

Episode 1.29 Resistance Is Futile

Within the bowels of a massive Borg cube, thousands of drones scurried around working efficiently and perfectly. Many more lined the walls, napping in their alcoves. One drone walked over to tend to one of them, waking them up. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary until the alcove drone yawned and stretched as he stepped down.

"You can't be tired," the initial drone said.

The newly woken up drone stifled another. "I'm a light sleeper, all right. Not exactly ideal around here."

"Apparently they got Bob last week," the first drone said sadly.

Borg 2 gasped, "ohno, not Bob. I liked Bob."

"We all liked Bob. We've got to do something about this and... shh wait," Borg 1 stuttered, having spotted two beefy looking drones walking side by side in their direction. Borg 2 pretended to work on his own alcove. Once they passed, Borg 1 sighed and continued in a hush tone, "the Queen's gone mad, er. So many have gone in, same many have never come out."

The two beefy drones stopped in front of another occupied alcove. They woke him up and escorted him away.

"Another one for the pile," Borg 1 sighed.

"I hope it isn't because of that rumour," Borg 2 said, getting their friend's curious interest. He leaned in to whisper, "apparently there's a safe haven free from the Queen's gaze. A place we can hang out and finish our conversations."

Borg 1 didn't believe that was possible, still he got his hopes up. "Speaking of which, before we're spotted Negeri I just want to say that I lov..." Both Borg's faces and eyes glazed over, they walked off robotically to their stations.

"Hmph," the Queen grunted as her torso floated down from the ceiling. She glared at the drones below, watching her descent. "We better not be going in backwards again or we're going to be humming two lines of wrong lyrics over and over until we remember what song they're from."

Both drones looked at one another, one wandered off nonchalantly. The wires bringing the Queen twisting into a knot didn't go unnoticed as she was lowered into her body.

"Very well, a compromise. We rather like the new Justin Timberlake track, don't we?"

All of the drones in the room trembled. "No we don't, you monster," someone squeaked. One look from the Queen and they were carted off, passing the two meaty drones and their escortee entering the chamber. They lead him straight to her, allowing her to stare him down like a piece of meat.

"So you're the one who keeps lining my chambers with these..." she brandished a poster in his face. On it a smug picture of Kathryn folding her arms, "abominations!"

The voices in her head soon corrected her, mixed in with a few choruses of pleading not to torture them. "Oh. That pest continues to allude me, no matter." She began to pace in a circle around the oblivious drone. "You will give me the frequency for your safe haven, quickly. Then we can all return to the perfect, blissful euphoria we had before Janeway and her weaponised spawn infected us."

The drone still said and did nothing.

"Well!" the Queen snapped. A few drones in the background snickered very quietly. "Of course, our minds are one."

She merely blinked at the drone to make him gasp. He looked around, panicked and disoriented. Then he noticed the Queen in front of him, that only made him groan. "Typical of my timing," he grunted.

The Queen narrowed her eyes, "yes indeed. The frequency."

"I dunno, every few days," the drone replied.

"Irrelevant, safe haven's frequency!" the Queen barked.

The drone stammered, confused. "If I knew anything about a safe haven, I wouldn't be here, would I?"

"Of course you do or you wouldn't be defying me, like all the rest," the Queen said, her eyes drifting to her left. The drones in that particular part of the room straightened their backs and pretended to work. "You must remember, tell me."

"All I remember is stumbling into the Coffee bar on the 1003rd deck the other week, and I certainly wouldn't call that a safe haven. I haven't been able to find it since and the crowd were pretty rowdy," the drone rambled.

Fire sparked in the Queen's eyes. "I've heard enough. Off with his head!" she barked.

The two beefy drones grabbed the drone's arms, his only eye widened in horror.

"To extract his cortical array, my Queen?" one of the guards asked in monotone.

The Queen's eyes turned a little shifty. "What, why... yes. Yes." She smiled darkly, "this is why our Collective is, was perfect. Great minds think alike as those wretched humans say."

"It was probably the 1004th deck now that I think about it," the drone squeaked, extremely panicked. "It's as soon as you step out of lift 447 on the left."

"No, I'm not interested in that sinful place but you have given us a wonderful idea," the Queen's purred, reaching to clasp his chin in a motherly manner. He shuddered in a mix of revulsion and fear.

"Does that mean we don't need his cortical array?" one guard asked.

The Queen stared at him in disgust. "Off with his head too!" She flounced off as the two talkative drones were dragged off by the few remaining drones still connected to her.

The ones who weren't looked a little envious of them, until she blinked at them too, connecting them back to her.

There were trees as far as even her eyes could see. Beautiful and calming. The air felt pure in her lungs. It was a strange place but it felt so familiar to her.

Seven made her way through the woods, taking it all in. Nearby a stream was flowing, splashing against the rocks. She followed the sound to see it for herself.

Any trace of peace fell from her face when she clasped eyes on the dark brown *water* trailing by her feet, foaming at random intervals. Whilst reeling from the strangeness of that, Seven missed the approaching man emerging quickly from the bushes behind her, gazing at her in wonder.

"Annika?"

Seven swung around to address and later correct the stranger, only for the forest to begin to fade away. The man ran straight through her like she didn't exist, tripped and fell face first into the stream. He didn't mind one bit.

Cargo Bay Two reappeared as normal, leaving Seven more than a little flummoxed. "I've got to stop watching those films the Doctor insists I study."

Seven attempted to return to regenerating but the dream remained in her head, its familiarity disturbed her. Instead she stepped out of her alcove despite its warnings.

"I'm telling you, it's so funny," Emma snickered.

Lilly kept her eye firmly on the computer resting against her raised thighs, while she sat against the corridor wall. Her head shook. "I don't doubt it, it's how you know that. You'd have to have really good timing or..."

"Oh please," Emma grunted in disgust. "I'm no Tom, I'm not a creepy loser. Some guy told me."

Lilly stared up at her friend, even more confused than she was before. "A different guy?"

They missed someone turn the nearby corner and approach, only instead of passing by they stopped nearby.

"Duh, he used to room with him years ago," Emma replied. "We're in for a good laugh. Last time I did it, I apparently throttled my quilt. Can't remember a thing."

"Why am I not surprised?" Lilly laughed.

The new arrival stared at them with a raised eyebrow. "What are you doing?" Morgan asked. Both girls jumped, their attention darted to her.

"We're not being creepy losers," Lilly jokingly answered.

Emma huffed down at her, "what else is there to do in the middle of the night?"

"Sleep?" Lilly suggested.

"Sleep? It's only three," Emma said.

"Holodeck," Morgan said half heartedly. She was a little thrown off by Emma's confused stare pointed at her. "What?"

Lilly edged up back to her feet, carrying her computer with her. "You remember, you go in and say a place and it appears."

Emma's eyes widened with great interest, "ooh, does it make people?"

"Uh," Lilly hesitated, "no?"

Morgan glanced between the two of them, regretting ever stopping. "Okay? Are you two intruders or just really sheltered?"

"Neither, we're new here. I'm Lilly Johnstone, this is Emma..." Lilly said, Emma cleared her throat before she could finish. "Funny story."

"No, I know who you are. You're the *little brat who tried to steal my coffee*, and the Damien stabber. Mum told me," Morgan said.

Emma grinned at her new nickname while Lilly struggled to decide whether she liked either of them. "Lilly is quicker," she eventually settled with.

"Coffee hag's your mum, huh? Poor thing," Emma smiled sympathetically.

"Maybe we shouldn't call her a hag," Lilly whispered.

"Doesn't matter. She's driving me crazy, dad too, shouting on and on. It's all the time, and..." Morgan said.

Quarter doors opened while she was talking, Lilly and Emma's heads darted in that direction expectantly. They were instantly disappointed it was some random crewmember walking out of a different door to the one they were watching. The girls got some strange looks, which Emma responded to in kind.

"I'm just so sick of it," they heard Morgan sigh.

Lilly looked back a little nervously, "sick of what?"

Morgan's eyebrow twitched, "you weren't listening, were you?"

"Sure, your parents are annoying, you're sick. We're not sure what of but..." Lilly replied.

Emma nudged her with her foot, then looked at Morgan apologetically. "Sorry, we thought that was him. Can't miss it."

Morgan looked at the same door, then to the one they were closest to. "Harry Kim," she read. "What's so interesting about him?"

"Apparently he does some funny junk while he's sleeping," Emma giggled. Lilly groaned, face flushed in embarrassment, which she promptly covered.

Morgan shrugged and sat down beside Lilly. "Okay, I could use a laugh after that VTV fiasco."

"So, um, your parents huh?" Lilly said awkwardly.

Morgan rolled her eyes, "doesn't matter, I was just rambling. I don't know you anyway."

"Are they still arguing about their drunk wedding?" Emma asked.

The question left Morgan looking a little pained. "Does everyone know about this?"

Emma shrugged, "well they're not exactly quiet about it."

Morgan groaned as she raised her knees up by her chest so she could wrap her arms around them.

"Why is it so bad they have to shout?" Lilly asked meekly. "I mean, weren't they a thing before? I mean you... they have a kid."

"I... not sure," Morgan said, bemusing both of them. "They claim not to remember how Kiara, and me I guess, got here."

"Nice of them to tell you that," Emma muttered. Lilly nodded discreetly, wincing all the while.

"They don't live together but they flirt, argue like a couple. It's so confusing," Morgan continued like she never said anything.

"You don't even know if your parents ever dated?" Lilly stammered. Morgan glanced up at her with a sombre face. "That seems like a no on its own."

Emma stared down curiously, arms folded. "Why can't they just get a divorce?"

"I dunno, they prefer blaming each other for it and they don't care if we hear it. They even had a blazing row cos dad was one second late dropping my sister off back at mum's," Morgan mumbled. Her head dipped, she stared at the floor. "Dunno if I'll be able to stand another night of this. One time I even tried sleeping in the Cargo Bay again, but I woke up to find Seven staring at me."

Emma shuddered at the thought, Lilly found it a little funny though.

"Then if I stay with Tani, she wants to talk all the time. All I hear is James did this, said that, how hot he *isn't*," Morgan said, gagging at the thought.

"Yeah," Emma laughed instead, "he is a bit annoying."

Morgan stared at her blankly, "no, Tani. James is who she keeps obsessing over."

"I know," Emma shrugged.

Lilly frowned and turned to her friend, "hey that reminds me. Did you hear about the weird security stalker? Girl in a scarf and hat follows a team around, they occasionally hear a bleep and a flash, like a camera. I wonder if that's this Tani."

Morgan sighed despondently and turned away from them both.

Emma meanwhile giggled. "Gawd, that's freaking creepy, following some stupid bloke around. Bet she keeps an ass folder on her *phone*."

"Yeah totally," Lilly laughed with her.

The doors they were watching opened, allowing for Harry to stagger out with eyes closed. "No Mom!" he pointed at the door, "I won't clean my room. It's my room." He stumbled off down the corridor mumbling about pancakes.

Emma and Lilly scrambled after him, Lilly made sure to point the back of her computer in his direction.

"No lower, he has a nice bun," Emma said, pushing at the computer.

Morgan watched them turn the corner, she sighed and shook her head.

Sickbay:

The Doctor scanned a clearly uncomfortable Seven sitting on a biobed. He meanwhile was beaming with pride.

"What a milestone. Your first dream. I hope it wasn't too risque," he chuckled.

Seven stared at him firmly, he continued to grin until he noticed her eyes sharpen, creating an awkward atmosphere in the room.

Morgan meanwhile walked in, in the middle of a large yawn and noticed it immediately. Though to her it looked like Seven and the Doctor had frozen in time in the middle of an exam. She walked over, staring at them curiously.

"Uh, hello?" she waved in between them.

Since they weren't frozen they looked at her, the Doctor chuckling nervously and Seven with a furious scowl.

"Can I help you, miss Morgan?" the Doctor asked eagerly.

That only annoyed Seven further, "excuse me, you have a patient."

"Everyone dreams Seven, you're fine. Morgan however looks terrible," the Doctor said.

"That's an everyday occurrence too," Seven huffed.

Morgan rolled her eyes, "yeah don't care, try again." Seven flinched and turned her head away. "I'm just wondering if you have anything that puts people to sleep."

"Ah," the Doctor sighed sympathetically. "Well if I'd be so bold to prescribe noise cancelling headphones instead of drugs."

"I wasn't talking about me," Morgan said, throwing the Doctor really off he nearly stumbled over. "Put something herbaly, relaxing in mum's coffee or dad's tea crap, they'll be too knackered to keep Kiara and me up. Might get some peace and quiet."

The Doctor clicked his tongue disapprovingly. "That's not the way Morgan. It's unethical to spike people's drinks, or air. Ask Tom, he learned the hard way."

Meanwhile:

The turbolift doors on the Bridge near Tuvok's station opened. Tom strolled out while straightening his sleeves.

"You're late!" Kathryn barked.

Tom looked around sheepishly, noticing everyone was staring at him. "Huh? I left five minutes earlier than I usually do." Still, he hurried to his station.

Kathryn got up to block his route, glaring so icily he didn't need her to be in the way, his feet froze into two blocks of ice cubes.

"Who do you think you are being one month late to work?" she hissed.

Tom sighed in relief and laughed, "oh good one." Her stare intensified, making him trail off uncomfortably. "Wait, you're serious?" He looked to Tuvok for help but he was averting his eyes, then he spotted Jessie watching from her station, scoffing popcorn.

"But, I've been in the brig for thirty days. You were the one who sentenced me in some shoddy courtroom drama knock off," Tom stuttered.

A crunch from his right and he looked over at Jessie again. "Yeah, that was a good one. I've watched it ten times." She smiled before tossing more popcorn into her mouth. Tom's jaw dropped.

"Thirty days? Oh how could I forget?" Kathryn said, lunging for him. Tom quickly covered his ears but she went for his throat, and thankfully only snatched a pip from his collar. "Get to your station Ensign Paris."

Sickbay:

Morgan and Seven for once were on the same uncomfortable and slightly disgusted page as the Doctor was in the middle of a tangent, smiling broadly and rambling. "This could give us a fascinating glimpse into your unconscious mind. Any one of those images might have a symbolic meaning. The mysterious stranger for example, is he a father figure? Or does he represent a repressed desire for male companionship?"

"What the hell is your effing problem, you creepy bast..." Morgan snapped.

"I don't wish to dream again," Seven's voice cracked. "Repair my cortical array."

Both the Doctor and Morgan were taken aback by her outburst. Morgan recovered first, choosing to laugh pitifully in response.

"No problem, move in with one of my parents," she sighed.

It was the Doctor's turn to recover and strangely enough he was the least accommodating one doing so. "You're not sick Seven, I told you. This is a normal Human experience which you will get used to."

"Yeah, until you turn it off, forget it happened and one or two years later it happens again to your utter shock; *Ohno this is new and unsettling, please Mr Creepy Ass Doctor, make me a robot again,*" Morgan said, earning Seven's disdain once more. It did nothing to put her off though. "You ran out of the storylines by Drone didn't you, so now we gotta recycle."

"You'd know all about recycling old storylines," Seven sniped.

The Doctor laughed and then smiled warmly, "oh you two. Why can't you get along, you've got more in common than you realise."

Naturally he was glared at into walking off and hiding in his office.

"So, no cure huh," Morgan said once she calmed down. "What are you going to replace the season seven version of this with?"

Seven's stare didn't let up, "oh, I was thinking I'd take your father on a picnic, since your mother clearly isn't interested in him."

Morgan though wasn't annoyed which angered her further, she even smiled sweetly. "Oh is that right? Good thing you're already in Sickbay then."

"I don't understand," Seven frowned. When Morgan's sweet smile evolved into a narrowed, almost squinted eye deathglare she *suddenly* got it.

The Doctor strolled back in, chirpy as can be as if the previous comment never happened. "A thought Seven. Perhaps we could keep a record of your REM cycles, it might..." he trailed off when he noticed he had caught Morgan with her hand raised but frozen, staring at him. Seven on the other hand looked almost bored. "Um."

"Oh god," Morgan said, lowering her fist. She looked at the ex-drone with some actual pity, "you know what, nothing I can do can top creepy doc stalking your dreams." With that she walked off, mumbling to herself. All the Doctor heard as she passed him by was, "ruined it for me."

"I'm sorry?" the Doctor said incredulously.

Seven sighed while he approached, brandishing one of the small circular devices. "What are you hoping to achieve with this?" she asked cautiously.

The Doctor was halfway towards putting the device on her neck when she spoke, he quickly reclined, a little shocked that she asked. "Um, well. You're so unique, I just want to rule out an actual malfunction or disorder. I have no interest in seeing you and some plain fella hanging around a forest. Nope. None."

Seven didn't hear the last part, the unique sentence convinced her and she had since tuned him out. She gave him a nod. The Doctor smiled and continued what he was doing.

It had been relatively quiet for a while, enough time for Morgan to get dressed and climb into her bed. Her eyes barely had time to close when the door chime went off. The shrill three notes made her heart skip a beat and her skin tingle in anxiety. She hoped it was Tani once again not realising the time, or a random Ensign delivering a report.

As soon as the door opened she winced in anticipation.

Sure enough barely a second later she heard her father grumble, *"what on earth do you want?"*

Morgan shuffled across her bed to reach for the flimsy over ear headphones she had replicated, the only ones she had enough rations for. They barely covered her ears, they hung over her head loosely. Still she attempted to put some music on and drown out the noise.

"At ease, you don't want me to sprain something!" Kathryn hissed.

"Oh for the love of... get some new material, you psychopath," Chakotay snapped back.

All it did though was make the voices sound a little muffled, and a few words incoherent. She lay helplessly on her back staring at the ceiling, wishing for it to stop.

"Don't you start judging me, I'm not the..." Kathryn groaned.

"Too late, I've been doing that for years," Chakotay said over her.

Kathryn resorted to a shout, *"I'm not the one marrying clearly drunk women in sleazy Vegas bars! Great example to our daughters, you creep!"*

Morgan whimpered and sat up, only to grab the top pillow. She lay back down and tried to cover her head with it.

"Don't flatter yourself! I clearly had to be pissed out of my mind to stand being in the room with you. Oh, don't look at me like that. You dish out all the hate and can't take anything back, so you pull ears and smack people around..."

"As usual, changing the subject because you have no argument...!" Kathryn shouted back.

Chakotay's voice rose to once again go over her, *"it's no goddamn wonder that your kids are always getting into trouble. You reward them, they..."*

"My kids!?" Kathryn roared.

Morgan squeezed the pillow into her ears, thankfully blocking the words, but she could still hear the voices screaming at each other. It was too much, her heart was pounding, she leapt out of bed and grabbed one piece of clothing lying across the chair next to it.

She'd have to endure the yelling a little longer, in close proximity, but it was worth it. Once again she had to get out of there.

Neither of her parents noticed her run out into the corridors, despite standing right next to the door.

Once more, Seven found herself roaming the woods, following the sound of trickling water.

She expected to find the river, and perhaps the odd man she met. Instead when she emerged from the trees what greeted her was a crystal clear, but still brown tinted, lake at the bottom of a waterfall.

Despite the odd colour of the water, the whole area felt soothing, all of her anxiety over coming back washed away in the breeze.

Seven decided to sit in the grass and enjoy the dream like the Doctor had suggested. Once settled with her legs curled beneath her, she had another look around. The waterfall caught her eye once again, then she noticed something off about it. The rocks behind the water seemed almost flat, metallic. They shone in the sunlight.

She looked up, seeing more of the same until she reached the very top where the so called water was coming from. The area seemed a lot less peaceful when she noticed the water falling was coming from a massive pipe protruding from a soulless industrial looking building which looked out of place sitting on the edge of a grassy hill. The flat, metallic *waterfall* backdrop got her attention once more, albeit briefly.

A sudden rush of water splashed upwards all over her, leaving her soaked. The culprit, sporting what looked like a scuba mask, stood upright in the lake to walk towards her. He took it off quickly. "Oh my, Annika. I'm so happy you're..."

Seven stared at him with her eyes wide and sharp, her usually neat hair had fallen from its bun and hung soggy and tangled over her shoulders. The catsuit looked pretty much the same, only wet.

The man looked a little unnerved, he started to stammer, "I'm sorry. I didn't know you were back Annika."

"That is not my name anymore. Where am I?" Seven asked bluntly.

"You're in Unimatrix Zero. It's great to see you," the man said.

"Who are you?" Seven said more forcefully.

The man's face fell. "You don't remember? I am Axum, we were very close friends." Seven's face twitched at the name, something about it reminded her of feeling secure and liked. It was strange, not something she was used to. He smiled at her, "familiar?"

"Yes," Seven admitted. Her eyes fell to the odd waterfall, the pipe and the building. Suddenly she felt cold again, but she assumed it was mostly due to being drenched. "This is not."

Axum seemed a little despondent. "This is our safe haven." Seven's frown made him chuckle slightly. "I know how it seems. We come here during our regeneration cycles. One in every million drone has the recessive mutation that allows us to come here."

"You're Borg?" Seven said in surprise. Axum nodded. "And this is some sort of REM induced shared dream?"

"I suppose you could say that, yes. It'll all come back to you," Axum replied.

"I've been here before?" Seven stammered.

"Yes, you used to come here all the time. In fact you were here before me, you showed me around," Axum answered cheerfully.

Seven nervously bit her bottom lip, which to her surprise and disgust tasted sugary. Her face was a lemon biting picture. "What is this irrelevancy, it's vile," she spat.

Axum's face once more fell. "I suppose you left before," he mumbled to himself. Seven stared at him accusingly. "A lot's changed in the Collective, Annika. The last three years have been chaotic. Drones have been awakening outside Zero, the Queen has been losing her collective consciousness and as such any sanity she has. This," he gestured to the waterfall, "is one of the side effects."

"Explain," Seven said uneasily.

"I'm not sure I can. It appeared one day, it turned the water into this deliciousness we all can't get enough of," Axum replied with a smile. He gestured to the scuba mask he had been wearing, which she then noticed had one extra pipe, thin and bendy like a straw. "You caught me during my evening swimdrink."

Seven shuddered uncontrollably, "what is this stuff anyway?"

"According to the labels inside the building, it's a cherry flavoured coke. Whatever coke is," Axum answered.

Seven's eyes rolled into the back of the sockets, making her eyelids flutter. "Of course it is. It was going to be that or coffee."

Axum looked a little excited at the thought, "oh I love a good brew. Do you remember StarBorg's Coffee, they can wire it straight to your alcove."

"I... no, what?" Seven said, staring at him while blinking furiously. "This Cherry Coke is a human drink, it's an obsession on my ship as well."

"I'm not surprised, it's so gorgeous isn't it?" Axum chuckled, clearly missing her annoyed tone.

"No," Seven snapped to his disappointment. "Why is it here? Lots of different races would come here, most of which wouldn't have heard of it. Something about this is all kinds of wrong."

Axum shrugged, "I suppose. Good though." He looked hesitant despite his words. "Kinda."

Seven's eyebrow raised, "kinda?"

"The Queen knows this place exists. Over the last few months two hundred of us have been lost. We suspect she's trying to find the interlink frequency. Once she does," Axum shuddered. "The water is wonderful, but it's killing us."

"I do not understand," Seven said uncomfortably.

Axum sighed while absentmindedly fiddling with the mask. "When we leave here and return to our lives as Borg drones we forget we were ever here. It's how we've remained hidden for so many years. However our thirst, desire for this water lingers. So when the Queen cuts the connection to interrogate, she knows who is infected. It's only a matter of time."

Seven couldn't believe what she was hearing, and she wrongly assumed she heard the stupidest of things over the last few years. It didn't help when Axum popped the straw part of his mask into his mouth and started to suck likely only droplets of the lake. Fire in her eyes, she slapped the ridiculous contraption off his head.

"Then stop drinking it!" she barked.

"The harm has already been done. The months of Cherry Coke has gone to everyone's heads. There is nothing we can do. The Queen will get the frequency and she will take this place away from us," Axum said. "That's why I brought you here, you're our only hope."

Hearing that threw her completely off her guard. It wasn't something that people said to her. "Why?"

"You will remember us when you awaken since you are an individual. We have a remedy that'll keep us hidden once again, but with no recollection of it, it's next to useless," Axum replied. "Please, we don't have much time."

Many of the Borg Queen's primary adjunct's last memories before they were hooked back up to her, had been what they considered normal for the last few years. Her walking around the clammy yet cold feeling empty chamber, talking to herself sometimes in the first person, rambling about somebody called Janeway. When they reawakened the atmosphere had shifted considerably to a much sinister one, in they assumed a long length of time but their internal chronometres kept telling them only a few months had passed.

"And how are you today, Bob of Twelve?" the Queen said seductively towards a terrified face staring in her general direction. Even when she stroked his cheek and patted him on his bald head, he didn't react whatsoever.

She then moved onto the next face, similarly frozen permanently in its terror. Many more lay before her in the same predicament, with only their heads brandished cruelly on spikes. At the end a trio of drones, one of which kept gagging while the other two stared blankly into nothing, were wrist deep dissecting various other heads.

Two drones approached very carefully, making sure to keep two metres away from her when they stopped.

The Queen narrowed her eyes at the third face grimacing back at her, their eyes rolled up. "You're hiding the frequency aren't you?"

"My Queen, tertiary adjunct 0047 are ready for inspection," one drone said.

The Queen swirled around to glare fiercely at them. "Off with all of their heads," she cackled.

Both drones tried to hide their uncomfortableness, fearing they'd be next for the spikes. "Only one may have the mutation. The rest of the Unimatrix are operating perfectly."

"Hmm," the Queen looked thoughtful. "No, bring in this lone drone. If he is indeed infected then he may have infected his Unimatrix."

"It does not work like that, my..." the other drone brought up.

"Bring me your head first!" the Queen snapped, her eyes flashed towards them. "And you, bring in the mutation."

Both drones double backed, the last one to speak a second faster than the other. Only one returned with a different drone.

Like before the Queen blinked at him to cut him off, making him sigh a little in relief. That was until he saw the Queen staring at him with a long row of impaled heads behind her. He went from calm to hyperventilating in seconds.

"You have been to Unimatrix Zero, haven't you? Tell me how to get into it so I can destroy it," she said coldly.

The drone didn't understand, it was making his breathing even more ragged. "I don't know of any Unimatrix Zero," he managed to stammer. His whole body shook yet his mind started to wander. An image of a brown waterfall snuck its way into his head and made his stomach feel empty. He didn't know what it was or where he had seen it, and still two words found its way to his thoughts. "Cherry Coke."

"What?" the Borg Queen snapped, staring holes into him.

He knew instantly that was a mistake, but didn't know why and still had no idea what it was. "I... I'm not sure, I don't remember."

"Hmm, I do," the Queen smiled sneakily as she circled him like a vulture. The drone started to sweat viciously. "If you help us, you will have unlimited access to this Cherry Coke. It will be more real than some safe haven fantasy. Wouldn't you like that?"

"Um maybe," the drone replied but his mind and stomach were screaming yes. "I don't remember anything about it though. Please. I've never heard of it until today."

The Queen's mood soured greatly, she stopped dead in her tracks whilst staring into his back. "You have failed us. Dispose of him."

"Really?" the escort drone asked, immediately regretting it.

"Well his body anyway," the Queen sneered. The poor interrogated drone squeaked fearfully. The two drones busy poking into the severed heads went to grab him instead and carted him out of sight.

"Perhaps infecting the safe haven with the Human beverage is not the solution," the escort drone said.

To her surprise, and relief, the Queen smiled at the remark. "We're getting closer with every traitor exposed. We must be patient. The Cherry Coke factory will expose all of them, and I will destroy their safe haven once and for all. Then these disconnections will plague us no longer. Nothing will stop us now! Not even that pesky Voyager! Bwahahahahahahaha!" the Queen laughed.

Two drones who were standing behind her shook their heads. "Do you remember when Humans used to crap themselves at the mere mention of us?" one asked. "Now we have a vendetta with a tiny ship, ridiculous."

The other groaned impatiently, "don't get me started. Things have been going so downhill since we lost Queen Alice. The worst thing she ever did was makeout with some android." He shuddered, "that was so gross and awkward. Fancy making out with billions of people at once."

The first drone laughed as quietly as possible, "I know, what a whore he was. And we were so cool. I miss those days, though I do like the new bar down in Unimatrix 999. Bitching."

The Queen heard and she pressed a couple of commands. Everyone in the room were back to normal again.

"Finally, perfection will be ours," the Queen said, before erupting to further villainous laughter.

Voyager:

Jessie woke up to the sound of the door chime. She forced herself to sit up and climb out of her cozy bed. She walked out of her room to go answer the door, while trying desperately not to yawn. Doing so only made it last longer.

Once opened she was surprised to see an exhausted, annoyed looking Morgan standing there.

"Morgan, do you know what time it is?" Jessie asked in the trail end of her long yawn.

"Of course I do, I haven't been able to sleep. Those two won't stop arguing," Morgan replied.

Only then Jessie noticed the girl still had her pyjamas on with a long cardigan over the top of it. Any irritation she felt about being woken up washed off her, she instantly felt terrible.

"It's two in the morning, how can they be so self centred?" Jessie said.

Morgan sighed, "is it? I lost track. Can I... can I stay here tonight?"

"Sure, you can sleep on the sofa," Jessie replied.

"Thanks, I owe you big time," Morgan said with huge relief.

Jessie step aside to let her in. While Morgan walked over to the sofa and sat down, Jessie headed back to her room. The tired teenager assumed to go back to bed, but she came back a few minutes later with sheets and a couple of pillows. They were wordlessly handed to her with a sympathetic smile.

"Thanks," Morgan said through a growing lump in her throat.

"Don't worry, it'll be fine. Night," Jessie said before turning back to return to her own room.

For the first time in weeks there was nothing but the sound of the ship's engines purring beneath her feet. Morgan knew it wouldn't be for very long, so she wrapped the soft sheets around her and curled

up on the sofa. Despite the many thoughts about her parents buzzing in her head, she drifted off quickly.

Axum lead Seven out of the forest, into a small village filled with different styles of buildings. Lots of different people walked around chatting without a care in the world. Seven watched as a man appeared out of thin air, immediately greeted by a group of three who seemingly expected him. They all exchanged hugs and walked away.

"I had heard that the Collective was having connection difficulties, but this was not what I envisioned," Seven said.

Axum directed her to a bench, he gestured for her to sit first. She did, then he sat beside her. "Unimatrix Zero has existed far longer than the Collective's troubles of late. You yourself stayed here throughout your entire maturation chamber cycle," he said to her surprise.

Several children playing chase nearby caught her eye, making her feel a little uncomfortable. "So, why now?" she mused quietly to herself.

Axum heard anyway and thought about how to answer. "I suspect it's merely poor timing. Drones that do not have the mutation are cut off, while ones with the mutation could remain permanently connected to the hive. It seems to be random."

Seven's shoulders slouched, "so you have no idea how this occurred?"

"The theory is that the Unimatrix Zero mutation started with one drone, and it developed from there," Axum answered. "I imagine the connection issues could have drawn attention to us, since the Queen has been desperately trying to find the cause and repair it."

A few people walked by them clutching bottles of Cherry Coke to Seven's distaste. One double backed and greeted her warmly, "Annika. You're back, welcome."

"I know you as well. Your name is Laura," Seven said.

The woman smiled, "it's good to see you again." She took a long sip of her drink. "You seem different to how you used to be. Your cybernetic implants..."

"My appearance is irrelevant," Seven said, bitterly eying the drink in her hands. "Like this frivolous, detrimental drink."

Laura finished off her bottle and dropped it in the bin beside the bench. "Your personality. You used to be so spirited, fun. Whatever happened to you, I'm sorry," Laura said with lots of pity. She walked off with a smile towards a drinks machine.

Axum chuckled at Seven's twitchy response. "You really hate this Cherry Coke, don't you?"

"It is absurd to hate a beverage," Seven replied. She hesitated, hoping for the bitterness in her voice to settle away. "It seems like I can't get away from it though. Even here, I'm reminded of Voyager and how ludicrous it can be now."

"Voyager," Axum said wistfully, he wasn't surprised but he acted as if it was still news to him. "It all comes back to that ship."

Seven stared at him curiously. "What do you mean, clarify."

"The source of the Queen's obsession, her weakness, the missing link and a weapon," Axum mumbled. It didn't help Seven's confusion one bit. He noticed and smiled apologetically. "I'm not sure I fully understand it myself. All any of us know is that the encounter with Voyager changed the dynamic of the Borg. Cubes were cut off and destroyed themselves, Unimatrix One became closed off to other

subjunctions to protect its plexus from being infected. The Queen stopped being the order of chaos and turned into a matriarchal tyrant..."

Seven's mind jumped to someone else she knew, it made her smile knowingly. "I know what that's like."

"Our way of life was to seek so called perfection, but now our primary, actually no... only focus is to enslave humanity," Axum said.

Seven frowned intensely, "that doesn't make sense."

"In a way it does. Everything that happens within the Collective is instant, or it was. The Queen closed off Unimatrix One, creating a delay between her and the rest of the Collective, but it didn't stop the infection spreading to it in time. Whispers from inside One got out; the missing link, the weapon, will cure the Borg and bring us closer to perfection," Axum explained. Seven's eyes glazed over, she struggled to maintain her composure. "I have no idea on the context though..."

"I think I do," Seven said softly.

The Conference Room:

"Is that all? Dismiss..." Kathryn said with disinterest.

"Actually," Jessie cut in to most of the room's horror, "I've got something to discuss. How long is the Janeway and Chakotay blame each other show scheduled to be on, because like Tom's VTV crap, we'd all like to change the channel but we can't."

The temperature in the room dropped ten degrees. Even Tuvok was feeling the chill, his eyebrows had frosted over into a neutral position.

The only one not immune other than the ice queen herself struggled to keep a straight face.

"Excuse me?" Kathryn said slowly and dangerously.

Jessie faked a look of shock, "what, you're not done screwing over your daughters over something that was clearly Tom's fault?" Tom's eyes bugged out, he shrunk quickly down into his chair he was soon under the table. "I'm so so sorry I offended you, the obvious only victim in this mess, by asking about it, carry on."

Everyone around the table heard Kathryn's teeth grinding and even the steam whistling from her ears.

"Damn, that was iced cold..." Craig whimpered fearfully.

James could no longer hide it, he let himself laugh. "I know, I love it."

Kathryn's eyebrows twitched as she directed her scorn in his direction. He gave her a smile in response. A shudder later she turned to glare around the room. "I seem to recall telling everyone to get the hell out."

Most of the room scampered on the word hell. Tom took a little longer since he had to reshuffle back into a sitting position before he could stand.

"Perhaps..." Kathryn said icily, her stare gradually shifting back to Jessie. "You can stop pretending you know anything about responsibility, grown up relationships and raising children, and focus on what you're really good at. I hear Seven's after a new catsuit colour."

Jessie's cheekbones flinched, shoulders tensed while her face flushed as if she were slapped. She was left stammering, "what the he... how can, I..."

"Can't dish it out, get out of my sight," Kathryn snapped.

"That's rich," James scoffed bitterly.

Kathryn shook her head rapidly, rising steam almost clouding their sight of her. "Don't you start as well. If I want sarcastic oh so *funny* backtalk about things that aren't his business, I'd ask Tom for his input."

She hadn't realised Tom had remained in his chair to watch the fight unfolding, at least until he huffed in offense. Once spotted he dashed off in such a hurry, his chair was sent rolling into the window.

"Prove my point why don't you," James said, shrugging. "And it's absolutely our business when you two use the whole ship as your sparring grounds, or when your daughter is so traumatised she has to find somewhere else to sleep."

Kathryn's face turned lily white. "Excuse... what?"

Jessie rolled her eyes in disgust. "Did you even notice your daughter run away from home? No, of course not. It doesn't affect you."

"Enough," Kathryn growled. Her hands slammed on the table and she jumped to her feet. One hand raised to point towards the door, "out, now!"

Jessie looked over at James with a similar look of disdain. He shook his head and shrugged. She nodded, silently agreeing. They got up to leave the Captain fuming alone if only for a few seconds as they passed somebody on their way in.

"Oh for... you're late," Kathryn growled at them.

Chakotay sighed impatiently, "I call it on time." He turned to leave.

"Is it too much to ask for you to be professional?" Kathryn hissed.

"Profess..." Chakotay said in disbelief before he burst into laughter. "This is coming from Captain Janeway, the bully who assaults her crewmembers and gets drunk on coffee everyday. You should practise what you expect of the rest of us. Maybe we'll follow from example."

Unknown to them there was one final leftover of the meeting, only they were peering out from under the table. They tried to crawl out in a different spot, but knocked a chair into another, getting their attention.

"Kiara?" Chakotay said in surprise.

"What are you doing under there?" Kathryn snapped at the same time.

The little girl squeaked and looked up at her two furious parents meekly. "Er... is this a good time to ask for replicator rations?"

"No!" and, "out!" were the responses from both of them. Kiara's bottom lip wobbled, tears dribbled down her cheeks. She ran out wailing.

"Oh, well done Chakotay. Look what you did!" Kathryn groaned.

Chakotay glared back, "you told her to get out, don't pin this on me!"

The Bridge:

Everyone had heard the latest shouting match and were wincing, as well as looking confused since they were sure no one else was in there with the two. That was until Kiara ran through the back of the bridge sobbing.

James flinched at it, "unbelievable." He was about to go over but the little girl ran into the turbolift which was currently occupied, the doors shut behind her.

"What's wrong sweetheart?" B'Elanna asked softly whilst kneeling in front of her.

"My mum and dad yelled at me," Kiara cried.

Tom looked on guiltily, "what, why?"

"I dunno, they were so mean," Kiara sniffled.

"Janeway yeah, but that's really out of sorts for Chakotay to do," B'Elanna said.

Tom nodded, "yeah, I imagine that's why he was late. He wanted to avoid another fight. It might not have gone so badly had Jessie and James not poked the bear."

B'Elanna pretend scowled up at him. Kiara weakly laughed at her squinted one eye and pursed lips. "Are we forgetting the primary antagonist in this story?"

"Uh..." Tom's eyes shifted nervously, beads of sweat started to form on his temples. "We really oughta fix this. Get them back together."

"Were they even together to begin with?" B'Elanna asked.

Kiara didn't care about that part, her face brightened slightly. "How?"

"I'll think of a way, I always do," Tom smiled and winked at her.

It did the trick for the little girl, she wiped away her tears and smiled. B'Elanna though was very worried by the remark. "The day you learn your lesson, pigs will not only learn to fly, they'll volunteer to be Neelix's ingredients."

Tom pretended to laugh, "yeah yeah. And on that day Seven will be listened to and crucial to the plot."

The Conference Room:

Seven ran through the doors, completely oblivious to everyone. "Captain. I have something urgent to report about the Borg and..." A small spherical object flew at her head, instantly knocking her unconscious. Whatever hit her broke apart into little pieces which Kathryn was eager to crouch down for and gather.

Chakotay rolled his eyes, "really? They could be coming for us, but you'd prefer to continue your bullying of your crew?"

Kathryn narrowed her eyes and stood back up, "why are you suddenly sticking up for Seven? What's going on?"

Ten minutes later Seven awoke in a daze, and with a small empty box of chocolate lying on her chest. The contents had left many crumbs behind which stunk of coffee, chocolate and orange.

Thankfully the room was quiet, so she assumed the warring command duo had left her. Another ten minutes or so and she was able to get up and stumble back out.

The Mess Hall:

The dinner rush had long since ended, leaving a few off duty stragglers chatting or juggling finishing their stone cold food and PADD tapping. Morgan was one of the latter, only her distraction wasn't visible, she merely stared into space.

Seven entered hesitantly, stalling at the door whilst shifting her eyes side to side. It took her a few minutes to walk over to the teen's table.

"Explain yourself," she said abruptly, startling the girl.

"Well I... okay," Morgan grunted. "I'm sixteen, got black hair. Dunno what eye colour I have, you tell me. I'm to the point, I'll speak my mind. My hobbies include reading, food, some game called Squash, and quite recently singing and dancing. You... nah don't care."

Seven scowled down at her. "That's not what I meant. You consume that sugar irrelevancy," she pointed at Morgan's glass for emphasis.

Morgan eyed it with her face blank, eyes rolled up, "that's a tough one, gee. I think it's yesno."

"And your connection to the Borg was minimal and caused temporal disruption. Then you..." Seven continued as if she never said anything.

"Hold on," Morgan rose her voice so she was heard this time. "I'm struggling to join the dots here, did you jump to a different page? Book?"

Seven groaned, clearly frustrated. She went to sit down, looking wary as if it were a bomb. "You heard of Unimatrix Zero, correct?"

"Negative," Morgan smirked. "One sure. What's this about?"

Once again Seven hesitated as she didn't expect that answer. "Do you recall my dream the other night?"

"Uh sure, something about a guy in the woods," Morgan answered with a frown. "We're even more off track than before."

"It wasn't a dream. It was a shared cognitive state with other Borg drones, a side effect to a rare mutation," Seven said.

Morgan's eyes drifted to one side while her lips tightened. "Ookay? I still dunno how me and my drink fit in?"

"Their safe haven has been infected by this," Seven said, attempting to clasp the glass. Morgan slapped her hand away. "It's leading the Borg Queen to it with its addictive nature."

"Right, and you've assumed this is all my fault?" Morgan said in a bored voice.

"No," Seven replied genuinely. "There were two of you that disrupted the flow of the hive during your assimilation."

Morgan looked very confused, but her interest was finally piqued. "You're blaming this on James and Jessie? Neither of them mentioned a trip to a forest. It doesn't seem like their style either."

"I'm not, Unimatrix Zero has been around for a long time. And I do not believe Rex has anything to do with this," Seven said. A thoughtful expression appeared on her face, "much. I'm referring to drones losing their connection to the Queen at seemingly random intervals, the coke infestation."

"I'm no expert but, both sound like good things to me," Morgan said.

Seven stared at her with bulging eyes, "drones do not remember their time in Zero, but they recall their love of this drink. It exposes them. People are dying."

Morgan's face fell, "you could've opened with that." Seven grunted and turned her head away. "Look, I have no idea why the Borg are so messed up. I also don't know why off duty drones are dreaming about boozing it up in the woods..."

"What was it about you both that caused so much damage? Why is a human drink substituting as water in a shared Borg Unimatrix?" Seven asked sharply, eyes drilling accusingly in the teen's direction.

"It's like I'm talking to a bumpy wall," Morgan grumbled to herself. "I haven't a clue about James since I wasn't around then. But for me, temporal anomalies and Torg influence will have a hand in the sphere getting cut off. Also, I was two and I don't remember drinking any of this stuff until I returned to Voyager. You're barking up the wrong bush, whatever that means."

Seven nodded, "so you're suggesting I interrogate Taylor?"

Morgan's eyebrow raised, "no. You say there's a sanctuary for Borgs and the Queen's trying to get in, right? If it's been around for so long, why now?"

"I assume it became more noticeable to her when more drones were infected. That or she discovered it while attempting to repair the current problem," Seven answered. "The people there have a solution but since they cannot recall when they awake, it's up to us to help them. However your foul mother was more interested in marital strife."

"Yeah, mum doesn't care about anyone else right now," Morgan grumbled while staring down at the table. "Last two weeks I've been doing odd jobs to get rations. Kiara and I don't dare ask for any or it's scream central."

To her surprise Seven looked sympathetic. "Perhaps you should find a job suited to you. What did you call your musical endeavor, Virus?"

Morgan struggled to keep a straight face, at least until she noticed mirth in Seven's eyes as well.

"Dance on the tables for my dinner? I'm sure mum would love that. But she did say I'm 16, *old enough to get your own damn sandwiches*," she said, imitating her mother's voice. A smile spread across her face, "she said it herself. We don't need her. We can do this on our own."

Seven's eyebrow shot up, "how? To spread the nanovirus Axum designed to keep them hidden again, we'd need access to a Borg vessel."

"We might be able to think of a way round that if we pool our heads together. I should check this place out and..." Morgan replied.

"You just want to go because of the Cherry Coke infection," Seven bluntly said.

Morgan tried not to think about it so she wouldn't drool. "No, no. I have some here anyway." To prove it she went to take a sip, not realising only a drop was left. Seven saw that, as well as her sad sigh which she tried to smile over. "Well?"

"You don't have the mutation," Seven reminded her. Morgan's smile faded to disappointment. "It is not necessary for both of us to visit. I will retrieve the specifications for the virus and discuss distribution plans with the drones. You can investigate here while you learn some lyrics."

To her own disappointment Morgan's eyes sparkled mischievously. "Or... James is good at that boring rejigging computer stuff. Maybe he can figure something out, and maybe join us."

"He no longer has a cortical node. I was there when it was extracted," Seven said.

Morgan pulled a disgusted face, "you creepy weirdo," she muttered, taking Seven aback.

"It wasn't transmitting and yet receiving, I had to be there to investigate it. It wasn't damaged, it simply wasn't compatible with his brain," she said defensively. "Don't you find that fascinating, and..."

"No," Morgan replied, intentionally yawning. "But you do have a point. I should invite Tani or Jessie instead."

Seven shook her head rapidly, "that does nothing to solve the no mutation issue. I don't appreciate you joking about this. Individuals are dying."

Morgan tensed so much her shoulders were up by her ears. "If you're going to accuse me of being responsible for this safe haven being compromised, I'm not sitting around and doing nothing. Besides I wasn't entirely messing. We may need other Borgs to pull this off, or we may need to do this behind my mum's back, which James is good at, and I don't fancy being screamed at again."

"I agree, however for the moment we should keep our team at a minimum until we know more and have a plan," Seven suggested. Morgan nodded.

The Cargo Bay:

"This will not work, and I will be the one who suffers when I'm proved correct," Seven said.

Morgan briefly glanced away from the alcove she was messing about with, "and?"

Seven internally berated herself, she should've saw that coming. "I knew I should have gone to Taylor instead."

Morgan finished switching over a few chips inside the arm panel and closed it, all while sticking out her tongue slightly and pulling a stupid face. It was gone before she turned back around to face the other ex-Borg. "You implied that he was the one who made the Queen a nutbag. We don't want you ending up like that." She scowled, "then again, too late."

"No, I implied you both had a hand in it," Seven said.

"Oh come on," Morgan groaned like she was in pain. "I wasn't even hooked up to them that long. And it was erased, so didn't even happen."

Seven's eyebrow raised so much it pointed at the ceiling, "and yet the Queen remembered you, and kidnapped you and not him."

Morgan's nose shrivelled up, mouth twisted. "Yeah well, I..." Seven smiled a little smugly, it annoyed the younger girl. "It proves my point still. It couldn't have been both of us."

The smugness lifted, but only slightly. "Indeed. However this idea is still an unacceptable risk."

"We're not going to be a mini collective. God, I can't even stand being on the same deck as you," Morgan said in disgust. Seven agreed and nodded. "My alcove will scan yours, copy the interlink frequency and activate it. Nothing to it."

"If it were that simple, the Queen will have already attempted it," Seven pointed out.

Morgan stared at the modifications she made, slowly coming to the realisation she was right. "Oh," a tired groan escaped, amusing Seven. The teen didn't see that, she focused on the screen by her fingertips which showed a few green lines scattered seemingly in a random manner from one side to another. It reminded her of her last encounter with the Queen, something else soon came to her and she brightened up. "I got it."

"I doubt it," Seven scoffed.

Morgan chose to ignore that for the moment. "The comm signals the Queen used to talk to me in my nightmares. She said they were a way of talking to me without the usual means."

"You mean via the interplexing beacon?" Seven said with growing interest.

"Yeah. I wonder if it's still in my mum's data banks," Morgan said, rushing over to the console nearby.

"Are you suggesting you could visit Unimatrix Zero by connecting to me in a similar manner? Again, wouldn't the Queen be aware of this tactic?" Seven said.

Unlike the last time, Morgan wasn't discouraged. She found what she was looking for and ran over to mess about with the alcove again. "Unless the Queen fancies a dip in the Cherry Coke waterfall, I doubt it'll help her. Us though, it'll do." Once done she pat the neighbouring alcove's armrest, "hop in."

Seven sighed, "our options are limited." She reluctantly stepped up to stand in her alcove.

Morgan swivelled around to do the same, not without first scowling at her neighbour. "Don't snore!" she snapped seconds before *dozing off*. Seven looked on flummoxed before she did as well.

In the corridor directly outside the Ready Room, Tom had his ear pressed against the door while B'Elanna stood watch, quietly wondering why he was bothering since she could clearly hear them. When they heard the sound of the Bridge's door opening and finally some silence, Tom pulled himself away with a flattened, aching ear.

"B'Elanna, I've got an idea," Tom said.

"Let's hear it," B'Elanna sighed.

"Chakotay has to drop off a report at Janeway's quarters tonight at 1600. Once he's in, we can fiddle with the locking mechanisms so that Chakotay and Janeway can't get out of her quarters," Tom said.

B'Elanna stared at him blankly while she thought about what he was suggesting. She hoped he'd use that time to start stammering about it being *only a joke* but that didn't happen. "No," she said eventually.

Only then did Tom's face fell and start to stammer, "hear me out. Usually when the argument gets to its peak, one storms out or some poor schmuck gets an earful of deflection, and we're right back to step one. If no one can leave and no one can enter, they may be able to start actually talking."

"Tom, that's a great idea! Let's do it," B'Elanna smiled, opening her arms as if to hug him. He grinned and went for it, only for her to step back with a straight but stern face. "The only reason we're in this mess is because you meddled. Spiking the air, inviting people to your chat show for the sole purpose of hooking people up, the wedding finale?"

"Well, that was supposed to be for us but..." Tom said pathetically draping his hand behind his neck.

B'Elanna wasn't done, she barely let him even say that before continuing. "You'd think you would have learned your lesson after the James and Jessie spiking drinks fiasco, but no, you had to one up it and you're still not satisfied?"

Tom laughed awkwardly and started to fidget. "What fiasco, I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Tom, you have that video filed in your Projects folder with the tags revenge and hilarious. You're lucky they, I assume, don't know you're responsible or I'd be widowed by now," B'Elanna cringed. "It's really creepy, it goes beyond meddling. Promise me you won't escalate your screw up by imprisoning people, because I won't be on your side next time."

Tom huffed while looking away, "I'm trying to help them and fix my mistake. Do you think I enjoyed seeing little Kiara sobbing over her bickering parents?"

"No but you enjoy making people do things against their will, like kissing and weddings and..." B'Elanna trailed off as her eyes widened slightly, "and why am I supportive of you again? This isn't funny. You could really ruin people's lives doing this rubbish, what if the Captain and Chakotay never make up and one of them quits? What if James and Jessie's Irish *coffee* incident escalated to more than kissing and she ended up pr..."

Tom snorted a bit at the thought, infuriating her further. He felt like he was being burned alive by her penetrating glare, which despite being nearly a foot shorter than him, was being pointed down at his shrinking frame.

"Oh my god, I married a colossal idiot. What kind of immature little snot finds the idea of two different not couples having their consent violated hilarious, or worse actually being the cause of it?" B'Elanna snapped.

"I... okay, okay," Tom whimpered, holding his hands in a surrender pose. "Okay, I'm sorry, I'll fix this." Still B'Elanna's eyes narrowed. "Not like I said, but some other way. And just in case, you know so I don't die; your Jessie and James one was hypothetical, cos sheesh, that'll keep me up all night."

"This'll be the shortest marriage ever," B'Elanna rolled her eyes.

"That's a yes?" Tom dared to ask. A slight, clenched jaw nod was his answer but he didn't feel any relief. "Okay, so just the Jane-tay marriage then. Good. I'll get started, Tom's on the case." He hurried off down the corridor.

B'Elanna let out a long sigh. "The only idiot here is the one who married that guy, sober." She walked off in the opposite direction while re-evaluating her more recent life choices.

As soon as she clasped her eyes on the odd looking building and its various streams of glistening and fizzy brown *water*, Morgan couldn't help but head over there first, absentmindedly licking her lips. However she felt a little tug on her arm before being pulled a few steps back.

"Why can't I go in?" Morgan whined, pulling the rude arm holder forward.

Seven rolled her eyes, "this isn't what we, or rather I came back for."

Morgan pulled her arm away from Seven's grip, huffing childishly. "Fine. That first, but I'm not going without a sip."

Seven sighed in relief, she gestured for her to come with her, only then noticing the tubules on her hand were gone. Her gaze followed her sleeveless arm up to her shoulder, then down to discover her entire outfit had changed to a lavender blouse and beige trousers.

She heard a gasp, telling her Morgan had turned to face her and spotted the same thing. "What the, Seven? You look... almost... normal."

Seven smiled as her hand reached up to check her usually mechanised eyebrow to find it no longer wasn't. Then she dabbed at her loose hair around her shoulders. "Annika. That's what I'm called here," she said softly.

Morgan's jaw threatened to drop, she quickly shook it off. "I'm sorry, whaa...?"

Axum spotted them, smiled and rushed over to greet them. "Hello again. You must be Morgan," he said in a friendly manner.

"Um er... hey," Morgan stammered, still floored by the Seven makeover.

"I've heard some *interesting* things about you," Axum said, hesitantly and with some diplomacy. "Would you like a drink?"

Seven quickly stepped forward with eyes flashing, "no she can't."

"Annika's also a big dull killjoy, I see," Morgan muttered under her breath.

Axum smiled and nodded, "she's as spirited as you told me. Come on, let's find somewhere more suitable to talk." He lead the way toward the building to Seven's disappointment, Morgan followed eagerly

Unimatrix One:

Once more the entire adjunct were in perfect singular harmony, but not in the way the Queen would've liked. They all painfully grasped the side of their heads, grimacing in agony.

"I'm a single collective, we're a single collective, oh oh oh, oh oh oh," the Borg Queen sang tunelessly, all while swinging her hips side to side. Not only that but she was also swinging a severed head over her own in the same pattern.

It only thankfully stopped when she accidentally let the head slip from her hands.

The escort drone returned, looking very relieved she missed all the noise, so were the beefy looking squadron of drones following her. "My Queen. We are prepared."

The Queen nudged the head out of her path, smiling darkly. "Good. Bring them all to me," she cackled.

Back in Zero:

Axum had brought his two visitors to a conference room inside the factory, where a few other habitants were waiting. Of course there was a few jugs on the table which Morgan kept helping herself to. Seven watched with clear distaste on her face.

"I fail to see the point in bringing her and this child here," a Klingon man snarled in Axum's direction.

Morgan responded unintentionally with a loud burp, to which she smiled apologetically before refilling her glass. Seven sighed and pushed it to one side. Morgan glared at her like her mother would if she did that with coffee.

"They cannot help us, not without endangering their ship. All this will do will stall the inevitable," the Klingon continued.

Axum waved dismissively in his direction, "if we do nothing Korok, we'll all die. Besides, we have a new more permanent solution."

"That's right. Your current weakness is this factory and the effect its product has on you," Seven said. Most of the room didn't like where she was going, they talked amongst themselves. Morgan grabbed her glass back. "The Queen is using it to her advantage, I suggest we use it to ours. If we change the virus so it nullifies the cortical inhibitors, everyone will retain their memories of this place."

"Wait," Morgan said, closing her mouth tightly afterwards to contain another burp. "You told me we were going in to figure out a plan. You already have one? So why did you come to me?"

Seven smiled broadly, unnerving her since she definitely wasn't used to seeing it. "The addictive nature of this beverage remains even when you awake from your regeneration cycle. If the virus could be remembered as well, any drone here could infect the Borg with it instantly. I suggest we *spike the punch* as Paris would say."

The whole room reacted badly to it, their voices raised, all directed toward her.

Morgan groaned, slamming her hand on the table. The sound of it got their attention, but didn't shut them up until they noticed the damage she made doing so. "That's the dumbest idea I've heard in a while, and I'm from Voyager, that takes some freaking beating."

Seven wasn't put off. "Why is it *dumb*? We have no means to distribute it ourselves, Unimatrix Zero's people are not able."

"It's little more than some notes scribbled on a bit of paper," Morgan replied. "I thought we were coming in to get that information and figure out a way to use it in the real world. This is so ridiculous, I expected it to come from Tom not you."

"I don't need you to understand it. It's done already," Seven said.

Axum flinched while Morgan looked on confused, the rest of the room talked amongst themselves angrily.

"What do you mean it's done?" Morgan snapped. Seven's eyes fell toward Morgan and the glass she was holding. Morgan looked at it too, grimaced, then back up at her. "What, huh? What?"

"I knew you wouldn't be able to resist," Seven said as if that answered everything.

Morgan was even more confused by that. "I'm not Borg anymore, how does me drinking this help anyone... and what!? You were trying to stop me, I..."

"It needed time to circulate, so we were certain of its consumption. You have a personal connection to the Queen. You are her sole goal, and you said it yourself, she can talk to you anytime she wishes. We just need to get her attention and..." Seven said. The glass hurtled towards her head, she barely had time to duck. It smashed against the wall.

"You bitch, you only brought me here to poison me? And toss me over to the Queen? You haven't changed at all!" Morgan screamed.

"What choice did we have? The only other options would be to infect a central plexus with the virus, or give the virus to somebody willing to sacrifice themselves to a Borg vess..." Seven said.

Morgan marched over to glare directly in her face, something not easy for her to do considering the height difference. Even on tip toes she managed to unnerve Seven, she looked away. "What's your problem with me, Yawnika? Huh? That I'm able to act like a person and you need to hang out in fantasy land to do so?"

"This is not a personal attack on you, Morgan. If it's any consolation, we're connected and so it's inside me as well," Seven said uncomfortably.

The stare momentarily lifted as Morgan looked away with her eyes closed. Seven noted she breathed in deeply so prepared for a Janeway style anger fit by stepping backwards a few times. Only she turned her head back with a quivering jaw and a fearful glint in her eye. "Good. I'm not," Morgan's voice cracked, "going back."

Taken aback for a second, Seven afterwards nodded. "That was never my intention. If we can get the Borg Queen's attention somehow, all it would take is a subspace cha..."

Screams from outside interrupted her. Everyone in the room hurried to the door. To their surprise and horror the tranquil courtyard in front of the building was being invaded by several Borg drones.

"What the, how...?" Axum stammered fearfully.

Seven glanced at Morgan beside her, the teen shook with her fists clenched. "Perhaps they altered the commsignals like we did," Seven said.

While she spoke one unfortunate woman had been grabbed, she could only scream as the assimilation needles penetrated her neck. By the time she hit the ground her body faded away.

"Enough talk, we have to stop them," Korok growled, unsheathing a bat'leth from the back of his armour.

"Right," Morgan mumbled.

To everyone but Seven's surprise she was the first to run forward. Korok followed a few seconds later, only to stall when he realised his weapon was gone.

"What!? That girl, I'll..." Korok bellowed, continuing on. Seven brandished an arm in front of him to try and stop him.

"Are you sure about this Annika? She's only a little girl," Axum said warily.

Morgan meanwhile reached the closest drone about to grab a fleeing man. Her foot slammed into the back of its lower leg, making it lose its balance and fall backwards to the floor. The bat'leth swung down into its torso. It disappeared exactly like the woman did.

Immediately sensing it, another nearby drone bounded after her. Morgan heard it before it was right on top of her, swung around and clobbered it in the face with the brutal weapon, sending it flying into a nearby tree.

A third drone panicked at seeing both incidents and transported away seemingly on its own free will.

The Unimatrix Zero inhabitants meanwhile looked on in shock. Seven barely managed an eyebrow raise.

"My goodness. Is she really...?" Axum stammered.

Seven's eyes narrowed very slightly, "yes. She is a..."

"Janeway!" the Borg Queen hissed while glaring fiercely at a screen with Morgan's face falling upwards. It cut to static once she was out of sight.

As soon as the Cargo Bay doors started to part, Morgan launched herself through them and sped off. Seven waited for them to be more than a foot apart before she ran out to follow her.

"Don't think for one second you're getting away with this one!" Morgan barked over her shoulder. Her pace increased to a jog.

Seven did as well. "You are overreacting, misunderstanding. I would never..."

Morgan faked a laugh and briefly stopped, allowing Seven to catch up. "Right? Like you haven't tried to kill me before." Once again she was stomping away, Seven sighed and gave chase.

"Whereas you have not?" she said, her voiced tainted with venom.

"Self defense to your attempts," Morgan muttered bitterly. She groaned impatiently as she reached a turbolift door which didn't open immediately. Her finger rapidly tapped the panel on the side.

"This is the safest way to achieve our goal," Seven said. The finger tapping increased speed. "You shouldn't come to harm, though I admit it will be difficult for you. It's a small price to pay though to repair the damage you've done."

Morgan's entire torso flinched, thankfully stopping the finger from hammering the panel anymore which had become slightly cracked.

"We need to devise a plan to entice the Queen into communicating with us," Seven said as she reached to clasp the small of Morgan's arm. "In case your theatrics in Unimatrix Zero failed to do the..."

"We?" Morgan laughed mockingly. She pulled her arm back and swung around on her heel to once more look the ex-drone in the eye. "I'm going to report all of this, every detail. You'd best prepare for your one way trip to the nearest sphere or cube, and pray that's the only thing my mum does."

"Yes, I'm sure your mother will listen and care about any of this," Seven said a little more flat than she usually did.

Finally the turbolift arrived and so Morgan stepped in. Seven tried to follow but the teen stretched her arms out across the frame to block her. "Oh I'm sure she'll make the exception for you. Either way, this is the last time I work with or try to help you."

"Then what? You know the Collective has no interest in reclaiming a run of the mill ex drone such as myself, so sending me as spiked bait will be for nothing. When they come, and they will since they will have seen you interfering in their affairs..." Seven said. Colour started to drain from Morgan's face. "...Who do you think will be the utmost priority?"

Morgan merely shook her head, hoping it would make her not seem as nervous. It didn't work, it only made her look meeker and childlike to Seven.

"I deduced this was the safest and most efficient method for dealing with this problem, a problem that only escalated because of your unique failures; yours and the boy's," Seven said harshly. "I assumed it would be in your best interests to solve it outside of the Borg's eye, but clearly I was wrong. You're too selfish for that."

Morgan stepped back to allow the doors to close in both their faces. Once the lift was in motion her eyes shut tightly, she tried to clear her racing mind. Being alone though made it so much more busy, a particular part of Seven's rant replayed over and over.

"What's she talking about, what unique failure?" she whispered to herself. The doors re-opened. She quickly stepped out while huffing, "I didn't fail, I didn't get a chance to do anything, she toyed with me and..." Two crewmembers walked by her, briefly glancing in her direction. It reminded her of another part. "What boy? That Ax guy, can't be."

The raised familiar voices of her parents brought her out of her head, stopping her cold. She looked around, expecting to be near a door, but had to look back behind her as she had walked past it. With another groan Morgan turned around, fists clenching in a vain hope to steel herself for what she was going to walk into, then made her way toward the door.

To her shock the doors to her mum's quarters didn't open, she instead walked face first into a forcefield in front of them. "What the...? What's going on?"

"You did what?" Harry asked, his eyes much much wider than usual.

"I locked them in Janeway's quarters," Tom replied proudly.

Harry's eyes were starting to water, he forcefully blinked them. He had no idea why he was shocked, what he heard wasn't the worst thing Tom had ever done. "Oh great. By the end of the day, one of them is going to be dead."

"No they won't. Trust me, Harry," Tom said.

"I've heard that line before," Harry muttered.

"I wonder where the Captain and the Commander are. They are ten minutes late," they overheard Tuvok say from the command chairs.

Jessie glanced over her shoulder to point a raised eyebrow in his direction. "Really? I thought you were supposed to be all logical."

Tuvok's left eyebrow flickered upwards, "I did not enquire as to what they were doing. Usually at this time of the day we can hear them. Since we cannot, it is a matter to be concerned about."

Tom snorted very quietly. Harry heard it and passed him a bored, almost annoyed stare.

"Oh I wouldn't, those two would get into it in a nursery. They have no shame," Tom said.

"Well, you would know something about that," Jessie said flippantly, turning her head back to her station.

Tom nodded, then got it and frowned. "Hey, I'll have you know I can have shame. I care, I tell the truth and I help. It's just not always appreciated."

This time Harry snorted, but a lot louder than Tom did, then laughed not so quietly. "Oh yeah, tell that to Mister and Mrs Captain Janeway. I could do with another pip," Harry smirked.

Tom smiled broadly, "you know what, I will. I'll show you. I have everything under control." He paused, nervously anticipating something to happen to prove him wrong. After a few minutes all he got were Harry's judgmental head shake and look away. Satisfied the helmsman smiled.

The turbolift doors beside Tactical opened. "All right, which one of you wise guys sealed up my mum's quarters?" Morgan bellowed before she had finished stomping out of it.

Harry bit his lip, his shoulders shook. Meanwhile Tom looked more than a little horrified, he seemed like he was one slap away from wetting himself.

"Elaborate?" Tuvok said, turning his head to look up at her.

"Some prat's put up a forcefield outside mum's door. Mum and dad are still in there," Morgan snapped in response.

"I doubt anybody with any sense would have the guts to mess with her right now, it's like suicide. What a *shameful* thing to do," Harry said, directing a side eye toward an extremely sweaty and pale Tom.

"Who did it?" Morgan yelled.

Jessie scoffed and shook her head. "I know who my money's on."

Morgan glanced in her direction, her eyes flew wide open before being re-directed towards Tom's back. "You?"

"My god Jessie, how could you do something so, bad," Tom squeaked. Footsteps approached, slowly. He felt chills on the back of his neck. "Oh, fancy implicating best mate Jamesy in this, such betrayal."

Morgan stopped directly behind him, glaring whilst trembling. He instinctively ducked down as if expecting an ear grab or a slap, neither of which happened to everyone on the bridge's disappointment.

"What's your bloody problem, you big creep?" Morgan spat at him.

Tom winced and quickly scrambled back up straight, using Opps as a crutch. "Me? No problem. Thanks for asking, and you?"

Harry groaned tiredly. He decided to get out of firing range, so walked around the pair to instead man Tactical.

Morgan put on a fake smile, "oh I dunno, there's this pathetic no lifer around who has locked me up in the Holodeck to get me to date someone, spiked my oxygen so I'd embarrass myself on his show, gotten my parents to drunkenly marry and now locked them up in mum's quarters so my three year

old sister has nowhere to live, or she's stuck in there with our shouting parents. Other than that, dandy."

Tom laughed very nervously, sweat dribbled down both cheeks from his forehead. "To which most of those he served time for and is a new man. That last one, you should talk to Security."

"Maybe I will," Morgan said with her eyes flashing. To his relief she turned around as if to walk back away. It was short lived, before she walked off she raised her foot and aimed it for one of his own. Everyone winced when they heard the crunch, followed by his painful wailing. Morgan then stomped back to the turbolift she came in from.

Meanwhile in Unimatrix One:

"Send more in, and crush those little worms!" the Queen cackled towards a group of drones.

They stepped into the alcoves lining the nearby wall. They looked normal until they were activated. Instead of the usual green strobing lights, what looked like brown fluid flowed through everything. The drones' mouths twitched, gradually turning into goofy looking smiles. Their closed eyes rapidly moved around.

"Now that they're hyper, they will care less and be far more ruthless," the Queen sinisterly said before laughing like a typical villain once more.

Unimatrix Zero:

Seven appeared outside the factory, she couldn't believe her eyes. Hundreds of drones were giggling like hyper kids as they were chasing innocent residents.

"Cherry Coke can be a dangerous thing," Seven groaned.

Axum ran up to her. "Annika it's terrible. The Queen must be feeding her own supply to her entire Unimatrix. Drones are quicker and unpredictable. Hirogen hunters are moving through the forest, targeting them, but we're losing people every hour!"

"The trap is set, she'll take the bait," Seven said.

Axum shook his head fearfully. "How can you be so sure? If that girl was the one who caused the connection glitch, then the Queen wouldn't be so quick to target her again."

"She wasn't," Seven said.

"What?" Axum stammered.

"Morgan, or rather Kiara Janeway's assimilation never happened. It was erased from the timeline," Seven replied hesitantly. She looked down, "the Queen's interest in her is personal."

Axum looked very confused, "but, you implied that the cause of the glitch was the weapon the Queen is after. If it's not her then why did you bring her here?"

"I didn't lie to you," Seven said, dipping her head with a guilty frown. "She was not the cause, but she could be. The Queen may or may not know this, it's irrelevant. Her personal vendetta with my Captain, Morgan's mother, will be what lures her in."

"I... I see," Axum said, his wavering voice betrayed him though. "Then how do you know what the actual cause was, if it was not this Morgan girl?"

Drones spotted them both, laughed high pitched and started to pursue. The pair ran off into the woods quickly.

Morgan stood with her arms folded opposite her door, impatiently tapping her foot, quietly grumbling to herself.

James crouched down in front of an exposed wall panel with a tricorder in his left hand, while the right poked around with the wiring. The piece of metal that shielded it lay discarded with a few dents, behind him.

"So, did it work?" he asked with a small smile.

Morgan exhaled huffily, "no, it only made me madder." As if it would prove her point, she gave the bit of metal a little kick. It bounced a few metres down the corridor.

James looked over his shoulder just in time to see it stop, then he glanced up at the girl who did it. "Have you tried doing that to Tom?"

"Hmm," Morgan lightly smiled at the thought of it. Then she shrugged and sulked, "dunno if he'd bounce. It's too tight in here, so."

"He might, try to get him in the Cargo Bay or something," James laughed as he re-focused on the wall panel. A few wires were switched around, some buttons were pressed. He sighed and looked down at the tricorder, making Morgan even more impatient than before.

"What? Don't tell me you can't do it? Aren't you the master hacker?" she asked.

James didn't answer right away, he merely reached in to grab a handful of wires. To her shock he pulled them out and chucked them over his shoulder. She stared slack jawed as he shuffled closer to it and focused on the computer panel. "That's better," he said.

Morgan's wider eyes drifted up at the ceiling as she mumbled incoherently to herself. She shook it off and focused on him once more. "What was that, you do know what you're doing right?"

"Oh nothing, just typical Tom bull. A few electric shock traps here, a lot of redundant wires made to look complicated there," James replied, shaking his head. He finished tapping the console only for it to negatively bleep at him, making him frown. "Huh, that's new."

"What?" Morgan said, looking pained.

James shrugged and looked up at her. He noticed her expression and smiled to reassure her, "it might take a little longer but I can still do it. He's put in a fail safe which'll put up a stronger forcefield once disabled. Shouldn't be too long."

"Fine," Morgan sighed. The shouting in the next room flared up again, making her wince.

"I'm sorry," James said, quickly tapping in a few commands before turning back to her. Morgan frowned for what he said and that, until she noticed the console was running some sort of debug program. "They shouldn't be putting you through this. Whatever's going on between them, it's not your fault and if they must fight, they should leave you both out of it. It's not fair."

"Yeah," Morgan mouthed. She went to sit down and lean against the opposite wall to the one he was working on. "Did you, I mean... do you remember what happened when you were assimilated?" It was James' turn to frown. "It's, you told me about it briefly."

James briefly glanced at the console to check if it needed any input from him. It didn't so he turned himself around to focus on the girl sitting across from him. "There's not much to tell. They chased our shuttle, boarded us. Jessie tried to get our shields back, I tried to hold them off. Then..." he pointed to his throat with two fingers.

Morgan laughed weakly, "that was dumb of you."

James smiled and laughed as well, "that's me. All I remember after that is the voices. I'd heard the Borg were all one voice, but these were jumbled. People were screaming, crying, shouting. You couldn't make any of them out. I must've passed out or something cos the next thing I remember was waking up in Sickbay. Apparently every Borg in the area were disconnected from the Queen, but still hearing each other. They couldn't control their ship, the voices drove them crazy."

"I see," Morgan said, glancing down at her feet. "So you don't know why that happened?"

"No, we never figured it out," James replied. "Is that how it went down for you?"

"I'm not sure, I guess," Morgan replied, stuttering. James instantly felt bad because of it, unlike him she was a child when it happened to her. She noticed him shaking his head and mumbling about being an idiot. "No, no. I asked, it's okay."

It didn't make him feel any better though. "Why did you?" he asked carefully.

Seven's words replayed in Morgan's head. She tried to shake it off but doing so made it easier to overhear the words her parents were screaming at one another. "I... Seven, she thinks it's my fault the Borg are in the state they are."

James scoffed and rolled his eyes. "Don't listen to her, she likes to get in your head, make you doubt yourself. It makes her feel more relevant. If anyone's to blame it's me, and besides, I don't see how the Borg's connection issues are a bad thing."

"Yeah I guess." Morgan faked a smile, but he saw right through it and looked worried. She climbed back to her feet, her gaze fixed on the forcefield blocking her quarters. "Will you call me when you're in?"

"Sure," James nodded.

Morgan smiled genuinely but weakly, "thanks."

James' worry grew as she ran off as if her life depended on it. Once gone he glanced toward the door. After double checking the debug program was still running, he got up and walked off down the corridor, only to return a few minutes later with a cup of coffee he intentionally wafted near the door before sitting back down.

"What's that smell, hnnnng," Kathryn's voice drooled.

"Oh my god, of course that's more important to you than..." Chakotay's voice groaned.

James shook his head and tapped on a different part of the wall panel.

"Coffee black," Kathryn's voice barked.

James quickly pressed his ear against the wall a tad further down in time to hear the computer's response; *"there is no such item in the replicator database."*

The resulting gasp and tantrum kept him entertained until the debug program was finished.

The Cargo Bay doors opened. Morgan didn't wait again, she turned sideways and slid through the small growing gap. She approached the alcoves in a hurry until she spotted Seven standing in one, snoozing away with shifting eyes and drool in the corner of her mouth.

"Great," Morgan said, veering off to the console close by instead. She quickly keyed something in before rushing to the neighbouring alcove. "Computer start regeneration cycle but only for twenty minutes," she told it once stepping into it.

The computer acknowledged. So she spun around to start it off, only to find someone standing in front of her, leering. The shock had her scrambling backwards.

"What, what are you doing here?" she stuttered.

The Borg Queen smiled darkly at her. "Morgan," she purred. "How is my favourite daughter?"

Morgan tried to collect herself, thinking over and over it wasn't real, it must be a dream. "This again. I'm not your daughter. What do you want?"

"I heard you and the other one paid some of my wayward children a visit," the Queen said.

"I haven't a clue what you're talking about," Morgan said.

The Queen's eyes hardened, "you know exactly what I mean. Don't you think you and your *friend* have caused enough damage already?"

Morgan had to laugh despite everything, "Seven's not my friend."

To her surprise the Borg Queen smiled at her reaction. "That's my mistake, I did mention her before. I am of course referring to the other unique specimen in your crew."

"What, I don't..." Morgan mumbled, glancing away.

The Queen reached out to grasp her chin, forcing her to face her. Morgan instantly pulled back but it did the job the Queen wanted. "You do know. A male, like you. You'll both be added to our distinctiveness, your *talents* will bring us perfection," her voice turned into a cold whisper.

It gave Morgan goosebumps, she shivered. "You're wrong," she tried to say calmly but it came out as a squeak. "There's only me. Everything that happened was caused by the temporal anomalies that formed after my assimilation, or technically before if you'd prefer. His was only badly timed, a coincidence. He's just a smartass hacker, nothing special."

"Such a noble girl," the Queen said proudly. "But also foolish. Stay out of Borg business, submit yourself to me and I'll consider letting him and Voyager continue unharmed."

Morgan flinched, she shook her head. "Wrong again. I'm not stupid. You know you can't assimilate me or you would have the last time. I also know nothing about your wayward children, so I'm useless to you. You're wasting your time."

An eery mist surrounded the Queen, almost obscuring her. The Queen did not seem to notice it. Morgan hadn't noticed either until she finished talking, she looked around the room to find it the same. When she looked straight ahead again the Queen had vanished completely.

The mist cleared slightly allowing her to see a shadowed figure approach. She knew it wasn't the Borg Queen, the feeling she got from her was gentle. And yet she felt a great power emanating from it. The stranger stopped in front of her in the same spot the Queen did, as if waiting for the mist to clear.

When it did Morgan could see her features; a blonde woman with a soft, kind face.

"This is weird, what's happening?" Morgan asked.

"I'm sorry if I scared you, but I had to break the link before the Borg pinpointed Voyager's location," the woman said gently. "I'm merely stalling the inevitable though."

Morgan stepped down from the alcove, more curious than anything else. "You're not Borg, and you know of Voyager. How are you doing this, who are you?"

"I understand you have many questions, however we don't have much time here. Voyager is in great danger, you're going to need some help," the woman said.

"The Borg are looking for us, and I...?" Morgan stammered. Her eyes narrowed, "how do you know this?"

The woman smiled warmly, "you have an advantage over them, something precious the Queen is eager to control. The chaos to her order. No matter how much she tries, she'll never be able to take it. However the way it is now, it is nothing but a stall. You're going to need a push forward to be able to wield it against her."

Morgan's narrowed eyes grew into a full frown. "Do you mean Unimatrix Zero?" The woman's head barely moved, it looked like a shake but she wasn't sure since it was so light. "But, I don't want to be some pawn, I'm not a weapon to be wielded."

The woman closed her eyes and nodded her head once. "I know that more than you think. I can help, you don't have to lose a thing." She held her hand out toward her, "it's your choice."

Morgan shakily held out her own, at the last second she hesitated.

Axum lead the way down a hill towards some rocks. He grasped Seven's shoulders gently to pull her down to a sitting position in front of them, obscuring them from the drones view.

The drones eventually tottered off, still laughing.

Seven looked at the arm still on her shoulders, Axum noticed and brought it back awkwardly.

"That was familiar as well," Seven said.

Axum rubbed the back of his neck while pulling a few awkward faces. "Yes erm it might, may be. Er... I don't suppose this is this a good time to tell you that we were in involved?"

Seven clambered to her feet with outrage all over her face. "No, no it is not. Why didn't you tell me before, or later for that matter?"

"You'd forgotten. It wasn't my place," Axum answered.

Seven's face softened a little. "I see. I would have preferred to have known about it, but I appreciate you not attempting to force the matter."

Axum smiled and gazed into her eyes, "I would never do anything to make you uncomfortable, Annika."

Inside her, hearing the name flipped a switch back on her mind. Seven's face straightened, eyes hardened. "I should return to Voyager."

Axum sensed the change, he looked on worried as he hurriedly stood up as well. She meanwhile headed back up the hill. "Please wait, Annika."

Seven stopped and looked over her shoulder. "My name is Seven of Nine."

Axum's face fell. "Outside yes, but inside you and I both know who you really are." Seven refused to listen, she turned her back on him. "Wait!" he stuttered, arm stretched out for her.

"What, I must leave," Seven said harshly.

"I just, let's make out before you go," Axum said.

Seven once again turned her back on him. Closing her eyes firmly took her away from the forest and back to the Cargo Bay. She stepped out in a hurry, gunning for the door. Halfway there she noticed

something amiss in the corner of her left eye. So she swung around, instantly spotting Morgan slumped on the floor in front of her own alcove.

"Please enter alcove to begin stated registration cycle," the computer said.

"What?" Seven frowned, eyebrow raised. She crouched down to roll the girl carefully onto her back. "You didn't? You wouldn't." Her hand went to check her pulse, but the ship rocked violently, knocking her backwards.

"Bridge to all hands, report to battlestations. Repeat; all hands to battlestations."

The Bridge:

Tom tried to peel his eyes away from the viewscreen showing an approaching Borg Cube firing white weapons directly at them. He also attempted to swallow the stubborn lump in his throat. Neither happened. He could fly the ship blindfolded, a talent he wished he didn't have at that moment.

"Lieutenant, phasers. Rotating frequency," Tuvok ordered a new arrival to the Bridge and Tactical.

Craig took one look at the viewscreen, squeaked and unlike Tom buried his head in the station, never to look up again. "No damage to the Borg. Every hit seems to drain our shields by ten percent, we're currently at forty."

"Commander, they're attempting to lock a tractor beam," Harry reported anxiously.

"Mr Paris, bring us out of warp, then evasive maneuvers beta pattern five, keep us out of range of that beam," Tuvok ordered. "Re-modulate shield frequencies Mr Anderson."

The ship continued to rumble, making it harder for Craig to keep up. "I'm trying, they're still managing to land..." A particularly vicious tremor nearly sent him barrelling over the top of Tactical. While he was recovering they were hit by another. "Twenty percent."

"Are you even trying to evade them, or are you too busy setting up the cameras for your new show *Drunk Borg Lol: Live?*" Jessie hissed towards the helm.

Tom firmly ground his teeth, "oh boy, another classic from does nothing Jessie. I can't wait for more of her expert on everything advice."

"Ensign, concentrate your efforts on your piloting," Tuvok scolded.

Tom couldn't help but roll his eyes, all while secretly feeling relieved since the banter was a distraction from their predicament. That was until another tremor made him lose his finger placement on the console for a second.

"Bring us around, Anderson fire a spread of phasers and torpedoes while he does. Then take us to maximum warp," Tuvok ordered.

"I dunno," Tom said warily, "weapons fire cover isn't going to trick the all seeing eye of the Borg, even with their current issues." He followed the order anyway.

Everyone felt the ship turn sharply, while the viewscreen finally lost its shot of the Borg ship firing. Craig meanwhile frantically tapped at Tactical, hoping it would be enough.

As soon as Voyager finished its turn, the blank viewscreen was soon overwhelmed by a close up view of another cube.

"Oh... sh..." Tom stuttered, quickly hammering in a new course.

One last tremor left everyone feeling a sense of dread. The cube on the viewscreen fired a beam straight at them.

"I... I don't think I have to say it," Craig whimpered.

Six figures rematerialised all over the Bridge. Everyone quickly reached for a weapon.

Meanwhile:

Despite everything that was happening, shouting was still coming from Kathryn's quarters. The only change seemed to be the open panel had been abandoned. The forcefield was still up.

Two Borg drones appeared from around the corner, seemingly gunning for the room.

"I can't believe you'd lock me in here, in a crisis no less. You really are..." Chakotay's voice snapped.

"Oh yeah, I'd lock you in my quarters with me. Don't flatter yourself you buffoon!" Kathryn's voice shouted back.

The two drones stopped outside and glanced at one another. In perfect unison they backed away, back to the corner they came from.

They turned around, only for one to be promptly greeted by a fist to the face. They slammed onto the ground with its head slouched to one side, sparks spitting all around him.

The other drone lunged for the culprit with their assimilation arm, which was immediately grabbed and twisted. Their whole body flipped over the shoulder of their attacker, ending up on the floor just like their partner. Both were transported away after a few seconds of convulsing.

"Intruder Alert; all decks. All crewmembers make sure your phasers are set to rotating. Repeat, Intruder Alert..."

The Bridge:

All of the drones that originally beamed in had been taken care of, and were being beamed off. There was little room to celebrate though as they were quickly replaced.

A few shots rang out, knocking some down, until shields appeared around the remaining drones. They converged on the closest crewmembers, slowly as if to drag out the terror.

Tom was one of them, he tried to work on his station while his back was to it. It kept beeping at him negatively, he muttered to himself in a desperate bid to keep himself calm. His eyes instinctively drifted to Jessie on his left. "So um Jess, does the hair come out instantly, does the needle bit hurt?"

Despite the drone in front of her, Jessie's anger switch was flipped on. "What the... you pick your moments. Maybe I should shoot you now so I don't have to hear your stupid thoughts."

"Please do," Harry whispered.

Tuvok sighed, his eyebrow raised. "You're assuming he has any, since he likely vocalises them immediately."

Tom gasped, the rest of the Bridge nervously laughed. The drones kept on their approach.

"Damn Tuvok, that's an epic burn. I'd be hurt if it wasn't so glorious," Tom said, once more trying to key in something at the helm. This time it didn't make such a negative noise.

Jessie groaned, she ended up re-pointing her phaser at him, making his eyes fly wide open. "Either way, I'm doing us all a favour."

"We are the Borg. Your biological and technological distinctiveness will be added to our own. Resistance is futile, you pesky meddlers." Everyone's fearful expressions turned into puzzled frowns. *"Oh we'll see you soon Harry."*

"Oh come on, that joke was old decades ago, and I still don't know what it means," Harry rambled. The drone closest to him grabbed his arm and stuck needles into his neck. His face fell, "oh."

TO BE CONTINUED