

B4FV Episode 3.20

Loved Up

Sickbay:

Two crewmen stood by the main door with the usual repair equipment, attempting to fix the workstation next to it. Kes attempted to enter, however the door which was open previously closed as she approached it.

"Oops, wrong wire," crewman one muttered. He quickly fiddled with the wiring, the door opened obediently.

The Doctor watched on impatiently as Kes entered. "Hmph, you'd think Sickbay would be one of the first priorities when it came to repairs."

"That's more or less the same as what Neelix said," Kes sighed. "I'll tell you what B'Elanna told him, bridge and Engineering comes first."

"Plus the Mess Hall and Sickbay's problems are mainly around the doorways," crewman two muttered.

"Yes but how will sick people get through if the door continues to misbehave," the Doctor groaned. "Never mind, there's nothing that can be done about it now."

"Finally," crewman one rolled his eyes.

Kes rested her arms on the station in the middle of the room. The Doctor watched her with concern in his eyes. "Is something bothering you?"

"I know a secret, but I don't even know if the people involved even know," Kes replied with a sigh.

The Doctor frowned, "then how do you know?"

"I can't say specifically, that'd give it away," Kes replied. "Let's just say it started with a comment, that gave me a feeling then I checked it out."

"Your feeling was right then," the Doctor said.

"There's one person that'll know for sure, she's acted the whole time like she knows," Kes said.

"See, there you go. Glad I could help," the Doctor beamed.

Kes raised an eyebrow, "um thanks?"

"Hey what else am I here for besides the obvious?" the Doctor proudly smiled again, folding his arms tightly.

Kes stared blankly, "um yeah. Excuse me." She headed back the way she came.

"Uh, you've only just come back from a break," the Doctor butted in.

"I won't have another one for the rest of the day, promise," Kes said, going through the doors. Once in what she thought was an empty corridor at first, she stopped dead in her tracks. "Huh, what are you doing back here?"

James/Jessie's Quarters:

James moved across to the replicator just as a tray appeared within it, on it was two different sized plates and an orange juice glass. A groggy looking Jessie appeared at the doorway, yawning and stretching one arm. James looked back at her. "Morning."

"Ugh, I feel five years older, not one," Jessie groaned. She looked at the dressed up table, then at the sofa which was covered in gift bags. This of course brightened up her face. "What's this?" she grinned.

James turned around to carry the tray to the table. "Generally people get presents for their birthday," he replied, putting the tray down.

Jessie scampered over to hug him. "You didn't have to go so nuts as usual."

"Why break tradition?" James shrugged. He moved to pull out one of the chairs. She shook her head before sitting down in it. "Do you want anything else?"

"I think that's more than enough, I'm not eating for three or four," Jessie replied just before the door chimed.

James glanced toward the door, "who is it?"

"It's meeee," Danny's voice squeaked through the door.

"Ohno she's going to sing," Jessie said, pulling a face. "And she's going to see me. I don't even have make up on."

"Since when did that make a difference?" James muttered.

Jessie pouted, making a child like moan. "I'm a mess."

"You just got up, you look great," James said, then noticing her pout managing to get bigger. "I'll distract her, prepare whatever it is you think you need."

"Great," Jessie said, dashing back over to her bedroom.

The door soon opened on it's own, Danny strolled in with a chirpy smile on her face. "Where's the birthday girl?"

"She's getting changed, and being a bit more Jessie than usual," James replied.

Danny looked around his shoulder, smirking. "Ooh, someone's been spoiling his girlfriend."

"It's her birthday," James said.

"Yeah but that's a lot for you, can I watch her open them?" Danny giggled like a child.

James grew a little nervous, "only about half of them."

Danny giggled very differently to before, this time rudely. "Ooh what's the other half?"

James pulled a disgusted face, "gross Danny."

"What do you expect?" Danny winked at him.

Jessie peeped her head around the recently opened door, "James can we talk a second?"

Danny clicked her tongue, winking again in James' direction. He rolled his eyes then rushed to join Jessie in their bedroom.

"I can't find anything that goes with these pants," Jessie stuttered, gesturing to the pair of trousers on the bed. "You know that covers the bump while she's here."

"Asking me is like asking Janeway how to give up something you're addicted to, or asking Danny how to stop telling rude jokes," James said.

"You dress ok, not great," Jessie commented awry.

"My point is I'm neither pregnant, or a woman who worries about tops that goes with the pants I'm wearing," James said. "Oh and thanks."

"Fine fine," Jessie sighed, pouting again.

"Well now that, that's cleared up, Danny wants to watch you open presents so I'll bring in a certain half here to cheer you up," James said. He quickly stepped back out.

"I knew that would work," Jessie smiled sneakily.

The Conference Room:

Everyone sat around the table listening to Chakotay giving a lecture. Most of them looked bored to tears, the ones who didn't probably had headphones on to distract them.

Kes leaned in close to Jessie. She protectively hid her stomach with the long sleek cardigan she wore, while looking suspiciously at a few people. "I have to put forward our appointment to ten hundred."

"I'm at the Stellar Cartography lab," Jessie whispered back.

"It won't take long," Kes sighed.

Tom chimed in to interrupt Chakotay, "I don't get this. I thought we were just dropping this guy off at his homeworld. I'm surprised he wants to leave considering what happened to the last guys we shipped home."

"His people are very, well ritualistic," Chakotay said. "They like to meet new races."

Kathryn sighed, "also they're interested in meeting the ones who did the ritual at H'Taria."

Jessie looked up, "huh, what are we talking about?"

Chakotay groaned into his hand, "oh god."

"The man who helped you with that ritual months ago, we've reached his homeworld," Kathryn said.

"Can you ask him not to tell his friends who did that ritual?" Jessie meekly questioned. "I'm not up to the hassle it'll cause."

"I suppose I can talk to him," Kathryn replied.

"It'll have to be soon, we've arranged a senior staff meeting with the leaders," Chakotay said. He glanced at Jessie with distaste, "uniforms people."

Jessie looked on in horror, "what, uniform? Can I take a rain check, I don't have a uniform as I'm relieved of duty."

"No," Chakotay groaned.

"Fine, but what is a rain check anyway?" Jessie said with a puzzled look on her face. "No you can't force me."

"She's right. She's moving jobs so she doesn't have to be in uniform. However as she did the ritual she'll still have to go," Kathryn said.

Jessie huffily pouted, "crap, it's always me."

"We may as well do some trading while we're here, there's been nothing since the necretive expanse," Neelix said.

"True and all our resources have been drained since the anomalies and our demon possession," Harry commented.

"Ok Neelix, Chakotay and Harry work on a list of what we need and what we have," Kathryn ordered.

"Ok, we need everything and we have nothing. That was easy," Chakotay muttered.

"Let's trade Neelix," Tom cheerfully said.

"What, why me?" Neelix stuttered.

"Four words; leola flavoured wholemeal bread," Tom commented.

Later on the planet:

Fourteen figures rematerialised outside a large silver sky scraper type building. Other buildings in the city surrounding it were built in similar styles. The team stood in probably the only bit of green in a several kilometre radius.

Kathryn and Thy stepped forward toward the welcome committee who waited two metres in front of the main entrance to the building. The leader spoke up, "Captain Janeway, may I be the first to welcome to you to our home world."

"Yes you may," Kathryn said. The rest of the team and the aliens stared blankly toward her, or just shook their heads in disgust. She meanwhile waited impatiently for a response. "God fine, don't!"

"You'll have to excuse her, she usually takes comments like that the wrong way," Chakotay uneasily said, stepping forward.

"Just what's the point of all of us being here exactly?" Craig asked.

"No reason, like there's no real reason to add Danny and Ian to the senior staff. I mean what on earth are they the senior of?" Harry whispered back. He glanced back while Tom tapped Craig's arm to distract him. Harry cringed as he caught the couple he mentioned mouth something suggestive to each other. "Besides grossing people out."

"Take note of that," Tom was busy saying to Craig. "Your first senior staff thing is a learning experience."

"Uh, I've been in it for months now. The only reason I haven't been to meetings is..." Craig stuttered.

The Doctor coughed into his hand, "bad continuity."

Tom looked around, "but Jessie's still here, quick blindfold them both." He pushed Craig so he was facing away from everyone else.

"Fool! You're using the episode Hunters as a basis," Chakotay grumbled.

Tom shrugged, "Jess, act like you're in Season One."

Jessie looked at him as if she only just started listening, "huh what?"

"No that's Season Three plus, you idiot," Tom muttered.

Jessie groaned and rolled her eyes. "Fine, I'll give you Season One!" She swung around to punch Tom hard in the jawbone, he of course collapsed to the ground. "Oh sorry, look what I did, exclamation mark, exclaimed."

"Which version of Season One was that, prequel or main?" Chakotay questioned.

"Meh it was a little of both," Jessie replied.

Harry frowned in confusion, "why do we care about crap that was in Hunters, even if it was a main season episode based after this? It's so bad everyone pretends it doesn't actually exist anyway. Who cares if Craig and Jessie, oh and James don't meet before then." Everyone but Craig and Jessie turned to glare at him, some shushed him. Craig seemed happy watching female passers by while Jessie went back to not caring or listening.

"Crap that was in Hunters? What's left of it after you remove it?" Kathryn asked.

By this time the aliens were staring at the team like they were mental patients. Thy looked embarrassed.

"I'm so glad I leave this season," Kes commented. Everyone moved their glares to her instead. "Ok ok, sheesh. It was the Doctor who mentioned Craig's lack of senior staff meetings, thus starting the Season One continuity talk." Once again the glares were shifted.

"My bad. Let's fix the Jessie and Craig are not supposed to really meet, or exchange names yet," the Doctor nervously said, nudging Jessie in the arm. By instinct she punched him in the face too, then got back to worrying. Of course the punch didn't effect him.

She turned to look at him, "what?"

"Can we fix the stupid continuity error and move on?" the Doctor said.

Thy whispered to his fellow aliens, "I swear, I never met most of these people before now."

"What are you talking about, I've barely been listening?" Jessie huffed.

The Doctor glanced at Craig who had swung his pad out to make notes on the girls he was seeing. "Ok, who's Craig?"

Jessie shrugged, "I don't know, who is Craig?"

"See, all that fuss and she's not even listening," Tom said. "Craig's eyeing the girls, James is quiet for once. Good going doc."

"Speaking of James, wasn't he in the same team as him in the previous episode?" Harry questioned.

"Oh come on, he didn't know exactly who he was. No first names were exchanged, it's good," Tom replied.

"Huh, where is James anyway?" Kathryn asked, looking at each member of her team. "I'm sure he wasn't even at the meeting either."

"Oh, last time I called him he sounded like he was in a battle or something. I heard something break," Tom replied.

Kathryn groaned, "ugh what now?"

Meanwhile on Voyager:

James stood in the epicenter of a desk building malfunction in the Security Office. Pieces were scattered everywhere. Two Security crewmen stood by the door, I'd say out of harm's way but we all know that'd be a lie.

"Why didn't that desk package come with instructions?"

One of the crewmen pressed the delete button on the padd he had behind his back, then smiled at his companion. "Dunno."

"Tell me the cargo bay replicators are back online," James groaned to himself. He lightly, at least for him kicked one of the larger pieces. "What do you two want?"

"Tuvok wants you to go to Deck Thirteen, some odd intruder," one guy replied.

James turned around to look at them, eyebrow raised in suspicion. "Then why didn't he tell me himself, how come no alarm is going off?"

"He's er, really mad at you," guy one nervously replied.

"Well if that's true tell him that I don't take orders from any old Security guy or girl. Oh and join the club," James said. "Oh, and I did it."

"Did what?" guy two asked.

James picked up the larger pieces, then smiled at them. "Oh I don't know exactly yet." The two widened their eyes and ran out.

The planet:

Thy turned around just as the leader decided to speak up. "First order of business. Your ship and crew are allowed to rest here for as long as necessary. I hear you've endured a lot of hardships in the past few weeks."

"Should we tell them about Borg space?" one alien asked quietly.

"I dunno, it's a few months away yet," another whispered.

"Hardships, that'll explain why they're so nuts," another one whispered.

Kathryn mouthed in his direction, "I heard that." The man cowered.

"Uh yes we have, thank you," Chakotay said.

"Now we'd love to meet the two people who helped with the ritual two of your months ago," the leader said.

"I'm afraid one hasn't turned up," Kathryn said, beckoning her head toward Jessie. "You don't mind if we have a look around while you talk or whatever with her?"

"No, you are our guests," the leader smiled.

"Great," Kathryn sighed.

Everyone but Craig and Jessie dashed off. He stepped forward to greet or attack a couple of girls. "What are you doing later girls?" They looked at him in disgust, then glanced away from him swooning a little. Of course it wasn't because of Craig, they ran over to an alien man they had just spotted. "Ok maybe another time," Craig pouted. As he turned to walk away he failed to notice the girls immediately start cat fighting just as they got to him.

The welcome committee swarmed around Jessie before she knew what was happening. "So how's the baby?" one asked.

"We've got a little gathering planned for you and your partner later," another said.

"Are you busy later?" the leader asked.

Jessie's eyes widened, and she backed off a little. "Um it's my birthday today so yes."

"Oh really, wonderful. You look very young, which is it, sixteen, eighteen?" one stuttered.

"Why is your other half not here, I hope he's ok," another said.

"Yeah why don't I check on that," Jessie stuttered, clutching herself protectively. "Voyager, beam me up please, now!" Moments later she dematerialised.

The aliens looked at each other in disappointment. "Did we say something wrong?" one asked.

The Security Office:

Jessie ran in frantically, she looked around the room. James spotted her just as she dashed over to sit on the floor, right behind the biggest chair. James dropped the piece of desk he seemed to be folding, then headed over to her.

"Jess, why are you hiding?"

"Too many people," Jessie replied. "Why is it when I was a kid nobody ever liked me and stuff, and now when I wanna be alone they're everywhere. Swarming around me, liking me."

James leaned on the back of the chair, he knelt on it. "Do you want me to leave you alone?"

Jessie tilted her head back slightly to look up at him, smiling weakly. "All I heard was 'do you want me'. Why weren't you at the meeting or on the planet?"

James shifted his eyes side to side. "Um, meeting, planet?" He took out a packet of crisps from behind him, then offered her it. "Crisps?"

"How come no one told you?" Jessie questioned.

"Hmm if it was today then it probably got swapped for the 'Tuvok wants you to break into someone's quarters cos of domestic violence' task," James replied. Jessie moved onto her knees and turned around, then looked back up at him. "I didn't believe it as the whole of Security mess with me on a minutely basis, and well..."

"It was true after all?" she said.

"I felt bad so I checked it out anyway. I heard swearing and yelling, so I broke the door down," James said, cringing at the last part.

Jessie did the same as she slowly stood up. "Oh god, what was it?"

"Let's just say it was the hairiest ass I'm hopefully ever going to see," James replied.

Jessie widened her eyes, but tried not to laugh. "Yelling and swearing, butt? How much of the woman did you see?"

"I told you, ass," James pulled a face.

"Eew," Jessie muttered. "Was the guy at least 'pretty'?"

James laughed a little, "luckily he covered himself in time." He frowned, "with the girl's underwear I think."

Jessie giggled, "I'll not ask what kind. Look I wanna know what you're going to do, birthday related. I just don't want people to see me, you know."

James moved off the chair to turn it around, "well I'll have to delete the people."

"Oh holodeck, where are we going?" Jessie asked sweetly as she sat on the chair.

"I've already said enough," James replied.

"Fine," Jessie pouted her lips. "By the way thank you for the five years worth of birthday presents. Do I have time to open the rest before, or do I have to wait until after duty and our trip?"

"If I were you I'd save most for later, besides..." James meekly replied. He took a little gift bag from the shelf on the wall, and handed it to her.

"Oh James, you didn't have to." Jessie shook her head. "I thought you were just going to get me clothes I can wear while pregnant."

"Yeah but it's no fun if you know what you're getting," James said. "You needed something you could keep after all that."

"Well then you still shouldn't have gone nuts with the first lot," Jessie pretended to scold.

"Ok, I'll put this back then," James smirked, pulling the present back. She kept a tight hold of it.

"That's ok, since you're not a fan of Christmas it's ok." She opened the bag, and took a small present out. James knelt down in front of her, watching intently. "What?"

"This is my Christmas, maybe we should get some kind of tree," he said.

Jessie glanced toward the table pieces, "as long as it's ready made." She turned back to him, "you should have told me that I had to get you presents too."

"That's why I don't get Christmas. You don't get presents yourself on someone's else's birthday," James muttered.

"Well the baby's due in January, so next year you'll have to change your tune," Jessie smirked.

James pouted, "fine, but no Santa."

"Why not? Don't you want to dress up as him?" Jessie laughed.

"Eugh no," James shuddered. "I don't like the idea of lying to our child about some fat guy who would implode if he rode that sleigh in space. How would he get to the Delta Quadrant in time anyway, Janeway would just steal his sleigh and use it to get home."

"They've updated it you know," Jessie said.

"Uh huh, don't forget your present," James muttered.

Jessie nodded her head, "how is this your Christmas then?"

"Simple, the birth of somebody special I believe in," James shyly mumbled. She reached to take a hold of his hand with her spare one. "That was stupid, sorry."

"No you're sweet. I'm like that with your birthday, just not as imaginative with presents. Ok here I go," she said while opening the present. "Aaaw thank you," she leaned forward, so did he and they met halfway to kiss.

Kathryn marched in looking straight ahead so she didn't see them. "Those aliens are such b***ards. All they do is silently judge you and talk about it with friends, when they think you're not around." James and Jessie by this time had separated quickly, and turned to look at her. "First they think there's too many seniors, we're crazy, unprofessional and a seventeen year old shouldn't be in it, and their..."

"Which seventeen year old? Wait you didn't bring one of the students in as a senior officer, did you?" James commented.

"Wasn't me, and that wouldn't hell surprise me. I mean what does Neelix do now that the expense thing is behind us, and there's Ian. We only need one Engineering person," Kathryn grumbled.

"What about me and James? My station was Engineering," Jessie questioned. "Plus you already had Tuvok for Security."

"Pfft Tuvok dumped Security on James, fact. He's just Tactical," Kathryn grumbled. "Wait, I had three Engineering people in my Senior Staff? No wonder they make fun of us." She stepped on a desk piece. "What the?"

"Oh um, that's my new desk," James meekly said.

Kathryn glanced down at the piece she stood on, then the rest of it. "For god's sake James, I know a lot of people are being jerks to you but don't take it out on the furniture."

Jessie laughed, James didn't look amused though. "Actually I don't have instructions, the cargo bay replicators are down and..."

"No they're not, they've been used non stop to fix the mess those idiot demons made. I'm telling you, I didn't shoot nearly enough of them," Kathryn said.

James groaned while staring up at the ceiling, "ugh must hold back, just one more day, just one more day."

"One more day?" Jessie looked puzzled.

"Last day of punishment duty, unless I screw up yet again," James replied. He looked back at Kathryn, "right, my recent stuff didn't extend it?"

"No you're good," Kathryn sighed.

"But you'll just end up on the bridge, I'd better cancel my work trials," Jessie said.

"What was I thinking when I assigned both of you to the same station, same shifts?" Kathryn muttered to herself.

James moved his glance to Jessie. "I asked to do this instead, but Janeway has to do something first."

Kathryn smiled sneakily, "put every person who's given him trouble double cleaning shifts, done already."

"So why do you have to hold back?" Jessie questioned.

"I'd feel like I earned the job I suppose," James replied.

"Does either of you know why I came in here?" Kathryn asked, glancing around. Jessie shook her head. "Oh tomorrow Jessie, have you chosen your job?"

She widened her eyes, "two weeks are up already?"

"Reynolds told me you did well in the new counselling office. No one else is good enough, and she can't handle it solo," Kathryn said.

"Wouldn't it be easier to cut out the middle thing and just hire me as an assassin?" Jessie mumbled.

"Jessie the guy was taken over by a demon," James said.

"There's no proof of that, his ex and kids were dead," Jessie mumbled.

"Sorry Jessie but you'll have your old job back if you don't find anything," Kathryn said in Jessie's direction. She glanced in James', "and for god's sake James, I won't punish you if you stick up for yourself against these whiners. Heck if you hit them I'll just say I was a witness to you not doing it."

"That's ok, I'd rather do it right," James mumbled.

"Suit yourself, just remember threats in a jokey way can't be considered real. Oh and you're allowed to yell when this stuff happens," Kathryn muttered, walking back out.

Transporter Room:

Neelix and an alien man dematerialised on the pad. "Thank you Sally," he smiled at the transporter girl.

She smiled and blushed as the alien smiled at her.

"Now you'll have to excuse the mess, we're still repairing," Neelix said, leading the alien man out of the transporter room. The girl stared after him.

The Bridge:

The turbolift doors opened, Neelix and the alien man stepped out of it. Only Chakotay and Harry occupied the bridge, with the exception of the unknown people. Neelix guided his guest to Chakotay, he quickly turned to an unknown to pretend to look busy.

"Looks like we've picked a bad time," Neelix said cheerfully.

The man looked disappointed, looking around like all he wanted was to be rid of Neelix. Right on cue Kathryn charged out of the Ready Room, the entire room froze as a result.

"Who... put decaf..." she slowly growled. Then she raised broken cup pieces, "in the real coffee ingredients!"

Chakotay's eyes shifted nervously, "I'm so glad I only suggested it, and never actually did it." The unknown quickly backed away, in fear of getting caught up in a Janeway fury shockwave once she discovered it was him.

"Where's Tuvok? I demand an investigation right away!" Kathryn snarled, making her way further onto the bridge.

"It's hardly a Security matter," Chakotay commented, immediately regretting it.

Kathryn death glared him, he still was affected by it even with his back turned. "You, you're just..." she muttered, making her way toward him. Instead the alien guy caught her eye, her facial expression changed completely. "Oh we haven't been introduced."

"Uh," he muttered.

She held out her hand, smiling sweetly. "Hi, I'm Captain Janeway but you can call me Kathryn."

Chakotay frowned, daring to look at her. "Kathryn?"

Neelix however didn't notice this odd exchange. "Ah Captain, this is Herk, he is in charge of trade negotiations for his area."

"That's an interesting name, where did you get it?" Kathryn asked, fiddling with her commbadge. Chakotay looked on, jealous.

"She only does that for me," he whimpered quietly.

"Really I've never seen her do that, ever," the unknown nearby commented. Chakotay glared her away.

"Um my father, it's a family name," the alien replied.

"How nice," Kathryn purred.

"I was just showing him around Captain, giving him the tour," Neelix said.

Kathryn nodded in agreement. "Excellent Neelix, perhaps I should take over." She attached herself to Herk's arm, he looked uncomfortable. "I am the Captain after all, and I can add one more place to the official tour that we only show special guests."

"Oh, where's that? Deck Thirteen?" Neelix questioned, looking confused.

Kathryn glared briefly, slapping her disobedient Talaxian. He shuffled away rubbing his face. "No, my quarters."

Chakotay felt the need to butt in, he stood in front of them and pulled Kathryn away from Herk. "Neelix, continue his tour. The Captain and I need to have a word."

"You're not the boss of me, Commander," she snarled, giving him the evil eye.

"Yes sir," Neelix stuttered, his eyes wide in slight panic. He lead Herk away, who didn't mind him as much now after that ordeal. "I'm sorry, she's never done that before. You don't perhaps have coffee supplies or something.." The two disappeared into the turbolift again.

Chakotay gently pulled Kathryn closer to the Ready Room, she pulled her arm away, sighing like a huffy teenager. "What was that?"

"What, he was very manly and smart," Kathryn replied. She frowned at him, "maybe you could learn from him."

"I know what this is, it's the pregnancy hormones. The Doctor warned me," Chakotay said.

"How come whenever I do anything you don't approve of you think it's cos of the pregnancy?" Kathryn grumbled.

"I don't, if I did I'd be suggesting that you're always hormonal even before getting pregnant," Chakotay said.

"And you wonder why I'm interested in Hek," Kathryn said.

Chakotay groaned into his hand, "it's Herk, you should know that if you love this guy so much."

Kathryn gasped, her eyes widened and she grinned at him. "Love, that must be it." She pushed him roughly out of her way, heading for the turbolift. "I love Pek!" Tom entered via the turbolift she was going toward, he stood there looking bemused and waited until she had gone.

"Did she just say she loves pecks?" he questioned.

"I don't know which one's better," Chakotay sighed in response.

"I'd go with pecks," Harry commented. Everyone stared blankly at him.

Deck Nine:

Security Team One stood around the corridors, most probably skiving. A group of the aliens arrived on the scene from around the corner. "Excuse me," one chirpily said.

Thompson pulled a face, "crap work." He pushed Sid forward, then pretended to work at one of those wall stations.

"Er hi, what's up?" he asked.

"We're looking for a James Taylor and or a Jessie Rex," the first alien said.

"What for?" Foster questioned uneasily.

"Oh we'd like to talk to them," the alien replied.

Sid's face lit up, "oh he's just in the Security Office, you're on the right deck, just keep to your left, you'll see it." Foster and Thompson stared at him in pure horror.

"What are you doing!?" Foster hissed.

"What?" Sid innocently shrugged.

The aliens nodded at the group, appreciating the help. They continued down the corridor.

"He's going to kill us, you heard what he did to that gunman," Thompson muttered.

"I know, maybe if we run now we'll get at least a minute head start," Foster commented. He looked toward Thompson, but he wasn't where he was before. He and Sid glanced around to see where he'd gone, but he was nowhere to be seen. "Damn you Thompson." Foster rushed away in the opposite direction to the aliens, while Sid waited patiently for something to happen to him.

The aliens wandered into the Security Office to find James sitting on the sofa, muttering angrily to a disobedient computer. "I don't care what you say, that is not my complaint reports."

"Please specify type of death," the computer responded.

"What the fu..." James muttered, then he noticed the aliens. "Um, can I help you?"

The aliens quickly surrounded him, taking him by surprise. "We're friends of Thy's. We were most impressed by what you did."

"Yes yes very impressed," another alien spoke.

"We've heard a lot of rumours about you," the third said.

James raised an eyebrow as he looked up at each of them. "So what else is new? Impressed with what exactly." He groaned, looking towards the window. "Oh I see, the Security guys have put you guys up to this, haven't they?"

"No, we wanted to meet you," second alien said.

"That's great and all but..." James muttered.

The third alien interrupted him. "Is it true that you're different than the other humans? Do you get treated any differently to the others?"

"God, yes and yes, now can I get back to work?" James groaned.

"I see, now it must really effect Miss Jessie, your work I mean. Your kind usually die young, not humans in general. I mean," the second stuttered.

"I know what you mean," James said. "I don't want to talk about that with you."

"What do you mean?" the first one asked.

"Oh you're listening to me now," James said with a sigh. He stood up, "I don't know what this is, but you've got to stop it now. It's creeping me out."

"But..." all three spoke at the same time.

James raised both hands as a sign of protest, "no damn it, I've got about twenty complaints to file even though 80% are jibes about me. Plus I've got a meeting very soon about that very issue you mentioned. I'd appreciate it if you took your bizarre fanboy questions elsewhere."

"Which issue, the die or complaint issue?" the third questioned with a frown. "I don't understand."

The door opened to reveal Jessie, she stepped inside. She noticed the aliens, they noticed her before she had a chance to leave again. "Crap again."

"A bit of both, now can you go?" James muttered in response to the third's question.

Two of the aliens rushed over to Jessie, she quickly dashed to another part of the room to escape them. "No it's ok, we're not going to do anything, we just want to ask questions."

"Well I want a hot bath and some quiet time, but you don't see me chasing them," Jessie muttered. She made it over to James, eyeing the last alien with distaste. "Now you know what I meant earlier."

"Now I do yeah," James said, narrowing his eyes at the aliens. "So do you guys have better things to do than crowd and harass a pregnant girl? I'm guessing that's a normal thing to do in your culture."

"That wasn't our intention, we just..." alien one said.

"Well that kind of behaviour would normally lead to you being locked in the brig, or warned off," James said. "However giving the circumstances I'll just jump straight to throwing you off the ship, literally."

The aliens widened their eyes, in a flash they were gone from the office. Jessie sighed in relief. "They'll be back. What did you want to talk about?"

"Well I was trying to think of another more personal gift I could get you for your birthday," James replied.

Jessie shook her head, "no, no no. I appreciate what you've given me so far and I haven't even opened them all yet. I don't want you to give me anymore."

"Just one more, please," James smiled nervously.

"No," Jessie replied, twitching slightly. "I don't even wanna know what it is."

"Uh huh," James said, raising an eyebrow.

"I don't," Jessie quietly said to herself. She sighed, "what is it?"

"I've been thinking about it since the incident with the rifts, and it kinda makes sense. I want your opinion on it first," James said.

"Um, you want my opinion before you give it to me? That's strange," Jessie muttered.

"Not really. It's just I've put you through a lot in the last couple of months, it's usually cos I've stupidly jumped straight into dangerous situations," James said.

Jessie shrugged, "no argument here, for once. What's this got to do with a present?"

"The point is I'm nowhere near mature enough to handle being a Slayer, a dad, committed boyfriend and keep this job. I'll get caught up in the stuff originally because of the job, and then decide that it's something I have to solve myself," James said. "Maybe when I'm older, hopefully a lot better I'll be able to handle all those things, but right now I've got to concentrate on the two most important ones."

"What are you saying?" Jessie frowned.

"I'll quit Jess, for you," James said. "Both of them, the job and the Slayer thing."

Jessie stared at him like she was in a daze for a short while. "Are you serious? I thought you loved that job and Slaying isn't something you can give up."

"Not completely no. Obviously if vampires appear I'll have to take care of it, but the other stuff the crew shouldn't need me," James muttered. "Besides the job just keeps me in the know of all the dangerous stuff, and I don't want to be putting you through that grief anymore. I'll do emergencies I can take care of only, everything else someone else can deal with it for a change."

Jessie smiled at him, "you'd do that for me? And you say you're not mature enough."

"Um I'm James remember, you know that right?" James said.

Jessie shook her head, smirking slightly. "I know you'll never be fully mature, you'd be dull if you were. You said you're not mature enough to handle them all, like you can't control yourself when it comes to situations."

"Um that's true, there's no doubt about that part," James said.

"Yeah but you've just proved that you can do it," Jessie said.

"Not really, I could be just saying it," James said, shrugging his shoulders.

"True, but I can tell that you mean it," Jessie said.

"Then why ask if I was serious, and stuff?" James asked.

Jessie glanced to the side, raising one of her shoulders a little. Her head turned back, tilting more to the side of the raised shoulder. "I wasn't expecting it. What will you do instead? Also does that training you do in the Holodeck count as quitting or not?"

"No if I put the safeties on," James replied.

Jessie passed him her own death glare, "you don't put the safeties on? I thought we cleared that little issue up."

James cowered slightly at her glare, his eyes were wider than usual. "Of course I put the safeties on, it was just a reply that didn't imply anything."

"Why don't I believe you?" Jessie muttered, raising an eyebrow suspiciously.

"Um as for the job, if you're not keeping that job of yours, I'll do it," James said.

"I doubt I'll find anything else anyway," Jessie sighed.

"Then Engineering, I've already got an appointment with Janeway to discuss my options which are lacking," James said. "The point is I'll do this, for you and our kid."

"Do you think you'll ever go back to Security?" Jessie asked.

James shrugged, "probably, I just need to slip up and I'll be back there involuntarily. Maybe Janeway will be smart this time and punish me properly."

"What about voluntarily?" Jessie questioned with a slight smirk on her lips.

"I doubt it, the only way I would join again is if I could handle myself better. I don't know," James replied. "As for the Slaying thing, all I can do there is hope that I don't need to do it for a long time."

Jessie smiled, "you want my final opinion? I think it's the best gift you can give me."

"Oh good, I feared it would be too cheap a present if you know what I mean," James said, smirking a little.

"Cheap, not with about a hundred presents waiting for me at home," Jessie giggled, playfully hitting his arm. "I hate to know what our child's birthdays are going to be like. Each present is going to have both of us on the label, I don't want to look like the cheap parent."

Deck Five:

Neelix guided Herk down the corridor, unaware that the transporter girl Sally was following them. She nearly bumped into others passing by a few times as her eyes were not the right kind of ahead of her.

"On this deck we have Sickbay, and that's really about it," Neelix said.

"Great," Herk unenthusiastically muttered.

They both entered Sickbay, only just, the door tried to close on them as they entered. The two crewmen were still trying to do their repair work.

The Doctor and Kes meanwhile were treating a woman in her mid thirties. Kes looked a tiny bit preoccupied though.

"Now what have we learned today?" the Doctor said in a patronising voice.

The woman rolled her eyes, "the area around the warp core is off limits because of the broken glass."

"No," the Doctor sighed like he was talking to a child who gotten an obvious question wrong. "Try again."

"Uh," the woman groaned in annoyance. "That you're an annoying piece of crap?"

Kes rolled her eyes, "he wants you to compliment him by saying he's great or something."

"Screw that," the woman grumbled. She got up and headed out.

The Doctor shook his head, "she's always been such a charmer."

The woman stopped in front of Neelix and Herk. She stared at him with her mouth open slightly. "Hi," she managed to say finally.

"Hi there Suzanna," Neelix said, totally oblivious that she wasn't talking to him. "This is Herk."

"Herk? That name doesn't do you justice," the woman sighed dreamily.

"Oh I know, I hate it," Herk smiled politely.

"Anyway, this is Sickbay. All the sick people come here," Neelix said. "Well except Danny, haha."

"You have a very interesting ship," Herk said, ignoring him.

"Oh it's like a paradise, we all love it," Suzanna said.

Herk nodded, "I couldn't live on a ship though, the planet's where I belong."

"Me too, I can't stand spaceships. I've been looking for a place to stay," Suzanna quickly said.

Neelix frowned at her, confused again. "Maybe you'd..."

"I'd love to help you show him around, Neelix," Suzanna giggled.

"Ookay," Neelix said, blushing for some reason. "Let's go then." The three quickly left.

"What was that about?" the Doctor questioned. He didn't get an immediate response, he glanced at Kes who was staring at the door, fiddling with her collar. "Kes?"

She jumped to attention, "yes Doctor?"

"Are you falling for Neelix again?" the Doctor smirked.

Kes pulled a disgusted face, "eww god no." She marched off into the office in a huff.

"Interesting," the Doctor muttered.

Outside Neelix, Herk and Suzanna walked down the corridor. Just as they passed a junction, Suzanna was pulled out of sight by an unknown set of arms. Neelix and Herk looked around confused.

"Huh she must have gone back to work. Suzanna's very unpredictable," Neelix commented.

"Aaah," Herk sighed. They continued onwards.

Stellar Cartography:

The two infamous Delaney sisters were too busy squabbling like typical sisters, while Jessie and a male crewmember worked at the stations.

"I don't care what you think of it Megan, the sensors work perfectly fine for us," Delaney One grumbled.

Delaney Two scoffed, putting her hand on her hip. "Then how come we never know what's coming until we're mostly on top of it. This job can be so demeaning at times, there's no point to this lab while we're in this uncharted quadrant."

"Fine, I'll magically make stargates appear into the database. Will that stop you complaining?" Jenny groaned.

"Oh don't do that, I didn't expect you to do anything about it," Megan muttered.

Jessie sighed, "getting a headache here."

The man next to her glanced at her briefly, "they always bicker. Megan's right though, all we do here is chart where we've been before and slightly ahead."

"I don't know, it doesn't seem that bad a job to me," Jessie said. "Though I've thought that before."

"Sometimes there isn't a lot to do. When those two are not fighting we tend to talk about life on board ship," the man said.

"Let me guess, you gossip," Jessie muttered.

"It's not gossip if you don't pass the information onto anyone new, you just talk about it with ones who do," the man said with a smile.

"Great, score," Jessie said through a fake smile, turning back to her station. "I don't like gossip that much."

"Everyone does really, I'm guessing you've been the subject of some and that's why you don't like it," the man said. "Let's see, what about Senior Officers. That can't be you so..."

"Well actually," Jessie butted in.

He continued on like she didn't say anything, "did you hear about the girl who thought sleeping with her friend a few times wouldn't do any harm? Anyone who sleeps with her close friend is a bit 'blonde' if you ask me." Jessie closed her eyes, sighing into her hand. "Supposedly she only does that as she's a mental wreck, and has strange eating habits cos of it." Jessie moved her hand, then stared at him bewilderedly.

Meanwhile

The Ready Room:

Kathryn walked away from the replicator with a coffee cup against her chest. "I understand your reasons for this James, but you seem perfectly capable of doing the job you're in now." She rested against her desk. "Maybe you can learn some self control while you're still there."

"Trust me I won't, I'll end up beating one of those Security guys if I remain there," James commented. "It's for the best, and surely you need a lackey somewhere on ship. I hate to say it but replacements for dead crewmembers."

"Lackey?" Kathryn frowned, taking a sip from her coffee. "I've already got Jessie trying for a new job."

"I was thinking about that. I'm willing to take her old job, if she doesn't find one that suits her current status then you can easily just put what I earn into her account," James said.

"I don't get it," Kathryn said.

"It's simple. If she can't find anything, you pay her for all the work I do while she..." James said.

"Oh dear," Kathryn sighed. She walked around to sit in her chair. "She's barely six months along. Yes the bump is noticeable, but that can be hidden. She can't be effected physically that much yet, so I don't see why I should just let her start maternity leave."

"I don't think you need to worry about that. She loved the counselling job, she just needs to be convinced to take it," James muttered.

"I think that's your department," Kathryn said, sitting back in her chair. "She'll listen to you, not me. Besides if I did do what you suggested, how would you feed yourself? Neelix's food just seems to get stranger everyday. After replicating all that baby stuff, you can't have much saved up anymore."

"No I don't, but I'll live. Other crewmembers live on his food," James said.

"Yes and they visit the doc regularly," Kathryn muttered. She sighed, "I'll think about it. I just hope you're right about her taking that job, we can't run the new department with just one person. I'm aware that the office doesn't need to be open all day like other departments, but it's still too much for Reynolds to handle solo." The door chimed, "come in."

Kes entered, she grew nervous as James was the first thing she saw. "Hey."

"Kes, what can I do for you?" Kathryn asked with a smile.

"I'll wait until you've finished talking to James," Kes said, she turned to leave.

James did the same, he put an arm out in front of her. "No don't, I was finished anyway. Later." He stepped out.

"Dismissed," Kathryn muttered. "Now what is it Kes?"

Kes turned to her looking uneasy, "I'm not sure where to begin Captain."

"Please sit down, I have time so don't worry about it," Kathryn smiled warmly.

Kes sighed to try and relax herself, it didn't work for her. She opened her mouth to speak anyway. "It's about him."

"James? All right, what is it?" Kathryn questioned with concern in her voice.

Deck Ten:

Neelix was busy showing a bored Herk around the Hydroponics Bay, but the topic of his speech had barely anything to do with it.

"I don't know what it is, but she claims I was too needy and jealous," Neelix rambled on.

Herk rolled his eyes as he wandered away from the lovesick Talaxian. He eyed a few of the plants, then faced forward. Suzanna was now directly in front of him, this scared the life out of him, he backed away a few steps.

"Hi, I'm back," she cheerfully announced.

"So I see," he stuttered.

"I had to go deal with a technical issue, but here I am," Suzanna said, quickly closing the gap. "Did you miss me?" she purred, stroking his chest with her index finger.

"Uh technical issue?" Herk muttered.

"Yeah, you know separating fact from totally impossible," Suzanna smiled sweetly.

The Morgue:

The morgue attendant Matthews sat in his tiny office reading a padd. He reached out for his cup of tea when he heard a muffled voice. "Huh, it better not be a vampire." Matthews climbed to his feet, then headed out of his office. The muffled voice got louder as he approached the crypts. One opened up with just one push of a button, his eyes widened in shock.

The transporter girl Sally lay inside, gagged by her own hair that looked like it had been ripped out. Her hands and feet were tied up as well.

Deck Ten:

"So would you like to get together later, we could have a coffee first, a meal, then a stroll and see where the rest of the night takes us," Suzanna purred.

"Um no thanks, I'm taken," Neelix said.

Suzanna pulled a face at him, then turned back to Herk. He didn't look happy as she attempted to touch his butt, he took a hold of the hand to move it back to her.

In: "Matthews to Neelix."

Neelix tapped his commbadge, "yes?"

In: "Is a Crewman Killhern there?"

"Yes why?" Neelix replied, not paying any attention to Herk and his new admirer.

In: "That bitch, she thinks she can have him all to herself, well she's wrong!"

In: "Um, that's all I got."

Suzanna scoffed, "please little girl, you can't handle a real man. Go hang out with the little boys on the ship."

In: "Uh, she's gone, that can't be good. Matthews out."

"Oh dear, you two shouldn't fight over the silliest of things," Neelix said, blushing slightly. "Though it is very flattering."

"What the hell are you on Talaxian?" Suzanna snarled, then she got back to being all flirty with Herk. Again Neelix didn't notice this.

Sally marched in, then tried to pull the two apart. She soon resorted to pulling Suzanna's hair, she screamed and kicked her in the leg. Soon the two were in a typical cat fight, as Sally had a good grip on her hair she had the advantage.

Matthews rushed in to quickly join Neelix and Herk who didn't seem that surprised to see the two fight. "I found her locked in a crypt, I untied her and she started screaming like a..." He then noticed Herk, his eyes glazed over.

"Like a what?" Neelix asked.

"Hi," Matthews said towards Herk.

He looked at him briefly, nodding politely. "Hi." Then it hit him, his face turned pale. "Oh god no." Matthews quickly moved to stand in front of him, he backed off a little.

"I've never met anyone like you. We should have lunch sometime," Matthews said.

"Um I don't have lunch," Herk quickly said.

"You want my hair, have my hair bitch!" Sally screamed at Suzanna, then shoved her separated hair into her opponent's mouth. She spat it back out, then just pushed her to the ground like she was nothing.

"Ugh it tastes like tacky cheap shampoo!" she grumbled.

"You would know, wouldn't you?" Sally muttered as she pulled herself up. The two were about to fight again when they noticed Herk's latest admirer. Before he knew what was happening, Suzanna had him in a painful headlock, and Sally got ready to kick him in between the legs. As he was in the headlock he couldn't escape it.

Neelix and Herk cringed, then looked at each other. "Let's just leave them to it," Herk said. He rushed out of the Bay.

"I dunno I'm morale officer, and I caused this," Neelix said. Matthews then screamed in a girly way. The girls looked at Neelix, both looking very annoyed.

"Where is Herk? What did you do with him?" they both asked.

"But I quit," Neelix finished off, then he ran for his life.

James/Jessie's Quarters:

Jessie sat on the sofa staring not literally into space. James walked in through the main door. "Hey Jess, what..."

"I just can't do it anymore," she stuttered without looking at him.

"What happened in Stellar Cartography, do you want me to beat somebody?" James questioned.

"I can do that myself, but shouldn't you be careful about getting into trouble," Jessie mumbled.

James pulled a disappointed face, "damn, it won't be just today will it? I'll have to be good everyday."

A small smile appeared on Jessie's face, "you'll be back on punishment duty by tomorrow. I'll be huddled in the corner of our bedroom, hugging myself like I'm cold but not, with my eyes wide. I'll give

birth in here alone, our baby will sleep in a drawer when we have visitors, and you'll continue to distract people so we can kiss in public. If we get over the anti marriage thing we'll have our wedding in here with Janeway and Kes as witnesses."

James walked over to sit down next to her, "wow."

"Yeah wow," Jessie muttered. "I'm so freaking out about this. Everyone's giving us both a hard time. Now I don't know if we'll ever come out because there's always going to be judgmental people making me feel like crap. I don't know what to do."

"We'll figure it out, for now we can just go and celebrate your birthday," James said, slipping his arm around her shoulders. "What do you say?"

"I'm not in a celebratory mood," Jessie mumbled. She glanced at him with sad eyes, "can we just stay here, and you know panic?"

"We did that today already, there's time to do that on another day," James muttered. Jessie pouted her lips while resting her head on his shoulders, holding tightly onto his arm. "Jess it's all right, I'm sure the crew will find another couple to bitch about. We just have to sit it out. Before us they were picking on those two guys we had to save during the timeloop. The one dating the morgue attendant made a comment about the lack of work he was getting, and someone overheard."

Jessie sighed, "was the joke bad and not tasteful?"

"I didn't say joke," James shrugged.

"You wanted to though," Jessie said.

"I thought it was funny at the time, pre-rift by the way, and it was tasteful," James meekly replied. Jessie looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "Well as tasteful as a 'where are all the dead bodies' joke can get."

"I didn't know those two were dating," she said.

"Unfortunately on a ship this small, everyone finds about any couple," James said. "We'd be better off admitting it before everyone knows for sure."

"It feels like they already do. Current rumours are that we slept together while drunk, and I'm carrying twins," Jessie muttered. "The other theory is that I'm depressed so I'm seeing you and comfort eating."

"Comfort eating?" James frowned. Then it hit him, "oh."

"Now we've got those aliens treating us like celebrities, it's all too much." Jessie sighed.

James got up and headed over to the replicator. "If we're staying here we'll have to just eat here."

"I don't know, eat?" Jessie mumbled as she climbed onto her feet.

"Well birthday cake, chocolates, maybe your favourite meal. Not exactly in that order," James replied.

Jessie shuffled over so she could hold onto him again. "What did you have planned for me in the Holodeck?"

"That would spoil it. I'll have to save the program for next year," James replied.

Jessie sighed, pouting her lips huffily. "Ok I'll go, but you'll have to contact the transporter room, I'm not going out there again."

"What about your new clothes, aren't they good enough?" James questioned.

"What's the point if everyone knows already," Jessie muttered.

"Ok what do you want to do?" James sighed, turning around to face her.

"I told you. Me, you, here. You can fill in the gaps, I don't mind how," Jessie replied, smiling seductively.

"How would that look if we did that. You're upset, panicky, even vulnerable. I don't want to look like I'm taking advantage," James said. "Besides I'd rather take you to that program, and actually prove there's more to us than well, making out."

Jessie rolled her eyes, smirking slightly. "I hope you don't believe the slut rumour as well."

"Of course not. But I do believe the comfort eating one," James smiled.

"Ooh you're going to pay for that," Jessie laughed, pretending to look mad but failing. "I'll go, but you're only getting me through that door via transporters, or you as a cover."

"First thing's first though, we need to talk about the baby and relationship, and the crew being nosey stuff mainly," James mumbled.

"All right," Jessie said.

James nodded his head, "great, let's go."

Jessie looked confused, "what, I thought you wanted to talk."

"No I just wanted you to agree, we'll talk after your birthday's over," James shrugged his shoulders.

"Ok here's a preview. I wasn't serious about the drawer part," Jessie smiled. He smiled back at her. "Or the wedding part, I know your feelings about it." His smile faded away, she grew a little nervous. "But the other parts I'm serious about."

James kissed her on the forehead. "It's ok, we'll talk about this later. Let's take you to your twenty first, no sorry eighteenth birthday."

"I'll take the twenty first one this year, I'm pregnant so," Jessie grinned at him. "I just need ten minutes to get ready." He coughed into his hand. "Ok an hour, for that and the comfort eating comment you're not getting any."

"We'll see," James commented slyly as she headed for the bedroom on her own.

She looked back at him, pretending to look shocked. "He's very confident now, I'd better watch my back." She disappeared in her room.

Engineering:

"I'm so sorry about this Herk, this is just embarrassing," Neelix commented. "The ladies are just loving me today."

Herk's eyes shifted toward him with an eyebrow raised. "Yeh, you."

Meanwhile not far in front of them, Sally, Suzanna, Matthews and now B'Elanna were yelling at each other.

"He's not gay, so get out of here morgue man!" Sally snapped.

"Morgue man? Oh come on, you can't go out with him, it's illegal to have relations with a five year old!" Matthews yelled back.

Sally gasped, slapped him in the face. "How dare you!"

"He's right, but so is she. He's straight and he loves me," Suzanna said, smiling smugly.

B'Elanna growled at her opponents. "You don't know who you're messing with."

"You're dating Paris, so go and intimidate something else, well attempt to," Suzanna muttered.

"Yeah," Matthews added on.

"You're seeing someone too, so shut up!" Sally snapped.

"There's room for one more," Matthews commented.

"Exactly," B'Elanna said. "Besides Tom's a wuss."

"We should leave together this time," Neelix whispered to Herk. However he'd already gone. His eyes widened and he ran off. The four love rivals soon began fighting again, Matthews only tried to defend himself from Sally's cat fight like moves, while Suzanna and B'Elanna began fighting viciously like animals.

Later:

James and Jessie headed toward the Holodeck exit. Jessie was attached to his arm, laughing behind her spare hand. The doors opened to reveal a dozen anxious aliens. "Oh god."

All the aliens began talking to them at once, making it sound garbled and loud.

"That's enough!" James snapped at them. Only a few shut up. He rolled his eyes, leading Jessie away from the group. All of them began following them. Lucky for them they got to the turbolift. "Deck Eight." Two of the aliens got in with them, leaving the others behind.

"So, how long have you been together?" one asked.

"Is that your first child?" the other asked.

"Look we're not..." James muttered.

Jessie groaned, stopping him mid sentence. "I don't mean to sound rude, but I've had a bad day because of nosey people butting into my business. Questions like these and slurs about my personal life, Security messing with James. I've had enough of it." The three men looked at her uncomfortably. "When I want people to know my business, I'll let them know, and can I just ask what the deal is with you guys and us?"

"Uh," alien one stuttered.

"Don't different people do the death ritual all the time? Why stalk us?" Jessie grumbled.

"It's a rare case. Aliens are never compatible. A lot of races have different ideas about relationships, love, breeding. Your race seems like one of those who are mixed. Some pick several different mates but never commit to any. A few don't bother, a lot commit with the wrong ones and break up," alien two replied.

"I don't understand. If we're so incompatible..." James said.

"You seem to be a rare case for your species who've gotten it right, that's why it worked," alien two said.

"Fine we're a perfect match and stuff, why stalk us? It's not like we can do it again," Jessie said. "I'm almost six months pregnant here, I'm hormonal, emotional enough without getting all this crap. I don't need this too."

"We're sorry if we caused you any grief," alien one said. "If there's anything we can do."

The doors opened. "Leaving us alone's a good start," James said. He and Jessie pushed passed them.

"Can you believe that?" she muttered.

"Nope, I didn't realise we were a perfect couple and whatnot," James said.

Jessie pouted as they entered their quarters. "Am I wasting my time then?" she asked while removing her jacket, dumping it on the chair.

"It's not that. I've always thought that you'd be a perfect match with someone perfect like you, that would be impossible," James mumbled.

Jessie sat down in the same chair, frowning in confusion. "So I have to be alone then?"

"Wasn't really what I meant. I mean that you should be with, you know," James replied cautiously.

"No one's as good as me, so I have to settle for you, you mean?" Jessie raised an eyebrow. "Oh woe is me."

"I'm not saying we're a bad couple, far from it. We're good together," James said. Jessie cleared her throat, staring intently. "Great I mean, look let's just forget I said anything."

"Again I say, do you believe that?" she questioned. He frowned at her. "How do they know how awkward human relationships are. I know we're the lucky ones."

"Oh really?" James commented.

Jessie stood back up, moved closer to wrap her arms around his shoulders. "It's passed midnight, you wanted to talk about us."

"I just think that if we plan to have a baby in three months, we're going to have to come out. We can't hide him or her, it wouldn't be fair," he said.

"I know that. I know that everyone will know the truth and it's inevitable that I'll be getting slut comments. We can't hide the baby, I wouldn't really want to in the end," Jessie muttered, shaking her head. "There's no way that I can put up with it all in my last trimester, or whatever it's called."

"All right, what about this? When the baby's born that's it, we'll tell everyone about all three of us. Probably by then they'll have moved on to somebody else," James said.

"I hope you're right," Jessie sighed, smiling lightly. "So in three months we can kiss in public, and show off our gorgeous little baby to every uptight person whose insulted us. Sounds good."

James smiled back at her, "that's weird. I thought you'd be more resistant to the idea cos of those people."

"They seem to know anyway. Hopefully three months will give them time to adjust to something that's not their business anyway," Jessie said. She lowered her hands to fiddle with the jacket he wore. "I hope you realise that once we're public, everyone will know our every move. That means if you bail or something."

"Why would I do that. I'm not that much of an idiot," James said.

"Hmm, come here," Jessie purred, pulling him closer to her. They kissed passionately, after a minute or so they separated "So you won't leave me?" she whispered.

"Why would I?" James quietly asked.

"I dunno, maybe it's just cos I've had a hard day," Jessie sighed.

"It's a new day," James said.

Meanwhile in the Mess Hall:

Herk sat on his own in the dark room, staring at his planet through the window. Sitting beside him on the table was a cup of white coffee. A dim shadow cast over his table, he uneasily looked to see the source of it standing next to him.

"I see we have something in common," Kathryn smiled, she sat down next to him with her own cup of coffee.

"Uh you like sitting at this table or..." Herk nervously questioned.

Kathryn patted the cup of coffee he had. "It's a human beverage, it's probably the greatest invention humans ever came up with."

"Actually it's kinda bitter," Herk muttered. "But I'm sure humans have much better inventions. I like the drink called tea."

Surprisingly this didn't phase her at all, she ended up smiling sweetly and stroking his arm. He widened his eyes in panic. "If you think it's bad, I'll give it up for you sweet cheeks."

Chakotay watched from his hiding place in the kitchen, he couldn't believe what he was hearing. "What the, she'd give up coffee for this guy? Something's terribly wrong."

"But I thought you'd hate me for it," Herk stuttered.

"What a stupid reason to hate someone," Kathryn purred, moving her chair closer. Herk quickly moved double the distance. This just appeased her though, "ooh are we playing a game?"

"You hussy!" B'Elanna screamed from the doorway. She marched over to join them, then roughly pushed Kathryn. "Get away from him!"

Kathryn growled, jumping to her feet. "Get back to your gay helmsman and leave us alone."

"Gay, not that I care anymore but he's not gay," B'Elanna grumbled.

"Oh please a man that acts like that has to be in denial," Kathryn said.

Herk saw this is another perfect opportunity to escape, he got up quickly to head for the other exit. What he didn't realise as he was watching the two bickering women, was that Matthews, Suzanna and Sally were standing in his way. He crashed into Matthews as he was closer, he didn't seem to mind at all.

"Hey boy, I knew you'd choose me. Let me give you the tour of the Holodeck," he smiled.

"Eugh," Herk shuddered. He was in luck as this annoyed Sally and Suzanna, Suzanna tugged hard on his ear while Sally stood on his toe.

"You've got a boyfriend, give someone else a chance," Sally grumbled.

"Yeah you hussy!" Suzanna screamed as she pulled his ear even harder. He squealed while trying to wiggle free.

"That's not how you do it," Sally snapped. She gave him another kick somewhere where men hate to be kicked. Suzanna let go of his ear so he could collapse onto his knees. The two smiled in victory before turning back to Herk. "Soo what are you doing for the rest of the morning?"

Suzanna spoke at the exact same time however, "my Holo program has some nice views." The two glared at each other.

Meanwhile B'Elanna had pushed Kathryn into the window, she seemed to have the upper hand like expected. "Look you obviously have a problem with men who are interested in me like Tom and Herk, so I suggest getting back to marrying the coffee!"

"Herk is better than coffee and is mine. Nothing will tear us apart," Kathryn gasped. "Oh and FYI Tom obviously doesn't like you, only pretends to hide his gayness. You'd better give him a message for me, James doesn't swing that way."

B'Elanna gasped, she swung around to throw Kathryn into the table. "You bitch, I'll kill you!"

"What, I thought you didn't like Tom anymore," Kathryn smiled as she stood back up.

B'Elanna jumped on her again, this time they wrestled on the table. The coffee was knocked over but neither of them cared at all. They eventually rolled onto the floor. The other two girls were fighting again too, if it can be called that when one side can't even do anything. Sally was in a headlock, screaming abuse at Suzanna. Poor Matthews lay on the floor crying. Herk could only look on helplessly.

0600 Hours:

Jessie grunted and groaned as she struggled to sit up in the bed. Failing that she turned onto her side, frantically shaking James' arm. Her face cringing in pain, her eyes filled with fear. "James, wake up. Please wake up." She fell back onto her back, her hands clutched her stomach. Her face twitched as a sharp pain went through her whole body. "James!" she cried out.

James' form raised, he sat up. "Jessie, what's..." He saw the condition she was in, panic grew on his face as he leaned over her. "What's wrong?"

"I dunno," she squeaked. "Something's wrong with the baby. I keep hurting, it's fading away again." She tried to relax a little, "it still hurts like crazy though."

James reached over to the bedside cabinet to pick up his commbadge, "Taylor to Kes."

Kes, who now knelt beside the bed closed her tricorder. "We have to get her to Sickbay."

"No," Jessie moaned. She rested her head on James' lap, he stroked her hair looking more concerned than earlier.

"Jess if there's something wrong..." he said.

Kes sighed, "we have no choice. She's in labour."

The couple stared at her with wide eyes. "She's only five months and a few weeks along, is it safe for her to have the baby now?" James stuttered.

"I'm sorry but I'm not going to Sickbay. The doc doesn't know, he'll probably just tell me off for not telling him," Jessie muttered. She cringed and gasped in pain, clutching the bump again. "Oh god, this isn't happening."

Kes and James looked at each other helplessly. "The aliens are more advanced medically than us. She may be better off in their care," he said.

"This isn't the time to worry about what people will think," Kes softly said.

Jessie cried out as the pain got worse. James held her hand, she clutched onto his tightly.

"Either way we need to transport, we haven't got time to answer to the doc, and these people might have a better chance of helping," he said. Kes nodded and sighed. James pressed the commbadge in his other hand, "Taylor to Transporter Room."

The Mess Hall:

Neelix wandered in holding a tray of vegetables. He looked on in horror at the catfighting before him, dropping the tray in the process. "No." He didn't notice Chakotay hiding and seemingly talking quietly to himself in his kitchen.

"I'll teach you to ogle my man!" Suzanna screamed, pulling at Sally's hair while she was in another headlock.

"He's not yours, and I'll do more than ogle him," she grumbled. Suzanna gasped, she pushed the girl to the ground.

"I'll show you pain!" Kathryn screeched as B'Elanna dared to touch her hair. The two began punching at each other, while still wrestling around on the floor.

Herk quickly went over to Neelix, "this is getting out of hand, should we call your Security teams?"

"I've known pain ever since I've known you!" B'Elanna yelled back.

Neelix stamped his foot like a child, "stop this, stop this now!" The girls ignored him anyway, so he raised his voice. "I'm not worth it, please stop fighting! I love Kes and I'm sorry!"

The girls stopped just to stare at him in disgust, Herk and Matthews looked at him in the same way.

Chakotay pulled a face, "what, what kind of emergency?" He tapped his commbadge, "I hate it when the transporter guys cut me off."

"What?" Neelix innocently asked.

"Ugh, they're not fighting over you," Herk said.

Kathryn shrugged, quickly punched B'Elanna in the face. She pushed her off her like she was nothing. B'Elanna brushed herself down, "ugh now I wreck of coffee."

"You'll have to kill me to get him, I'm not leaving," Kathryn said.

In: "Chakotay to Janeway."

"What is it Chuckles?" Kathryn groaned, tapping her commbadge.

In: "James, Jessie and Kes have beamed to the surface. Apparently it's an emergency, there's something terribly wrong with Jessie. Oh and that's not my name!"

"Oh god, I'm on my way," Kathryn gasped, she quickly ran out.

Chakotay raised from the kitchen, he cleared his throat and walked out hoping that no one saw him. B'Elanna decided to join in Suzanna and Sally's fight.

Herk groaned, "they've been fighting for hours now, what do we do?"

"I'm confused, if they're not fighting over me, who are they fighting over?" Neelix questioned. Herk rolled his eyes.

Chakotay meanwhile stood outside looking confused and a little insulted. "She gave up coffee for him, but when James is in some kind of trouble she just. Ugh, I hate being second or third best." He marched off down the corridor.

The Planet:

Inside a bright modern hospital, alien doctors and nurses were hard at work. Double doors opened automatically, four medical staff pushing in a stretcher with a bio monitor attached to the side of it.

One doctor kept an eye on it. James and Kes were rushing alongside them, Kes tried to join them. Jessie lay on the biobed itself, tossing slightly as the pain now was mostly non stop.

"She's nine centimetres already, we'll have to take her straight to the delivery room," one doctor said.

"Hang on, will the baby be ok after it's born. It's only five..." James questioned.

The doctors and nurses exchanged glances at each other then looked toward an uneasy Kes. "He doesn't know?"

"No time," she mumbled.

"Doesn't know what?" James demanded.

They all reached their destination, which was a small delivery room. One doctor blocked the doorway to stop James from following everyone else, "I'm sorry, but you'll have to wait outside."

"No, human dad's are allowed to go in you know," James muttered.

"Fine but you'll have to stay out of the way," the doctor said. They joined everyone else in the delivery room.

The nurses moved Jessie onto the main bed. The other doctor stood nearby, "prepare for resuscitation." The two nurses rushed to the other side of the room to work on the equipment there.

"What, is it too soon for, can somebody..." James stuttered.

The main doctor looked at him briefly, "we have no reason why she's gone into labour yet, but we do have a theory."

"Oh god, what do I have to do to get some pain killers around here!" Jessie cried out. She whimpered while resting the side of her face on the uncomfortable pillow, "the last two helped."

"We don't want to risk anymore damage," the other doctor said.

The first doctor sighed, "Miss Kes, you know more about humans. What can you tell us?"

"It's safe to, but not too much more," Kes replied.

"There's five of you, can at least one of you fill in the gaps?" James asked impatiently.

"The theory is that she went into labour to er... expel the..." the main doctor sighed. "I don't know how to say it without angering anyone."

Jessie grabbed the man's arm tightly as the pain intensified. "Just say it!"

"The baby, we detected no lifesigns," the second doctor said uncomfortably. Jessie managed to ignore the pain for a few seconds to stare bewilderedly, James joined her. "Our scans show that it's been that way for an hour roughly."

The first doctor took the opportunity earlier to remove his arm from Jessie. He looked toward the two nurses. "She's ready to give birth." They headed over, one put a blanket over her. "Ok sweetheart, we'll have to get these off," he said, hinting at her lower clothes.

"Hey," Jessie snarled. "We aren't doing anything of the sort!"

"Ok you do it," one of the nervous nurses stuttered. She made sure the blanket was covering her appropriately. Jessie glared at as many people as she could as she did as she was told. The nurses and doctors stared at her intently, expecting her to do something else. She groaned. "Um you do realise that the baby needs room to..."

"Ugh, can't we just transport it out, it'll be quicker," Jessie stuttered, looking very vulnerable with her eyes wide and lips trembling.

"I wouldn't recommend anything unnatural, we don't know what killed the baby," the main doctor replied.

"But but..." Jessie stuttered, staring helplessly at James. "I don't want them looking at me there, tell them."

James knelt down next to her, stroking her hair which was damp because of the sweat. "Jess we need him or her out, we still could have a chance to save it. I'll be here ok, it's all right."

Jessie pouted her lips. "Ugh I hate this, next time Caesarean."

"Jess it's ok, it'll be over soon," James said. He gave her a kiss on the side of her head.

"Ok you push on each contraction," main doctor said.

James helped her sit back up using the arm he had around her. She grabbed a tight hold of both of his hands for support.

Later:

"Push, push, push!" the main doctor yelled.

"Shut up, shut up, shut up!" Jessie screamed back. She fell back onto her back, breathing heavily.

"It's not enough, nothing's happening," the second doctor said.

"I can't, James tell them," Jessie whimpered.

The main doctor turned to do something, his hands both covered in blood. She looked down just then, then looked up at James. Everything in the background became blurry, the people around her began moving erratically from side to side. Her skin felt icy cold and like it was getting pricked gently by lots of tiny needles. A hot flush came over as everything became distorted. "I don't feel too..." she mumbled, her eye lids felt very heavy.

James' panic level rose to almost critical, "what's the matter?" She then closed her eyes, her head fell to the side.

Kes placed a comforting hand on his arm. "It's all right, she just fainted, must have been the sight of her own blood."

"Oh yeah everything's all right, our baby's dead, she's in labour after five months, and I don't think she's meant to be bleeding like that," James muttered, now shaking.

"James you have to try and keep calm," Kes softly said.

"Um we'll have to wake her up, she needs to..." the second doctor said.

"Not really," the main doctor said. He placed a device on her stomach. "It's not how I like to do it, but it'll have to do."

"We're almost there, nurses get the life support ready," the second doctor said. One of the nurses brought over a small enclosed life support machine, and stood it nearby.

James kept a hold of one of Jessie's hands, he looked on as one of the doctor's straightened up holding a tiny blood covered baby in his hand. The other doctor gently cut the umbilical cord. The baby itself was barely that much bigger than the hand holding it. He carefully placed it in the machine. All five medical staff surrounded it to work. James could only just watch helplessly.

"Again," the main doctor ordered.

A nurse shook her head, "it's not working."

"Just do it," the same doctor snapped.

Kes sighed, "he's not developed enough. Even if we did get him back his heart would fail."

"Ugh," the second doctor grunted, slamming his hand on a nearby console. "Damn it! That shouldn't have happened."

"You can say that again. I can't see what killed him in the first place. As far as I can tell he should be still alive and healthy inside the womb," the main doctor said.

Kes closed her eyes, turning to James who seemed to be just staring in her general direction in a daze. She walked over, "I'm sorry, there's nothing we can do for him."

"I don't understand, can't we just..." he said.

"He was too premature, there's no way. Look why don't we go and sit down, I'll get you a drink," Kes said.

"No, no, you can't make it better with a drink," James stuttered.

"I didn't mean," Kes mumbled.

"So that's it then? Five months of looking forward to being a dad, well ok three but... I was really looking forward to it," James stuttered. He tried to hide the tears forming in his eyes. "It's not fair, Kes it's just not."

"I know," Kes softly said.

"No you don't, you're Ocampan. Your people pick one person, the right one. Humans almost always have babies with the wrong people. A lot of parents don't want their kids, and it's usually the ones who want children that never get any," James muttered.

Kes placed a comforting hand on his shoulder, "James."

"No, how come people like my dad who hates their accidental children and beat them for that reason get to keep them. And people like Jessie and me who would have loved that little boy more than anyone could love their child, lose him and..." James muttered.

"I know it's not fair but," Kes said.

"I can't, I can't do this!" James stormed over to the doors, he pulled one of them open and slammed it behind him. Everyone conscious in the room jumped as it collapsed to the floor afterwards.

Further down a few corridors, Chakotay sat in a waiting room on a chair. Kathryn paced backwards and forwards, looking very anxious. They heard the door slamming to the ground in the distance.

The doors to the waiting area burst open, they suffered the same fate as the other door. Kathryn and Chakotay turned to look at James. He stood still looking around like he was lost, his face wet with the many tears coming from his red, puffy eyes.

"Ohno," she said. Then he did something she never expected. He stepped forward to bury his face in her shoulder, and put his arms around her, sobbing uncontrollably. Kathryn put her own arms around him, one hand stroked his hair. "It's ok, just let it all out, it's all right."

He pulled away only slightly, "no it's not, nothing's right about this." He collapsed to his knees, partly lying across the ground, crying into his hands. Kathryn knelt down to continue trying to comfort him. She moved slightly to rest his head on her lap, he was too upset to notice or care about it.

Chakotay stared, looking on worried. Kathryn met his eyes with her own teary ones.

Later:

James stood over the life support machine with the tiny baby lying motionless inside. Kathryn stood beside him. Jessie still lay unconscious in the same place.

"I have to tell her but I don't know how," he said.

"Do you want me to leave you and her alone?" Kathryn asked. He looked at her, nodding slightly. She placed a hand on his arm then walked away.

He moved over to stand next to Jessie, she was already starting to wake up. He knelt down next to her.

"James," she weakly said. "What, how is it?"

James nervously bit his bottom lip, again his eyes filled with tears. "I'm sorry Jess." She stared at him with wide eyes. "There was nothing they could do for him." Jessie's eyes looked away, she sighed and rested her arm across her stomach.

Meanwhile in Guest Quarters:

Herk was busy talking with a few of his alien friends, looking frazzled. "They only stopped fighting when one of them went unconscious, and the other noticed I had snuck out."

One of the guys smirked, "well it's your own fault. You can't just choose which girls are going to fall in love with you."

"Yeah you're not going to get an actual girlfriend this way, it wouldn't be real would it?" the other guy questioned.

"It's not how we do this you know. We've told humans that we're enlightened when it comes to this, you're just making us look like liars," the first guy said.

Herk frowned, "well you shouldn't have told them that you fool."

"We couldn't explain why we were following those two humans around, could we? They'd keep us away if they knew the truth," the second guy said.

"At least I'm the only one showing that we're not just a religion obsessed race who stalk people," Herk muttered.

"No you're worse, you put a lotion on yourself that makes women fall for you," the first guy said.

Herk shuddered slightly, "and a guy."

The two men laughed at him. "If that doesn't put you off, nothing will."

"Oh believe me, I've stopped applying it. I can't take anymore," Herk said.

"So when will it wear off?" second guy asked.

"I'd say in a few hours. The problem is they'll remember it all, and I don't want to be around when the more aggressive ones go back to normal," Herk said.

"It's ok Herk," a woman said as she entered the room. "We won't be staying on board long anyway. There's a problem."

"What sort of problem?" Herk questioned with a frown.

The woman sighed, "the child, it's dead."

The three men stared in shock. "But he or she was supposed to be the Chosen One, how could this be?" the first guy stuttered.

"That's what we've been called to the surface for. The meeting begins at sunset," the woman said.

"We couldn't have just got it wrong. Thy chose well, he chose the couple who saved the citizens of that colony, one was even a Slayer. It was said that two alien people would do a death ritual of the largest magnitude, and the child created from them would be the one of light, the Chosen hero who'll..." second guy stuttered.

"The boy is dead Jake, there's no medical explanation for it. It could only mean two things," the woman muttered. "One, that he isn't the one spoken of. The scrolls weren't clear, maybe they conceive the Chosen One at a later time. Two, another greater more evil force interfered knowing that the child would harm them."

"If he isn't the Chosen, explain the strange death," the first guy said.

The woman shook her head, "I can't. Something powerful and mystical must have done this, and they wouldn't have a reason for doing this otherwise."

Herk sighed, "has it ever occurred to you that the child may have followed in his father's footsteps, and that was reason enough to do it. He may not have been the hero you speak of, but he may have been still a threat to evil."

"We'll never know now," the woman sighed.

The second guy shuddered, "guys I just had a thought. If he wasn't the saviour, then another couple must come along to do a death ritual on a greater magnitude than the colony. Too many people died that day, it makes me sick to think about it." The others looked just as pale as he did at that moment. "I hate to say it but I hope he was the One, what's the worst that can happen without him?"

Voyager:

Kes, James and Jessie entered their quarters. He had his arm around Jessie, she seemed distracted and distant.

"I don't know what else to say, I'm sorry," Kes said. Jessie slowly sat down on the sofa, James turned to look at Kes who remained at the doorway.

"It's ok, you don't have to," he said. "If it means anything, we're thankful for everything you've done for the last four or so months."

"If you need anything, just call," Kes sighed, she turned to leave.

James turned back to face Jessie, he sat down beside her. "Do you want anything, a drink or anything?"

"No I'm ok," Jessie said, finally making eye contact with him. "Really I'm ok."

"Are you sure?" James said.

"I'm not the only one in grief here," Jessie said. "I could get you something if you want."

"You could, I suppose," James sighed. "What about a few tears."

Jessie frowned at him, "what? You want me to cry?"

"That would be nice, well appropriate anyway," James replied.

Jessie stared at him bewilderedly with her mouth open in shock. "What is this?"

"Jess our baby's just died, and you were just like 'huh ok' that's it," James muttered.

"What are you talking about? You'd rather I was crying my eyes out?" Jessie stuttered. She uneasily stood up, "what's wrong with you?"

"What's wrong, could be the headache I have, or it could be the dead baby part," James grumbled.

"Oh don't get all smart with me. What do you want exactly?" Jessie questioned, putting one hand on her hip.

"I want you to show me that you care, at least a little," James replied, standing up to stand in front of her.

Jessie pouted her lips angrily, she gave him a hard slap across the face. "How dare you. How dare you accuse me of not caring!"

"What do you expect? If you cared you'd show it," James said.

"I think panicking before I passed out proves I did. I knew ok, he was barely six months and already dead. When I woke up I knew, I'm not stupid. It had already sunk in before I passed out," Jessie said.

"Oh she knew, brilliant," James muttered, turning away from her. "I wish I knew it was going to happen for sure, then I could become immune to it and..." He turned back around, "not make a fool of myself with all the crying I did."

"So I don't cry, it doesn't mean that I don't care," Jessie said. "For god's sake, I know you James, you have no one to take it out on so you do it to me."

"Don't do that damn it, don't just assume that I'm being all vengeful," James snapped.

"Oh come on, why wouldn't I care?" Jessie groaned. "Answer that."

James shook his head and folded his arms. "How did you know exactly?"

"Oh god," Jessie rolled her eyes. "Now what?"

"You weren't upset, you knew, what are you not telling me?" James asked suspiciously.

Jessie closed her eyes as she stepped closer. "You're just upset, you're not making any sense. I am upset, and I told you already how I knew. It's more of a feeling than knowing." James shook his head again, walking away. "You're upset too, please don't do this. I don't want to lose you too."

James swung back around, "Thy, he said the baby would have good health when we did that ritual."

"Further proof that some religious stuff shouldn't be believed," Jessie muttered.

"He said to me if just one parent has second thoughts, bad feelings, the good health in other words the reward will be taken away from us," James mumbled.

"When did he say that? It doesn't make sense, it would just mean that he'd have normal health, so why would he die?" Jessie said.

"He said the baby himself was a gift," James muttered.

"Again, no sense. The baby was three, four months old when we did the ritual," Jessie said. "I know it's harder to cope when we don't know why it happened."

"You felt uncertain about the pregnancy and he, he died because of it," James quietly stuttered, looking at the floor.

Jessie couldn't believe what she was hearing anymore. "What!?! I don't believe it, first you accuse me of not caring now you blame me for his death. I know you're hurt but this is going too far."

"But you..." James said, looking back up at her.

Jessie marched forward with a vicious look on her face. "I never had second thoughts. I can't believe that you would accuse me of something so horrible." He was about to speak but she quickly butted in again. "I don't blame you for being mad, but don't take it out on me. No, how dare you! I thought you were decent, and I've stuck up for you against all those 'bullies', but you know what maybe they have the right idea. You've become a right asshole."

"What happened to 'I am just upset'?" James muttered, now looking hurt.

"There's a difference between being upset and being so immature and irrational," Jessie muttered. "I will not stand here and be hurt repeatedly by you of all people. Why don't we talk about this when you've calmed down and grown up."

"Grown up?" James said.

"Figure it out yourself. The only good thing about all of this is that I still have a baby in the end," Jessie snapped.

James glared in her direction, then turned to storm off into their bedroom.

Later:

Jessie sat on the sofa, with her elbows on her upper legs, resting her chin in her hands. She looked toward the bedroom door. "Idiot," she sighed, standing herself up. "Ok Jess, go and sort this out, first move." The door opened itself. "Oh thank god, James we need to talk about this, I'm..." James stepped out carrying two bags, this made her skin turn very pale. "What are you doing?"

"What does it look like?" he grunted in response. He straight to the main door. Jessie rushed to grab his arm.

"No don't do that. I said, both of us said things we didn't mean. I'm sorry for the things I said."

James looked at her, trying badly to disguise his hurt with anger. "It sounded to me like you were being completely honest with me." He tried to leave but Jessie kept a tight hold of him. "You're right Jessie, about everything you said earlier."

"No I wasn't. You upset me," she stuttered. "This is silly, you said you wouldn't leave me and it looks to me like that's what you're doing."

"Oh come on Jess, who are we kidding. The reason the baby died was probably cos we weren't meant to be," James mumbled with a lump in his throat. He looked away as Jessie's eyes quickly filled with tears, and her lip trembled. "You deserve better, someone who'll actually treat you right."

"But James, you were upset, we both are," she said.

"I wasn't just talking about today. I'm talking about trying to hit on you when I was drunk, pretending and lying about being ok about the baby before that. Trying to attack you in the prison, jumping into seemingly killer rifts," James said.

"Doesn't it mean anything that I still wanted you after all of that?" Jessie said, she stood closer to him. "Couple's who are good together are ones who can still bare each other, stick together when things are crappy." She kissed him on the cheek twice. "That's us, isn't it?"

"What about today then?" he mumbled.

"We just need more time," Jessie said. She tried to take one of the bags off his shoulder, he stopped her. "Please James, just sit down and think about this."

"I have," James said. "You and me, we got closer and we fought more, usually because of me. I'm just doing you a favour." He pulled away, then stepped out of the quarters. Jessie rushed after him, quickly grabbing his arm again. "Jessie don't make this harder."

"Harder? This looks very easy for you. Just yesterday you told me you'd be a fool to leave me, what's changed?"

"Exactly, I am a fool. This isn't easy for me," James mumbled. "This is for the best, one of us had to do this."

"No, no we don't," Jessie muttered, not caring that two crewmembers walking passed stopped to watch them. "Don't you feel anything for me?"

"Of course I do, that isn't the problem," James replied. "You deserve better."

"All couples have their problems," Jessie said.

"Jess I'm sorry, you..." James quietly said, noticing their audience. "Jess, people are watching."

Jessie then broke down in tears, "I don't care! You're wrong as usual. You always have some excuse that makes you think we aren't good together."

"Jess," James uncomfortably said.

"But it's just you, you don't like yourself so you think everyone else does too," Jessie stuttered. "You have no idea how much I like you, I can't ever put it to words. We always stick together during all the crap, why is this any different?"

"The only difference is that this is the last time it'll happen. This way I won't hurt you," James muttered.

"You're missing my point entirely. What about how well we get on, the chemistry between us. I'm just supposed to forget that?" Jessie cried.

James turned to walk away, closing his eyes. She rushed to go in front of him. "Jessie please."

"You're not leaving me, we're going to talk about this," she said.

"You can't just decide for the two of us like that, I want, no need," James muttered, like he didn't want to say what he was saying. "I can't stay with you, it's for your own good."

"You can't decide for both of us either," Jessie said. She kept a tight hold of him, "stay with me. I don't care if we had problems, this is the happiest I've been despite all that. I know that you feel the same way."

"Jessie, people are watching, you're entertaining them," James quietly said.

Jessie grunted slightly, turning to scowl at her audience. "Get out of here, haven't you got anything better to do!" Everyone backed off, a few decided to leave.

She turned back, held both of his hands while moving closer to whisper to him. "There are many times I wish I knew if I loved you or not. I'm just too messed up to know the difference. But I do know that you're the reason I feel strong enough to face each day. You're the only one who can make me laugh and smile." She kissed him on the lips briefly. "Don't tell me you didn't feel anything just then, cos I know you did."

James sighed, "I'm not denying that I have feelings for you, I do, why do you think I'm doing this. I care about you too much to continue hurting you like this, I've done enough damage."

"But you're hurting me now," Jessie stuttered. She lowered herself to her knees, still clutching onto him, resting the side of her head against the side of him. He seemed very uncomfortable at this point as there were still people around.

"No Jess," he muttered, cringing at his own words. "You've got to stop this, please."

"Why do I have to stop? You're being unreasonable, actually cruel," she said, rising to her feet again. "You're not going anywhere."

"Jessie you can't just," James said. She attempted to block his escape every time he tried to move, he pushed passed her. She only rushed to grab his arm, he turned around slightly to push her away lightly.

"Stop it, you're not getting away." She stopped him one more time from walking away, this time he lightly slapped her in the face. She stared at him, gobsmacked, she placed her hand across her cheek. He looked shocked as well, like he didn't mean to do it. He lowered his head in shame as he walked away, leaving her alone. She fell to her knees again, loudly crying into her hands as everyone watched.

The Transporter Room:

Herk and the other aliens waited for transport, luckily the one doing the transport was someone different.

"Let's just hope your girlfriends and boyfriend don't see you off," the woman said.

"Now you've probably just given the writer a cue," Herk muttered.

Outside the group of five were bickering again. "No I get to see him off, I beamed him here after all!" Sally cried.

"Oh stop being a baby," Suzanna grumbled. Kathryn punched her hard, knocking her to the ground.

"What did you say about a baby bitch!" she screamed.

B'Elanna pushed her, "what's your problem?"

Kathryn pushed her back, the two again started punching at each other.

Suddenly the group stopped what they were doing, looking confused. A second later they all looked disgusted.

"Oh god, Tom," B'Elanna stuttered. She glared at Kathryn, "he's not gay and doesn't like James that way, god you're sick." She stormed off.

"Ohno I painted a picture of him on my wall," Sally stuttered, she ran off.

Suzanna grunted, "ugh whatever." She went off in another direction.

"Oh god, I'd better start grovelling. I told my boyfriend we should see other people," Matthews stuttered, he ran off too leaving Kathryn alone.

"Coffee, it'll never forgive me for this," Kathryn stuttered. She burst out crying into her hands, then she stopped, looking angry. "I know who did this."

The transporter guy was about to beam the aliens away when Kathryn walked in. Herk turned pale as a result.

"You, what did you do to me!" she grunted. At the last second the group beamed away, leaving a fuming Kathryn and a very nervous transporter guy. Slowly her head turned to look at him with a death glare planted on her face. He hated running, but it was better than the alternative so he ran for his life.

Ian's Quarters:

The door chimed. Ian headed over to open the door. He immediately faced James with his bags and look of shame. "I can't believe I'm asking you this but..."

"Oh boy, what happened?" Ian asked carefully.

"I screwed up again. You can tell me to get lost if you want. I need somewhere to stay," James muttered.

Ian sighed with a slight frown, "the sofa's all yours."

"You wouldn't be giving me it if you knew what I did," James said.

Ian raised an eyebrow, "I doubt you can surprise me now."

Meanwhile:

Danny sat on the sofa, trying desperately to comfort Jessie who sobbed against her shoulder. "It may not seem like it now Jess, but it'll get better."

"How?" she cried.

Danny stroked the hair out of her face, "give him five more minutes and he'll crawl back to you, begging to be with you again. Why did he even break up with you?"

"He thinks I... we shouldn't be together, cos he keeps upsetting me," Jessie replied in between cries.

"So he doesn't want to hurt you anymore?" Danny scoffed. "Well done James, you've won the Stupidest Idiot of the Universe Award."

"He's just upset and he needs time to..." Jessie muttered.

"Jessie you're just covering for him, as always. If he means it anyway he's right, it's all him, and you just love him too much to care. You don't want to lose him so you make excuses for him," Danny said.

Jessie lifted her head up to look at her straight in the eye. "What, I don't love or make excuses for him."

"Doesn't it seem a little suspicious to you that he broke up with you now?" Danny asked with a frown.

"What's so special about now?" Jessie sniffed.

"No forget it, it doesn't matter," Danny huffed.

"No what?" Jessie demanded.

"Well he makes one mistake after another, and we're talking about huge mistakes here. He only thinks you did something wrong, he goes in a big huff and breaks up with you," Danny said.

Jessie turned her head away, with a frown she shook her head. "No it's not like that."

"It's exactly like that, sorry Jess. I have a good mind to talk to him," Danny grumbled.

Jessie stood up, "he was so angry with me. He was calmer when he did it, he didn't want to hurt me anymore."

"Problem solved, when Ian finds out he's going to be all 'I told you so'," Danny mumbled. "That's a bright side to this, you won't let him walk all over you anymore. It's typical, one mistake and he... Ugh I haven't been so angry!" she grunted. She waited for a response, but got nothing so she looked at her. "Jess?"

She stared towards the door, her bottom lip trembling. "You're right."

"I am, about what?" Danny muttered.

Jessie walked out of the quarters without looking back.

Ian's Quarters:

Ian paced from the replicator to the table, with his fist resting against his mouth. "I don't believe it."

"I'd understand if you didn't want me to stay here," James said from the sofa.

"No it's fine," Ian sighed, glancing toward him. "I've been saying for a while that Jessie needs a break from you, you just picked an awful time to do it."

James sighed, "I know that. How many more mistakes could I have made though, maybe..."

"No maybe's," Ian quickly butted in, pointing at him. He lowered his finger, stepping closer. "You finally did the right thing. You would have upset her when you broke up with her no matter when you did it. You can stay here."

James stood up quickly, startling him. "Oh god what have I done? Maybe I can still, maybe she'll understand if I just apologised, explained."

Ian groaned, clenching his teeth for just a moment. "No no, I thought you were dead set on this."

"I know we have problems but I promised I'd stop Slaying for her, and I might never do that again. Here I am throwing the best thing that ever happened to both of us away," James said. He headed towards the door, "no I'm not going to give up so easily." Ian quickly got in the way just when the door chimed.

******THE END******