

## Episode 5.11

### Lifestyles of the Lost & Helpless

*"Once upon a time, in a..."*

Most of his audience groaned. All of his stories started the same way. He looked at all of their faces with surprise; it was a point that he hadn't noticed himself.

"Now, now, manners cost nothing. Let me start again."

*"Once upon a time, in the middle of a beautiful meadow... OW!"*

Everyone's attention went immediately to the storyteller's feet. Some laughed, while others knew that pain well and felt sympathy for him. He followed the pain in his leg to the source and was met with a pair of innocent blue eyes.

"Miral, was that you?"

An innocent smile formed. "No, was him." The toddler's arm flew in the direction of the audience. "He moved."

Neelix clicked his tongue disapprovingly. His attention went to the audience. "It isn't very nice to blame other people, especially young innocent ladies. I'll have a chat with your mummy later, Duncan."

"My mummy already knows you're an idiot, why waste her time?" Duncan commented with a shrug.

"I could talk to your father instead, though it's obvious where you got that from," Neelix scolded. His attention went back down to Miral who he caught rolling her eyes and clenching a fist, only for a second. "What's the matter sweetie?"

"Eew," she barely whispered. "Your stories sound same, tell a different one."

Neelix's face frowned in confusion. That was exactly what he was doing. "I was trying to when I was violently interrupted." This time Duncan rolled his eyes.

*"Once... OW!"*

"Duncan, again!?" Neelix quickly looked down, catching Miral trying to pull one of the boys over by the arm. For some reason the Talaxian smiled as if she was doing something cute. "Young love, precious."

This comment stopped the mischievous girl in her tracks, not before letting go of the poor boy she was trying to frame. "Grossy," she cried while wiping her hands on the floor.

"I'm sure you'll enjoy parts of my story then, children. It has everything you could want from a story."

"An original opening?" Johnathan asked hopefully. Most of the children nodded furiously.

"Whatever do you mean by that?" Neelix questioned.

Duncan sighed in annoyance, "once upon a time there was a badly described place where something happened. Snore."

Some of the children giggled. Carl pulled a few faces, which Duncan noticed at the corner of his eye. "I'm Duncan, I have no personaty so I copy daddy's, fear me," he grumbled quietly to himself. "Lamer," he huffed, not noticing that Duncan was staring at him with his eyes narrowed.

"Now boys, save the squabbles for when you like girls or something," Neelix chuckled. Both boys rolled their eyes at the same time, Duncan shrivelled his nose up as well. "Okay so you want me to start the story differently? I see. I suppose it doesn't work with this one as it isn't a Fairytale."

"And the love story between the pixie and the handsome chef wasn't? Dad's told me that it's about you and that Kes girl," Johnathan blurted out. He looked thoughtful for a moment, "even though she dumped you it was still ridiculous, so maybe it is. Forget it."

Neelix shook his head, trying badly to hide the pain that sting caused him. "Let's begin shall we?"

*"All was lost for the planet of Shurouva, until the heroes from the stars arrived."*

"No way, we've heard that one, and it was so long it was your bed time by the time you finished," Carl whined.

Neelix smiled bitterly. "If you'd waited until I said the second sentence you'd know I was telling a new one. Now..."

*"Their heroics held no rewards and no respite. Their gallant vessel lay helpless in a beautiful meadow; the Voyagers would not be travelling for some time. All that they could count on were their enduring friendships and for some, love to keep them going in those harsh times. Fortune would have it that those traits were the Voyagers' strongest ally."*

The children were either sleepy or queasy by this point. The unfortunate ones were both. They continued to listen anyway.

*"Our story begins in a handsome man's kitchen. He had some unexpected help, for which he was very grateful."*

"No, does that look like a place you'd put a spatula?" Neelix whined as he snatched the offending object away.

Kiara looked at the wall rack where other utensils hung from, then straight back at the angry man with the spatula. "Yes." Neelix shook his head. She pointed at a nearby drawer.

"Of course not. You've been in the Q Continuum far too long," Neelix huffed. To the young girl's horror, he dropped the spatula into a dirty pot, which despite being involved in a ship crash, still managed to have goop at the bottom of it.

"Remind me why I gave up immortality again," she muttered to herself.

Neelix's huffy mood melted into a warm smile, he patted her gently on the arm. "Immortality is a little lonely without family or friends."

"Family? What family? They're either dead or gone completely bonkers," Kiara grumbled. She turned on her heel to head over to the nearest seat, which she had to pick up off the floor before sitting in it.

"That's not true. You have an uncle, cousins..." Neelix tried to reassure her. He followed her out of the kitchen. "Besides, the Voyager crew are like one big family. At least that's how it is for me."

"I guess but that part of the family has their own thing going on. I don't want to bother them," Kiara sighed. "As for the latter, I did mention the word bonkers already."

"Yes because the Stuart clan are all sane and normal," Neelix said with a wry smile.

Kiara raised her eyebrow at him. "Says the man chucking clean utensils into a pot of mouldy leola root."

"It wasn't leola root," Neelix seemed confused. Kiara pulled a disgusted face, and then shook her head. "Look I understand exactly what you're going through. I lost my whole family too. Bonkers or not though, I found a new one. Luckily for you, you already had that."

"Yeah lucky me," Kiara muttered sarcastically. "If somebody had told me I wouldn't have come back at all. This is a nightmare." Tears started forming in her eyes. She blinked a few times to hide them. "Even though I know, he is still not telling me everything. If what I know is bad, how bad is the stuff he's not telling me?"

Neelix knelt down beside her, "who is he?"

"Dad?" She got no response so she sighed angrily. "Granddad? Crazy man? Psycho? Whatever you answer to, tell me!"

Chakotay kept his back on her, his eyes focused on the floor. The sunlight from outside was blinding; he didn't dare to look up. He didn't want to turn away either, there was no hiding the scars on his face in this light.

"That's it, is it? I don't deserve answers. Would you prefer if I found them out on my own?" Kiara was almost in tears.

"No," he finally spoke. "But it's too difficult to put into words, and while it is unspoken I can pretend it didn't happen."

"Oh, so is that what I should do then?" Kiara snapped. She marched across the cluttered Ready Room to meet him half way. "You're keeping my mother from me, so while you don't tell me why, there's no reason to?" His head turned to the side, she could just make out the Tolg technology still on his cheek. "What, it's your logic."

"I'm not the one keeping Lena from you," he said quietly.

"So the chucking me from Voyager to Leda, then back to Voyager again is somebody else's doing? I'm noticing that nothing is your fault these days," Kiara said.

Chakotay sighed deeply. "That's only happening to keep you and James on the same ship, he and... someone else has to take turns between ships."

"That's a load of bull. How can you keep lying to somebody who you once thought was your daughter?" Kiara demanded furiously.

"That's actually the truth," Chakotay replied. He closed his eyes tightly, "and even though you're Lena's daughter, I still think of you as mine."

Kiara shook her own head. Her own gaze fell to the floor in deep thought. She didn't believe a word he was saying.

"I can't give you the answers you want," Chakotay continued sadly.

"Why not?" Kiara almost whispered.

"Because I'm not fit to. You deserve to hear it from someone who isn't a lost cause," Chakotay answered.

This angered her even more, her fists clenched. "You have the stones to say I'm like a daughter to you, and still say something like that? If that were true you wouldn't be like this, you'd fight it." She turned to leave, "you're just a selfish coward." With that comment in the air she left as quickly as she could.

"Can't argue with that," he said to the empty room.

"Did not!" Sasha's voice complained.

"You did, who's bad now?" Duncan's gloated.

Jessie rolled off her back onto her side, sighing into the pillow. "They're back." She yawned while wiping the sleep from her eyes. The sunlight beaming through the windows helped as well.

In the living area the squabbling siblings were sitting at the table, not eating their breakfasts. Amy quietly played with hers.

Duncan grinned. "Ha, you got wrong."

James groaned and shook his head. "What did I just say?"

Sasha smiled sweetly and whispered, "don't wake mummy up."

"Kiss ass," Duncan muttered as quiet as he could.

"Hey!" James warned. He didn't have to say anything else; the boy pouted and folded his arms. "Now can we have a breakfast without war breaking out?"

"I could have said kiss Sass," Duncan mumbled.

Sasha threw a glare at him, "I don't like that name."

"Well I didn't like the kiss part," Duncan quickly said.

Sasha looked at him like he was nuts. "You said it, are you daft?"

James covered his face with his hand, and shook his head. "Now that you're finally out of insults, maybe you can stop picking fights with your sister."

Duncan thought about it for a second. "Nope, I'm just tired." He dug into his chocolate cereal.

"He can't be nice. Duncan likes mean," Sasha whispered.

The furthest away bedroom door opened, Jessie stepped out of it.

"I'm not mean. I'm honest, right dad?" Duncan said.

James reached out to ruffle his hair, "you said kiss ass."

Duncan pouted while he tried to fix his hair. "Most of the time."

Once Jessie had approached the table, James turned to face her. "Sorry, you know once they get going..."

"It's fine, they weren't that loud anyway," she said with a slight smile. "Anyway morning all."

"Morning mummy," Sasha said just loud enough to drown her sister out.

Duncan looked up at her, "morning."

"Did you enjoy the trip?" Jessie asked, briefly turning her head James' way and back again.

"No," Amy whispered while her siblings said yes.

"Amy?" Jessie said with a concerned frown directed her way.

James fidgeted slightly, his face looked a little pained. "There was an incident."

Jessie turned her full attention on him "What kind?"

"Vampire, but I use that word very loosely," James replied.

Jessie turned her head back to her youngest daughter. She had completely abandoned her breakfast by now.

Duncan's face meanwhile had lit up. "Was so funny, mum. He was like grr, and dad was like no, and..." He punched his own hand, which he then made its fingers shake. "Boom!"

"Duncan, you didn't even see that part," James said, staring blankly at the boy.

"Amy told me," Duncan said with a grin.

Jessie raised her eyebrow abnormally high, "boom?"

"Not boom, more like crack and crumble," James said uneasily.

"Uh huh. Vampire, loosely, crumble. Have I got everything?" Jessie said with a shake of her head.

"Creepy," Amy added on.

Jessie sighed deeply, "so it was after them?"

James nodded grimly, "just Amy this time. I'll tell the whole story later." Jessie lightly nodded. He slipped an arm around her shoulders and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Are you okay?"

"Hmm? Yeah, why wouldn't I be?" she mumbled in reply. The replicator nearby provided her a quick escape.

James sipped at the coffee in his other hand. "You seem a little down," he answered as he followed her.

Jessie appeared uncomfortable to him even with her back on him. "I'm not, it's just..." she squeezed her eyes shut. With a sigh she shook her head. "You know what, I'm not going to make something up." The replicator got its order and it sprung immediately into life. With her breakfast in hand she turned back around. "It's Nathan."

"Oh? You know I shouldn't get in the middle of a sibling fight," James said. He glanced over to the table, "it never ends well." His attention returned to her, a smile appeared on his face. "But if you want to talk about it..."

Jessie shook her head, "I can't, not now. You should talk to him though."

"About your fight? I don't..." She shook her head again. "I guess I haven't had the chance to thank him for getting me out of that tower. I doubt that's what this is about."

"No, he never mentioned that," Jessie muttered.

"Well you know, he probably didn't want you to worry, or get angry at the both of us," James said, shrugging his shoulders. Jessie smiled for a moment. "If it isn't that, why do I need to talk to him? Didn't you win?"

"It wasn't really an argument, at least in the end," she answered carefully. "He knows who you are and... stuff, you know?"

James looked confused, "he's in my Slayer trainee class, and I'm the teacher. This is news to him?"

"Yeah well, maybe you're not as infamous as you thought," Jessie smiled.

James smirked back at her. "I figured he always knew. I thought that's why he would make those beating me up jokes." He sighed, "does he have a problem with it?"

"No," Jessie winced slightly.

"Okay, so what's the problem?" James frowned.

"Please just trust me on this, it's important," Jessie avoided answering.

"All right, I'll talk to him," James shrugged. "I dunno what to open with though, but when do I ever plan what I say?"

"Thank you," Jessie smiled. With that sorted she returned to the table and sat down next to Amy. She gave her daughter's hair a little stroke. "Are you feeling okay, sweetheart?"

Amy shook her little head, "no, been bad."

"No, no you haven't," James said as he sat down too. Jessie looked across with a confused frown on her face. "She had a bad dream."

"Oh, well you know bad dreams are not real," Jessie said back at her daughter. Amy shook her head. "It's over now, everything's fine. Can I get a smile, hmm?" The tiny girl tried to force a smile, but that only made both her parents worry more.

***Lieutenant Commander Paris' Log Stardate 58779: The Leda has finally returned after being delayed by yet another disaster. Luckily she's returned intact with no casualties for once. Harry and I have decided to allow the crew a few hours to rest up before the next trip. I'd like to give them more than that but there are still a lot of aliens to evacuate, and time's still a factor. Harry and I will now discuss the strategy for the rest of the evacuation.***

"Was she hot?" Tom asked, his grin wider than ever.

Harry smirked, his eyes glistened. "Naturally."

"Nice!" Tom congratulated his friend with a pat on the back.

"She's invited us back for shore leave when we're done. I was half tempted to stay behind and leave Chakotay to captain the rest of the trips," Harry smiled.

"Oh you sly dog, I'm so proud of you," Tom laughed. "If Chakotay was sane I'd question the half though."

"I would have been fully tempted, I assure you," Harry chuckled back.

"Besides from my man here getting a hottie, that shoreleave would do us some good. Even just a little time to figure things out would be nice," Tom said, his voice turning serious.

"Well as long as we don't tell the Softmicron we're going there, why not?" Harry grinned.

"Then it's agreed. With our delay how long do you think it will take now?" Tom asked him.

Harry tried to think but all he could see in his head was his new admirer. Desperately he tried to tell himself that the sooner he could think, the sooner he could get back to her. That worked very well. "We'd only have two more trips left by the time Voyager herself is space worthy. Three weeks, and that's if everything goes right. Even then Voyager won't be going far very fast," he sadly replied.

"Why don't I take the Leda off your hands for the next few trips? The worst Chakotay could do on Voyager is another runner," Tom suggested.

Harry's eyes lit up, it took him a minute or so to say something. "You'd do that for me?"

"Well it works for me too. B'Elanna wasn't happy that you returned in the middle of the night. Most of the kids had to sleep in sleeping bags in the Mess Hall, due to not many people being available to watch them." Tom shrugged his shoulders, "and you don't want to be around when she's in that mood."

Harry chuckled, "I'm sure your kids enjoyed it though."

"Not really," Tom sighed. "Miral bites in her sleep." Harry frowned. "She sleepwalks."

"Ouch," Harry winced. "How's it going with her anyway, besides from that?"

"She doesn't just bite in her sleep, lets just say that," Tom sighed again. "But enough about me, I want to talk more about your new girlfriend. How far did you get?"

Harry shook his head and smirked. "You wonder why your daughter doesn't like you."

"Hey!" Tom complained. "It's a fair and not sexist question, and she doesn't hate me... much."

Harry ignored him, "and why she doesn't particularly like guys either. You don't talk like that in front of her, do you?"

"Of course not!" Tom snapped.

"Hmm," Harry smirked. "Do you treat her differently to the boys because she's a girl?"

"You know what, I might just let you watch Voyager for three weeks instead. How do you like that one?" Tom grumbled.

"Three weeks of no B'Elanna, and Miral biting. Be my guest," Harry laughed.

Tom tried not to laugh himself, "all right, I know when I'm beat. Having a girlfriend suits you, my friend."

"I know," Harry nodded.

The picture looked lop sided to him. Every time he tried to adjust it and study it again it would still look wrong. It was the only bit of redecorating he had left to do, so it was all the more frustrating.

One last nudge to the right and he realised immediately what was wrong. Once he had let go it drooped back again. He looked over his shoulder to the window. "I'll have to remember to adjust that when we're not lying in a farmers ditch."

Damien turned fully towards the window, taking a moment to absorb the beautiful view. It gave him an idea. "I should put a forcefield up." His hand reached forward to adjust the position of the rabbit ornament on the window. "Next time Voyager's someone's bitch they could fall, can't have that."

A knock on the door startled him. "What!?" He got no answer.

Damien shrugged as he returned to the window, paying particular attention to the broken one. Picking up a tool he got to work. Another knock made him drop it onto his toe. He bit his lip, as usual his little toe was the target of gravity.

"I'm busy!" he yelled. Another knock made him even more frustrated. "Go away!" One more knock made him tremble in anger.

Grumbling a few obscenities under his breath, he limped over to the door. Despite being a little dented it still sensed him, and badly opened up much to his horror or disgust.

His guest leaned on the door frame, her hand caressed the wall beside it. "Hello my honey bun," Annika purred.

"Ugh, no! What does it take to permanently kill you, you bimbo?" Damien snapped. He then noticed the catsuit she was wearing sparkled even more than her old brown ones. It also didn't help that it was bright pink. "Why, why would you wear that? You've already blinded me enough times this week."

"Oh, it goes with my skin. Do I..." Annika decided to rest her back against the poor door frame, and caress it with her hand. "Dazzle you?"

"How many times must a man throw up in your presence before you get the *you are revolting* hint?" a pale Damien replied.

Annika pouted, "aaaw, my baby is still sick? Let me play doctor."

Damien's hand hammered the door panel to close the door, but it started to struggle half way.

"Maybe some fresh air will do the trick," Annika giggled. Before he could think of stopping her, she ran for the broken window, dragging him with her. She forced the arm she squeezed around the front of her waist. He tried to resist but her grip on him was too strong. "You better hold on, spider monkey."

"What? What the hell kind of line is that?" he gurgled. How he was managing not to throw up again was a mystery. He struggled but she threw him over her shoulder anyway.

Everyone currently outside of the ship was then treated to the view of the crazy drone leaping out of the window, with a screaming Damien over her shoulder. At that point they expected a repeat of her last trip on the hull. Smiles were on everyone's faces.

However to everyone's astonishment her jump had thrown her a few metres over the saucer. Once she started to drop like a stone, the only thing in her way was the ground.

Unfortunately for Damien he landed first. Annika's assets were likely full of air so it slowed her fall slightly. Before he could move she landed on top of him.

"Oooh!" she giggled. The drone raised up a little so she was sitting. The sun reflected off her face, which seemed to glitter in response. "See?" Her hand went to her tied up hair, she let it loose.

"Noooooo!" Damien screamed as he tried to get away.

By this time the audience were not laughing anymore. Most even felt sorry for the ex-villain, including B'Elanna. "Poor Damien," she couldn't believe she said.

Everyone already felt a little nauseous watching this scene, but Damien's response to it all made it so much worse.

Annika screamed as she leapt to her feet, "my beautiful catsuit!" Damien quickly got back up, covering his mouth. "I guess I'll have to take it off." Her hand went to unzip at the back.

Despite feeling very, very sick Damien ran for his life towards the ship. She of course bounded, or bounced after him.

"That's the worst thing I've ever seen, and I've seen Neelix streaking," B'Elanna muttered. Her teammates grimaced at the memory, but it was still better than what they had just seen.

"Change of plans," Harry announced as soon as he left the turbolift. "After our resting time, a few people will be re-assigned." As he made his way to the centre of the bridge he spotted Chakotay sitting in the First Officer's seat. This made him smile proudly for a second until he saw the stoney look on his face. That was when he realised he was the only recognisable face on his Bridge. "Where is everyone?"

"Rest period," Chakotay muttered with a roll of his eyes.

"Oh," Harry blushed. "Well, I have a job for you."

Chakotay shook his head, "I'm only sitting here so I don't have to hear you whine about your precious chair."

"Okay, I heard yes sir," Harry smiled. "First, your report on the er... three's company incident."

"Waste of breath," Chakotay answered as he climbed to his feet. "He told me to go find a hole and die in it, to sum up my report... sir."

Harry sighed. "How did you ask him?"

Chakotay narrowed his eyes in the younger man's direction. "I asked him if he knew anything about our three guests and their identity. What do you think I am?"

### **Several hours ago**

"So..." Chakotay said, glancing briefly down at the three children standing behind James. "Has it ever occurred to you to stop breeding? I'm sure today's been a good hint. It's late, but a hint anyway."

### **Present time**

"A liar?" Harry replied.

"Well my memory may be a little fuzzy. There's a gap between my question and waking up in Sickbay so..." Chakotay said. "I'm still wondering why this psycho is allowed free reign of both ships."

"Yeah, it is a wonder," Harry said, staring intently at the ex-Commander.

"What does it matter anyway? So at least two of his brats and a mystery person travelled back in time to visit us. They're gone now anyway," Chakotay said.

Harry cringed slightly, "it matters because Craig mentioned that James met one of them. Its bad enough they had to talk to us, but meeting your dad in the past could change things. Next thing you know we have another temporal paradox, and I'm having a hard time keeping up with the ones we have."

"Well if it keeps you up at night, ask," Chakotay smiled. "Just don't expect to get out without a concussion."

"Well hopefully you won't screw this task up," Harry muttered as he handed him a PADD. The other man scowled at him. "I'm probably expecting way too much of you."

Chakotay glanced briefly at the PADD then back again. "You're re-assigning me?"

"Getting rid of you," Harry corrected with a smirk. That disappeared when Chakotay's glare became a little unnerving for him. "We need supplies and who better than to negotiate than me? In the meantime, I'd trust Damien with the Leda more than you."

Chakotay scoffed before throwing the PADD at his face, he ducked in time. "You just want to see your blind alien girlfriend. Typical Harry, thinking with his..."

"Look I like your angry slash evil rants as much as the next guy, but I've got to go pack," Harry said with a smile. "I'll just message everyone who's been re-assigned. I don't want to give you too many responsibilities. We all know you have a tendency to run off and..." Chakotay snapped; he grabbed the younger man by his collar. This made him yelp in response.

"Anymore sass from you and I'll deliver you to your girlfriend in a..."

"And it just gets better," Kiara's voice interrupted him.

Chakotay let go of him immediately, his focus now at the turbolift doors where his granddaughter stood. Inside he ached as the scowl she was giving him reminded him so much of what he lost.

Harry tried to readjust his collar, and stop himself from trembling too. "Right well, when Tom arrives to take command, I'm off." He rushed for the Ready Room.

"Look Kiara, I'm..." Chakotay began to say.

To his surprise she smiled a little. "Do you realise how pathetic you look? I'm sure a certain uncle of mine will be embarrassed to see how badly his evil side is parodied."

"Don't compare me to James. He's..."

"Better than you, yeah sorry," Kiara muttered.

Chakotay inhaled deeply as he tried to contain his temper. "Better? That idiot literally gets away with murder, and he gets the Security Chief and First Officer seats handed to him on a plate."

"Oh this gets even better, he took your job too," Kiara actually giggled. She turned serious very quickly, her head shook. "You're angry at him; you blame him, blah blah... so why take it out on everyone else, including me?"

Chakotay sighed, "was there a reason you came here, Kiara?"

"I was looking for Craig, he was assigned to Tactical," Kiara said, turning her head away. "Like I'd see you willingly."

"Craig?" Chakotay scoffed. "If you think I'm pathetic now, wait till you hang with him for five minutes. He acts like Harry just did with me earlier."

Kiara narrowed her eyes, giving him her version of the Death Glare. "I'm not just some dumb kid, I have noticed, and that's why I want to see him. I can put two and two together you know."

His chest felt heavy, his eyes squeezed shut. "Kiara, try to understand..."

"I'm not a dumb kid, but I'm not a genius either, or a psychiatrist for that matter. I'll never understand you," Kiara snapped. "Like most of my family, you're dead to me." She turned on her heel and flew back into the turbolift.

Her words slapped his face, leaving his cheeks stinging. His chest tightened. All he could do was stare at where she once stood, letting the entire conversation sink in. For a moment, he felt like he had woken up after a long sleep.

Fortunately for the repair crew outside, the star was hiding behind a group of large clouds. The air was a lot cooler as a light breeze blew through the fields Voyager was resting in.

One of the lifting platforms stood beside the belly of the ship, waiting on the ground for someone to use it. A small team stood around it, discussing what needed to be done while organising the tool kits. Nathan was a member of the team but he was barely paying attention. He leaned against the bar around the platform, staring into space.

The group were soon joined by James as he approached from the back of the ship. All of the team but Nathan looked in his direction once he had stopped.

"Uh, we don't need Security with us, do we?" the only man asked.

"Huh?" James was confused for a second. "No, why would you?"

"Oh, we just thought," one woman said, pointing up a few decks to a hull gash. "The outside shouldn't be haunted too, right?"

James looked up to where she was pointing at, he understood immediately. "Thirteen. No, it shouldn't be. I'm just here to talk to Nathan."

"Oh," the woman said. She turned to the man in the group. "We're good to go." He nodded before taking a step onto the platform.

Nathan only noticed the new arrival when the platform started to move, he got out of the way quickly. "Hey, didn't notice you."

"I noticed," James said.

Nathan glanced at his team. They were now completely focused on the platform. "We're not training, are we?"

"No. Jessie told me you wanted to talk about something," James explained.

"Right," Nathan mumbled. He looked back towards the ship, then the platform which had gone up three levels to Thirteen's gash. "Now?"

"Whenever you're free. It's not like there's much for me to do, I'm better at breaking than fixing things. So er, just let me know," James said. He frowned as Nathan's attention was still on Voyager. "Thanks."

This got his attention, he swung around to face him with a bewildered expression. "What?"

"You saved my life in that tower," James answered.

Nathan looked a little embarrassed, he rubbed the back of his head. "Oh that. It was nothing, really."

"Not to me," James said. For some reason this made Nathan uncomfortable, his head turned slightly away. "Maybe I'll try to tone down the making comments and stuff from now on, huh?" He was starting to feel the same as Nathan's attention seemed to drift further away. "I say maybe, it's no guarantee you know."

"Uh yeah," Nathan finally spoke up. His attention was still away. "No problem, just don't make a big deal out of it," he stuttered. This was odd even for him, he knew it but he couldn't stop it. "I'm okay with it, you know."

"With what?" James asked. His eyes shifted to the left briefly, mainly to see if Nathan was distracted by something. He appeared to be looking at nothing.

"I don't think you should be sickly nice to me just 'cos of the tower thing. We bicker, that's our thing and I'm cool with it," Nathan continued stuttering. "Besides, I was just keeping a promise." His face was bright red at this point. "You know what, forget that."

"A promise? Jessie wouldn't..." James was definitely confused by now.

Nathan shook his head, his attention finally went back to him. "Forget it, just mumbling. You saved me and the others at the planet anyway. I just did what I had to, we're even."

"I don't think..." James muttered.

Nathan sighed loudly, annoyed at himself. "Maybe..." He turned his head towards his busy team. "We should talk but, not here."

"Good cos I haven't a clue what just happened," James commented.

"Yeah sorry. I don't handle that stuff well," Nathan meekly said with a small smile. "I'll explain." He began to walk away from Voyager's resting grounds.

Tom winced as he stared at his friend, sympathy washed over him.

"So yeah, I won't be doing that again," Harry finished his story. His body still trembled a little as he thought about it. Tom clasped his shoulder. "I don't know why I did it, I must be mad."

"Love makes fools of us all," Tom sighed. Miral squirmed in his arms, pulling a disgusted face. "Believe me. How many times have I been almost or beaten up?"

Harry nodded in agreement, "true. Tira has made me feel a lot more confident now. I shouldn't let Chakotay put me off."

"Atta boy," Tom smiled. "Are you off then?"

"Almost. The Doc wants me to stop by first. Apparently I didn't escape the medicals," Harry replied with a sad smile.

"Ha, too bad," Tom chuckled. "Have a nice trip." He leaned in close to whisper to him, "please don't take the Flyer."

Harry raised his eyebrow, "the Flyer is still sitting near a giant crater, nose buried in soil, unable to fly. No problem!"

Tom's eyes began to water at the thought, "my poor baby." Miral looked up to scowl at him. Harry chuckled at him as he headed for the turbolift nearby. He passed B'Elanna on the way inside, they gave each other a nod. "What would I do without her?"

"If only you loved the other women in your life that much," B'Elanna commented with a sly smile. Tom almost leapt out of his skin. He turned to face her.

"Why do you keep doing that?"

B'Elanna laughed, "just keeping you on your toes, or not as it would appear."

Tom groaned and looked down at his daughter, "this is where you get it from, isn't it?"

B'Elanna nodded as she reached over to stroke Miral's head. "We girls have to stick together, even if it's something small like picking on daddy." The little girl giggled cutely. Tom almost swooned at it until he remembered she only ever did that when she was naughty.

"Please, it's hard enough without you encouraging her," he complained, his eyes cast downwards. "That's why I brought her here today. The Leda isn't going anywhere. We can have a safe father and daughter time in the place where I'm in my element."

"This isn't your Bridge," B'Elanna pointed out.

"Minor detail," Tom muttered. "My other point still stands."

B'Elanna's smile faded away, "you're right, I'm sorry. This is a nice idea, did you bring any toys?" Tom pointed to a bag on the ground. "Good, that may keep her from playing Pun-Run."

Tom frowned as he let his daughter down to stand on her own. "What's Pun-Run?" He got his answer straight away from a pain in his leg. He looked down to find Miral running away, laughing.

B'Elanna sighed, "she still struggles with punch."

"Nope, she's mastered it," Tom stuttered. B'Elanna watched him rub his leg with sympathy. "Why?"

"Well I keep saying it's better than her being bullied and/or unable to defend herself," B'Elanna said.

Tom looked around quickly like he was worried about someone hearing her. "Should we really be talking crap about someone else's daughter? Especially someone's who could make Tom mince meat."

B'Elanna raised her eyebrow, "I wasn't comparing her to Amy."

"Shhh!" Tom tried to shush her. It just amused her instead. "Why do you two hate me?"

"We don't, do we Miral?" B'Elanna smiled sweetly.

"Yup!" Miral squeaked from nearby the helm.

Tom's shoulders fell, B'Elanna quickly placed a hand on one. "She was probably just agreeing with me."

"I doubt it," Tom mumbled sadly.

"Come on, don't be..." B'Elanna said. Tom's panicked face appeared, interrupting her. "What?"

"You said bullied. Who the hell is mad enough to bully any of James' daughters? I mean really? You might as well slowly shoot yourself in the head with a cross bow, while jumping off Voyager's saucer, legs first," Tom explained.

B'Elanna laughed into her hand, "like I said, I never meant to single out Amy."

Tom sighed deeply in relief, "thank god."

"If it makes you feel any better, she and Miral seem to get along okay. That may keep you in the good books," B'Elanna said. This cheered Tom up a little, he smiled at her gratefully. "Would be ironic, wouldn't it?"

"It would only be ironic if they fell out and Miral..." Tom muttered to himself. He shook his head to remove that terrifying thought. "Oh gods, I knew one day James would really be the death of me."

"Well it's not like he's never tried," B'Elanna giggled. "Anyway I'd better get back to work. Have fun, and good luck." She turned to go back into the turbolift. Tom smiled after her, not realising that Miral had ran back up to him.

"Phew, now it's just you and me," he said, glancing back at where Miral once was. He frowned. "Miral?"

"Are you picking on my friend?" Miral asked him with a deadly look in her eyes. Tom finally realised where she was and looked down. "Huh?"

"What?" Tom's eyes widened in horror. "Oh god no. Like I was trying to say, that would be a stupid thing to do."

Miral cocked her head to the right, staring straight up into his eyes. He tried to smile warmly at her, but he couldn't shake off the glare she was giving him. He didn't have to wait long. She reached out to tug on his trousers, and roughly too.

Everyone in the Bridge burst out laughing as his trousers fell to his ankles, revealing red boxers with a Delta Flyer pattern on them. On the butt there was text reading *Da Man*. He blushed so much his face was redder than his boxers. He quickly knelt down to pull them straight back up.

"Eew," Miral commented. "Worth it."

Tom stared down at his daughter. For the first time he was angry at her. "That's enough!" he snapped. Miral's smile vanished. "That wasn't a very nice thing to do, at all. You don't treat anyone like this, especially your own daddy."

"But, funny," Miral squeaked, she tried to smile again. The look on his face actually stopped her.

"No, bullying," Tom corrected her sternly. "You wouldn't like it, would you? Don't ever do that again."

To his surprise his daughter burst out crying, and loudly as well. She even put Amy's to shame. Everyone covered their ears and turned away. Tom's first instinct was to pick her up and comfort her, but he tried to resist it. It was probably the hardest thing he ever had to do.

Meanwhile in the Leda's Mess Hall, her cries could even be heard there. Everyone tried to block it out.

"As if it couldn't get any worse, it does," Damien stuttered. He was still trembling violently. "She glittered in the sun."

Ylara looked across at his full plate. "That's the worst part?" she asked with a raised eyebrow. While he stared straight ahead of him with a pale expression, she snatched his plate.

"She swished her hair around and..." Damien squeaked. "And started to... egads, undress."

Ylara tried her best not to laugh at his misfortune as she tucked into his breakfast. He finally noticed that and stared at her with wide eyes.

"How the hell can you eat after hearing that story? Weren't you listening?"

"Barely," Ylara answered honestly. "Which one is Barbie?"

Damien groaned and rolled his eyes. "The blonde bimbo in a catsuit."

"Who would wear a cat costume?" Ylara asked, puzzled.

"No!" Damien snapped, slapping his own face with his hand. "This skin tight thing that may as well be body paint. I'm sure you're used to that look where you came from."

Realisation struck her, "oh, her!" She pulled a disgusted face as the image popped into her head. "Well she is insane I guess."

"Hey, she'd be lucky to get a great man like me," Damien tried to boast, but he still sounded sick.

Ylara tried not to laugh as she had just put some food into her mouth. Once it was clear she said, "you know for once, I agree."

Damien scoffed, waving his hand mostly in her face. "Spare me the jealous act."

Ylara shoved the food away while turning her head to glare at him. It was strong enough to melt the table but he seemed to be immune to it. "Tell me again about the landing on top of you, and undressing part."

"Urgh," Damien suppressed a gag, but barely. "You're a piece of work. Why did I ever tell you?"

"For some reason you think I care about your tiny problems and ego," Ylara replied, not breaking her glare.

Damien huffed as he folded his arms on the table. "Unfortunately you're the only one I'd ask to deal with this."

"Why? You still owe me dozens of chores," Ylara muttered.

"Why would you charge me? You like killing things, don't you?" Damien said with an evil glint in his eye.

Ylara's face turned ice cold, she stood straight up. "I have an idea. Marry her. She's the only one who can stand to be around you, so why not?" Damien tried not to throw up yet again as Ylara marched out of the Mess Hall, almost knocking poor Neelix out of the way in the process.

"Oooh, I hope you haven't angered your only friend," he said as he approached.

"Friend? Are you eating your own poison, Talaxian?" Damien hissed.

"Of course not, it's just to keep the local wildlife away from my kitchen," Neelix stammered, glancing briefly to the windows.

Damien grimaced but he wasn't surprised. "She's not my ally. She thinks I'm her slave when it's the other way... you know what, why should I tell you?"

"Hmm, I couldn't help overhearing about Annika making a move on you," Neelix grinned as he joined him.

"Come to gloat have you? I had you all wrong. Well not all wrong, you do cook like you dress," Damien commented.

Neelix glanced down at his favourite outfit, pouting slightly. He calmed down quickly. "Oh, your harsh manner made your compliment sound like an insult. My mistake. So anyway..."

"Is it too much to ask to have a conversation with at least one brain cell? I keep coming up dry here," Damien rolled his eyes.

Neelix frowned in confusion. "I thought Annika was popular because of the chest." Damien groaned as he tried to keep that horrible image out of his head.

"You don't have that many people who can stand you as it is, I wouldn't be so picky. Annika's a... fine girl; once you get passed the crazy, the look at me catsuits, and her delusion of being a unique flower we should all love." He then shoved a tray in the villain's face. "Cup cake?"

Damien cringed at the sight of the variety of green on the tray. "Yeah cos you're not crazy or suffer delusions of greatness yourself."

"I'm not hitting on you. I give everyone food," Neelix was confused again.

Damien pulled a disgusted face, "I don't know who is worse."

Neelix's patience with him had run out. "Rude! You're not fooling anyone Mr Damien. You really should have a last name, by the way. I think you're definitely lonely and you're so proud you won't admit it or do something about it. Why else would you keep surrounding yourself with people you claim to hate; the FVDA, evil versions of us, Riker, us again, Ylara."

Damien narrowed his eyes at the Talaxian, "so I guess you're Neelix Smith."

"What?" Neelix stuttered. "Didn't you listen to anything I said?"

"Clearly I did, it was the only part worth replying to," Damien said. He stood up, even taking the tray with him. "I might need these later." Neelix seemed oddly proud as he walked off with them, holding his nose. "Yeesh cupcakes shouldn't smell like feet," Damien mumbled once he was through the door.

Whilst everyone else was working on its hull, one person had decided to sit on it instead and stare into the horizon. He had picked that particular spot so no one would see him but he wouldn't risk sliding off. As nobody would be using it the flat area around the outside of the Conference Room window was just right. Just in case he chose to sit as close to the walls around the Bridge, blocking his view from the ground even further. The view from right up there was perfect as the events of last week were literally behind him, out of sight.

Craig couldn't help but groan as he could hear approaching footsteps behind him.

"You've gone to a lot of trouble to bother me. It better be good."

Kiara climbed down from the Conference roof to join him. "Don't flatter yourself," she huffed as she tried to get her breath back. She sat down next to him. "There's still a hull breach on Deck Two."

Craig glanced at her, cringing a little. "I'm sorry, I didn't think it would be you," he said.

"It's okay. At least you admit it," Kiara said sadly.

Craig moved his attention back ahead of him. "How did you know I was here?"

Kiara shrugged her shoulders. "One of the guys repairing that hole spotted you." Her head turned to her right, where he was. "I don't know what's happening anymore. Nothing makes sense."

Craig tried not to smile, "seems to be a theme with everyone these days."

"I know my mu... grandma is dead," Kiara quietly said, glancing down at her feet. "Granddad's been replaced by this monster, I don't know how."

"Nobody knows," Craig muttered. "Losing Janeway would be rough on him, sure, but it doesn't give him the right to be a SOB to everyone." Kiara's attention was back on him, she studied him carefully while he spoke. He noticed and turned his head to her. "What?"

"He's not the only one who's changed. You're... grittier. I can't think of a better word. I liked the old Craig, where is he?" she asked.

Craig inhaled deeply as a stall as he tried to think of what to answer with. Once he was done he still had no idea what to say.

"I haven't seen her and people have been very strange whenever I mention her," Kiara said so quietly Craig could only just make her out. He felt very uncomfortable, he knew what was coming. She shook her head as his expression just proved what she was talking about. "What happened to my mum, Craig?"

"I... are you really sure you want to talk to me about this?" Craig awkwardly said.

Kiara nodded firmly. "I wanted granddad to tell me the truth. All I got from him was self pitying remarks. He doesn't care about anybody but himself. I'll leave if you don't feel comfortable telling me, I'll understand."

"What about James? He's family," Craig said.

"You're not comfortable telling me, that's fine," Kiara muttered. She climbed to her feet, forcing a fake smile. "My gut was telling me that asking James would be a bad idea. Granddad's attitude towards him..."

"It wasn't his fault," Craig interrupted, immediately regretting it. He gazed down at the hull under his feet. "I can't. I'm sorry."

Kiara tried to stop any tears from escaping, she turned her head away just in case. "It's okay. It's not your responsibility to tell me. I'll go."

Craig quickly looked up at her just as she began to walk towards the edge. She was about to sit down so she could climb down to Deck Two when he got up himself. "Wait." Kiara turned back around. "It's not that I can't tell you because of how I feel about it, I just don't want to hurt you. You understand?"

"Yeah," she mimed; her voice was close to cracking.

"But..." Craig shook his head. "You deserve an answer."

"I got it. My mum... Lena's dead. I know," she quietly said in a hoarse voice.

"Yeah but there's something you should know about it before..." Craig said in a quick panic. "It's about why you're tossed from ship to ship. I think you should know before you find out the hard way."

Kiara didn't say anything; she just stared straight ahead of her.

Craig sighed deeply with his eyes closed. When he opened them, he knew what to say. "There's a woman onboard. Her name is Ylara." Kiara's eyes drifted to the side, a puzzled expression on her face formed. "She... she looks like her."

"What?" Kiara obviously didn't understand.

Craig sighed again; it was hard enough explaining it like that. "That's really all I can say. I didn't want you thinking that she was alive when she's not. It would be cruel not to tell you."

"Why? How does she look like her? I don't understand," Kiara stuttered.

Craig shook his head slowly. "Sorry, I can't explain that. All I can say is that we kept you away from Ylara to avoid false hope, or anything for that matter. I'd continue to do that, to be honest."

"So..." Kiara turned her body away. A lump formed in her throat. "What does my uncle have to do with her?"

"Huh?" Craig didn't understand.

"Granddad said that I was supposed to be on the same ship as him. Now you tell me its to avoid this Ylara," Kiara mumbled. "Which is true?"

"Both," Craig answered quietly.

"What's the answer then?" Kiara asked.

"Sorry," Craig didn't answer. "Once you get that answer, there's no going back."

Kiara rolled her eyes and shook her head, the lump in her throat throbbed and her eyes stung. "You're starting to sound like Chakotay."

"It's probably the only thing we agree on then," Craig said softly.

"Fine," Kiara muttered. She sat to climb down from where they were. Craig only watched as she walked around to the left of the ship, he sighed once she was out of his sight. His gaze lingered straight ahead from where he lost sight of her. He could see two figures standing around some debris in the short distance. With a shake of his head he turned away, instead choosing to stare straight ahead of him once again.

Unknown to Craig the two figures were James and Nathan. They had stopped mainly so Nathan could sit on a large but charred piece of metal.

"You should rest, you know," James commented.

Nathan nodded, breathing in deeply. "Hence the sitting."

"No, I mean you were helping with repairs, then went to the Leda, now you're back," James explained.

"I'm fine, and you're one to talk," Nathan said with his trademark cheeky smile.

"I guess," James shrugged. "So, what's all this weirdness about?"

"Hmm, what did Jessie tell you exactly?" Nathan answered with a question.

"She said that you figured out my big, not so secret," James replied with a raised eyebrow. Nathan appeared to be a little embarrassed as he turned his head away, he didn't say anything. "She said no but is it a problem?"

Nathan's eyes widened as he looked up at him, "what? No, no of course not."

James shook his head, "it's okay if you do. She's your sister and you'd be right to worry about her. Just don't tell her that and you're fine."

"No it's not, I mean I am a little worried but she's a tough cookie. If anyone can handle a supernatural hubby, it's her," Nathan stuttered. James stared blankly at him, mainly to avoid looking annoyed or offended at that comment. "I didn't know what word to use instead. Is there a PC word for it?"

James decided instead to smirk at him, he shook his head. "Anything but freak, or the M word and you're good."

"M?" Nathan frowned, he got it almost immediately. "Right yeah, that one's mean."

"Uh huh. So if you have no problem with it, why are we here?" James questioned.

Nathan nodded uncomfortably "There's really no problem. I'm happy for you two, really."

"That's... that's weird," James muttered with a frown. "You were all big brother on me before you knew."

"That was mostly just in jest," Nathan admitted. "You were the one taking it seriously."

"Not really. I take the piss out of everyone," James shrugged.

Nathan chuckled, "everyone male. Jessie mentioned that. I joked something about daddy issues and she went all quiet." He nodded as James cleared his throat and glanced away just briefly. "She told me not to take it personally... most of the time."

"Yeah, but it still doesn't explain suddenly being happy for us. If knowing that is the only thing that's changed, then it doesn't make sense."

"You're right," Nathan nodded grimly, his good mood suddenly gone. "I was a little envious that Jess had managed to nab a close friend of hers. Not everyone's that lucky." He cringed a little and looked down, "that's probably not something I should say to you, now that I think about it."

James smirked at his second remark until he noticed Nathan's sad sigh directed towards the ground. "Sorry. Look, neither of us planned getting together. Even now we're best friends first."

"Even better," Nathan tried to smile. "Then I know you weren't some jerk who befriended my little sister, just to get her into bed."

"God no," James scoffed and shook his head. "She was... well is, way too important to me to risk making a move on. If she never asked me or said anything, we'd still be just friends. As long as she's in my life I'm more than happy." He sighed, shaking his head with a smirk back on his face. "And that's enough sap from me to you."

Nathan smiled sincerely, he finally looked up. "Don't worry, I understand perfectly. I had a friend like that."

"But you said..." James said with a frown.

"Yeah, I worded that wrong. I knew the moment I said it," Nathan nodded. "Hearing stuff from Jessie about you and her just makes me miss her all the more. Craig moping about over his ex slash friend reminded me of her too." He sighed deeply, "I acted exactly like that. I feel for the kid, it's hard to snap out of it."

"I'm sorry," James said quietly.

"No, no. It's more than okay," Nathan said. He swallowed a lump in his throat, "she was like family. We were inseparable." He climbed to his feet, but avoided further eye contact. "Like you, I met her when we were little. Six, seven... she didn't give me the time of day at first. She however, nobody could miss her. She had a smile that would light up the room, she was always happy."

James felt a little uncomfortable. He didn't understand why he was telling him this story, or how they had got to it in the first place. He rested against another piece of debris, and listened anyway. He felt he owed him that much at least.

Nathan laughed a little. "Whenever I brought her to my house, my parents would always joke about swapping us. They referred to her as the daughter they never had. I wish her parents had been as nice to me, well her dad anyway..." he trailed off, like it was a subject he wanted to avoid. "The only time we were apart was when one of us had to go home."

"My foster brothers treat her like their sister. Her own brother... I felt like he was my own as well." He finally looked James' way, who to him looked like he was staring off to his left. He could tell he was listening anyway.

With a deep breath in and out, out of the way he decided to continue. "Anyway one day I was at her house, and her dad calls her to the kitchen. I kept her little brother company, but all I could hear was raised voices from the two of them. Eventually she came out, she was hysterical." He closed his eyes tightly, grimacing at the memory. "I didn't understand it. All I could make out was that something was wrong with her baby brother. Her dad decided it would be best to keep him away from normal things; other kids, school, toys... etc."

He turned his head briefly to watch his audience. James hadn't really budged; he assumed he was still listening to him, waiting for him to get to the point. "She said he wouldn't live to adulthood, and if he did, what life would he have? It made no sense to either of us. When she finally turned to face me, her tears had stopped. With a whisper she said *I won't let him do it*. She looked fiercely determined. *I'm not going to give up on him. I'm not going to let dad take away his humanity. We have to protect him.*

*He must live.*" He inhaled deeply again. "She looked straight into my eyes and asked me, *will you help me?*"

"I looked across at the kid I treated like a little brother. He had been so absorbed in the toys he was playing with; I assumed he'd still be there. He wasn't. That apparently abnormal kid was right by our side, squeezing his sister's hand, watching her with quiet concern. I didn't have to think about it. *I promise, I said. On my life.*"

A lone tear in his eye fell to his cheek. He ignored it and turned his attention back towards James. He was surprised that he hadn't moved at all since he started his story, his gaze seemed light years away. "It only took me thirty years, but I kept that promise."

There was a deathly silence for a while, a one he didn't really expect. James didn't even move, and it was starting to worry him greatly. Nathan decided to open his mouth to say something, anything. At that moment James finally moved, but only to turn and walk back towards Voyager.

Nathan didn't try to stop him. He stared towards the ground. It only felt like a few seconds, but when he looked back up all he could see besides the dead field was Voyager. The sun was creeping up on the horizon behind it, dulling the brightness of it for him. With a heavy heart he decided to return to it as well.

### **The Leda, Sickbay:**

"Please hold still," the Doctor complained as he tried once again.

Harry would not listen to him, he was in a whole other world, or more accurately another planet. The annoyed Doctor aimed the tiny hammer at his patients knee one more time, but it just kept shaking side to side.

"Mr Kim. I would like to finish this medical sometime before Voyager is re-launched."

"Hmm?" Harry barely registered him. Finally the hammer tapped his knee, this brought him out of his daze. "Ow!"

"Ah so that does work," Jones sighed. He made a note in his PADD.

"When are you going to start, Doc? I've got to get out of here before Chakotay tries to kill me again," Harry said.

Jones stared at him blankly, which Harry matched with a chirpy stare. This went on for a few minutes before the Doctor gave up. "I'm finished."

"Oh, great!" Harry grinned.

"Mr Paris tells me you're going to see a lady friend," Jones said, shaking his head. "I never would have guessed that if he hadn't told me."

"Hey, I've gotten more girl attention than you have," Harry pouted.

"I was being sarc... never mind," Jones groaned. "I need to run a few more tests to make sure that this is okay."

Harry still looked offended, "you don't need to do a scan. I'm perfectly normal and I'm not happy that you think my getting a girlfriend warrants a scan."

Doctor Jones smirked at his tantrum, he shook his head. "No, it's Starfleet procedure. If an officer decides to enter a relationship with a new alien, he or she..."

"Oh the Kirk Protocol," Harry's face went crimson. "You already have her species information, right?"

"Right, but I still need to do a comparison. Excuse me, wait there," Jones chuckled. He made his way to the station nearby. Harry quickly jumped off the biobed to join him.

"But Doc, I'm not going to..."

"That's the spirit," Jones whistled.

Harry groaned, "no, that's not the *going to* I was about to say."

"Then why the objection? Everyone must follow the rules," Jones smiled.

"Fine!" Harry sighed.

The Doctor's eyebrows raised a little as he worked. "So, she must be something if you're leaving Chakotay in charge of the Leda for her."

"I'm not," Harry protested. "Tom will look after the Leda. I didn't tell Chakotay this, I lied but... he's not even in charge of Voyager either."

"Oh?" Jones interest was high.

"It wasn't my decision but he'll blame me anyway," Harry muttered. The Doctor cleared his throat. "Oh well James is the second in command, so..."

Jones chuckled, "yes I'm sure that will be great news for him to hear. Good call."

"I'll be gone when he does find out," Harry smiled, but that didn't last. "How long will this test take?"

"Relax," Jones said much to his relief. "You're in the right place if he finds out before you leave."

Harry stared blankly at the amused Doctor. "It's been eleven years and your bedside manner is still crap. Have you ever considered programming one?"

"No, that would be changing who I am, would it not?" Jones answered with a smile.

"It would probably be the only character change I'd be happy with, sorry Doc," Harry commented.

"Hmm so you don't even support your own? That is interesting," Jones mused. Harry directed a confused frown at him just as he wandered off to the office. He hurried after him.

"Wait, what do you mean by that?"

Doctor Jones turned around to face him with a surprised look on his face. "The Harry Kim I met eleven years ago would always put his career first, women second. He dreamed of commanding his own starship." Harry's face drained in colour, his attention shifted to the floor. "I honestly thought you knew."

"No," was his answer.

Jones actually looked uncomfortable for once. "I'm not judging you. There's nothing wrong with what you're doing. You have your own ship now. You and it have been through quite a lot of turmoil." He patted him on the back, "go. The Leda will still be here and will still be yours when you get back."

"Thanks Doc, but you've given me a lot to think about," Harry muttered.

Ylara kept looking behind her as she walked down the corridor. Somebody going in the opposite direction turned the nearby corner. He stopped in front of her, but to his dismay she didn't see him. "Wait, wait!" Her head swung back around to in front of her, her eyes widened.

"Er, what... what are you?"

"I'm Neelix," he sounded offended. "I'm sure we've met before."

"I'd remember," Ylara suspiciously said. Her hand hovered over a knife attached to her leg anyway. "Why did you stop me?"

"I'm arranging a mass memorial for the people we lost in those battles. I assumed you wanted to know, mainly to pay your respects to Kevin."

Ylara's blood ran cold. "What? Why... why would you think that?"

Neelix senses her nervousness, he smiled warmly. "He's one of your kind, isn't he? I imagine when another Slayer is lost, it adds a lot more pressure and er..." Ylara's stare was intense enough to shut him up for a minute. "I was informed that you reported his death. I just thought you would want to know. I didn't mean to upset you," he said sincerely.

"We didn't get along, I didn't even like him," she protested a little too much. Neelix's morale officer senses were tingling. "There was no reason for him to do that." She turned around to walk back the way she came.

"You mean dying? I agree. I'm sure he wouldn't though," Neelix said.

Ylara stopped, her head shook. "He should have left it alone. He was an idiot."

"Why do I get the feeling there's more to the story?" Neelix wondered.

"There's no story!" Ylara snapped. She continued on her way.

Neelix shook his head sadly. "It will be at 1800. I hope you'll come." He got no answer.

Once he was out of range, Ylara clenched her fists as her anger grew and grew. She stopped once the corridor was clear of other people. Her fury grew too much for her, next thing she knew her right arm swung to the side and slammed into the wall. The poor glass panel there was smashed on impact.

"Oh that's the second time today," another voice said from afar. Ylara almost growled once she pulled her arm back. She would never forget that annoying voice. "Though it wasn't an arm. Now that I think about it, my mirror broke on its own. Funny that."

Ylara turned her head to find Annika standing directly beside her. Startled she backed away.

"How did you get here so quickly?"

"Oh, I'm special," Annika giggled as she swished her hair back.

"What do you want?" Ylara demanded harshly. The strange girl looked even more strange than usual to her. Luckily she had changed out of her pink catsuit. Instead the crazy drone had decided to bring back her silver one with the painted on rib cage.

"Girl time darling," Annika replied. Her demeanor was rougher than usual despite what she had said. "You should stick to your level, sweetheart. That's Craig by the way. Daniel was already batting above your height." With that comment she patted the already angry Slayer on the head like you would a dog. "Little girl."

Ylara was more confused than angry, at least until she was patted on the head. Annika seemed to sense this and back handed her before she could do anything about it. Within seconds there was a hole in the wall behind her, dust flying everywhere and Ylara was alone again.

"Hey!" the hole screeched. To Ylara's surprise Annika jumped out of it like nothing happened. "You can't push me around anymore, Lena. I'm stronger than you."

"I'm not Lena," Ylara said slowly, her fists clenched again.

Annika ignored this, she roughly shoved her opponent back a step. "He is mine, all mine. I won't let you take my snuggly bun." She flicked her hair out of her face. That was when Ylara realised what the difference she sensed earlier was. Her cheek was badly scrapped, but instead of bleeding, that part of her face sparkled.

"What the hell are you?" Ylara growled. Then she frowned when another question popped into her head. "Who's he?"

Annika scoffed, "wow you don't know which man I mean? Someone's a slapper."

"No I'm a puncher," Ylara muttered. "Answer me and I won't kill you."

"Like I'd be interested in bleach boy Daniel, or wimp Craig. He has toughened up a bit but...." Annika rolled her eyes. "And I'm already dead so." She stuck her tongue out as she kicked Ylara in the knee, just like a child would. "Stay away from my Damien."

Ylara was genuinely confused, she looked behind her like she was expecting somebody else to be there. Nobody was so she turned back. "Are you still talking to me?"

"Don't play dumb. You're always fluttering around him. You're trying to tame him to your liking, I've seen it. Well you can't! He can't be tamed, or blamed," Annika said in a deep swoon. "He's a wild man."

"You think I'm in love with Damien?" Ylara asked seriously. She burst out laughing while Annika glowered at her. Her sides already ached and tears streamed down her face. "Thanks I needed cheering up." Annika put her hands on her hips, her scowl was making the situation even more hilarious for her. The drone could only watch as her *love rival* walked away with her arm across her stomach, still laughing loudly.

"Hmph, nobody puts Seven in the corner. Not anymore!" she huffed.

A few minutes of laughter later and Ylara found that she had accidentally walked straight into a turbolift. She wiped the remaining tears from her eyes before opening the door again.

She only had time to widen her eyes before something large and grey slammed into her face. The blow even managed to knock her backwards onto the floor. The corridor span for a few moments. She could just make out a figure was standing in front of her. What sounded like metal clattered to the ground beside her. Her vision straightened out, she could finally see what had just happened.

"Give her back," a familiar voice hissed.

The girl standing over her looked familiar, she certainly sounded familiar. "What?"

"My mother," the girl spat. It hit her as hard as the metal just did, she was familiar for a good reason. "You killed her."

"I..." Ylara didn't know what to say. She stood up quickly.

"Aren't you going to say anything? Huh?" Kiara growled.

"I'm sorry," Ylara decided to say.

That only angered the young girl further. "Sorry? Sorry doesn't bring her back."

"I can't do that. Nobody can," Ylara said.

"You knew enough to take over her," Kiara said.

Ylara shook her head, "no, it's not as simple as that."

"Simple? I don't even understand how this happened at all. All I know is you're in my mother's body so..." Kiara grumbled. She knelt down to pick the metal back up, Ylara quickly stepped on it so she couldn't.

"What are you doing? If you're convinced that I can just switch her back, won't you hurt her?" she said calmly.

Kiara backed off and straightened back up. Her Janeway glare was on in full force. "Well it's one way of finding out."

"Knocking me out or trying to beat me won't get rid of me, I promise you that," Ylara said.

Kiara scoffed, "yeah like your promises mean anything to me."

"Ask anyone, ask that Doctor. He said I was lucky to be alive after that last fight..." Ylara said. She quickly ducked back as Kiara's fist rose up. She didn't do anything else though, her face seemed to be cracking. "I... she's not inside me, waiting to come out whenever I'm knocked out. Nor will killing me bring her back."

"Lucky to be alive?" Kiara said slowly, the rage in her made her voice sound very hoarse. "You're only alive because of my mother. I hope you're enjoying that new found strength and endurance that you've stolen from her."

"I didn't... I didn't mean to," Ylara tried to explain. "I know it's no consolation, but I wasn't myself when that happened. I'm really sorry. You wouldn't be the first to..."

"You didn't mean to possess a girl and steal her life from her? When you say you weren't yourself, were you having a bad day or something?" Kiara said, her voice was shaking.

Ylara frowned at the young girl. "I thought you knew the whole thing."

"What part of I don't understand what happened did you miss?" Kiara grunted.

"Who told you?" Ylara asked.

Kiara shook her head furiously, "does it matter? Whatever the hell you are, you have no right to be here." She stepped forward, but Ylara stood her ground. The two stood barely a foot apart.

"I'm Human, just like you. This happened because I died an Evil Slayer. I realise how ridiculous that sounds..."

"You're wrong. I'm only half Human. My other half will be more than happy to prove that to you when the time comes," Kiara muttered quietly. Her face then softened only slightly. "A Human Evil Slayer? Who are you really fooling with that story?"

"It's true," Ylara said. "I was dead for a very long time. I didn't choose Lena, nor did I really want to take over anyone. When I was evil, all I cared about was killing. I'm not that way anymore."

"I don't believe you. If you possessed her, she's still in there. You're just trying to..." Kiara grumbled.

Ylara shook her head, then turned it away, "she's not. Lena moved on, without a fight. She..." Her head shook again to stop herself from saying anything more about that. "Do you really think if she was still around, Chakotay or Craig would have done nothing for almost two years?"

Kiara stared at her, thinking deeply. Her eyes narrowed, "nice try, but you're stronger than either of them... put together."

"What about her brother then?" Ylara suggested. The colour in Kiara's cheeks faded, her eyes were wide. "I'm really sorry that I've hurt you, I really am. I know what it's like. Before they murdered my brother, they took my mother as well. They made her one of them. I was a child, I didn't know what that meant until I was forced to grab my brother and run from her."

Kiara only shook her head and turned her whole body away. She didn't know what to say.

"What better way to kill us before we grew up?" Ylara mused quietly. She was angry at the memory and herself for bringing it up. "I don't ever expect you to forgive me. All I want you to know is that if I was myself during the take over, I would have done what I could to let her win. I guess you have no reason to believe me, so..." She turned slowly to walk back towards the turbolift. Kiara didn't try to stop her, she stared towards the wall.

### **Voyager, Deck Thirteen:**

The corridors throughout the deck were eerily quiet. It was almost like time had gone back to ten years ago when they were off limits, barring a lone Security team keeping watch.

Today James was the only occupant on the entire deck. He was staring at one of the computer panels across the wall, but his attention was obviously elsewhere.

The nearby turbolift doors opened. Somebody stepped out and immediately spotted him. She headed straight for him.

"Penny for your thoughts?" she said.

He didn't seem to break out of the daze. However he still was aware that she was there. "You'd be wasting your money."

Jessie smiled down briefly towards the ground. She turned her attention back up. "You've talked to Nathan then." James only nodded his response. "Right. If you want to talk about it, just tell me. I know I shouldn't nag it out of you," she said with a warm smile.

"You know..." James murmured. Jessie looked at him with surprise on her face. "This anti-demon shield won't last. They never do."

"Oh," Jessie seemed a little disappointed. "Is there even enough power right now to keep it?" She looked straight at the same computer panel he was.

"Apparently it's powered by any attempts to re-open a portal in any protected area," James said. He shook his head.

"That's actually quite brilliant," Jessie said. "I dunno why they kidnapped me to avoid this happening. I would never have thought of it." She rolled her eyes in disgust, "maybe they were after Damien after all."

"Not really. Unless they continue to keep trying constantly, we won't always be protected. Who knows how long that battle powered this up for."

Jessie faked a scowl in his direction. "You're optimistic aren't you? Once Voyager's up and about we could probably power it ourselves." James shrugged and continued to stare at the screen. Jessie shook her head, "so much for no nagging, but I need to know." She waited to see his response, but he did nothing. "How much did he tell you?"

"I understand why he told you first, but it wasn't really fair to you," James said.

"That's not an answer," Jessie muttered. "And no, it made more sense to tell you first. Telling me just made things awkward."

"Hence the not fair," James said with a brief shake of his head. "I assume he told me everything."

"I hope he explained to you why finding out you were a Slayer made him remember you," Jessie said.

James finally turned his attention away but only by a few inches. His eyes widened briefly and he then rolled them. "Oh he was very detailed."

"Jerk, that shouldn't be a way to remember someone," Jessie grumbled, shaking her head. She folded her arms. "I've already told him that he's on my bad side."

James couldn't help but smirk only a little bit, it was barely noticeable to Jessie. "It's okay. He had no other way to remember me. I was three years old, max."

"Oh I don't know, even with a minor name change it..." Jessie said, trailing off. "You do have a common name I suppose, but..."

"But? There's a but?" James said.

"It still should have been enough to check. Did you look like your sister in anyway?" Jessie questioned.

James shook his head, "I think we're getting into talking about it territory."

"All right, I'll just be offended for you in your place," Jessie smiled half heartedly. "Is there anything about this you're okay with telling me, or should I just sod off, hmm?"

James smiled slightly, he turned to finally face her. "You don't have to leave, I'd never ask that."

"Good, cos I don't want both of you on my bad side," Jessie said, putting on her fake scowl again. "Well? You know I'm not the type to pester you like this. I didn't even like confronting you about it when I first found out about her. You were blaming yourself and... I felt I had to."

"I know," James only said.

"I knew the subject would have to be really awful for you to never even mention her, ever. We rarely have any secrets," Jessie continued. She looked down at her feet. "I wanted you to feel comfortable enough to tell me, on your own. I'll never mention this again."

"I guess at first it was so I didn't have to accept that it happened. Over the years I just assumed I had told you everything," James said, his head shaking. "Don't worry. There's not much else left to say about it. You know."

"No I don't. I only know the bad stuff. All I know is that your sister was murdered. I know nothing about her," Jessie explained. "I'm not whining about that or anything. It's just sad that is what she's remembered for." Her eyes widened a little, and then she looked at him. His gaze had wandered away again. "That was rude, sorry."

"No, you're not wrong," James muttered. "Maybe Nathan will be a little less disrespectful."

Jessie squeezed her eyes shut, guilt pained her face. "Don't say that. I understand perfectly why you can't talk about her. You were only a child, and your father... god what an asshole, made things so much worse for you. If you ever feel okay to talk about her then great, but don't beat yourself up if you never can. Nobody will judge you. At least I never will."

James turned his head back to smile at her. She smiled back.

Meanwhile on the Leda Bridge the atmosphere was a lot more tense. None of its crew dared to look in Tom's direction just in case they made a noise; most likely by laughing. Tom himself sat in Harry's chair staring straight into space. Miral had decided to sit as far away from him as possible and play with her toys. The scowl on her face could compete with the infamous Death Glare.

Tom sighed quietly but because the bridge was so quiet it seemed deafening. Everyone but Miral looked at him expectantly. He cleared his throat, also loudly, and kept his stare straight ahead of him.

The turbolift doors opened. Nathan stepped out and stopped. He looked around with a frown, catching everyone staring at him. "Uh, permission to board USS Creepy?"

"Yeah, yeah," Tom muttered quietly.

"Ookay," Nathan only mouthed. He made his way towards the helm. "Talk about awkward."

Damien finally finished fixing the window in his quarters. It had taken him quite a while to even get close enough to it without shuddering. Annika's recent antics had made him think about moving, but it's not like anyone else with a half decent room was going to die anytime soon. He shook his head at the unfairness of it.

The whole day had been exhausting so he decided to take a quick nap. He didn't even get dressed for it, he collapsed straight into bed and pulled the rabbit themed duvet cover over him.

It didn't take him long to drift off. Unfortunately this wasn't a good thing as just at that moment a tuft of blonde hair slowly raised up on the other side of the window. The hair became a head and hair; the head sported a contented smile and enlarged eyes. Now there was half of a torso in view as well as a pair of hands plastered against the window. Something else hit the window as the body raised. Once that happened the figure started going backwards.

"Uhoh," she mouthed. Only for a brief second she was in full view, holding onto a ladder upright. Then she was gone. Damien continued to sleep, blissfully unaware of what had just happened.

Neelix happily served a small table with a tray of snacks. He didn't understand why they asked if it was replicated. He decided to say it was anyway just to see what happened. They helped themselves anyway. He wondered why they would be okay with substandard food. He finally decided that it was because they were too hungry to care.

While his back was turned the people at the table quickly spat out anything they had put in their mouth. They didn't look very happy at all.

The next table got his full attention. Harry was sitting there all alone, stirring a cup of tea. With his morale officer cap on Neelix sat down opposite him. Harry didn't notice right away so he decided to sit in the exact same position as him; his chin sat in the palm of his hand, that elbow leaned on the desk, and he even adopted a pouty look on his face.

When Harry finally looked up slightly he got a bit of a shock to see the Talaxian mirror in front of him. "God! Why didn't you say anything?"

"I've got a better question. Why aren't you on a shuttle on your way to your lovely friend?" Neelix interrogated him.

"I don't know," Harry answered honestly. "All my life's been about Starfleet. Commanding the Leda is what I've always dreamed of."

"I see," Neelix nodded.

"You're wondering what that has to do with anything, well..." Harry muttered.

Neelix shook his head, "no I understand. You don't want to leave your other *lady* behind."

Harry smiled and chuckled slightly. "It's not as simple as that. I was so excited to finally meet someone that I forgot everything else. I forgot who I was."

"I disagree," Neelix said. "It's just a few days away isn't it? Once Voyager's back up and running and shore leave is over, you'll have to leave your lady behind. I say you should cherish the time you do have. The Leda will still be here afterwards."

"That's what the Doctor said," Harry said with a sad sigh.

"Well two against one," Neelix grinned. "I'm sure you can find somebody to watch your ship while you take some time off. It's been a rough few weeks, you deserve it."

"While everyone else toils with fixing Voyager or transporting refugees?" Harry protested. He shook his head angrily. "That's what I was going to do. That's not who I am."

"So you're not going?" Neelix decided to ask.

Harry frowned at him, "what?"

"You looked like you were struggling with a decision. Have you made it now?" Neelix asked. Harry's face turned blank, he only blinked a few times. "I'm glad I could help." With that comment in the air he climbed to his feet, leaving the bewildered *Captain* behind.

Meanwhile another commander was looking perplexed at what was happening. He stepped forward onto a piece of charred metal by accident. It only made him wobble a bit before he stepped off it and kicked it aside. That wasn't what was making him pull the same face as Harry however. The one responsible stood straight ahead of him, pulling a disapproving scowl his way.

"Would you mind saying that one more time?" Chakotay said.

"Are you kidding, I'd love to," Craig said, breaking into a slight smile. "You're not in command of Voyager while Tom is gone. James is and until he's back, I am. Want to hear it again?"

Chakotay's eyebrow twitched a few times, he couldn't control it. It seemed to be a side effect of containing his temper. "Kim re-assigned me here when Tom replaced him. I assumed it would be so I'd take command here. Why move me otherwise?"

Craig shrugged his shoulders and his smile grew. "Tom and Harry have their moments. Sometimes they can make good command decisions. This one gives us both a good laugh, those two get rid of you, and you're left red faced. Everyone wins."

"Don't push me boy, you're still a scrawny little..." Chakotay's fuse ran out.

"Big talk for a man who's only achievement lately is making his granddaughter cry. Come back when you have some fresh material, okay," Craig commented with a smirk. He dared to turn his back on him and walk back to the command centre.

To everyone's surprise this didn't set Chakotay off any further, it seemed to put him down. He directed his gaze to the floor, and then to the right of him. The Captain's chair seemed to be his main focus.

"How come I don't even outrank you in this little play?" he asked with no malice in his voice.

Craig turned back around before he could get to one of the seats. "I didn't dig up my wife or girlfriend and try to bring her back from the dead."

"That seems to be the qualification for being the backup Captain today though," Chakotay muttered.

Craig inhaled through his teeth and he pretended to consider what he said. He shook his head afterwards. "Can I be there when you tell James the exact same thing?"

"Fine," Chakotay rolled his eyes. "We all know he can do no wrong. And I thought that would be over when his mother wasn't around."

"If we're really comparing, which by the way is a little creepy that you want to be like your wife's son, then can we do that later? You know, when he's here?" Craig asked with another smirk on his face. He dropped into the First Officers seat while still looking at the ex Commander.

"I don't..." Chakotay snapped loudly, getting everyone's attention. He decided to move closer to the banister and lower his voice. "I'm not complaining that I can't do the same things James does without consequences..."

"Funny. It sounds like you are," Craig shrugged.

"No, it's the opposite. I understand why I get a hard time, that's why I hold back," Chakotay muttered as he leaned on the banister.

"And it gets better," Craig chuckled to himself.

Chakotay decided to ignore that and continue. "I just don't like getting grief from people who seemed to support his decision to do these exact same things. It's hypocritical. You're just trying to annoy me for some other reason."

"I guess you're half right. I am pissing you off for treating Kiara the way you have. You and James are the only family she has, and I hear that you not only scared her off, but tried to put her off him as well," Craig said. He turned his head to look up at him again. "It's all me, me, me up there isn't it?" Chakotay's eyes narrowed, he opened his mouth to speak again. "I do still think bringing Jessie back from the dead and making Janeway a zombie isn't comparable. I can't think why."

"The only difference is I failed. Do I really have to explain that to you?" Chakotay grumbled.

"Look, I'm only going to tell you this because he won't, he'll just throw you through walls again. I want to see it this time sure, but like everyone else I'm getting tired of the *poor me* whining," Craig said.

"*You're* tired of *me* whining?" Chakotay growled.

"You really have to stop trying to interrupt me, that's rude," Craig commented as he sat further forward in his seat. "I supported James years ago because one; Jessie was essentially murdered and replaced by a woman who should have been dead thousands of years ago. It's *funny* how history repeats itself. Bringing her back would put things back the way things were. Two; she wasn't buried, her *coffin* was lying on a planet with demons on, so no creepy grave digging. Three; bringing her back meant that we wouldn't be destroyed and/or killed later. Four; I don't remember James skipping her funeral and backhanding one of her kids for calling him out. Now that I've said that there's another; he didn't try to murder another one of her kids by chopping his or her head off. Do you want more cos I'm sure any one of us here can help you out."

"Aren't we forgetting the stuff that he did do, not what he didn't," Chakotay managed to say through gritted teeth.

"I thought we were comparing everything related to wife/girlfriend death and resurrecting, or lack thereof," Craig said in a confused voice. He shook it off, "fine, I'll leave out the last one. I shouldn't as it was because you blamed him for it, but fair's fair."

"We are. He killed his father and tried to kill his mother after Jessie died. It's funny how things are brushed aside when they're done by him," Chakotay said.

Craig rolled his eyes, he felt like he was telling Annika that her cat suits made her look ridiculous, or Neelix that his food is a deadly weapon. "Two words; Evil fricking Slayer. Okay three words, but the middle one was for emphasis. What's your excuse you psycho?"

Chakotay had enough, he marched around the banister area to join him. He towered in front of him. "You have no idea what you're talking about, do you? You would never understand. All you care about it seems is being James' second wife."

That comment made Craig laugh a little to his surprise, but he didn't show it. Craig had just enough room to stand up. "Honestly, this isn't actually about James. It never was. You're the one who keeps bringing him up. Who's the obsessed one? It isn't me. You're just trying to justify your actions by believing someone onboard is worse than you."

"Right, and you think there isn't on a ship with Damien or..." Chakotay groaned.

"No not really," Craig said honestly. "Yeah Damien has done some terrible things, but he knows it. James wasn't himself when he did his, and he blames himself anyway. Ylara at least tried to make some amends..."

"Wait, you think I'm worse than her?" Chakotay couldn't believe what he was hearing. "You?"

"My point is you're worse because you've not only done crappy things; you've done them to the people you claim to love. To make matters worse you complain when people give you a hard time about it. Damien has nothing on you, you're the real definition of evil," Craig said. There was no sign of his good mood from before, he was completely serious.

Chakotay stared at the younger man with a blank stare. All the colour that was in his cheeks was gone. He did not like what he said one bit. What he didn't like even more was that he agreed with him. That feeling chilled him to the bone.

It was time for a short break so Nathan had decided to escape the tense silence on the Leda's Bridge. As soon as he was in the turbolift the PADD he carried in his hand beeped to get his attention. He lifted it up to take a look. It appeared to be a new message which he quickly opened. He was less in a hurry to read it when he noticed it was Jessie. She rarely contacted him like this and he knew what it would be about. With a deep breath he decided to read it.

*"Hi Nath. I hope you weren't too offended by what happened with James. He never did want to talk about Debbie, it's too painful for him. He didn't know what to say to you and it just brought it all back. It doesn't help that he lost another sister quite recently either, but that's just what I think. If I were you I'd leave him alone to let this all sink in."*

*"PS; I only decided to write instead of visit you on the Bridge because Johnathan told me his dad had his pants down. No thanks! Nobody deserves that, so I hope you're okay. We'll talk soon, okay?"*

Nathan smirked a little at the PS part, he quickly pressed the reply button.

*"That would explain why everyone's been weird all morning. I'm glad I missed it. You're probably right, I'll leave him be. I just hope he's not still awkward with me when training restarts. Anyway I'm on break now, maybe we can chat for a bit if you're free."*

The turbolift doors opened not long after he pressed send. He didn't step out right away as somebody else was standing waiting for it. That person also had a PADD in their hand.

"Probably?" she said with a fake angry look on her face.

Nathan tried not to smirk at her. "Well there's a tiny chance that making him talk about it may just help, but what do I know about being a guy?"

"What? What's being a guy got to..." Jessie muttered. "You don't pressure James into talking about things. You'll only get him mad at you, and you'll never get anything then. What's the hurry? Haven't you told him everything?"

"There's no hurry," Nathan answered. He stepped out of the turbolift. "I just thought it would be nice to talk about Debbie with someone, someone who knew her. It's been a while."

Jessie shook her head and turned away from him. She began to walk down the corridor. He followed her. "Yeah, I don't see that happening."

"Oh come on. You said he never talked about her with you," Nathan protested.

"Um, yeah! That's how I know," Jessie groaned.

"So he's never talked about her with anyone?" Nathan questioned.

Jessie pulled a face as she rolled her eyes. Nathan immediately stopped behind her when she turned back around. "I doubt it. What's your point?"

"Not even his other sisters?" Nathan continued to interrogate her. This made her a little irritable. He only smiled at this response. "It was almost thirty years ago, Jess. It's nice that you're not pushy or naggy like a stereotypical wife, but to not talk about a sister he was *that* close to for *that* long, it can't be healthy. Surely you must agree with that."

Jessie folded her arms tightly and arched her best scowl. "There's a reason for that. There's a lot more to it. You can't just go up to James and say *hey, about that sister who died when you were a kid, lets reminisce*. He will not sit down with you and have a nice chat over drinks."

"Why not? After thirty years I'd bet most people could do that. If I asked him about Lena or his mother he would," Nathan said.

"Well for one before the planet incident you two didn't even get along..." Jessie tried to explain.

Nathan waved his right hand in the air, "that's ancient history."

"Because you saved his life?" Jessie muttered, not convinced. "Tom saved his life once."

Nathan chuckled, "I see, so that claptrap about treating me nicely was out of character. I knew it." He shook his head, "I told him to continue as normal. I prefer it." Jessie just blinked a few times. "He and Tom aren't that bad now, right? I've only heard tales. I know, I know, there's always two sides."

"Surely your break must be over twice now, Nath?" Jessie commented. "Tell me why you think you can get him to open up about a painful childhood memory, when I couldn't."

"Well I might try this little thing called asking," Nathan smirked. That disappeared when he noticed the scowl on her face got a little worse. "Okay you're the best friend and wife, so it matters if you nag him too much. Me, not so much."

"That only explains why it's better for you to ask. That doesn't mean he'll open up to you," Jessie said. "Besides he's not going to hit me if I piss him off. You on the other hand..."

"He won't. He thinks I saved his life, I doubt..." Nathan said.

Jessie quickly butted in, "what do you mean by think? Also just because you did, doesn't give you a free pass to do what you want."

"Fine, I'm just going by what he himself said to me," Nathan shrugged. "He seems to be making a big deal out of nothing."

"No I think he's making enough of a deal. He looked like a wreck when he returned to the Flyer. I don't know what you did, if anything, but if he thinks you saved him you probably did," Jessie said. "Don't go screwing that up just because you want someone to talk to, that's extremely selfish. I won't forgive you if you hurt him."

Nathan sighed deeply, he glanced briefly at the floor. "I'm not just doing it for me. Debbie's death hurt me too and I wasn't even there, I can't imagine..."

"James wasn't there," Jessie butted in, in a harsh tone. "Otherwise I'd imagine a murdering rapist would have been hunted down years later, and wish he hadn't have been."

Nathan's lip curled a little, "that's too bad. I spent my teens, early twenties hunting for him but I never found him. I imagined what I'd do to him. I can't imagine what a pissed off Slayer would do."

Jessie shook her head, "it's not funny. That's the type of thing that could turn him."

"True, but that guy would have deserved it," Nathan sighed. "All I really meant was that Debs and I had fallen out when she..." He looked back down to the ground. "All I know was that it happened during a family outing. They were separated. I know James enough to know that he'd blame himself for that when he shouldn't, even at that age. Look if he refuses to talk about something awful that happened thirty years ago, then something is wrong."

"I know. I told you, there's more to the story than you know," Jessie said.

"Yeah I get that. It's been long enough, he needs to grieve. It sounds like he hasn't even tried," Nathan said.

"Don't be so hard on him. He didn't get a chance to, trust me," Jessie muttered with anger in her voice. Nathan looked at her with concern and curiosity. "You're right that he needs to talk about it someday. I just don't think it's with you. You said he was like a brother to you back then, but did he even remember you?"

"I don't know. He didn't say or really do anything," Nathan replied.

Jessie shook her head, "it took him a long time to accept his own mother into his life after meeting her again. You two have not gotten along once since you met. You kept threatening to be a big brother on him, and he'd threaten to..."

"Yeah, you can't compare me to his mother reunion, though I'm sad to hear it didn't go well. She was a cool lady; really funny and nice. I remember what he was like when she left him," Nathan said. This got Jessie's full attention, her eyes were wide. "Yeah I shouldn't share that. He was like a brother, but he was painfully shy around me. I'd usually get a little look to tell me to stop teasing his sister or something, but that's about it. I doubt he saw me the same way."

"That convinces me more that you shouldn't," Jessie muttered.

"Sorry sis but it's not up to you. I'm not trying to get your permission, I just wanted to at least reassure you," Nathan said.

Jessie's eyes narrowed. He chuckled a little, not realising that was probably a mistake. Next thing he knew she had shoved him into the wall. He was surprised more that she could do it than that she had.

"That's the first warning. Don't make me give you a second," she growled.

"Jess?" Nathan stuttered. "I don't want to do anything to hurt him. Debbie would hate me if I did. She... she'll be mortified that even now that her little brother isn't over her death. Surely you want to help him to get over it too."

"Of course I do. I just know him well enough to know that he'll close up when you pester him. Besides you can't force someone to grieve. He has to want to first before he can, nobody can do it for him," Jessie grumbled.

Nathan nodded, "that's very true. That doesn't mean he has to suffer it alone. I think you should decide if by leaving him be you're really helping him, or just helping him avoid it." He decided to return to the turbolift in case that comment made him receive his second warning. He didn't even dare to look at Jessie's face to confirm it.

Jessie watched him escape. Her scowl had disappeared and a pained expression had replaced it. She continued to stare straight ahead of her once he had disappeared.

Harry appeared from around the corner with a confident smile on his face. He noticed her at the last second and adjusted his path accordingly. He was about to press the turbolift call button when he looked back briefly, catching her face. He decided to turn around fully.

"Jessie? Is something wrong?"

"I don't really know," she mumbled in response. "No," she finally answered with before turning around. Harry watched her walk down the corridor. He decided to leave her be for now and go into the turbolift when it arrived.

Once he arrived on the Bridge he had forgotten all about what happened and a big smile was on his face again. "Hi guys, I'm back." His smile once again disappeared when he noticed the icy environment that had replaced his Bridge. "Uh..."

Tom meekly looked over his shoulder, "oh, hi Harry. Forget something?"

"No," Harry slowly replied. He made his way over to his seat. "What's going on?"

Tom didn't really want to tell his best friend, and no else dared to just incase. There was really only one person on the Bridge who would answer.

"Daddy a big cranky pants," Miral spoke up.

"Uh huh," Tom tried to grit his teeth. "I was actually a cranky no pants thanks to my dear, sweet daughter."

Harry's eyes widened quite a bit. Tom had never spoken about his daughter like that before, even when she wasn't around. He always took her abuse well, even though Harry thought he shouldn't. He thought he should be careful about this. "If you like I can take over again."

Tom looked up at his friend with a confused look on his face. "I thought you were going on holiday."

"Yeah. I've changed my mind. This is where I want to be right now. What was I thinking abusing my power like that?" Harry smiled again.

"Hmm," was Tom's uncharacteristic response.

"So er..." Harry said.

Tom shook his head, "I suppose." He climbed out of his chair. "She's all yours."

"Okay thanks, but do you wanna talk first?" Harry asked with concern.

"About what?" Tom questioned.

Harry briefly glanced towards the little red headed baby on the other side of the bridge. "Because..." Tom shook his head slowly. "Okay, but this isn't like you. I just wondered why."

"I had this weird dream that a vampire was sitting near my bed, staring at me," Damien said. His eyes were groggy, bags were under them. His shaking hand held a large coffee mug. "I asked the vampire what the hell she was doing in my presence. She just said it was fascinating to watch me sleep. Weird."

A random crewmember passed by him, sighing deeply. "How romantic!"

Damien threw a disgusted glare at her back, hoping that she would feel the burn at least. "How can anybody be that stupid?" he asked his table-mate.

"Says the guy stupid enough to *still* think that I care about any of his measly problems," Ylara muttered. This time she was fiddling with her food and Damien was finished with his.

"Oh how stupid of me, I'm getting you mixed up with a vampire Slayer again. I forgot you were just a useless girl who doesn't fit in," Damien said, rolling his eyes.

Ylara turned her head slowly while squeezing the fork in her hand. It snapped immediately. Damien just smiled smugly at her when he noticed that.

"Besides none of my problems are measly. They're my problems so they're in dire need of fixing. Yours on the other hand, nobody cares," Damien continued.

"Why haven't I killed you yet?" Ylara asked with a dangerous glint in her eye.

"Because I'd probably just possess you to spite you," Damien laughed. He was serious only a few seconds later, "though if you're already possessing someone, then would it work?"

Ylara shrugged her shoulders. "Go ahead. You'll only get numerous people angry at you, and no one will forget what you did. Though you'd deserve it."

"And you don't?" Damien teased. Ylara didn't answer, she just continued glaring at him. "None of the people who hate you are a threat, are they? Though once again I'm mixing you up with a Slayer. I should ask one of the other two to deal with my problem. Why I'm asking a fake one who couldn't handle one little vamp without Kevin's help, I'll never know."

Ylara's eyes widened. She looked around to make sure no one had heard him. She then grabbed him by his hair and pulled him forward. "What are you talking about? Who told you that?"

"So it's true then?" Damien sniggered despite his position.

"Tell me who told you this and I won't pull your scalp off," Ylara growled.

Damien kept his smile on his face. "Does it matter?" To show she wasn't bluffing, she tugged at his hair but just lightly. He yelped as some hair was pulled out. "B'Elanna. She said you reported him dead. I just put two and two together."

"If that was true you wouldn't be blabbing on about one vampire," she said.

"That's true. I figured I could get away with that since you're not exactly the smartest..." Damien said. He didn't get to finish. His head was slammed into the table, he could feel her hand on the back of his head, pushing him gradually.

"For somebody who is supposed to be a genius you really don't know when to shut up, do you!" Ylara snarled. All she got was groans from the table.

By this time everyone had gathered around to watch what was happening. Nobody dared or likely wanted to help Damien out. The closer people swore they couldn't even see his face, it was almost like it was apart of the table's surface.

"How did you know about the one vampire?" Ylara screeched at him. She heard more groans. "I don't even need to hear you to know what you said. There were demons too. Get your facts right!" A lot more groans leaked from the table. With a growl she pulled his head back up to where it was before. Most people cringed when they saw this as Damien's nose looked like it had been flattened. "Well?"

"I have a..." Damien mumbled through the pain. "... Better question. Why did it take so long to..." He coughed up a little blood. "... Report that the other useless Slayer kicked it?" Ylara didn't do anything, she only had to stare at him to pierce holes through what was left of his skull. "Also, why do you care so much?"

"I... I don't," she stuttered as her hand let go of him. Without her holding him there his dizziness took over, he had to quickly grab his seat to keep himself still. "Kevin was annoying, he only had one thing on his mind, I didn't like him."

"I'm beginning to lose interest," Damien mumbled as he carefully inspected his nose with his hand.

"Why did he?" Ylara wasn't talking to him anymore. "Why did he save me?" she asked in a very hushed tone.

Damien still heard it though but it hurt way too much to smirk about it. "I see. That's disappointing. Ylara has a conscience after all. So much for being more evil than I am. Although..." he winced as his finger went where it shouldn't. "There's hope for you yet."

"Shut up," Ylara growled. "This isn't about that."

Damien carefully sat back down. "Oh so you're mad that he killed the vampire that you couldn't. That's gotta burn."

Ylara returned her focus to him, her face looked a lot paler. "He... he didn't."

"Great, bored again," Damien sighed.

Ylara shook her head. "Nobody did. I..." She looked down towards the table, "I ran."

"Oh ho... thank you," Damien chuckled even though it hurt him. "I knew staying on Voyager and this Leda dump would be worth it."

"Like you have a choice," Ylara retorted, but her face was unchanged. "I assume he was destroyed when the shield went up, but he wasn't stupid. Where... what happened to him?"

### **Meanwhile in Voyager's Mess Hall:**

"So you're upset that you had that nasty turn in the alien towers. I can understand that," Neelix said in a comforting voice.

James didn't even look at him, he kept his eye on his cup. "No."

"Oh. Commanding a ship is a bit stressful, but at least it's not going anywhere. Though I can imagine how bad it would be if it's being repaired and..." Neelix said.

"Neelix stop," James butted in. "I don't need a morale officer, okay?"

Neelix's smile turned mischievous. "Are you sure? I'm on a roll today."

"I'm sure," James replied.

"Oh I'll get you eventually. Everyone's opened up to me today," Neelix grinned. "Are you worried about little Kiara? It's got to be rough on her, and you as you'll have to tell her."

"Yes but no, just leave it," James groaned.

Neelix's eyes wavered as he remained on that thought. "I get the impression she knows anyway."

James slowly looked to his right at him. "You're just trying to get me to talk."

"Well mission accomplished because you still are. You're just not *talking*, if you get my drift," Neelix said. "Now I think I'm touching on the problem here, so..."

"No," James interrupted him again.

Neelix sighed sadly, but that didn't last very long. "So it is something?"

"I never said that," James muttered.

"Hmm. Jessie?" Neelix asked. He got no response. "This Softmicron tower dealy? Kiddies? You don't like the coffee?" James just rolled his eyes. "Okay, um... Tom annoying you? Chakotay and his character transformation?"

"Neelix, you're not going to guess it," James said. Neelix looked at him hopefully. "Because there isn't anything. It's just been a weird few weeks, that's all."

His mischievous smile returned, "I'm closing in. Trainees dying on you, that's got to suck."

"Suck? Very nice Neelix," James commented.

Neelix shrugged, "well yes it's awful, it does deserve a stronger word. Lets see. That's terrible, isn't it? Want to talk about it?"

"No," James answered to his disappointment.

"Kevin dying was a blow. He was one of you after..." Neelix trailed off he noticed James giving him a similar look Ylara did when he said that. "Someone told me he was almost sliced in half. That is absolutely awful. Surely you must have a thought on that."

"Yeah, why did you have to share that news?" James shook his head.

Neelix's spread his arms, showing his palms while he shrugged. "I'm just saying that must have taken a lot of strength to do. It's frightening that even you guys aren't safe. Whatever did that must have been powerful." James' mind seemed to go elsewhere at that sentence, Neelix didn't notice. "I really hope Ylara got it or something, or it didn't escape. It's not like anyone would have noticed in the chaos Voyager was in."

"Uh huh," was all James said.

"Anyway that's not it cos you didn't know about that. Lets see," Neelix continued to think about it. "Oh Ylara, something about her?" He didn't get a response again. "Hmm, Craig? No? Family members?" He noticed a slight twinge on his face, it was subtle but Neelix's sixth sense caught it. "Jessie's side or yours? How is Yasmin, she's the only sister you have left and..." He noticed another twinge. "Oh I knew it. This is about your sister's death."

"For god's sake Neelix, please, leave it alone!" James snapped at him.

This didn't put the Talaxian off, he was finally getting somewhere. "I've got it, haven't I? I want to help."

"No, you're wrong," James said.

"I'm not," Neelix disagreed. "Your reaction says it all."

"If there was something wrong, how on earth could you help? I doubt you could cook it badly away," James said.

Neelix felt a little offended, but he didn't let that show. "Sometimes talking about it can chase the demons away. Not literally of course."

"Oh I don't know," James commented.

Neelix didn't get it so he wasn't offended this time. "Now I know how it feels to lose so much of your family, sisters included. I can be a good ear at least."

"Neelix quit it," a familiar voice scolded him. Both Neelix and James looked towards the source. It came from Kiara, she walked across to join them. "You can't help, trust me."

"But," Neelix protested. He glanced between the two of them. "Oh okay. You have some family time. I'll be back." With that he scampered off.

Kiara sat down in a different seat while James sighed in annoyance. She smiled a tiny bit. "Thanks," he said.

"Nah, he'll be back."

"Yeah I pretended I didn't hear that," James nodded.

"As soon as he figured out what was bothering you, he should have had the sense to back off," Kiara shook her head.

"Neelix, really?" James commented with a slight smirk.

"Yeah, what was I thinking?" Kiara smiled briefly. "It's not something you should be forced to talk about. If you want to, you will."

James frowned slightly. "How did you find out?"

"Oh, I pieced it together. Craig explained some of it but..." Kiara replied, trailing off. "He's a mess, but that's another complaint."

"Craig? I didn't see that one coming," James said. "I'm really sorry, I..."

"Don't be. I wouldn't want to tell me either," Kiara muttered. She stared at her hands. "I kinda lost it."

"Of course you did. Believe me, I get it," James said.

Kiara nodded lightly. "Grandma Janeway. You looked like you were getting along too, you know, the last time I was home. Of course that doesn't mean you wouldn't have felt bad if you weren't."

"I wasn't... getting along with her, no," James said, his voice full of shame. "I was a jerk to her to the end."

"Oh. It isn't easy to get over your parents not wanting you or something. You shouldn't feel bad," Kiara meekly said. James watched her quizzically, she looked up briefly and noticed that. "I... I get it now. I was forced on Lena, and she was just a kid too. It's not like your parents, I guess they had a choice. I guess I win there."

"I wouldn't make it a competition," James said, wincing a little.

"I know," Kiara nodded. "Lena was wrong to blame me. I wasn't the one that made her believe that fake life, and I wasn't the one who took it away from her. But I certainly didn't see it from her side either, I made it so much worse by giving her grief back. I can't imagine having my whole life erased like hers was."

"You just told me that I shouldn't feel bad for being mad at my mother," James pointed out.

Kiara smiled but in a sad way. "Yeah, maybe I was partly telling myself too. We both never got a chance to forgive them."

"It will get better. I know it doesn't seem like that now," James tried to assure her. "What helped me was that I had other people in my life, and that's the same for you too." Kiara looked back down at her hands. "I'm not saying that's the only answer. You'll probably find your own. I guess for now, you just have to grieve."

"Yeah," Kiara mumbled. "But what if I don't? Don't accept it, I mean?"

James shook his head, "then you'll end up a bad tempered fool who will always act out at the slightest thing. You don't want to be like me. I don't want you to."

Kiara giggled slightly, "I did almost go Evil Q earlier. Too late, huh?"

"Ohno, best to get that out of your system. We've got enough Evil wannabe's as it is," James smiled.

"Well it's your fault, you started the craze," Kiara teased. They both laughed for a little while. Kiara's laughter stopped when she thought of something. "Who didn't you get over?"

"What do you mean?" James asked.

"You said that if I don't grieve I'll end up like you. Who didn't you grieve for?" Kiara replied.

James' smile was gone now, what he was thinking about before was back in his mind. "That's... that's a long story. I doubt I'll ever tell it."

"Maybe you should follow your own advice then, hmm?" Kiara said with a sweet smile.

"Yeah, it's complicated though," James commented.

"More complicated than some dead Slayer taking over your mum, killing her, and living in her body?" Kiara questioned, raising her eyebrow.

James shook his head, she had a very good point. "Not in the same way, no."

"Hmm, chicken," Kiara giggled. "Stop making excuses. You're the only one I have to set an example, unless you want me to look to Granddad."

James narrowed his eyes at his young niece, but not in a serious way. "Don't you think it's bad enough that I got three other kids who may look to me for that?"

"Three?" Kiara was surprised. "I only remember Duncan and Sasha."

"There's three now, and that'll change soon," James shrugged. Kiara's eyes widened. "Yeah four should be it, I'm putting my foot down there."

Kiara giggled again, "surely after four kids you know better than that." James shook his head and smiled, that just made her laugh a little longer. "I'd love to meet him or her."

"Her, and I'd love that too," James nodded. "I don't want you to forget you still have a family you can turn to. You won't be alone, I promise you that."

Kiara's resulting smile was genuine and sweet, she could only nod.

Meanwhile on a nearby table Tom and B'Elanna were chatting quietly, each with a drink in their hands. Tom was still looking very sorry for himself.

"You left her with Harry?" B'Elanna asked him.

Tom nodded, "that's probably the only time she's ever listened to me. I guess she really does hate being around me. I bet even he could do a better job."

As the doors were already open and still broken, Harry was able to walk into the Mess Hall without anyone hearing him. He looked around desperately, it looked like the end of the galaxy to him. As soon as he saw those two he widened his eyes and ran back out.

B'Elanna shook her head sympathetically, she placed a hand on his. He shuffled it slightly so he could squeeze it. "You really shouldn't give up. It will only get worse if you do."

"I've been nothing but patient with her. I love her to bits. But she just treats me like her punch bag. I don't know what I'm doing wrong," he said, his voice breaking.

"You can still try to play with her, and show her how you feel, but sometimes you do have to be stern. You did the right thing on the Bridge. She has to know she's doing wrong, and she won't respect either of us if we let her continue," B'Elanna said. "I haven't helped at all, I'm sorry."

"You're right," Tom's demeanor lightened up a little. "Everytime she'd do something like pull on my hair or say something rude, I'd encourage her by giving her a hug or something. I just assumed she hated that so I didn't think anything of it. It was like I was saying *that's okay, keep doing that* every single time I did. I only wanted her to know that even though she can be a pain, daddy still adores her. God, I'm an idiot."

B'Elanna smiled warmly, she nodded in full agreement. Neelix chose that moment to walk over to the couple.

"Hello. Do you need any help?" he asked.

The pair looked at each other. "No thanks Neelix," Tom replied. "I've figured it out."

"Oh?" Neelix actually seemed disappointed. "Are you sure? What's the problem?"

"No problem. Tom just wasn't getting along with Miral," B'Elanna replied. Tom tried to shush her but it was too late. "We've worked it out."

"Ah, she is a bit of a handful. She reminds me of her mummy," Neelix chuckled.

Tom laughed but B'Elanna wasn't amused. He nodded, "yes B'Elanna hated me at first too. There's hope yet." He climbed out of his seat, "thanks Neelix." He avoided looking to see what look B'Elanna had on her face after that remark, before making a run or more accurately, a walk for it.

"Yes, thanks Neelix," B'Elanna said through gritted teeth. She was obviously not serious. Neelix watched her get up and leave, taking her cup with her.

"Ah I've helped again," he beamed. Suddenly he felt a tug on his trousers so he looked straight down. He was greeted by the innocent face of Miral. "Oh, where did you come from?" She pointed at the table legs. "Ah well then..."

"Make fun of my mummy?" she asked in the cutest voice she could do.

Neelix melted at the sound of it combined with her innocent face and beautiful blue eyes. He didn't register what she had said at all.

"Bad man!" she said in the same voice. He was too busy thinking she was the cutest thing in the universe, well maybe second to Kes, to notice her leg go in his direction. The pain in his own leg snapped him out of it. She ran off before he could figure out what happened.

### **Leda's Sickbay:**

Doctor Jones stared at his patient in dismay and silent judgement. Well he thought it was silent anyway. His patient could clearly hear him clicking his tongue and see him shaking his head.

"Uh yeah Doc, my nose won't fix itself," Damien grunted.

The hologram wasn't done. He had to raise his right arm and rest his chin on his fist. Damien was getting more and more irritable, and this is somebody who loves attention.

"Yes I know my face is handsome but I think it would be better if it had a nose," he snarled.

"Hmm?" Jones barely made a noise. He then noticed his patient's expression. "Oh I was just calculating whether it is worth fixing your nose, as you'll likely be here again for something else."

"Doctors are goody two shoes, you're not fooling me. Heal it!" Damien snapped.

Doctor Jones smiled. "Maybe we wouldn't go through this song and dance if you behaved better."

"If you sing and dance again I'll reprogram you into a Justin Timberlake fan," Damien muttered.

"All right, all right. Lets not be too hasty. I was only trying to lighten the mood," Jones chuckled. He picked up a regenerator and got straight to work on Damien's nose. "So, I hear you have a new admirer."

"Do you want to add nausea to my symptoms?" Damien almost gagged.

Jones continued to smile anyway. "Of course not. My Sickbay on Voyager is bad enough, I don't want to have to clean this one up as well." Damien groaned, which made the Doctor squeeze his face with his spare hand. "Stay still, this is delicate work, even for me."

"You're a Doctor, why won't that stupid Barbie Doll die permanently? And when I say permanently, I don't mean she stays undead forever instead," Damien managed to spit out through his squished together lips.

"Most of the time I treated her," Doctor Jones replied like it was so obvious. "Otherwise I don't know what to tell you."

"If you revive a vampire, does it stop being one?" Damien asked.

That question surprised the Doctor. He let go of him. "Are we still talking about Annika?" he asked in a worried voice.

"Maybe," Damien said with narrowed eyes.

"What? How long has this been going on?" Doctor Jones stuttered.

Damien pulled a disgusted face, "ever since that alien ship. She's been following me around ever since."

Doctor Jones looked relieved, he smiled again. Damien didn't get a chance to react to his response, his face was held still again. "And why does that scream vampire to you?"

"Forget it. You're obviously too useless to understand," Damien mumbled.

The Doctor tried to remember his Hippocratic Oath, but Damien was starting to feel more and more like an exception to those rules. "She struggled to find her own personality when she joined Voyager. After leaving the Collective she felt insignificant, and people were too cruel to..." Damien pretended to fall asleep. Doctor Jones shook his head a little. "What, you think Annika's exempt from the sappy stuff in this episode?"

"I hope your holographic uniform is sick proof, Doc," Damien grunted. "Actually I don't, it's your fault!"

"It's okay. I think the writer is incapable of being nice to her, so I wouldn't worry," Doctor Jones said sadly. "I couldn't help her in therapy. All she wanted was attention, and you're giving it to her."

"Aaaw poor diddums wasn't the main focus in every episode, even in ones that had nothing to do with her? Nobody kissed her feet and ass, and felt sorry for her perfect snowflake self? Pass me a bloody hanky," Damien complained. "I still grimace at the episode where they forced her into one scene, just to compare some situation to her being disconnected. It had nothing to do with it, at all! She's lucky she's still in this series. I'm sure she was planned to be killed off in the first season. She's only still here cos she's great for cheap laughs. I'd say the *cry me a line*, but it just reminds me of another big whiner."

"You really have no idea, do you?" Doctor Jones just chuckled.

"What?" Damien snapped. "What the hell do you mean?"

"Doesn't all that stuff you said, excluding the original Voyager episode comparison, sound like how people would describe you?" Doctor Jones questioned. Damien's hand reached for a nearby console, his eyes were dangerously wide. "Now, now. I asked James to password my program to prevent tampering. Ironic considering he was usually the one responsible."

"I'm smarter than that prick," Damien growled. The Doctor grabbed his hand anyway to stop him. "You will pay for this hologram. Nobody compares Damien to anyone, let alone that stupid inflated everything bitch."

"I'm sure you two will be very happy together," Doctor Jones grinned. He finished his treatment. "You're free to go. Try not to annoy anyone else. I don't want to see you here again."

"I'm sure you don't," Damien growled. He kept his angry stare uncomfortably on him as he walked out. As the doors shut the Doctor could hear him. "Ow, my neck. Worth it."

The Doctor started humming to himself as he wandered into his backup office. The doors opened again. "Damien, you can threaten all you like but nobody is afraid of you."

"I'd hope not," a different voice said.

Doctor Jones looked around. He was surprised to see the ex Commander of Voyager standing at the door. He had a soft expression on his face, a one he hadn't seen in a long time. "Commander?"

"Doc... I need a favour," he said quietly.

"Of course. What is it?" Doctor Jones answered.

Chakotay closed his eyes tightly. When he opened them they showed a resolve that had been missing from him as well. "Can you remove all the Tolg technology?"

Doctor Jones smiled and nodded in relief. "I'm glad you've changed your mind. If you don't mind me asking though Commander, what's prompted this?"

"I've been dead for too long, Doctor. It's time I started living again," Chakotay explained.

"When you were injured a few months ago I noticed you weren't actually dead. Yes the Tolg technology is masking your lifesigns and giving you the look, but..." Doctor Jones said. He nodded anyway, "I suppose you mean in a more figurative way."

"I know. There's a lot of things that I've said, or not in some cases, that I've..." Chakotay said, gazing at the wall. "That were deceptive. I just didn't want people to know the truth."

Worry lines littered Doctor Jones' brow. "The truth?"

"Today's not the day. One step at a time," Chakotay said, a small smile started to form. The Doctor felt that he hadn't seen this particular man in a very long time. He smiled, he was right.

The sun was starting to set over the horizon. An orange haze filled the cloudless sky. The last remaining sunlight reflected off the top of Voyager's saucer, casting an almost identically shaped shadow of the vessel onto the fields it lay in. The much smaller Leda stood on four tiny struts by its other side.

There were no more repair crews working on the larger ship, even though parts of Voyager still seemed to be damaged. Instead a crowd of hundreds of people were sitting in seats in front of Voyager's nose, each one facing a podium. A group of six torpedo casings lay behind them, each with a plaque standing on it.

"We're here today to honour heroes," Tom announced into a microphone. "Each and every one of them gave their best, not only for the good of our ships, but for the billions of people on this planet. Even though most of them were only with us for a few months, they were apart of our family. We won't ever forget them and their sacrifice." He glanced towards Harry.

"That's right, but it's not just them we're honouring. The enemy took many lives on this world, and we can't let them be forgotten as well. One group of people risked their lives to save this planet, only two of them remain." He gestured to two of the aliens standing behind him. "It was their wish we would use this site as a memorial once Voyager has departed; to honour the memories of every single individual who the Softmicron took from us."

Tom nodded, mostly everyone knew that was when to stand up. Harry pulled out his old clarinet, prompting a few people to hold back groans in respect. He played while Tom read from a PADD. "Li'Chin Rova, Binene Shroza, Janet Ackleys, Leesa Hechenzun, L'Era Tinef and Kevin Clarke. May they rest in peace." Harry finished his tune with the usual three notes they do at Starfleet funerals.

The crowd began to disperse, a lot of them headed for the podium and casings. Only a few walked away completely, taking the route around to the back of the ship.

Ylara reached the group of torpedo casings, frustration grew as she couldn't read the names on the plaques. Harry noticed her and approached. "What's wrong?"

"I... don't know which one is Kevin's," she answered hesitantly.

Harry smiled sympathetically, he pointed at one of the two sitting in the middle. She nodded a thanks before he walked away.

Like she was worried somebody would see her, she looked around a few times. Once she was satisfied her hand reached into her jacket to pull out a tiny bunch of flowers. She quickly put them down on top of the casing. "Thank you," she whispered to it.

James walked up to Janet's empty casing, he placed a bunch of flowers on hers. Nathan approached him carefully, but he seemed to notice before he got there. James deeply sighed. "Not now."

"I know," Nathan said. "You did your best."

James didn't look at him, he glanced at all of the other casings, most of which contained people he was supposed to train. Nathan followed his gaze, noticing a similar tribute to Janet's on theirs.

"I heard L'Era and Leesa didn't die without a good fight. You should be proud of them," Nathan said, glancing back. "Janet, I completely misjudged her. What she did for Jach..." Then he noticed Jach standing directly opposite them, on the other side of the coffin. He was trying his best not to cry as he was putting some flowers down too. "What a woman." He smiled. "I'm sure Binene would have been just as good if he was given a chance."

He didn't get a response, but he expected that. He decided to wait for a bit.

Tom stepped down from the podium to meet with B'Elanna and his kids. To his surprise his daughter greeted him first, and with a smile too. "That was super cheesy daddy." His shoulders slumped, his hopes were killed. "But it was nice too." He smiled down at her.

"Thank you sweetheart," he said.

"I'm with her," Johnathan commented. Tom shook his head. "The second part, dad... yeesh!" B'Elanna chuckled behind her hand.

Bryan then turned to his little sister, "what's the matter with you anyway, are you sick?" He went to reach for her forehead, she pushed his hand away.

"Hands off goods," she said sweetly.

"Nope, obviously not," Bryan groaned.

Both B'Elanna and Tom smirked at each other, B'Elanna shook her head as well. "Well that's one thing she's gotten from you. You must be very proud," she said.

"What?" Tom shrugged. "The nice speeches?"

"Never mind," B'Elanna sighed.

Nobody really noticed somebody new climb onto the podium until it was too late. That person grabbed the microphone. "This one's dedicated to my snuggly Damien." Everyone stopped what they were doing, their eyes widened in horror. "Every time an episode comes on, just wanna hog all the scenes. The display of my sexiness," the person sang into the mic while shaking her cleavage. People were already evacuating the area. "Ooooh! Feels like there's no other character in the show."

"The writer couldn't even end this episode seriously, could she!" Tom yelled over the noise. He was surprised to see his daughter clutching his leg with a frightened look on her face. He quickly picked her up while B'Elanna scooped Johnathan up.

"Cameras are rolling while I'm being awesome," Annika continued her assault on the microphone. "They keep watching, keep watching. Feels like the fans are saying... gimme gimme, more! Gimme, gimme, gimme..." Luckily a phaser shot appeared from the crowd and slammed into the microphone. A screech erupted from the speakers when that happened, but it was preferable to what was going on before.

"Oh my!" Annika complained. "My beautiful voice must have been too much for it. Oh well." She then spotted Damien looking out of his window on the ship, he noticed her too and soon disappeared from sight. Everyone sighed in relief when she ran away, inhumanly fast but nobody cared about that detail as long as she was gone.

Neelix quickly clambered onto the stage, grabbing the second microphone as soon as he could. "Sorry about that everyone. It's definitely been one of those days."

*"And it certainly had been. The morale officer was exhausted but he felt that he had helped so many people, so it did not matter at all. He was just happy to be apart of such a wonderful, vibrant family who accepted him. Of course there's always one member each family could do without, but I won't name any names."*

"Annika," Duncan blurted out.

"Poo-ey, that's Damien, he's worse," Carl argued.

Duncan threw a disgusted look on him, "poo-ey? How is Damien worse? I don't remember him singing."

"Or wearing that strange outfit," Amy pointed out.

"She should get her face smashed into a table, that was funny," Miral giggled.

"I dunno, I think that Chak man is worse. He scary," Linsey squeaked.

Duncan nodded, "yeah he is a creep."

"Now, now. What have I said about interrupting?" Neelix said with a tut on the end.

"We've been quiet the whole story," Johnathan pointed out.

"Yeah, it's so long Sasha's still napping," Duncan said, pointing at his sister lying on the floor next to him. Amy looked at her and giggled. She noticed a few other kids were doing the same.

"I was nearly finished," Neelix complained. "Once I'm finished you'll be rewarded with cookies."

All of the kids said the same thing, "aaaaaaw!"

Neelix was confused, he thought kids loved treats like cookies. He decided to continue anyway.

*"It won't matter what is thrown at the Voyagers, they will prevail and grow stronger. Their family will not fall apart as long as they have that one special thing."*

"And what is that kids?" Neelix asked them all.

Miral almost gagged, "love?"

Duncan sniggered, "yeah that's probably it, gross."

Neelix looked offended, "no! Well of course that helps, but that's not it. Amy, do you know?"

Amy flushed bright red, all of the kids were looking at her. "Um... shields?"

"Cute, but no," Neelix chuckled. Once again he missed Miral crawl over to him. "Last chance." Nobody answered him, they were bored hours ago. "It's me of course! None of those problems would have been solved without me."

The kids all groaned. "I'd prefer love," Johnathan grunted. "And that's saying something!"

"What are you talking about? How many problems were solved? Oooh Miral didn't hit Tom, but that's about it," Duncan said.

Neelix huffed, "what about Harry? He didn't leave and his morales remained intact."

"What about Damien and his stalker?" Johnathan asked.

"Daddy and Uncle Nathan?" Amy added on.

"Chakotay being a creepy man," Linsey said.

Carl nodded, "that Q girl and her dead mummy." Duncan looked back and shoved him so he fell onto his back. "Hey!"

"The Ylara girl and her... something," Scott said.

Neelix beamed, "ah yes, if you were listening she resolved that by saying thank you. I told you it was sorted."

Duncan raised his eyebrow, "what about the others?"

Neelix started sweating furiously, he tugged on his collar. "Well erm..."

*"The End... OW!"*

"Was that cute too?" Miral sweetly asked in her old spot beside Amy.

Neelix pouted and rubbed his sore leg, once again not fully sure what had just happened.

**THE END**