If you really want to make yourself useful, find out why the temporal anomaly is wearing our emitters down. We can figure out the reason it and its friends are here later."

"Aye Captain," Seven said as neutrally as she could. Not long after Kathryn stepped out, something strange got the ex drone's attention. It made her shoulders tense.

Craig stepped into Sickbay with James trailing behind him. The latter stared into the cup he was holding with a grimace.

"I'm just saying, I'd feel more like a Security guy if we did. Imagine it," Craig said rapidly. "Red Alert, battle stations. All of us go to the nearest weapons locker and pick up the rifles. Ready for anything."

James shook his head. "Smells like onions."

Craig pulled a face and looked around to find his teammate about to walk into him. Before he could move out of his way, James walked around him while he raised the cup closer to his face. "Are you even listening?"

"No," James replied before daring to sip the drink in his cup. It barely touched his lips, he stretched the arm out to get it as far away from him as possible without dropping or throwing it. All the while he tried not to gag, his eyes watering. "Tastes like pickled peas."

Craig noticed what he was doing, his eyes gradually widened. "Is that Neelix's coffee?"

"Unless he's replaced the replicator entry for white coffee, then..." James said with difficulty, as he was still trying not to be sick. He rolled his eyes and groaned, "he's replaced the replicator entry hasn't he? Son of a..."

The Doctor approached the pair, eyeing the stray cup strangely. "If you are going to bring that in here, I request that you at least quarantine it."

"Safer than setting it on fire, I guess," James said. He put the cup down on the small table next to the door. The Doctor grunted as he went to grab it, and get it out of his Sickbay. James responded by waving his attempts away and shushing him everytime he muttered in protest.

Craig didn't notice any of this. Morgan stepped out of the Doctor's office pulling a bemused face in their direction. Since the last time he saw her, the girl's black hair had grown to just below her chin. With that and her casual clothes, she looked so unlike the Borg they beamed aboard. She would've looked like a normal teenaged girl if it weren't for the odd few implants still on her face and arms.

"Voyager's as weird as I remember," she said with a small smirk.

Craig laughed nervously as he blushed, "yeah, yeah it is."

"All right fine, I don't think starving the thing of oxygen's gonna help," James said. He walked away to leave the Doctor to the cup and its horrible contents.

Morgan's bemused expression moved to Craig, making his face redder. She thought best to turn to James instead. "What's his problem?"

"Don't worry about it. He's just the ship's drooler," James replied.

"Okay," Morgan laughed.

Craig seemed confused. He quickly cut in, "wait, weird as you remember?"

"And you are?" Morgan directed at James.

The Doctor growled at the tiny forcefield he put around the cup. The contents seemed to be fizzing. "The ship's troublemaker."

"I'm not," James said, his eyes widened and he pretended to pout. "That's so mean. How can you say that?"

Morgan noticed the tears in his eyes from before, she reached out to pat him on the arm. "There, there."

Craig wasn't too impressed with that. He cleared his throat. "Stop showing us up Jamesy." He tried to smile his red face away, "sorry, my subordinate here can be a little sensitive. We're not all like that."

James looked at him with his eyebrow raised, trying badly not to smirk or laugh at him, yet menace built up in his eyes. Meanwhile the Doctor panicked at the foam spilling over the cup and onto his bench.

"Say Doc, I've got a disposal method for you," James said, opting to smile dangerously.

"What is this stuff made of!" the Doctor cried as he rushed over to grab a tricorder.

Morgan couldn't help but giggle at all of them. "Now, now. You should know better than to upset the ship's troublemaker."

"Yeah, tough breaks. An almost thirty year old man nearing six foot, crying like a ickle baby. Very attractive," Craig laughed with her.

"Wow," James only mimed. Morgan spotted it while Craig didn't, she bit her lip to stop from laughing at the two again. "If he gets anymore pathetic he'll be sitting at the helm, making gay jokes a twelve year old would be embarrassed to say."

Craig stepped forward, his face now turning red for other reasons. "Let's just leave the baby here. His mummy can pick him up later."

"Where are we going?" Morgan asked.

"Janeway wanted to see you when you were ready. You'll probably need half an hour to wash off the smell of desperation though," James replied.

Craig groaned, "no, that's your coffee."

James pulled a face, he could feel his eyes watering at the very thought of that stuff. Little did he know its foam was burning a hole through the bench. Though he did start to notice his lip turning a little red.

"What's wrong?" Morgan asked, noticing both.

"Nothing a little getting out of here won't cure," James answered.

"Yeah right. Jessie's not here to impress, so you can knock it off," Craig muttered.

James rolled his eyes. "Oh good, insecure little boy runs out of material so changes the subject. Red alert. I'll get the phaser rifles." He walked out, leaving them both behind.

Craig blinked rapidly, he clenched his jaw before shouting, "you said you weren't listening!" He nearly rushed out after him, but then remembered Morgan. He glanced back at her and tried to straighten his face to not look flustered or angry anymore. "Um, come with me please."

"Why wouldn't I?" Morgan smiled as she walked past him. He smiled and started to blush again. "I don't want to miss the armbags and hair pulling."

Craig's smile faded away, so did his skin colour. He hurried out after her. "The what?"

"I think she means handbags," James sniggered.

They began to make their way down the corridor toward the turbolift.

"Oh, I'd prefer that over hair pulling," Craig sighed.

"Yeah me too. Those things are sharp," James smirked.

Craig repeated what he said very quietly, then raised his hand to gently touch his spiky hair. "Jerk," he huffed.

### **The Bridge:**

"What do you mean by that?" Kathryn roared at her victim.

"I mean the replicators are broken," Jessie said with a blank face but mischievous glint in her eye.

Kathryn's eyes narrowed. Jessie did the same back to her. "Listen you little piece of sh..." Kathryn hissed.

"Shocolate, chocolate. Do you want some sweetie?" Chakotay badly improvised to Kiara sitting by his feet.

She giggled at him, "yes please daddy."

Kathryn's right eye twitched. "Just one."

"No, all of them," Jessie said with a forced polite smile.

Kathryn blew two more fuses, her face was so red Jessie could see the steam rising from it. "I wasn't talking about the replicators!"

"Oh that's too bad, cos I was," Jessie said.

Tuvok looked on, worried that they'd all feel the Captain's wrath if this continued. "Perhaps you shouldn't..."

"Oh no it's fine. If Jessie wants to continue proving that all she's good for is smart alecky remarks, then she can go and fu..." Kathryn said a little too nicely to be genuine.

"Fuit juice, fruit. Let's get you some of that to wash the chocolate down," Chakotay stammered.

Kathryn's tense body trembled on the spot. "Replicators... are... broken."

"Finally. I thought I was speaking Klingon," Jessie said, faking relief as she turned back to her station.

"This is so unfair. If that were me, I'd be unconscious by now," Tom huffed.

"Well, why break a habit of a lifetime?" Kathryn said.

She started to roll up her sleeves at the same time as the turbolift doors opened. Craig walked out first, looking over his shoulder to Morgan behind him.

"So you used to be a member of the crew?" Craig asked. Morgan gave him a gentle nod. "But in our view you're not yet. From the future?"

"Yeah, confusing huh," Morgan sighed.

"No, a little sad," Craig said, stopping only a few steps out of the turbolift. Morgan walked around him, admiring the view of the Bridge. He waited for James to step out to mutter, "thanks for not telling me."

James smiled and shrugged, "oh no, thank you for not listening when Chakotay told you."

Kathryn glanced between Morgan and Kiara so fast, her head blurred. She stopped to glower at Chakotay. He understood and quickly gathered Kiara up to take her into the Ready Room. "Let's see if mummy has chocolates," he whispered to her.

"Morgan," Kathryn said as soon as they were gone. "You're looking well. How are you?"

"A little sore, I'm fine," Morgan replied with an awkward smile.

Kathryn headed over to her, passing Tactical and then Craig before she stopped. "I'm afraid we're going to need a little more information."

Morgan flinched, she tried to hide it but it was too late. "About my assimilation? I dunno, I can't remember much else."

"No," Kathryn shook her head. "About your ship. Its defences, weapons capability."

"Oh," Morgan sighed. "Good. Sure, I can do that."

"All right then. Tuvok, and er..." Kathryn said, glancing at the two Security officers. One look at Craig's uncomfortable and still slightly blushing cheeks instantly made her turn to the other. "James. We'll discuss this in the Conference Room."

"Huh?" Craig stuttered.

Kathryn ignored him and walked away to the opposite side of the Bridge. James, Tuvok and then Morgan followed her.

"But..." Craig protested. He pouted as soon as they went inside. Soon he was sulking near Jessie's station. She looked up at him with a raised eyebrow when his sigh drifted her way.

"Ew," she grunted, getting his attention. "Please tell me you're not crushing on Kiara."

Craig's eyes shot wide open in a panic, "no, god no. That's sick. She's not Kiara."

Jessie sniggered, and she wasn't the only one. Tom was biting his lip a little too hard. "No, you're right. It's just a girl who hasn't been born yet." She pointed a faked sympathetic face his way, "much better!"

"That's not what's going on," Craig protested further. "I know it. I feel it, she's a teenaged girl. I know it." Shame was starting to take over, making his voice lower. "I didn't know, okay. Forget it, please."

Jessie's smile faded away as sympathy took over. "All right Craig, I believe you. I'll not say anything more."

Tom swung his chair around. Both Jessie and Craig were expecting it and they glared in his direction. Instead of stopping, he kept spinning until he was right back to where he started.

Morgan sat back in the chair as far as it would allow. It turned slightly to her surprise, her eyes widened. "Oh, fun," she commented.

James responded with a smirk, Tuvok's eyebrow did its usual thing.

"Yes, so you don't think offense will help?" Kathryn said.

"No, we haven't really ran into anybody that's made a dent," Morgan replied. "Your shields though, they could work. All of our weapons are energy based. I imagine a little tweaking could save the day."

"Are you sure about this?" James asked.

Kathryn looked over her shoulder, giving him a small scowl. Morgan meanwhile looked at him with surprise.

"Well yeah, why wouldn't I be?" she said.

"No I..." James said with hesitation, not from Kathryn's face but Morgan's. "If we protect Voyager from your ship, you won't..."

"That's the point," Morgan said quickly and plainly. It almost seemed robotic to everyone, but they all saw her cheeks flex. "I came here to stop this, didn't I?"

"Doing so will undo your efforts. There is also the matter of the temporal Prime Directive," Tuvok said.

Kathryn's patience started to bubble beneath the surface. She grit her teeth firmly to tame it.

"Yes, that's what I meant. Not that I'm questioning the plan to erase somebody from existence," James said irritably.

Tuvok turned toward him, "you are allowing your emotions to get the better of you."

"No, sh..." James muttered.

"Gentlemen, this is not the time to argue," Kathryn snapped.

"Shit. Don't interrupt me," James spat back.

Kathryn directed her most lethal stare towards James, "excuse me!"

"What, I'm not a gentleman," James said a little too casually despite the tension.

"Get out," Kathryn said coldly. "I'd rather have that horndog in here."

"I'm not suggesting we let Kiara or whoever she is be assimilated," James said, while stubbornly remaining where he was. Morgan flinched and looked away from everyone.

The room temperature dropped a few degrees below zero. "Then what are you suggesting?" Kathryn's voice cut through the ice.

"There's no other way," Morgan mumbled in the background.

"I dunno, a third option. We jumped straight to picking the one we don't know," James said.

"It's bad enough there's Craig. He's a teenager, I can begrudgingly accept that. But you?" Kathryn snarled.

James was confused. When he figured it out he cringed. "What, no. I just think it's a bit cold that we can calmly discuss killing, or worse still, erasing somebody without even considering other options."

"It's impossible. We can't both exist. It's fine," Morgan said with a weak smile.

"A hypothetical third option could be the reason for the temporal anomaly," Tuvok suggested.

"Well like you hinted, we can't start changing things now," James said.

"Out. Now," Kathryn hissed. She looked over her shoulder once more, "unless you have an actual idea other than having a tantrum."

"Fine," James sighed.

To Kathryn's relief he did turn to leave. He almost collided with Seven as she rushed inside. She made a point of not looking at him and side stepping out of his way. "Captain."

"What?" Kathryn sniped.

"Long range sensors have picked up a transwarp signature two lightyears away," Seven said.

Overwhelming panic began to drum against Morgan's chest. Her eyes started to widen.

"Any sign of the ship?" Kathryn asked.

"Not yet," Seven answered in a quieter voice.

"Keep an eye on it," Kathryn ordered. She turned to Tuvok. "Go to yellow alert for now, but I want all Security teams on duty. Also..." She kept talking, but her voice and everyone else's grew quieter and quieter until it was merely a low hum in Morgan's ear.

All that remained was the crisp chill of fear brushing over her recently refreshed skin.

### **The Mess Hall:**

Crewmembers dotted around most of the tables, talking quietly between themselves. The unsettling image of the Borg Sphere sitting in front of them, they were all trying to ignore and yet they couldn't keep it out of the corner of their eye. Some unfortunate people missed Neelix take advantage by refilling their cups.

Craig however saw his shape coming towards him even while he was staring glumly down. So he pulled his cup closer to him.

"Oh don't worry. This is a different blend. Turns out the milk I used earlier had soured," Neelix said cheerfully.

"Still no," Craig mumbled.

Neelix quickly put on his morale officer cap. That was all he had time to do. The room began to buzz as people talked more, but in more hushed tones. He looked around to see what the fuss was about. Naturally he checked the sphere first. That wasn't it though, it seemed to be the young girl standing at one of the entrances.

Craig noticed it as well and he glanced upwards, immediately spotting her. "Morgan?" He hurried to his feet to go over to her. "Hey..."

"Why is everyone staring?" Morgan asked.

Craig frowned, he hadn't noticed. A scan of the room proved that to be true. Most of the people there averted their gaze once they were spotted.

"All right everyone. You've had a look, now leave the poor thing alone," Neelix said to the whole room. Then he turned to greet her, "I'm sorry about that. You must be our guest. Welcome."

"She's not a guest, Neelix. She's from Voyager, or she will be," Craig said.

Morgan's eyes drifted to the window. The sight of the sphere brought a lump to her throat.

"Of course. I apologise. Is there anything I can get you?" Neelix questioned.

"I can't eat yet," Morgan answered.

Craig resisted a smile, "lucky you."

Neelix didn't get why he said that, so he ignored it. "Well if there's anything I can do to help, give me a shout." He left them alone to further harass the room with his evil coffee brew.

"Do you want to sit down?" Craig asked, gesturing to his previous table.

Morgan shook her head, "no. I only came to see you."

"Me? That's funny. Nobody goes anywhere to see me, maybe the other way around," Craig laughed awkwardly. He trailed off when she obviously didn't laugh too. He reached over to retrieve his drink. First he checked to see if Neelix did anything to it. "Nobody likes me, now you know why."

"I like you," Morgan said as he took a drink. The shock pushed the liquid down the wrong way, he started to splutter. "I think you're funny."

"Oh," Craig said in between throat clearing. "Here I thought you preferred the older, funnier one."

"I didn't think I had to pick one over the other," Morgan said.

He laughed nervously, it only agitated his throat further.

"I'm sure most people would choose the younger one anyway," Morgan continued with her eye elsewhere towards the window.

"No, that's not..." Craig said quickly before she could say anything else or his coughing continued. She looked toward him with her good eye narrowed very slightly. "I'm not asking you to. I was just being silly, melodramatic, huffy, insecure. You don't need to pick there. It's all of the above."

The smallest of smiles appeared on her face. He wasn't sure it was a good thing or not. "I don't know why. You two are supposed to be friends. It'd be easier if you stayed that way, then I don't have to make tough choices I don't have to."

"Yeah," Craig said, his face fell. "It may be too late for that now. I was impulsive, at the time I thought it would help but all I did instead was put myself back to where I started. Friendless and pathetic."

"You're right. You are stupid," Morgan said bluntly, her eyes sharpened. Both caught Craig so off guard he almost lost his balance. "If you've screwed up, do something about it. Fix it. It's better than moping about it."

"I never said I was stupid. Closest word I used was silly," Craig said, laughing nervously once more.

"Oh," Morgan said, momentarily put off. "Well whatever. I made my point, I'm not repeating it."

Craig smiled warmly at her, "too bad. Sometimes I need to be told twice."

"There's always another way," Morgan said as her eyes glazed over.

"Um, for there to be another way, I have to use and fail a first way first," Craig mumbled.

Morgan shook her head, eyes focused on him. "No. I wanted to change the future, but I can't if doing it changes my past."

"Yeah about that. I had no idea who you were, if I did I wouldn't have acted like... I'm sorry, it's no excuse," Craig said.

Morgan's face fell, she pointed it to the floor so he wouldn't notice. "Don't worry about it." She put on a smile so she could look back up. "It's not going to matter soon."

"Why? You..." Craig stuttered in a panic. "Is your plan to stop the Borg attack? Wouldn't that technically kill you? You can't."

"It was, yeah," Morgan answered reluctantly. "But it won't work, it'll not do anything. That's where the other way comes in. Thank you." She gave him a sweet, grateful smile before turning away and running off.

Craig stepped forward after her, desperately wanting to say something to stop her, but he couldn't think of anything. Once she was gone the only word that came to him was, "stupid."

Light footsteps still managed to thunder through the hollow interior of the Borg Sphere. Most of it coated in darkness. Only a few rooms and corridors were lit, they barely scratched the surface, a mere few dots in the vast vessel.

Several of its inhabitants worked around one of the lit rooms. One of them the young Human man Voyager spoke to. A younger girl stood with him.

They all heard the footsteps approach. None of them reacted with any concern.

The one responsible arrived at the nearby doorway. A few members of the room briefly glanced up to see them and look back down. They each did a double take as she walked further inside.

"Tani, do we still have specimen 030?" she asked.

The younger girl swivelled around, her eyes widened in shock. "Wait, what, you're..."

Morgan sighed, "no I'm the Borg Queen. Well?"

"030, yes I think so, why do you ask?" the girl, Tani, stammered.

"I think it's time we tested it," Morgan said, stepping closer.

Tani didn't look so sure about it, she visibly twitched. "Don't tell me you changed your mind. Look where we are..."

"Yes I noticed," Morgan grumbled.

Tiran thought to interrupt. First with a sigh, then he spoke. "Do you? I tried to warn you. There's no such thing as changing the timeline. All we've done is keep the events exactly as they were before."

Tani scowled at him, "you didn't mention that part."

"I wasn't sure how exactly it would go down, but I said it would. It's inevitable. We can't fight it," Tiran said.

"We won't know until we try," Morgan said.

"We already have," Tiran grunted. "Use that thing and we may create the very anomaly we're stuck in. Think about it."

Morgan glanced toward a conflicted Tani. "Or we could break the cycle. Isn't that what we all want?" Morgan whispered to her.

"We can't," Tiran argued.

"We can!" Morgan snapped at him. "You said it yourself. This sphere wasn't here in the original attack. There are differences because I didn't listen to you. I'm going to keep doing that." She marched off down a nearby corridor.

Tiran sighed despondently, "there was never any doubt."

Kathryn stepped out of her Ready Room, onto the Bridge. "Status?" she directed towards the command chairs.

"Tom's in the naughty corner," Kiara answered her first as she sat back in the Captain's chair.

"She was kicking my chair!" Tom shouted from the actual corner, next to the viewscreen.

Chakotay tried not to laugh at him, "well you were ignoring the Captain's orders."

Tom huffed, "I answered her the first time. After the fiftieth rendition of *are we there yet*, forgive me for being a little cranky."

"Don't have kids Tom," Kathryn said. She intended it to be tongue in cheek, but despite the scene in front of her, she was still feeling angry from the previous meeting. It came out icy and Tom took it seriously.

Chakotay cleared his throat in a vain attempt to dispel the awkwardness after that. He climbed out of his chair to approach Kathryn, then hushed his voice. "Long range sensors confirm, a ship's on an intercept course."

"How long?" Kathryn asked, her voice caught in her throat.

"An hour if they stay at their current speed," Chakotay replied.

Kathryn sighed, her hands balled up into fists as she walked over to Tactical. "Has the Borg Sphere transmitted their weapon specifications?"

James looked over from Opps, shoulders tensing. He tried to concentrate on his own work. The best he could do was occasionally allow his eyes to drift to the right.

"Yes, Captain. It will take some time to modify our shields to compensate," Tuvok replied.

Kathryn firmly grasped the edge of the console. "If you say it'll take longer than an hour..."

"They will be ready in time. I must warn you however, Captain," Tuvok said reluctantly, expecting the worst glare in response to it. Fortunately all he got was a tired expression pointed in his general direction. "The Borg will no doubt adapt to our modifications. If we do not escape from this anomaly in time..."

Kathryn moved away to go towards Opps. James had been watching her in the corner of his eye, so he knew to quicken his work. Barely a foot away he moved his hand over the top of a particular panel and looked up to face her. "No news from Seven," he said to her.

"Hmm," she mumbled in return, avoiding eye contact with him.

The console began to flash beneath his hand, he barely made it out from the cracks between his fingers. "The sphere's hailing."

"All right," Kathryn said, turning away to face the viewscreen. "On screen."

His other hand slid across to a different section, he typed on both at the same time.

Everyone were expecting the same Borg crewmember to greet them when the screen changed to the interior. This time Tani was on the other side.

"Captain Janeway?" she said.

Kathryn took a few steps forward to lean on the banister, "that's me. What happened to your leader?"

Tani laughed meekly, "he only likes to think so. I'm Tani Henderson. Some of us are going through the archives from thirteen years ago. Or rather, our thirteen years ago. We're looking for anything from the original encounter."

"I assume you've found something," Chakotay said hopefully.

"A lot of it was scrambled by the time jump, so this might be something else or in the wrong order. It looks like Voyager arrived first. Battle ensued, then they detected temporal energy forming. The collective classified it or something else as a wormhole. The last thing they did was fly into it and bam, got stuck like we did," Tani said.

"Bam," Kathryn quietly repeated.

"A wormhole. With temporal properties," Chakotay thought aloud. He shrugged, "why not, happened before."

Kathryn shook her head, "no. None of our scans back this up. Why would the sphere get stuck in a wormhole, twice? Us too."

Tom folded his arms and stuck out his bottom lip. Anyone watching him figured that was his thinking face. "It does explain why we were in the vicinity at the same time." No one said anything, making him uncomfortable. He gestured a hand outward, "the first time. Before."

"Except for the whole not looking like a wormhole now, sure it does," Jessie commented.

"Perhaps our original trip through it destabilised it," Tani suggested.

"Or, we're all going on a trip to yesterday very soon," Tom did as well. This time the entire bridge looked at him, some strangely. "You laugh now, but when it happens you'll be like *you were right Tom*. I'll not say *I told you so*. I'll just shake my head and smile."

James and Kathryn rolled their eyes almost simultaneously, Kiara followed suit a second later. Everyone else who weren't Tuvok settled for scrunched up faces that said the same thing.

"Anyway, there's a data node here we're struggling to decrypt, that we think has the rest of the anomaly data. I'd send it over for a second opinion but the damage makes me a bit wary of sending it the normal way," Tani said.

Kathryn quietly groaned, "I can practically hear Seven's ears perking up." Chakotay smirked at her. "You're Human, aren't you?"

"Um yeah. Tiran and I were passengers on a ship called the *Jacque* assimilated in 75. I was only a baby, I don't remember much. Why?" Tani replied with a confused expression.

Tom rubbed his forehead, "you mean the *Jacque* could be getting assimilated right now."

"Really?" James groaned, rolling his eyes only half the way. Tom scowled at him. "By the Borg ship currently on its way here?"

"Hmm," Kathryn smiled. "Perhaps the best way is to hand deliver the data node. We have a couple of Borg systems that could help with the decryption. Our Doctor can help you in the meantime, if you wish."

"Smart ass," Tom muttered under his breath.

"Jack ass!" Kiara piped up and pointed at him. "I win." Chakotay groaned into both of his hands.

Tani laughed quietly with an awkward look on her face, "same as always." She quickly composed herself. "Thanks Janeway. I may take you up on that. I'll, um..." She raised her hand up as if to wave, the screen cut off before she could.

The entire bridge fell into an uncomfortable silence. Tom typically was the first to break it, accidentally with a tickle in his throat he instinctively coughed away. "Damn," he whispered.

Kathryn found herself clenching her fists once again, only tighter this time. "Same as always could mean anything. Let's get back to work."

"Where is Morgan anyway?" Chakotay asked after lowering his hands down to his side.

"She was with Craig. I think they were heading back to Sickbay," James replied.

"Fine. Meet our guest, then deliver the node to Seven," Kathryn ordered.

James nodded, "right," he stepped out of Opps and entered the nearest turbolift. Chakotay gestured to Jessie to take his place.

"Hopefully we can concoct a way out of this anomaly before they get here. Make sure our shields are ready, Commander, just in case," Kathryn said while turning towards Tuvok.

"Yes Captain," Tuvok acknowledged. No sooner had he said that, the ground beneath their feet lightly shook.

"Captain," Chakotay said, pointing ahead of him.

Kathryn looked around. A swirl of green now churned beside the Borg Sphere. Kathryn glared towards the viewscreen like it was the one at fault. Tom felt like she was directing it at him, so he squatted down and made his way back to his seat.

"The energy build up has increased by eighty percent," Jessie reported.

"Well, at least we can see it now," Chakotay said.

"Snip it Tom," Kathryn snapped instinctively. Tom span around with a pet lip on his face, Chakotay struggled not to laugh. "Sorry, habit."

Tom wasn't amused, though he didn't feel brave enough to complain. "Fine."

"I can see why the Borg assumed it was a wormhole. It has similar properties to one now," Jessie said.

"What about those temporal signatures they detected?" Chakotay questioned.

Jessie checked her readings again, all while pulling a worried face. "I'm not sure. I can't even figure out where it leads."

"Any changes other than visibility?" Kathryn asked.

"Negative Captain," Tuvok replied.

Jessie shook her head, "no, but the Borg Sphere's closer to it... Um, yeah they're hailing. Audio only." Kathryn gestured her to open a channel.

*"I don't know about you, Voyager, but the drain on our systems has doubled,"* Tiran's voice said over the top of other voices in the background.

Kathryn looked on at the image of the sphere with concern. "Perhaps we should start bringing more of your crew over..."

*"No, we can reroute the power through some of our unused sectors. It'll take some time though, hours in fact."* A lot of the Bridge tensed, they knew what that meant. *"I... don't think we'll have been much help against a fully powered, armoured and manned version of ourselves anyway. I doubt they'll even notice us. We're not a threat."*

"We're running out of time. We need to try something, anything, or that Borg ship will at the very least cripple us," Kathryn said irritably.

Tom gulped thin air, it still left him with a lump in his throat. "What if our doing anything does the crippling, which the Borg takes advantage of. We don't know, do we?"

"If we don't, the Borg will do it for us anyway," Chakotay pointed out.

Thompson and Foster stood outside Sickbay, bored to tears, wishing for something to happen. They got their wish as soon as the turbolift nearby opened. At first they were worried at the second drone to be making their way over. That was squashed the second they heard her talking.

"So, do you do this a lot? Escort seemingly dangerous people around," Tani asked with a polite smile.

To both Thompson and Foster's amusement, James' expression looked a little pained for some reason. "No, it's mostly standing around," he said in response.

"Oh," Tani seemed disappointed. It didn't last very long, her face brightened up. "So what do you do for fun? Do you work out?"

Fortunately she finished asking as soon as they reached the rest of his team. He gave them a tired eye roll which made Thompson snigger even more.

"You really do seem to have a... rapport with the Borg ladies. It was only a joke," Thompson said.

James stared at him with slightly narrowed eyes. "No."

"No. Only me. We're getting along great," Tani smiled.

Thompson snorted a little and laughed, while Foster mostly winced. "No," James repeated more forcibly this time.

"Does Jessie know you're replacing her with jailbait?" Thompson asked. He hesitated for a moment, "and Seven?"

Tani was confused and a little offended, "who's Jessie?"

"I was going to ask, but..." James said with a sigh. He reached out to shove Thompson to one side so he could walk into Sickbay. "Why bother?"

Tani giggled and followed him. "If he asks, I'm not sixteen. Eighteen," she whispered to Foster. He laughed nervously as the doors closed.

Thompson recovered and resumed sniggering. "Well, after being around a bunch of bald pasty dudes, wouldn't you lust after the first not bald pasty dude you see?"

Foster's eyebrow shot up, "no, not really."

Inside Sickbay the Doctor glanced briefly at the new arrivals. They approached the console he was working on. Tani kept going toward the only occupied biobed.

"Well?" James asked in a hushed tone.

"It's in and active. I'll monitor it, but I don't have any idea what good it'll do," the Doctor replied.

The biobed occupant's eyes widened in surprise at Tani. "You followed me back here?" she asked.

"Well that thing will be a little useless if we can't get out of the anomaly, *Morgan*," Tani said.

Morgan's shoulders slouched, her gaze drifted towards James. He shook his head. "Don't look at me. I didn't beam her here too. She asked, or hinted to Janeway."

"The archives," Tani said simply, knowing only Morgan would understand. "They might be able to decipher them."

"And you couldn't send that over in your distraction hail, because?" Morgan questioned.

"What kinda friend would I be if I let you do this on your own?" Tani replied in a fake huffy voice. She leaned forward to smile at her, "besides, hottie alert," she whispered.

Morgan's face scrunched up as she peered over her friend's shoulder. "Gross," she muttered. "You're a great friend, Tan. What would I do...?"

"Not exist at all probably," Tani laughed. "At least if it all goes screwy, we'll not exist together."

"It's not going to screw up, it'll work," Morgan said.

"So these archives," James interrupted. The two girls focused on him. "That's what you stored on that Borg Lego brick?"

Tani tried her best not to look confused. Morgan meanwhile tried to jog her childhood memories, an image soon popped into her head. "I think he means the data node."

"Oh. It looks like a brick, that's funny and true," Tani said, quickly fake laughing a little too much. The rest of the room cringed. "Um yes, I didn't lie there. Everything about the encounter with Voyager, up until the disconnect is there. Give or take."

"Give or take?" the Doctor said curiously.

"Well a lot of the data was fragmented during the cut off. Bits of other stuff could be lodged in the Voyager encounter's place, you know," Tani answered.

The lights abruptly dimmed, then began to flash red. The klaxon blared.

"Ohno," Morgan stuttered, her face drained.

### **The Bridge:**

"The approaching vessel has dropped out of warp, and is entering visual range," Tuvok reported.

Kathryn breathed in deeply, her jaw flexed. "How long until they rendezvous?"

"Five minutes," Tuvok answered.

"On screen," Chakotay ordered reluctantly.

On the viewscreen the green cloud and Borg Sphere disappeared. Normal space took their place. A small object in the distance approached gradually. "Zoom in." The screen did so, confusing everyone. The object was definitely not sphere shaped. The ship looming for them was a giant pyramid that apart from being basically shaped, didn't look anything like a Borg ship.

"What the hell is that?" Tom stammered.

"Is it powering weapons?" Kathryn asked.

"No recognisable weapon signatures," Tuvok said.

The turbolift doors next to him opened. Morgan was the first to rush out of it. She stared at the viewscreen with her eyes confused and wide. James and Craig followed her.

"Try hailing them," Kathryn said.

Tuvok did as he was told. "No response."

"My god," Morgan stammered. Most of the Bridge turned their heads towards her. "That's a Tolg ship."

Tom nervously laughed. "What is that, the Borg's impressionable kid cousin?"

"There are rumours. That long ago the Borg were divided on their methods and goals, so they split into two factions," Morgan struggled to answer through her nerves. "Others think they are the Borg, but from a different dimension to ours. They usually appear out of seemingly nowhere. Kill and take everything and one, then return to wherever they came from."

"Apart from their ship design and stealth, they don't sound all that different from the Borg to create rumours like that," Chakotay said.

Morgan watched as the strange ship grew closer and closer. Her body trembled. She tried to steel herself by tensing. "They are. They're worse. This shouldn't be possible. They're not supposed to be here."

"Energy build up, could be weapons," Tuvok reported.

Everyone watching the viewscreen assumed he was right as a ball of energy emerged from the strange ship and shot towards them.

"Brace for impact!" Chakotay barked quickly. No one disobeyed, they all grabbed tightly onto whatever was closest.

The light blazed towards Voyager, heading straight for the Bridge. Instead it grazed passed the shields, its speed undeterred, and flew directly into the Borg ship instead. On impact flames erupted from its hull. The fires were immediately snuffed out, leaving behind a deep hole and floating debris drifting towards Voyager.

A couple more balls of energy shot out from the mystery ship, neither of them bothered with Voyager either. They flew straight into the sphere.

"Three direct hits to one of their systems, I'm unsure which," Tuvok reported. Morgan hurried over to join him, he watched her carefully.

"I think that's... yeah, it looks like they hit our only working weapons system," she said.

Tom tensed, his forehead started sweating. "Adapt sometime today, come on," he muttered.

Kathryn grunted. Her grip on the railings nearby him tightened. "It doesn't work that way Tom. They're a crew of a dozen or so individuals." She swung around to face Tactical, "shields, hull integrity... do we stand a chance?"

Tuvok's eyebrow raised, Morgan meanwhile shook her head quickly. "Armoured hull plating, no shields. Weapons that could pierce the previously indestructible sphere's hull. I strongly recommend against a confrontation," he replied.

"We're not a threat to them," Chakotay said.

"No. We're seconds," Morgan stuttered.

The pyramid ship continued its slow approach towards the two ships. Its course changed slightly to circle slightly around Voyager, as if trailing around the edge of the anomaly that had trapped them. As it moved, it turned so a different side of the ship had its turn at the front. It then ignored Voyager completely, heading straight for the Borg Sphere.

It slowed to an almost stop, facing the sphere. Everything but the green cloud of the anomaly was deadly still as the two vessels faced off. A long minute passed before the pyramid shined a sharp white light at their stricken victim. It slowly began to move directly for them.

Tiran watched this on a large hovering screen in front of him, a determined glint in his eye. Several Borg letters drifted up on the left of the screen, with a few patterned circles. He raised his hand to press them. They shimmered, showing the screen to be merely a hologram. The image on it changed to a bright ship interior with no one in sight.

"We are the Tolg. Your existence belongs to us now. Resistance is useless," a Borg-like disembodied cluster of voices spoke.

Tiran scoffed, then smirked slightly. "You guys really need some original material." He paused, allowing that to sink in. "You do know you're not supposed to be here, right? If you stay, you risk creating a para..."

"Incorrect. Our calculations concluded that in a confrontation between your vessel and ours, your resistance would be unsatisfactory," the voices said. Tiran frowned, unsure what to make of it. "However, with the creation of anomaly 257309, your resistance level would eventually diminish, allowing for domination."

"You... put that thing there to trap and weaken us?" Tiran stuttered. His anger grew and so his voice rose, "doing so killed thousands of drones, and subjected the rest of us to thirteen years of exile on this hellhole. As bad as the Borg are, at least they're efficient with their assimilation tactics."

"Irrelevant," the voice tried to cut in.

Tiran scoffed, "you won't get much knowledge out of us. You've wasted resources and not just our time, but yours as well. I doubt you'll get any *satisfaction* from this assimilation."

"You will be zombified."

"Oh my mistake, you use *zombified*," Tiran groaned. "You won't take us, dead or alive."

The majority of the Bridge couldn't keep their eyes from the viewscreen. The feeling of dread built up the smaller and further away the sphere was, allowing a better view of the mysterious pyramid also dead ahead.

"You... think they're only helping them out of the anomaly?" Tom said nervously, hoping to lighten the mood.

Kathryn sighed impatiently, opting to ignore him completely. "Analyse that tractor beam. I want to know how they're doing it. I don't fancy sitting here, waiting for assimilation."

"Um," Jessie hesitated, her face turned ghostly pale. She was quickly joined by a concerned James. She passed him a brief nervous glance. "We'll have to be quick about it." Her attention moved to the back Opps stations, her work pace doubled frantically.

Kathryn frowned and looked over, just as James glanced down at what Jessie was focusing on earlier. He winced, "oh. Another vessel approaching."

Chakotay swung around, "the Borg Sphere?"

"Probably. Transwarp conduit, spherical," James replied uneasily.

Kathryn's gaze wandered over to Chakotay, he did the same, their worried eyes met.

"Oh god," Morgan stuttered fearfully, getting their attention instead. They saw her head shake over and over. "This is my fault, I lead you here. The Tolg will destroy my sphere, that's why our logs showed no other Borg ship. I did this."

"Not necessarily. Kiara's not in her quarters, she won't be alone," Chakotay said.

Kathryn nodded at him. She made her way over towards Opps, staring firmly at James. "I'll help here. Can you guard her? It's a lot to ask. I won't order you."

Jessie glanced quickly over her shoulder, her eyes widened.

James nodded. "No problem," he said with a confident smile.

Kathryn smiled as well, but she couldn't hide the worry still in her eyes. "She's in my Ready Room. Thank you."

James then hurried towards the Ready Room, passing Craig on route. He didn't hesitate, he followed him. "I told you we needed phaser rifles during Red Alert," Craig said a little nervously.

"It's okay, I'm sure Janeway has one hidden under her desk," James said as the Ready Room doors closed behind them.

Kathryn flinched while Chakotay stared at her. "Are you sure about this?" he asked warily. "I should go as well."

"It's fine. They're our safety net. If we can duplicate the Tolg tractor beam properties, we might just get out of here first," Kathryn said whilst working quickly at Opps.

Morgan divided her look of helplessness between Opps and the Ready Room. The viewscreen caught her eye. The sphere seemed almost nose to nose with the Tolg ship. Her mind raced at the thought of her shipmates about to be assimilated once again. The helpless feeling turned into anger. In her mind there was only one way to stop this in the time they had.

Her hand hesitantly reached over to the torpedo controls, mouthing a silent apology. Tuvok was momentarily distracted by another part of his station harshly bleeping. "Captain, the sphere has activated auto destruct," he reported.

"What?" Kathryn's eyes widened in his direction. She noticed Morgan abruptly pull her hand back with a similar expression.

The sphere's hull buckled, flames overwhelmed the weakened parts. The Tolg ship released its tractor beam in a vain attempt to get away. Their proximity left no room to breathe, debris and fire showered the pyramid's hull. The sphere imploded in its face, generating a damaging wave to ruthlessly push it far away, all while the flames consumed it.

The wave approached Voyager as well. With their shields already raised to maximum and no way to move, they could only sit there and hope for the best. By the time it reached the starship, its destructive power had dwindled. It still pushed them backwards and harshly, the shields fluctuated on impact.

Everyone hung on tightly until the severe trembling finally passed. Kathryn sighed and looked over to Tactical.

"The enhanced shields are holding steady at twenty percent. No damage," Tuvok reported.

"We're out of the anomaly," Jessie said while looking over her shoulder at the Captain.

Kathryn quickly moved out of the Opps area, "Tom!"

"You don't have to tell me twice," Tom said as he rapidly tapped at his station. "I can give you warp two."

"I'll take it. Engage," Kathryn ordered.

Most of the Bridge watched the viewscreen. The image of the Tolg ship floating and burning adrift in the distance moved to the right, confirming they were moving. It was on the edge of their sight when it was overwhelmed by a brief flash of light. It was gone once it faded.

"What the..." Chakotay stuttered.

Instead of the anomaly, the viewscreen showed the stars stretching behind them. Anyone watching sighed in relief at it.

"We might not be out of trouble yet," Kathryn mumbled. "The other sphere, are they pursuing?" When she didn't get an answer she turned back towards Opps. Jessie stared at it with a confused expression. "Are they following us?"

"They..." Jessie said, shaking her head slowly. "They were leaving before we did. Did they even see us?"

"Stand down from Red Alert," Chakotay ordered. Tuvok complied, the regular lights flickered back on. "It's possible they were only after the errant Borg ship, to re-assimilate it."

"Or the Tolg," Tom said.

Kathryn glanced between them, nodding slightly. "So much for fate being fate. Tiran destroyed his ship to break the cycle."

Both her eyes and Chakotay's widened in panic. Both of them mumbled, "Morgan," as they swung around to look towards Tactical. They were equally confused to find the young girl still standing there beside Tuvok. She nervously smiled at them.

"We picked it up from what remained of a Borg ship a couple of years back. An experimental nanoprobe that keeps the drone unaffected by temporal changes."

Kathryn's folded arms tightened, so did her grimace. Chakotay sensed it and edged slightly away.

"We hadn't tested it yet. I wasn't sure if it would help here. But I..." Morgan said, hesitating slightly. "I thought if I avoided my assimilation, then I'd be erased and everything would be fine. I didn't think that if I was erased, I couldn't be here to stop it. Or that asking you to meet us would cause the incident in the first place. I didn't want to let it all happen again. I figured this was the only way."

"I understand that," Kathryn said, her fingers drummed against the other arm. "What I don't is how you were able to get that thing here, and inject yourself with it without my hearing about it." She said it in response to Morgan, but her gaze lingered on the Doctor.

"I... was under the impression you ordered it," the Doctor protested while his program tried to delete itself to get away from Kathryn's glare.

James laughed quietly from the other side of the Conference room. Kathryn's deadly eye turned toward him while half rolling. "Sorry about that Doc."

"You. What did you do, how did you do it?" Chakotay asked.

"It isn't hard to piggyback a transport or two amongst data transmissions and hails," James said with a shrug.

Chakotay tried to bite his tongue but the shrug made him miss it completely. "You think that the Captain or I would turn this plan down? This is our daughter. We didn't want Kiara assimilated but we sure as hell didn't want her future self to disappear either!"

The anger wiped the smile from James' face, his head dropped slightly. "I know. We weren't sure if it would work. If you knew and it didn't..."

"Don't be mad at him," Morgan said, glancing between them both. "It was my idea after all."

Kathryn sighed and sat back in her chair, her hand caressed the headache which had spread to her scalp. "I'm not mad. I'm, upset that some people think I'm so cold that I'd turn down a plan to save my daughter from oblivion."

"Nobody thought that. Though I'm starting to," Tom commented. Kathryn stared at him blankly, which he didn't notice yet. "Jeez, apart from the headache with two Kiara's, which isn't so bad as future one gave us that masculine alias, I don't see any reason for getting all bent out of shape."

Morgan's good eyebrow raised, "did you just call me masculine?"

Jessie sniggered, "yeah he did, get him."

Tom's eyes widened, now noticing Kathryn's stare as well. "No, no, the fake name you gave us is. Oh er..." He tapped his commbadge, "I'm on my way." A Tom shape cloud took his place a second later.

"Yeah, that's the Tom I remember. I'll have to ask him how he liked the mutiny program," Morgan giggled.

Chakotay felt his own irritably wash away completely, "you remember that after all these years?"

Morgan's smile turned into a small smirk. "Cheesy love songs, giant coffee cups and a 'I love Harry' parade. Who'd forget that?"

Jessie sighed in disappointment. "Nobody seemed to find that little gem. It's a shame."

"I did. Now can we get back on topic? Seven, did you learn anything about the anomalies that could be useful? I don't want to get trapped in anymore of them," Kathryn said. Before she could answer she spoke again, "wait, with the Borg Sphere encounter erased did the data node and that Tani girl disappear?"

The Doctor shifted in his chair uncomfortably, "no, she didn't."

"Yeah, if that data helped us escape, we couldn't risk her influence with that being erased too," James said.

Kathryn's headache throbbed. Chakotay meanwhile covered his face with his hands, they lowered down to his chin and mouth.

"Then how come...?" Jessie started to ask.

"Stop, just don't. I hate time travel," Kathryn muttered. "Everyone but Chakotay and Morgan, dismissed. Please."

Everyone filled out, leaving the command team and the uneasy looking Morgan behind.

"Well, the question or rather questions remaining are; do we continue referring to you as your middle name, and what exactly will we tell Kiara until she's old enough to understand the truth?" Kathryn questioned.

Chakotay laughed quietly to himself. "Good questions. I don't think Kiara will mind if she uses it. She might not even know, we never give her the full name treatment."

"Yeah sorry. I wasn't sure if I was born yet, so I figured it was best to make something up. It was the only name that came to mind. Now I know why," Morgan answered meekly.

"I see. That still doesn't solve our biggest problem," Kathryn said.

"Okay sweetie. This is your big sister Morgan, back home after a few years away," Chakotay said a little too quickly.

The awkward silence filled the entire room. Kathryn and Chakotay held their breath. Morgan smile started to fade the longer it went on.

Kiara stared up at her, studying her curiously with narrower eyes. They all feared the worst.

"Oh god, I knew we should have went with the cousin story," Kathryn whispered.

Kiara's eyes brightened suddenly. "Hi big sis," she said cutely before running up to squeeze her older self's legs.

Everyone sighed in relief.

**THE END**