

[illegible][illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Sickbay -- Deck 5 -- XO Lt. Commander Sienna Verin, CTO Lt. T'Mur, 3XO/CMO Lt. Quinna Solice -- 1230)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1730

(ISS Illuminar- Deck 3- Personal quarters- PO1 Steven Hammons and LT (JG) Alaya Hammons- 0400)

(USS Illuminar - Transporter Room 1 - CO Captain Sekal, FO Commander Sienna Williams-Verin & Tamas Laredo – 1645)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Junior Officer Quarters - FO Commander Sienna Williams Verin & Tamas Laredo & Luma'lenai - 1655)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11- Main Computer Core - FO Commander Sienna Williams Verin & Tamas Laredo & Luma'lenai - 1705)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Holodeck 1 - Luma'Lenai & Tamas Laredo & Luma'lenai - 1730)

(Betazed - House of Trei - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 18.00)

(Betazed - House of Trei- Deltron Trei, Melodia Trei, and Agnes Trei- 1805)

(Betazed - House of Trei- SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 18.10)

(Betazed - House of Trei- Deltron Trei, Agnes Trei and Melodia Trei- 1815)

(Betazed - House of Trei- SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 18.20)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - 2/O LTCDR Dieter Gregory - 1900)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - Bridge Officer Tavay- 1905)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1907)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge Officer -- Ensign Tavay -- 1910)

(Betazed - Janaran Falls - FO Commander Sienna Williams-Verin & CTO Lt T'Mur – 2000)

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge Officer -- Ensign Tavay -- 2058)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - CMO/3O Lt.Quinna Solice & SFI Michael Weston - 2100)

(Betazed - House of Trei - SPA LT JG Ariel Trei - 21.01)

(Betazed - vacation suites - Ensign (jg) Hezuela - 2200)

(Betazed - vacation suites - Ensign (jg) Hezuela - 2230)

(Betazed - vacation suites - ME Mason Quincy - 2231)

(Betazed - vacation suites - ME Mason Quincy - 2233)

(Betazed - vacation suites - Ensign (jg) Hezuela - 2234)

DAY 14

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Personal Quarters - Tamas Laredo- 0320)

(Betazed - Janaran Falls - CTO - Lt T'Mur – 0600)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - CMO/3O Lt.Quinna Solice -- 0730)

(Betazed - Janaran Falls -Guest Suite- FO Commander Sienna Williams-Verin & CTO Lt T'Mur – 0730)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI Michael Weston - 0735)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice - 0740)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI - Michael Weston - 0742)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice - 0750)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI - Michael Weston - 0752)

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice - 0753)

(Betazed - vacation suites - Ensign (jg) Hezuela/ME Mason Quincy - 1100)

(USS Illuminar -- Officer's Mess -- Bridge Officer Ensign Tavay -- 1150)

"The order came down from the Chief in Command of StarFleet Security." He turned back toward the main viewscreen as an incoming meteor was found and its trajectory displayed, it would safely miss the planet by several million kilometers.

(Reply: Quinna)

His head turned and his eyes met hers squarely. "We will monitor and we will assist within the framework of our orders but we will not involve ourselves without prior approval. As we have already discussed."

(Reply: Quinna)

(Posted by Charles G)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Bridge -- Deck 1 -- CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice -- 0616)

"Are you up to speed on current reports?"

“I am working through the reports. There seem to be many events that have taken place at the same time.” Included the one she was involved in. “So we have taken on some prisoners?”

He nodded. "Those taken prisoner yesterday are due to be transferred to the Hades in 3 hours and they will be leaving at 1300 if the inspection audit is complete. The data transfer from the planet is ongoing and expected to be completed at 1500 hours. Our departure time will be one hour afterward."

“Understood”

"How much progress have you made on your studies and do you have any questions for me?"

“Honestly, I have been working on getting through the reports that I have barely scratched the surface on. Did finish the section entitled ‘You and the command chair.’” Quinna replied. “Do you want me present for the prisoner’s transfer to the Hades?”

(Reply Sekal)

He looked over a padd given to him by a yeoman then passed it to her. "Operational and readiness reports for start of tour, feel free to acquaint yourself with them."

“I will do so. Also, I read that Counselor Reea is also leaving with the Hades? Why is she being transferred out?”

(Reply Sekal)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Bridge -- Deck 1 -- CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice -- 0620)

He leaned back in the command chair then gave her a sideways look that gave away nothing. "The Counselor personally requested a transfer to the Exeter. She gave no reason for it and I did not ask. Logic would seem to point to a personal reason behind such a request this soon after her arrival on the Illuminar."

"I would have to agree. I have not seen any evidence of her displeasure in the Medical area."

The Vulcan shrugged. "Ferengi are motivated primarily by profit, perhaps she saw greater opportunities elsewhere but that is not certain. As I said I did not pry." He regarded her once more. "Mister Weston will be remaining aboard, our orders are to assist him with his investigation into Roanoke until such time as that entity has been dismantled."

Quinna had known about it, but she felt more reassured that the captain confirmed this news. “I was under the impression that when the operation was over, our part was done.”

"The order came down from the Chief in Command of StarFleet Security."

"Well, then of course I will do what I need to do." Quinna affirmed.

His head turned and his eyes met hers squarely. "We will monitor and we will assist within the framework of our orders but we will not involve ourselves without prior approval. As we have already discussed."

"I promise my involvement in this matter will remain within the confines just short of my death." Quinna replied.

(Reply Sekal)

“Are ‘close call asteroids’ standard? There are so many things we do not see in medical.” Quinna asked.

(Reply Sekal)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

"I promise my involvement in this matter will remain within the confines just short of my death."

Sekal nodded in affirmation and turned his gaze back to the viewscreen where the path of the meteor was being continually tracked.

“Are ‘close call asteroids’ standard? There are so many things we do not see in medical.”

"Indeed, interstellar debris is not only a navigational hazard but every planet and moon is scarred by such impacts. They range from micrometeors to larger which generally burn up in the presence of an atmosphere however orbital patterns will eventually take one within the path of much larger objects." He turned back to her. "Humanity's home planet of Earth was the recipient of one such 66 million years ago which was 10.6 kilometers in diameter and formed the Chicxulub crater in the Yucatan. It caused the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event in which 75% of the plant species and most of the animal life was rendered extinct."

He leaned back in the chair. "That scenario has played out numerous times in this galaxy alone for which reason societies take great care in monitoring debris within their own systems. You will see many such close passes during bridge duty. In the event of a pre warp society the prime directive would appear to prohibit interference in such an impact..."

(Reply: Quinna)

(Posted by Charles G)

[illegible]

He leaned back in the chair. "That scenario has played out numerous times in this galaxy alone for which reason societies take great care in monitoring debris within their own systems. You will see many such close passes during bridge duty. In the event of a pre-warp society, the prime directive would appear to prohibit interference in such an impact..."

Quinna thought about it for a moment. She remembered that when Earth was a pre-warp society they sent out probes into space such as Voyager and the Hubble Telescope. “So what happens if we do hit something from a pre-warp society? Or do I want to know?” Quinna asked.

(Reply Sekal)

“Is there a holodeck program that I can run to learn how to work all the stations here on the Bridge?” Quinna wanted to know everything.

(Reply Sekal)

(Posted by Kris B.)

[illegible]

“So what happens if we do hit something from a pre-warp society? Or do I want to know?”

Sekal looked at her for an instant before speaking as he weighed his words carefully. "The Prime Directive has often been misinterpreted and part of your studies will be on its intricacies therefore I will take this opportunity to spell it out logically and clearly."

He keyed the small viewer and used the interface to magnify the image on the main viewscreen. The vital statistics on the meteor were displayed in blinking yellow text to the lower right. The shape of it could be clearly seen, obolong with defined breaks in its surface and outline. "Diameter 350 meters, primarily iron with trace elements. From the size and composition such space debris would cause slight localized damage from an impact after 90% of its mass burned up in the atmosphere. But what if it were 6 to 8 kilometers in diameter, a small asteroid and it was about to enter the atmosphere of a pre-warp warp civilization?" Sekal reset the main viewer to its former state then turned to Quinna.

"The question has many variables. Are they advanced enough to monitor what is happening above the atmosphere of their planet? Is the culture stone age? Have they invented telescopes? Are they on a technological level to electronically monitor space around their planet?"

He crossed his arms. The prime directive prohibits interference in a technologically inferior culture. To whit:

No Starfleet personnel may interfere with the normal and healthy development of alien life and culture. Such interference includes introducing superior knowledge, strength, or technology to a world whose society is incapable of handling such advantages wisely. That is a direct quote. Does this mean to step aside and allow a primitive culture to be destroyed? Some have claimed so but that is not how the prime directive reads. If a ship has the ability to avert such a calamity and can do it without contaminating any society on the planet then it is not bound by that directive."

He turned back to the viewer. "It is the punishment for knowingly and willfully acting without regard for contamination that is severe and may result in court-martial and confinement."

"Is there a holodeck program that I can run to learn how to work all the stations here on the Bridge?"

He nodded his head. "The purpose of some of the simulations in your training regimen are for that very purpose. A command officer is required to know all Bridge functions in the event it becomes necessary."

(Reply: Quinna)

(Posted by Charles G)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Corridore -- XO Lt. Commander Sienna Verin, CTO Lt. T'Mur -- 1200)

The next morning, for Sienna, which for everyone else was around 1200, she headed on down to sickbay for the brain scans that Reea had demanded. Since Sienna knew that the requirement was entered into her file she could not ignore it, despite Reea's departure of the ship. Sienna did not really want to do the scans, she wanted to snuggle with T'Mur until they were due on duty.

Sienna ran her hand along T'Mur's arm gently, ::I need to go to sickbay for those brain scans. Will you be accompanying me, or sleeping in?: Sy wasn't positive that all of Roanoke aboard had been caught, in fact she was almost positive that something or someone was still aboard and that bothered her a bit.

::Would you like me to come with you?::T'Mur asked, concerned.

::Yes. I want you there, holding my hand with no secrets between us. Reea was worried that the extremes of my emotions are caused by the forced bonding with Luma.::

T'Mur took her hand and kissed it. ::That didn't seem like that difficult of a diagnosis. I will be there for you every step of the way::

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Sickbay -- Deck 5 -- XO Lt. Commander Sienna Verin, CTO Lt. T'Mur, 3XO/CMO Lt. Quinna Solice -- 1230)

Sienna entered sickbay and spoke quietly to one of the nurses and was shown to a private room. She quickly stripped off her uniform top as directed and laid down on the bed in just her tank top. Her long dark hair was in a single braid down her back, which she moved so that she was not lying on it.

Quinna walked into the room. “Welcome to the Brain room.” Quinna said pretending to make it spooky. “I see that before Reea left, she ordered you a brain scan. You will have to excuse me, I am trying to shift through her notes since she did not send me a report. Are you still feeling residual effects from Luma?”

"I would like T'Mur in here, with me, please. This affects her as much as me, Quinna. Yes, I am still feeling the residual effects. The bond with Luma is spiky and with rough edges. It's very close to my bond with T'Mur. And I need help." Sienna whispered. "My emotions have been all over the place and I've been having rages."

"I don't see a problem with T'Mur being here. In fact, the more comfortable you are, the better the results. There is something to be said about the euphoria you have when you are with the person you love. Chemicals are released that simulate the healing mind." Quinna said as she was preparing.

"Indeed," T'Mur replied, "being in a relaxed state helps your body release the endorphins that go to create that euphoric state. Besides, the action of someone attempting to force me to leave would have some ... unfortunate results." She left it at that, and noted a nurse taking a step back as the Vulcan picked up a chair and set it beside the bed. She reached over and took hold of Sienna's hand.

Quinna took a Neuro node and placed it on Sienna's forehead. Then she placed the dome on the upper part of her head. With a few punches of some buttons, the scan was started. "I can go. You should be totally relaxed."

"You should likely stay, Quinna. We need to know what the damage is sooner rather than later." Sienna's fingers were clinging to T'Mur and that spike of fear was back, almost as if Sy could not contain her impulses. She tried not to make a sound, but T'Mur knew, always knew. ::I can't control myself:: Nothing about this forced bonding had gone according to how it 'should' have gone.

T'Mur used their bond to share her control. She maintained continuous monitoring of Sienna, flowing the tides of her emotional state. Although she was not sure how it would affect the scan she knew her mate would not handle a full retreat of her assistance right now.

After about 10 minutes the scan was complete. Quinna moved back and removed the equipment. "Ok. We are done with the scans. As you know the right parahippocampal gyrus in the brain is associated with telepathy. When Luma did what she did, that area of the brain was bypassed. So for nontelepathic races, the left inferior frontal gyrus of the brain is the most suggestive area. Luma's bond went through this area. So you have two active telepathic areas. That could be why you feel like you are losing control. As for why Luma went there, I can assume that was the fastest way for Luma to bond with you. She may have overcompensated because she did not know how strong she was and we were all in an emergency state at the time."

T'Mur squeezed her mate's hand, "I believe we are aware of the cause doctor, but the counselor wanted to know if there was a physical result, and to be honest, the time that might be required for a recovery."

Quinna moved closer to support her friend. "There are neurosuppressants I can use, however, they are not designed to concentrate on just one area of the brain. I can administer one, but right now you would lose all your abilities. But I don't like recommending that. I just need more time to compare this reading with those that were taken in the past. We will figure this out."

T'Mur was curious how this would affect their bond and connection. It would be disconcerting to her to not have Sienna in her mind, and she was not certain how Sienna would handle being free of their connection. She was not convinced that was the best option, for anyone.

Sienna took a deep breath, "We will be on Betazed soon enough and the mind-healer, Dr. Mias will be helping us find another bondmate for Luma. He can assist me in terminating the bond and we can re-evaluate if necessary on medications. I shouldn't be needed on duty if you want me to rest, Quinna instead of working. I can do paperwork from bed as easily as I can take care of it in the First Officer's Office." She certainly looked tired still, but better than she had in a long time. T'Mur made sure she was too exhausted to stay awake.

T'Mur was gratified to hear her assert herself with Quinna. "I would agree with Sienna's decision. I do not think the use of drugs at this time would be beneficial."

"Then that makes three of us. I just had to give you the options." Quinna said. She pulled a spare PADD out from a nearby cabinet. She downloaded the information for Dr. Mias. Though it was not said, in her mind, Quinna translated that to mean that they did not trust Quinna's abilities. She would not say as much. She turned back to them. She handed over the PADD, "Here, you can give Dr. Mias a copy of my testing result. I do agree you need rest."

Sienna nodded, "Would you like to be present when he works on this bond?" Sienna was not sure what was wrong. "I don't mind. But it is pretty boring from the outside. We just sit around in a trance and then hours pass."

"That is ok. I am not much into sitting around. I have paperwork to work on anyway." Quinna said. "Besides, I don't think Dr. Mias cares for me too much. We never seemed to talk." Quinna also did not want to be the third wheel when they were done.

Sienna slowly sat up, "Official orders, Doctor?" Sienna asked, needing them to be noted so she could stay off duty. "Quinna, how is Jatón Alyl?" Sienna had the constant worry of Alyl in the back of her mind, and she cared for her crew.

"Official orders already signed," Quinna said then she turned her head in the direction of Alyl. She bit her upper lip. "Alyl has not changed. I was thinking that maybe it may be time to send him to Starfleet Medical on Earth."

Pain crossed Sienna's features and she nodded, "Or perhaps to Trill. How is his symbiont? Any danger to it?" Sienna knew her duty regarding the symbiont, as did Quinna. If there was any danger to the symbiont it would be necessary to remove it and get back to Trill. "Any word from the specialists on Trill?" She worried so much about each and every crew member.

"I have not heard from anyone on Trill but I have been doing my homework." Quinna was advising the XO on the crew so this does not interfere with Hippavoliations. "Alyl is doing great. Jatón is the one. If we send him back to Trill, they would not investigate what is wrong. They will remove Alyl and let Jatón die." Quinna answered. Quinna wondered if Sienna was going to go over her head with Alyl.

"So long as Alyl is stable, we can avoid informing Trill. Having worked with the government, I can assure you that you are absolutely correct, especially since Alyl is considered unique among symbionts. I know we have a half Trill, and we have another joined Trill, but do we have anyone who is full trill who might be compatible if necessary?" Sienna should have known the answer to that, but her head was hurting.

"We can work on it later. He is stable, like you said, we can keep him that way. You need to bed and rest. And I mean rest, not any other activities." Quinna ordered.

T'Mur made a face, "Doctor, I assure you, that I will keep Sienna in bed, by any means possible. Even if I have to tie her to the bed. I will limit her exertion as much as possible."

Quinna shook her head, "I mean sleep. She needs sleep."

T'Mur nodded and shrugged matter of tacitly, "Of course, I will ensure she sleeps as well."

She held out her hand to help Sienna get out of the bio-bed, "Come beloved, from one bed to another."

(Reply none)

(Posted by Mel G., Al M., and Kris B.)

"Oh," Penn said, "I was just telling Penn that he was being a little rude and he just explained that he had never experienced anything like the Ensign before. I told him that you were engineers and scientists and you wanted to consult with us." He looked at the two intruders to their lab with a "wasn't that obvious" look. Then he said, "I often forget that the analogies we speak in need a common reference."

"Well that's..." Bohb paused, "interesting."

"It is," Penn said, excited that someone was interested in their language. "Come in, come in and tell us how we can help. You'll find we're quite versatile."

Teller looked at the two and spoke in a more formal tone "Rai and Jiri at Lunga. Rai of Lowani. Lowani under two moons. Jiri of Ubaya. Ubaya of crossroads, at Lunga. Lunga, her sky gray."

Sitting down he took out a PADD and cleared one of the displays on the wall. "Kira at Bashi, Darmok and Jilad at Tanagra," as he looked at the two with anticipation.

Penn nodded, looking a bit more serious, "The beast at Tanagra."

Gregory looked at Dr. Penn, then Bohb. "Mr. Bohb, I think that is your cue to begin."

Bohb's mind was swirling a little going from the Temarian patterns of speaking, suddenly glad that at least the Benzite was able to translate.

"Yeah," he began, stepping forward and handing a PADD to the scientist, "I have working on a substitute to have Luma be able to transfer to, rather than the anelurian crystal that has been cracked. So I have created a liquid anelurian crystal, which was fun in and of itself. However, creating a containment device that can handle the massive energy transfer of an entire life form has proved to be a little problematic. I am certain that the problem is in the harmonics of the energy transfer, but I do not have enough experience with this kind of harmonic convergence with subspace fields. I need a little help."

Penn nodded, hearing the problem and began to scan through the calculations on the PADD. He grabbed a second PADD and transferred the data to it, then handed the original PADD to Teller.

"Franck and Cario with Klien and Rosseland," he said. "Janice Lester at Camus II."

"Swigert and Lovell to Houston," he replied as he took the PADD and directed the contents up to the screen.

He divided the screen and called up a set of equations. "Bekenstein and Hawking's describing the black hole," he said as the first set of equations lit up. "Pais and Treiman with their quarks," he added as a second set of equations appeared below the first one. Teller cocked his head to the side. "Camille Claudel, the sculptor."

He paused, "Henry Ford on school. Newton and gravitation. Nannini and Marcucci on hyperspherical harmonics." More equations appeared on the screen. Shaking his head, "Heywood on Rome," he said with a sigh.

Penn nodded, "François de Charette with omelettes."

Gregory looked at the equations floating on the screen, "I recognize some of them, but don't see how they are connected."

Bohb recognized the reference to non-symmetrized hyperspherical harmonics method for non-equal mass three-body systems, and looked at the equations. They began to swirl around in his head. This was almost his style of thinking, using what he knew to create something new.

"I see what you're doing," the Magillan said, pointing to the new equation, "but finding the right harmonic resonance level has been a real problem."

Penn nodded and turned to Teller, "Nigel Tufnel, with his amplifier. Brian Wilson and Dean Torrence with Barbara Ann. Mark McDonald in the ocean."

Teller began sketching a design on the PADD. It was a multi-layered composite material. Layers of transparent aluminum sandwiching ... "Madhavan at Iowa State, Musk and solar panels," Teller said.

Penn thought for a moment then nodded, "Sokath, his eyes are open."

Bohb looked on, a little lost, "Care to fill us in?"

Penn looked around, as if he suddenly remembered that there were others in the room. "Oh, yes, yes, of course. Have you considered a multilayered cell with a nanocrystalline silicate? It would have the ability to capture and channel the harmonics of the energy as it's transferred."

Bohb stood back and put his hand on his chin, stroking it as he thought. "That's still a wide range of harmonics. "

Teller nodded. On the screen appeared the Schrodinger equation for a particle in a spherically symmetric 3D harmonic oscillator. "Dirac and the ladder operator," he said, as he added another equation to the screen.

Gregory looked at the two scientists, and to Bohb, "Schrodinger. Seriously, I hate Schrodinger. He burned me on a test in college," Gregory chuckled. "I think the idea of using the ladder operator to calculate the quantum harmonic oscillator and address the angular momentum of the harmonics coming from the transfer to the container might work. We might have to get into quantum field theory as well. My head is starting to hurt."

However for Bohm it sent an explosion of in his mind, "I didn't think of that. It's such a basic rule in quantum engineering. Finding the eigenvalue of the annihilation operator to find the angular momentum of the harmonic oscillation. But do I have enough information to determine i?"

He pointed to the equation indicating the initial quantum number. Then began to study the equations as they scrolled across the screen, his brain working at full speed.

"I know what you mean, Lt. Commander," Bohb said turning to Chief of Operations, "I think I watched a lot of cadets implode with those equations and deciding whether it's creation or annihilation."

Then he turned to the two scientists and clapped the Benzite on the shoulder, “Gentlemen, you are geniuses.”

Penn laughed and turned to Teller, "Tennessee Tuxedo with Phineas Whoopie."

Teller nodded, "Darmok and Jalad on the ocean," he said as he opened his arms wide.

(Reply None)

(Posted by Al and Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Main Engineering - Ensign Scott Matrix - 1701)

Scott and the engineering team had finished inspecting and reverse engineering the cloaking device. The last of the simulations were finished and by all accounts, it could be adapted to the USS Hillary and work with relative reliability.

The computer suggested at worst, a 13% probability of failure during normal operation. In fact, it could probably be integrated into the Illuminar if needed. The technology was surprisingly adaptable to standard Federation power systems. Telemetry control would require special programming and specific replicated parts to overcome the data transfer differences between the systems, but it was doable.

“Thank you.” Said Scott as one of the engineering crew handed him the specification PADD.

“Ensign Scott to Commander Gregory. I have the final report ready on the cloaking device.” Said Scott.

(Reply Gregory)

“Yes sir, I would be happy to brief you, but it might be better if you came down to engineering. We have all the simulation work setup here. If you’d prefer just a summary briefing, I can meet you.” Replied Scott.

(Reply Gregory)

“Aye sir. Matrix out.” Replied Scott.

(Reply Gregory)
(Posted by Steve)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge -- 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1704)

Gregory was sitting on the bridge reviewing more reports when his comm badge churpped

=^= Ensign Scott to Commander Gregory. I have the final report ready on the cloaking device ^=^=

Gregory rolled his eyes and looked around the bridge to see who heard that.

"Mr. Matrix, excellent. Meet me in my office in 20 minutes."

=^="Yes sir, I would be happy to brief you, but it might be better if you came down to engineering. We have all the simulation work setup here. If you'd prefer just a summary briefing, I can meet you.=^="

"No. that is all right. I'll come down to Engineering =^=

=^=Aye sir. Matrix out=^=

Gregory put the PADD down. "Commander Verin, I'll be back, I need to check on a special project."

(Reply Verin, IYW)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1725)

Gregory entered engineering and looked around. Spotting Ensign Matrix, he headed toward the young engineer. "Well Mr. Matrix, I am here. Show me what you have."

(Reply Matrix, Verin)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - ACEO Ensign Scott Matrix - 1726)

"Well Mr. Matrix, I am here. Show me what you have." Said the Commander.

Scott turned to greet his superior officer, "Sir, we've done a detailed scan and virtual disassemble of the cloaking device and reverse engineered some of the components we couldn't identify." Started Scott pointing at the main display.

The image on the console showed a detailed line view of the device slowly rotating. Various colors indicated specific systems within the unit.

Scott pressed a few buttons on the console. "Here you can see all of the power flow requirements and input controls. Those in green are either completely compatible with our own or would only need minor adjustments to interface. Those in yellow and red would require some TLC to ensure they would interface correctly."

(Reply Gregory)

"This is pretty exciting stuff sir. The bottom line is that we can readily adapt this thing to the Hillary. We've run nearly one hundred simulations and the computer shows only about a 13% probability of failure during normal operation...if installed into the Hillary's systems." Replied Scott.

(Reply Gregory)

"Meaning we could expect to see decreased performance...the Hillary could become visible for brief moments because of the data transfer differences between the two systems. This cloaking device operates at a significantly slower data rate. Simply put, we would need to place a data buffer between systems. It's not a huge difference, but the memory could add up over several hours...perhaps minutes. I think we can shore up those numbers with some custom programming and circuitry." He continued.

(Reply Gregory)

"We'll need to replicate several subcomponents to account for the data transfer difficulties between Federation technology and this device. We've started to prototype several and I anticipate testing real telemetry tomorrow. With your permission of course." Replied Scott.

(Reply Gregory)

"I wouldn't directly interface our systems for testing, but we have several data and power units like the Hillary's in storage. I would use those for testing. As for the power systems, these should be easily overcome with just some modulation adjustments from a normal power conduit. Our circuitry is designed to automatically adjust the power flow, so this shouldn't be an issue." Said Scott.

(Reply Gregory)

"Aye sir." Replied Scott.

(Reply Gregory)

(Posted by Steve)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 11 - Main Engineering - 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1730

Gregory watched as the Assistant Chief Engineer brought up his display. Rotating on the display was a line view of his creation. He listened as the man started walking him through the device.

"Here you can see all of the power flow requirements and input controls. Those in green are either completely compatible with our own or would only need minor adjustments to interface. Those in yellow and red would require some TLC to ensure they would interface correctly," Matrix said.

"You have made a great deal of progress Mr. Matrix. By TLC, how much are you talking? If we need to use this, the pilot will be bugging out and won't have time to woo the device with wine and chocolate."

"This is pretty exciting stuff sir. The bottom line is that we can readily adopt this thing to the Hillary. We've run nearly one hundred simulations and the computer shows only about a 13% probability of failure during normal operation ... if installed into the Hillary's systems."

Gregory stroked his chin in thought while looking at the schematics. "What do you mean failure?"

"Meaning we could expect to see decreased performance...the Hillary could become visible for brief moments because of the data transfer differences between the two systems. This cloaking device operates at a significantly slower data rate. Simply put, we would need to place a data buffer between systems. It's not a huge difference, but the memory could add up over several hours...perhaps minutes. I think we can shore up those numbers with some custom programming and circuitry." He continued.

"What about a recursive loop requiring the Hillary to confirm the commands, that would slow down the processing feed from the ship to the device? How quickly do these moments of visibility occur? The Hillary has a max velocity of warp 5. I need to be stable for at least 12 hours at max warp."

"We'll need to replicate several subcomponents to account for the data transfer difficulties between Federation technology and this device. We've started to prototype several and I anticipate testing real telemetry tomorrow. With your permission of course." Replied Scott.

"Permission granted, Mr. Matrix," Gregory replied

"I wouldn't directly interface our systems for testing, but we have several data and power units like the Hillary's in storage. I would use those for testing. As for the power systems, these should be easily overcome with just some modulation adjustments from a normal power conduit. Our circuitry is designed to automatically adjust the power flow, so this shouldn't be an issue." Said Scott.

"Excellent. Keep me updated on your progress, and anything you need, you will have it. Keep up the good work Mr. Matrix."

"Aye sir," Matrix replied.

Gregory turned and left Engineering before heading back to the bridge. This plan might just work.

(Reply none)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(To Sleep, Perchance to Dream)

Alaya stretched like a cat and headed to where her mate was. Her dark blue hair and dark eyes were seeking Stevens in the mirror. “Latinum for your thoughts my mate?” She leaned up to brush a kiss along his jaw. Alaya was a short being, and her body was muscular. She too slept in the nude for the pleasure of both she and her mate. “Something woke you, disturbed you. Tell me how I can assist you.” Alaya did not like Lee, although she had approved of her mate’s ambition. “It will be pleasing to slice Lee up with my blades while you hold him down and I drink down his fear and pain..”

“You would not be so stupid. We are a matched pair, and I support your ambitions. I am the ship’s intelligence officer, after all.” Most were betazoids due to their psionic abilities. “I felt something odd for a moment, like someone was beside me that was not you. You but not you.” She shrugged and left the bathing room to take out one of her form-fitting leather uniforms. “Did you want to do something or go back to sleep? I’m.. hungry. And I would enjoy drinking down anyone’s pain, anguish and suffering. Someone must need punishment.”

He chuckled, coming from him the sound was chilling. "I'll get dressed and we will walk around the ship. I'm not going back to sleep anytime soon." He rested a hand on her left hip and caressed it roughly before slapping it hard then turned and went to the wardrobe to put on his uniform. The trousers and boots were black, the pullover shirt a dark gold. Upon the left breast was the vertical dagger piercing the earth, it's tip dripping blood. Early morning sweeps were rare, who knew what fun they could dredge up while running one, what secrets they might uncover?

Alaya's uniform was skin tight, black leather. The dark blue metallic sash held both her personal blades and her phaser. She unzipped the top, to show her cleavage properly. The heeled boots hit mid thigh and were armored, and she finished the look off with opera length leather gloves that were butter soft. She looked like she was, a dangerous blade held loosely by the current ship's Captain. Her loyalty, such as it was, was to herself and then to Steven. Her ambition was a crew greater than a hundred measly souls who were mostly scientists. Once dressed, she leaned up to kiss her mate. "You are mine and I yours." She spoke, reaffirming her loyalty to him this day. The one time she had not, they had a fun fight that had ended with each of them with a blade to the other's neck. Fun, but truthfully he outweighed her, and likely would have won.

Alaya had been his stroke of luck in a life filled with violence. Not only did she complete him, she was the perfect partner to his ambitions. It was like some bloodthirsty god had paired them up in order to cut a bloody swath through the fleet. Plots against him had been ferreted out by her and the would-be perps had met hideous ends. And agonizer booths were such fun places to visit to hear the cries and screams of your enemies. Deep down he knew he was probably the most hated man on the ship and he relished it. Without her he was only another struggling pretender, with her he was a nearly unstoppable force. His only other ally was Boyles; Galk viewed him with suspicion. The Klingon had made himself the Captain's personal guard by demolishing those above him. If there was anyone Hammons feared it was the Klingon in a one-on-one fight and the Captain right behind him. If they were ever to make a move on the command structure, both would have to be taken out simultaneously. It would be the greatest challenge yet but if they could seize the ship they could do anything they wanted from there.

He placed the agonizer on his belt along with his sidearm and the jeweled dagger she had given him. It was kept razor sharp and the rubies glinted the color of blood. "Let's go have some fun."

Alaya sauntered out of their shared quarters, her own personal guard swinging in behind her, and Hammons on her arm. She technically outranked him and when they were out she chose to communicate with him via telepathy only. ::Ksencia seems exhausted today. I wonder who she was doing all night.: Alaya swung around and grabbed the Cadet who was crossing near them in obvious fear. She slammed the half bajoran/trill woman against the wall.

"You." Her voice purred in the hated tone that all of the crew knew so well and feared, "Are not fit for duty, Cadet." She glanced over towards Steven and was unsurprised that the stupid cadet instead of submitting decided to fight her. Alaya grabbed the cadet's wrist, pinning it and the regulation blade against the walls.

"She's YOUR Cadet." Alaya spoke out loud, surrendering the Cadet to Steven to play with.

His backhand blow as Ksencia was swept toward him was so hard she was driven to her knees by it and fighting to stay conscious. "Sleeping your way to the top only works if you have a protector Cadet." His voice was a purr. An angry red welt was already rising on her right cheek. He removed the agonizer from his belt and placed it over her left breast. He leaned in close to her terrified face, his eyes narrowed as he whispered. "This is an object lesson. Another step in your training." He keyed it on and her eyes rolled back in her head showing the whites as she gave a blood curdling shriek of agony.

Alaya grinned and drank in the suffering from the agonizer, as did her two guards who were not exactly watching or guarding her, they were watching the Cadet writhe. ::She was trying to get into the Commander's bed, but T'Mur stepped in. So she was with.....: Alaya sent the image to Steven with a grin. ::Mr. Gregory needs to learn some discretion, but he took down Mr. Peters easily and ran Vex Jordaan off the ship.::

::He's a lone wolf and will be easy prey. Verin and T'Mur won't roll over and play dead but we are a match for them with proper planning. Sekal and Galk though, those two will be the real challenge. But first there is Lee. All in due time my dear.::

The Cadet had fallen to the floor and was writhing around, he pushed her onto her back with his boot then turned off the agonizer and replaced it at his belt. She curled up into a ball sobbing as he looked away from her in contempt. "Let's continue our walkabout my love, there has to be something of interest going on somewhere."

Alaya stalked away from the sobbing Cadet, the problem of Verin and her mate on Alaya's mind. ::I would make a better first officer than Verin ever would, but she has her Family behind her. How else did those two make it into command?:: She growled as they continued towards the turbolift. This ship did not have the roses that the Illuminar did, instead it had poisonous and deadly plants that took their place. And their version of Luma? Well, this one was a child who had been tortured until she had given in and sensors were restored.

::Luma dear, tell your Auntie Alaya all about the last few hours.:: The entity had no bondmate, and it was deemed best to keep her subjugated that way. A gratifying whimper could be heard telepathically.

::The Gregory plays with a new toy each day.:: Luma reported first, which was no news to Alaya. Of course he did. ::He's a human man, he has to use his charms to get ahead.:: Alaya spoke contemptuously. ::Tell me something good, Luma. So I don't have to hurt you.:: The turbolift finally arrived.

::Galk is alone? In the Security Center.:: Alaya glanced towards Steven as the conversation was relayed. ::Luma does not like Galk.::

::And Galk doesn't trust anyone. Alone he may be but he will be well protected and alert. He isn't one to leave chinks in his defenses. One day he will slip up and I'll kill him. It's too soon though. Do it now and the Captain will be warned of our ambitions. When the time comes we will have to take them out separately in a coordinated attack. Boyles will help with the Klingon. He hates him since he got roundly beaten by him, he would have probably killed him if I had not intervened...: And that concerned Hammons, the Klingon was a natural tactician. ~Has he already foreseen what is coming and was trying to lessen the threat? I've got to watch him closely and counter any moves he might make.~ What if Galk had been sending a message to Steven himself? Hammons wouldn't be dissuaded that easily.

"Deck 4 Luma and be quick about it. Forward lounge." The lift started up instantly. "I feel like breakfast and a quick drink to get the blood pumping." ::We also might find someone with their guard down we can wring information out of.:: That wasn't assured, anyone who saw them enter would probably be scared sober.

Alaya stood beside her mate as the turbolift went to the correct place, quickly. ::Why do you trust the servers in the forward lounge? Poison is not unknown.:: Alaya would often scan the servers, but there were others who would handle the food. "I prefer the replicators in our quarters for so many reasons." Alaya would not eat there, but her presence would intimidate the other crew. In the ISS, you were either Dominant or a doormat. Few were in between. The two swept into the lounge which was sparsely populated.

His face was grim. ::You've got to get out sometimes and show you aren't afraid or you become a target. And the lounge has replicators as well.:: His gaze swept over the few tables that were occupied and settled on one in the back corner, sitting there they could watch the entire room as well as the doors in and out. The table was currently occupied.

His eyes were hard as he walked over to it. "This table isn't for you, find another."

The two Andorians gave each other a look and one stood slowly to his feet as he gave Hammons and his retinue a good once-over. "You must have missed the fact this one is already occupied."

Steven's smile was deadly as he stepped into that one's comfort zone and the Andorian flinched but held his ground. He leaned in close. "Move or die." His right hand hovered near the hilt of the dagger.

The other Andorian stood very slowly and reached out for the arm of his companion, the first one shook him off. "I'm not an infant." He had spoken without turning his head though his antenna had swiveled. Still the odds were stacked heavily against them and he knew it so he backed off without looking away. "Yours this time Hammons but maybe next time it's not. One day you might be alone."

Steven's eyes narrowed at the threat. "In that case I will kill you first without asking."

The Andorian gave a ghost of a smile. "Perhaps we shall see when that time comes."

The two left the table without taking their eyes from them. Once they were out the door Steven sat down and leaned back as he stretched out his legs. "I'll get a drink in a minute, the chair is still warm."

Alaya simply laughed over the confrontation. She would have happily sliced off the andorian's antennas then forced said andorians to choke their now diced antennae down raw as lunch. Ah the screams from slicing those off, all the nerve endings dying, the exquisite anguish and pain of losing one of their senses... Alaya cast her dark eyes over towards her mate and giggled sadistically. Instead of taking a seat next to Steven, Alaya sauntered across the floor and ordered herself an iced coffee and Steven his preferred hot kona coffee. She took both of the drinks back to the table and slid one beside Steven.

::You handled the andorians well, although I like my solution much better.:: Betazoids seemed to feed off the darker emotions in the ISS Universe. She sat down and put her feet up on the table, showing off her thigh high leather heeled boots that she often fought in. Her attention was caught by another table. A trill engineering cadet was reviewing something on a padd. She was a joined trill, and that was just fascinating to Alaya. ::I haven't figured out if the symbiont feels pain separately from the trill. There are so few joined trill in the fleet....:: Alaya dipped into the girl's thoughts and found them centered rather

frustratingly on the newest members of command - Dieter Gregory and Quinna Solice. She gently pulled Steven into rapport so that he could see the trill's thoughts of knifing Solice to death and taking her place. Alaya found the thought to be rather amusing.

Steven grinned at the thought.::A Cadet yet already settling in. One less command officer in the way is one less we have to worry about. Good luck to that one. Solice is in high regard now after rooting out that pacifist cell aboard that was sabotaging the ship. Roanoke right? I'm certain they were in league with the anti-Empire operation that was going on at Sigma Draconis, if we can find evidence to tie the two together then we will be sitting pretty. I still can't understand why the Vulcan didn't just scorch the whole surface, dissidents, Morg, Controller and all. The Controller must have promised some serious tech to the Empire in exchange for its continued existence.::

::Mhmm. Reea was the one who was helping the Vulcan with that mess. A Ferengi. Over me:: She snorted in derision, rather inelegantly. ::But she's gone now too, off with the Vulcan's Daddy. Oh I know we couldn't try anything until this ship was far away from the Vulcan's Daddy and his interference. Fleet families:: Part of Alaya's handicap was that she did not come from a fleet family, in fact she was adopted by an earth couple who had raised her to be rather ruthless. Her adopted Father was a great fighter and had taught her well, but they were retired enlisted and while that wasn't terrible, it was not the same as Fleet Admirals like Verin and the Vulcan had standing behind them.

::Maybe I am hungry after all.:: Alaya's eyes had moved from the cadet studiously ignoring her to another. ::That one. The boy and his sister. What do we know about them?: Alaya was the ship's intelligence officer but that did not mean much other than ensuring loyalty to the empire and overseeing punishments.

::They are an unknown. Fleet brats but they don't seem loyal to anyone but themselves and they watch out for each other constantly. Best to keep an eye on them, they may be useful in the future.::

Alaya rolled to her feet in a smooth movement, having finished her iced coffee. She wanted to play but was unsurprised to find Steven holding onto her wrist. ::They shield too well for me to be able to read them. Which is a shame. Most half betazoids like them wouldn't be able to hold their thoughts private. I wonder what they do in those shared quarters of theirs?::

Steven shrugged. ::Maybe they torture their cats, who knows. Eat and drink now and play later. I may be able to enlist those two so leave them alone for now.::

Of the two, Steven was more dominant and he had scored a coup in capturing her attentions and bonding her to him. She didn't resent him, and she was looking forward to being his first officer on a ship.

::I want some ganglia. Freshly roasted with garlic::

She had a taste for the flesh of other beings.

>>>

(USS Illuminar- Deck 3- Personal quarters- PO1 Steven Hammons and LT (JG) Alaya Hammons- 0445)

Steven shook his head as he levered himself out of bed and padded to the lavatory. He looked in the mirror and traced the line of his jaw which had only the slight fuzz of a five o'clock shadow. He pulled the hair back from over his right eye and saw no scar. "Sheesh, that was a vivid dream." He muttered

then turned on the tap and splashed water on his face. He was in the buff because that was the way he liked to sleep, everything else was 180° from what he had seemingly hallucinated while unconscious".

Alaya woke up, screaming, and found herself hanging over the edge of their bed, also naked, dry heaving. The taste of the ganglia was in her mouth and she couldn't help herself. It wasn't real, could not have been real. It had felt so real.

=^= Our Alaya is ILL! ^= Luma cried out in response to Alaya's broadcast thoughts. ^= Bad dreams not dreams made our Alaya ILL! ^=

Steven had come running at her scream and pulled her up against his chest as he sat down close beside her. "Don't tell me you had the same dream I did. I'm here and everything is all right."

Alaya shivered, broken out in a cold sweat, her body rejecting everything that the dream represented. “Luma.” Alaya spoke very softly, her voice breaking as she tried to calm herself down, “What did you mean it was not a dream?”

Luma stayed quiet for a moment, ^= Our Sekal should know. It is wrong for the Mirrors to touch. The Opposites. ^=

"A mirror? What mirror?" Hammons was clueless.

Luma stayed quiet for a very long moment, weighing words and explanations in her mind. =^= Luma is not allowed to explain. It is considered 'classified' by the unintelligent ones. But our Sekal will know and since HE is the authority he can tell you and not break the rules. =^=

Alaya glanced over at Steven and shook her head, more than a bit confused herself. “I’m a diplomatic counselor, not a... intelligence officer.” Saying that last title out loud was enough to send another wave of cold sweat through her.

"This should be good." Steven quipped then after a second added. "But something tells me I REALLY don't want to know."

(Reply: None, more coming)

(Posted by Charles and Melinda)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Transporter Room 1 - CO Captain Sekal, FO Commander Sienna Williams-Verin &

Temas Laredo – 1645)

As the tingling of the transporter effect dissipated Teras found himself to immediately be assaulted by the little over a hundred unshielded minds throughout the ship. The sudden telepathic overload rocked the Betazoid. He caught his breath and staggered, holding himself up on the bulkhead of the room.

He took a deep breath and got control of himself. Using all of his skill he began to block out the minds. Every few seconds he would pull out a random thought, mostly superficial information, some quite private. It took him nearly a full minute to shut everything else out. Then he cursed himself for being so unprepared.

He looked at the concerned looks of the Captain and Commander. He gave them a weak smile and a nod.

“Sorry, it’s been a while since I’ve been among so many people. I didn’t prepare myself completely before transport. I’m fine now.”

Sienna knew where he was coming from, her shields had been destroyed by the forced bonding with Luma and it had taken T'Mur to reinforce them and keep her sane. It happened with the Q. "I should have thought to warn you, this ship has a higher than average number of telepaths with a younger crew. They can be exuberant at times but most are well meaning. She smiled at Sekal, "Permission to get our newest crew member settled in?"

"Permission granted Commander. My presence is needed in Engineering." As they left Sekal moved to the console to place a call to deck 11.

Sienna led the way from the transporter room to the turbolift and from there to the Junior Officer Quarters.

[illegible]

As they walked, Sienna had pointed out various places aboard, speaking of the lounges, the music that often was played later at night, and of course the roses and the arboretum. When they arrived at the Junior Quarters, she opened the door and stepped inside. The quarters were on the small side. There was a miniscule office that barely fit the desk and chair, a slightly larger sitting area with a food replicator, a couch, and a comfortable chair. The bedroom was about the same size as the sitting area, with one double sized bed and a tiny table. The lavatory had a sonic shower and sanitary facilities, but not the true water baths that the more senior officers had. “I’m sorry it’s not very large. The Illuminar isn’t that big of a ship,” Sienna spoke, stepping aside. “Do you want me to stay or go so that you can talk with Luma? She won’t need you to touch anything if you want to bond, as I learned on the Bridge. This, this goes deeper than an Imzadi or mate bond, it’s closer to a soul bond.” Sienna struggled with the words to try and describe what happened when Luma had bonded with her.

Temas could feel the turmoil boiling inside of the woman. He wanted to reach out to comfort her but he knew it might cause more harm than good right now. But he was interested.

"Please stay," he said. It sounded more of a pleading than a request. "I'd like to talk with you about your "forced bonding" you had with Luma. Besides, I feel that my bonding to Luma might take a little more time. We will need to get to know each other first."

Sienna took the seat on the comfortable chair, leaving the couch for Temas. "What do you want to know? I can link with you and share the experience if you wish."

Temas' eyes lit up. "That would be so much easier, and faster. If you can focus on the event I can stay with it longer."

He sat on the sofa and took a deep breath. Then he allowed a small reach out to touch the edge of the Commander's mind.

Sienna closed her eyes and met the touch, then called up the memory of the battle. It played through her mind, and the pain of the forced bonding came back. She was reliving this. The bond with Luma touched near to her mating bond with T'Mur and Sienna tried to shield that part of her from Temas. She took a deep breath and reopened her eyes, ::As you can see, it's still there, open and one sided, mostly. Luma has withdrawn now that Sekal is back aboard.

::Wait,:: Temas sent back, as he went through the path of the memory to the exact moment of Luma's forced bond. It was as if he had frozen time at the moment and could see the exact point of entry. His mind reached out to it and could see the damage done. Then he took a deep breath. ::I am not the healer Riven Mias's is, but I do see what must be done. He will be able to help you.::

Then he lightly moved around the bond with her mate and instantly withdrew. ::I envy you, your love for your mate. I have never had such love.:: Then he withdrew from her mind completely.

Still smiling he opened his eyes, "You have such musical thoughts. It's ... interesting. Thank you for allowing me to see Luma through you. Are you afraid of her?"

"No, not afraid. More... More confused? I had been told that because I was not a full Betazoid that she and I could not properly bond but it appears we did. She HAS to have a corporeal bondmate, we have learned. It's not just a want, or a wish, she needs one. And someone on this ship has to be it. We are only going to be here for about 48 hours, and the vast majority of the crew has leave, so the ship will be clearing out and it will leave you some time with Luma. Mostly alone. If you need me, I'll have my comm badge with me and the Captain will be on the ship I do believe. Oh." Sienna reached into her pocket and took out a comm badge, "This stays with you at all times." She handed the small black box over with the shiny comm badge inside.

"Everyone on this ship works, though. So besides being Luma's bondmate..which will be a full time job...what do you want to do aboard? Do you want to work with Alaya Ravenstone-Hammons in counseling? We do have a number of people who badly need counseling and not a lot of luck in that department. Alaya does her best, but she is only one person and a good friend. I..also..need a good counselor. For any number of reasons." Sienna concluded, taking another deep breath. Her stomach was in butterflies and she missed T'Mur. How could being away from her for such a short time matter so much?

Temas looked at the box and smiled. "I didn't bring anything for you." He opened the box and pulled out the comm badge. Putting it on his tunic he said, "I feel like I'm an official member of the crew. I would love to help out with the crew. I have a doctorate in interspecies psychology so counseling would be in my range. I also have a doctorate in intergalactic law so I will be available for any diplomatic events. However, I can help out."

Then he looked at the Commander, a little nervous. It was as though he were meeting for an arranged marriage. "Would you mind staying to introduce me. I'm terrible at meeting new people. Once we are introduced, we'll, we can see how it goes."

Sienna nodded, "I don't mind. Do you want to do it here? Or I can take you down to where the interface is. You wouldn't be able to go there without special permission even once you are firmly ensconced as her bondmate." Sienna took a deep breath and found herself yawning. "Sorry, long few days. Very long few days." She knew that he knew that and she felt pretty comfortable with him, the first time since Riven that she had truly felt comfortable around a male who was not Sekal.

"As for bringing me a present, you brought yourself and the smooth running of this ship will be present enough."

Sienna reached for that connection with T'Mur, :: I will be slightly longer with Mr. Laredo. I miss touching you.:: She blushed as she realized he likely overheard her.

A thought came back to her ::I will be waiting for you.:: It was followed by an image that made Temas blush.

"Oh, I am so sorry," he said, wide eyed. "I did not mean to eavesdrop. It was just... so clear."

"It's fine." Sienna quickly reassured him.

Then he managed to regain his composure and as soon as he felt the heat leave his face he responded. "Perhaps the interface would be a better location. At least then I'd know where it is. Is there a comfortable chair there?"

“Truly, Luma. He and his Lady will be coming aboard in the next day or so.” Teras could feel that Luma was reserving judgement about him - Luma was rather unhappy still about Vex’s departure. “As I said, this is Teras Laredo and he is a bit nervous about meeting you. He’s heard many stories and songs of you.” Sienna winked at Teras.

=^= Luma welcomes the Tamas to her skin. ^=

Temas reached out with his mind but spoke, gently testing the edges of Luma's awareness.

"Thank you Luma," he said, being very... official. "I really am very glad to meet you. Like Commander Verin said, I've heard a lot about you." Then he just started taking, "Actually, ever since Riven talked with me about you I've thought of little else, which is a big thing for me because usually I get lost in thoughts, and not my own thoughts but the thoughts of others that just float around in my brain end...less...ly."

He made himself stop as he realized what he was doing. "I'm sorry, like Commander Verin said, I'm a little nervous. And I really don't communicate well with speech." He closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

:: Can I just say hi without sounding like an idiot.::

The answer was telepathic giggling?

Sienna watched, amused while Luma giggled fiercely. ^= The rules say we must talk out loud when others are present, even if they can hear us. ^= Luma was greatly defined by rules and they smoothed the way for her interactions with the other crew.

"Do you need me to stay? Or would you like to stay and talk further with Luma?" Sy asked curiously. "I can say that the security people will not let you stay here while you two talk unless I remain." ~And I want to be on my date~. Went unsaid.

=^= Why would the security not trust the Tamas with Luma? ^= Luma asked curiously, endlessly inquisitive.

"The Lee feels that certain areas are off limits to people who are not officers. I'm sure once the Lee meets Tamas he will feel better about Tamas visiting with you here. If you want to talk out loud to him, why not the holodeck?" Sienna turned towards Tamas, "Luma has a program that she has created of her home planet, and she has two holo-forms, her planet form and her 'small one' form that is an amalgamation of many different lifeforms." Sienna spoke quietly, smoothing the way.

Temas nodded his head at everything he had heard. "Yes, rules, without them we would be with the animals. I have my own rules as well," he admitted. "Riven Mias offered to write them down for me if I needed. However I'm pretty sure I can remember. The number one rule is that I am not allowed to

communicate only through telepathy, no matter how much easier it is to deliver information. So if we must talk, it's good practice for me."

He was a little disgruntled that he could not be alone in this room with Luma, but in the end it would not matter. Besides, he'd kind of like to see how Luma presents her image.

“Yes, the holodeck,” he said excited. “I would love to see both of Luma’s forms. Then you can get...” he paused not sure if he should know this, but continued, “on with your date.”

=^= Date?! ^= Luma cried out. ^= The Sienna and her T'Mur are going on a date? ^=

Sienna laughed and nodded, “Yes, indeed. To the Falls. It should be fun and it will be good for us to get off and be on our own.” Sienna led the way out of the computer core. She nodded to one of the security officers.

“Mr. Laredo will be going to Holodeck 2, if you could spare someone to guide him, I will be on my way. He will be spending a good length of time there, getting to know Luma.” Sienna then turned and left Temas with the bewildered security officer.

The man in the yellow uniform looked uncertain what to do. Teras knew that he shouldn't, but drew out the location of the holodeck, then pushed the thought to lead them there. His face cleared and he shrugged.

"Right this way," the guard said and lead Laredo back to deck 4.

[illegible]

The security man, one Ensign Branson, opened the holodeck for Temas .

"If you need anything else just tap your comm badge," Branson explained.

Temas nodded, “Thank you Ensign, I believe I have it from here. And good luck with you exam next week.”

Branson looked at the Betazoid with curiosity, not remembering saying anything about it, but the man had him rambling so it was possible. He turned and went back to his watch station and the doors to the holodeck closed.

Temas looked around at the hologrid pattern. He realized that he was alone, so he reached out with his mind. ::Hello Luma::

Luma squealed both audibly and telepathically and glee. In front of Tamas, Luma in her snowflake, crystalline form appeared and she greeted him in the old, old language that few even in the Temple could speak. ^= Luma greets the Tamas and welcomes him to her home. May he find comfort, joy and acceptance in Luma's home.=^= Between them, the transporter beam wavered and a rather lovely lilac coloured rose appeared before him. ^= From Luma's roses. ^= Luma spoke proudly. ^= A gift. ^=

Tamas smiled and looked at the flower appreciatively. He smelled the fragrance and his appreciation grew. ::What a lovely fragrance.::

He drew the images of certain Betazoid flowers that he had grown to enjoy from the compound of the temple. ::Do you know these flowers?::

Luma's attentions were turned to the flowers and she giggled again ::Yes! There are some in the arboretum that the Celiste is playing with.::

He circled the image of the living snowflake. He reached out to touch her. ::You're so ... beautiful.:: He was mesmerized by what he saw that he allowed his mind to flow freely. Then he remembered what Riven had told him. ::But your... roses are wonderful.::

Luma giggled again, quite happily. ::The Tamas will stay and be Luma's bondmate and anchor? Care for Luma and help her interact and understand the small ones? Luma makes mistakes and losing her bondmates made issues. It has caused a rift between our Sienna, her T'Mur and Luma.:: Luma seemed confused by that particular issue.

::You are special, Luma. You require a special bondmate. I would like to offer myself as your anchor. It is as though it was what I was born to do.:: He opened his mind and shared his memories of his childhood. The insanity of the child who had been born with an ability he did not understand and could not control. Feeling the thoughts and emotions of others that he could not keep out. The murderous rages when it became too much. When he turned on his own parents, driving them to nearly kill themselves. Then there was the alone time. He had gone from hearing everything, to hearing nothing, and that nearly drove him insane, as he reached his mind out to find someone to connect with.

Then there came that single mind. Focused and closed to him, unless he consciously pressed it open. Riven Mias had saved his mind, his life and his soul. But Tamas had always wondered why. Now he saw the purpose of it all.

::I will be your anchor, if you will be mine. I need you to help me stay in control.::

She beamed down to just outside the front door to her childhood home. Before she could put her travel bag down, she was hugged in a fierce Klingon embrace. Her father released her only to be wrapped in an anaconda grip by her aunt Melodia. He returned her aunt's hug with a grisly bear grip enough to cause a chiropractic adjustment. It was great to be home. She made sure she used the ladies room before beaming down because she anticipated something like this. She made her way to her childhood room and placed her travel bag down on the bed. Detron, her Mother Cassandra and Melodia must have been aware of her visit because her bed was made and all her childhood stuffed animals were there to greet her. She smelled something wonderful coming from the kitchen. Her mother stepped away from the oven making a unbelievable chocolate and peanut butter pie. Her mother caressed her like she was little baby. In her eyes she probably will always be. She will have to go hard tomorrow at the weights to work this off. That was ok. She needed the work for the Rite of Ascension. She sat at the dining room table being served her favorite Betazoid juice mixed with iced tea and some great roast beef and potatoes. The questions started after she took a few bites of the food. She felt calm and content like she had never left for starfleet .

(Reply Melodia)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

(Betazed - House of Trei- Deltron Trei, Melodia Trei, and Agnes Trei- 1805)

When the proximity sensors went off Deltron checked the monitors to see who the intruder was and worked to contain his excitement. His baby was home. But he wanted to make her welcome a little special, or at least somewhat exciting. So he waited until the front door closed. He heard the thud as she dropped her bags. It was as if she'd just come home from school, dropping her cheer bags in the middle of the floor, leaving them for him to trip over and break his neck. He shook his head realizing that some things never change.

Melodia came out of the kitchen and he quickly motioned her to be silent. It was as if he were planning some military excursion. Then he waited until she had stepped past the entryway to the dining area before he struck. He jumped out and grabbed her, pulling her into a strong bear hug. He squeezed her as hard as he knew she was capable of withstanding and not passing out.

Melodia took her cue and joined in on the hug. She missed her niece. Since she had no kids of her own, Ariel had been like her daughter. When she pulled back she took a good look at the girl. "You look great."

"Alright, alright," Deltron interrupted, "we'll have plenty of time for this later on. Are you going to leave that bag in the middle of the floor for me to break my leg on? Go on and put your things away, and then come back down for dinner."

As Ariel went to her room to get settled, Melonia turned back to Deltron, "Do you think she is ok?"

Deltron shrugged his shoulders, "I'm sure she's fine, but she's always struggled with her cultural identity. Klingon and Betazoid is a very complex combination." He smiled, "I should know."

"Indeed. I guess I am just more comfortable in my skin. Now go help your wife in the Kitchen. Melonia ordered Deltron. Today Melonia was staying out of the kitchen.

Detron chuckled, "You are so bossy."

He followed Melonia and got what he needed to set the table. Once the table was set he walked back into the kitchen to Melonia's expectant look.

Melonia then passed the carving set to Deltron and pointed to the roast, "Get it carved, old man." She commanded. She herself started getting the food in serving bowls and platters and started to put the food on the already set table. With the amount of food, you would think the whole ship was invited.

Once everything was set Deltron and Melonia sat and waited for Ariel's grand entrance. And as usual, Delton's princess made her entrance as grand as possible. Once seated he poured her favorite juiced ice tea into a glass and began serving the food. As he served it became time for the interrogation to begin.

"So tell me about your life on the Illuminar," he said. "How is counseling working out for you?"

As far as my current relationship, I am not seeking a mate at this time. If this changes I will inform you by subspace direct from the Illuminar. I have changed positions on the Illuminar. I am now a special security officer that profiles people. In essence I use my empathic abilities to better use this way. I have seen some combat. You would be proud of the way I took down two pirates with the Batt'leff."

(Reply Agnes, Detron, Melodia)

(Posted b Edward)

[illegible]

(Betazed - House of Trei- Deltron Trei, Agnes Trei and Melodia Trei- 1815)

Deltron listened as his girl answered all of their questions at the same time. His brain processed the information she gave him in reverse. He smiled, she never really had the temperament for counseling work in the first place, and had warned her as such at the time. But like all children, Klingon and Betazoid, they had to find some things out on their own.

“A security profiler,” he said, “now that sounds interesting, You’ll have to tell me more after dinner. And you need to relax about training for the Rite of Ascension. You have always been more obsessed with your Klingon heritage than your Betazoid. Remember that you are only a quarter Klingon. That doesn’t make it any less important, but you do not have to put yourself through such torment. Your body is not build to withstand as much pain.”

He paused, knowing that they'd had this discussion a hundred times before. "Look, the Rite of Ascension is not something you need to train for. It is putting your body through as much stress as it can take, and keeping moving forward. It is as much a test of willpower as it is of pain endurance. And I do not want to spend what little time we have together seeing the tolerance of the pain I can put you through. Besides, that is not what you post as a profiler requires."

“Let’s eat and we can talk about your battle later,” he leaned over and whispered, “when your mother is not in the room.”

Melonia walked around the corner with a box that she loaded into the hover cart. “Ariel, Dear, You know the Fair is tomorrow. You always go to the fair when you are home. And I have my candle booth again this year. If you want pain stick practice, you should help me set up the candle booth with the Intha Brothers bringing their Vegetables to the fair.”

“By the Goddess woman!” Deltron exclaimed, “The girl wants to be conditioned for pain, she doesn’t need to be tortured as well.”

“And when was the last time you got off your butt and went to the fair, huh old man?” Melodia said, waiting for the man’s next quip.

She has given a good deal of thought on her duties to the 9th house of Betazed. She can possible handle these duties by subspace on the Illuminar. Her job was not really stressful. She was excited about the street fair. She really enjoyed the rides and the midway games and of course the fair food. She decided to take on some of the duties to the 9th house of Betazed.

"OK Mom. I will take on some of the duties of the 9th house of Betazed by subspace on the Illuminar. If I find love , you will be the first to know. The Illuminar seems to be the ship of choice for Betazoids so the possibility is good I will find someone. Now lets have some of that wonderful Chocolate and Peanut Butter Pie." She thought of this as a bit of a soap opera and she was playing the daughter of a Power boss.

(Reply Any)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

With the Illuminar around a friendly planet, the ship was running with a skeleton crew. Commander Verin had taken off to beam down to the planet for some much needed R&R, which left Gregory in charge of the bridge.

He was fine with that, especially after the last week and multiple battles, it was good to take the time to run some diagnostics on the ships systems. Turning around "Mr. McFry, transfer operations to the Science station and begin a level one diagnostic of the operations systems. "

McFry nodded, "Transferring operations to Science. Confirm transfer Mr. Nye."

Nye, on science typed in some commands, "Confirm Operations is transferred. You are go to begin your diagnostic."

"Operations is offline," McFry said as he got his kit out and began to remove the panels under the operations station.

"SPOTS," Gregory called.

The robot dog woke up and bounded in front of Gregory, "Yes Master?" it replied.

"Why don't you go over and help Ensign McFry run the diagnostics."

McFry looked up, "Really Sir, I can take care of this," he replied.

"I have no doubt in your ability, Mr. McFry, I need to test out the operational parameters of the SPOTS unit, especially since I've upgraded his software using the new code from Mars," Gregory replied.

SPOTS moved over to the operations station. Once there, several wires began to extrude from the dog's nose, "IF you can plug these into the interface Mr. McFry I will begin to monitor while you test components."

(Reply any on bridge)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - Bridge - Bridge Officer Tavay- 1905)

Tavay was more of a Jack of all trades when it came to the bridge. She could take any station at any moment. She was a standby bridge officer. She usually sat in the stand-by room ready to take a station when someone left. At this moment she stood at Tactical for the absence of the officers that were here enjoying themselves on the planet. Tavay kept locks on the crew but other than that, Tavay felt like crawling out of her skin. When was her shift over again?

“Sir, when the operations diagnostics are done, I would like to run the systems update on the Tactical station from Starfleet.” System updates tended to be long and tedious.

(Reply Dieter)

“I do not mind completing the task. I have nothing better to do.” But Tavay thought of plenty of things to do. Too bad she had no one to do it to or even with.

(Any Bridge Reply)

(Posted by Kris)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 1 - 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1907)

One of the new crew spoke up. “Sir, when the operations diagnostics are done, I would like to run the systems update on the Tactical station from Starfleet.”

Gregory reached for her name. "Ms. Tavay, an excellent idea. That will take a while. Wouldn't you rather leave that to the gamma shift?"

"I do not mind completing the task. I have nothing better to do," she replied.

"Very well. Why don't you go take a break and get some dinner. McFry should be completed by 2100 hours, sooner if SPOTS is as efficient as we are trying to make him," he replied. "and tomorrow we

should sit down, if we're going to be serving on the same shift, it would be good to review your jacket and discuss philosophies. Perhaps over lunch, which can be less intimidating than an official meeting?"

(Reply Tavay)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

"Very well. Why don't you go take a break and get some dinner. McFry should be completed by 2100 hours, sooner if SPOTS is as efficient as we are trying to make him," he replied. "and tomorrow we should sit down, if we're going to be serving on the same shift, it would be good to review your jacket and discuss philosophies. Perhaps over lunch, which can be less intimidating than an official meeting?"

"I believe we have a plan." Tavay said as she grabbed her PADD and headed in the holding area.

She managed to grab a sandwich as she started reading about the updates. They were all standard updates. Programming update here and a programming update there. Updates to process faster speeds. It is an updating package that usually comes once a month.

[illegible]

Sienna had arranged for a large and comfortable pavilion style tent, complete with a comfortable bed and fairy lights that were strung up around the top. Outside they could hear the sound of the waterfall which soothed Sienna's soul. She had lived so much of her life only seeing other planets through holodecks, vids and pictures. Being here on Betazed for the first time in her life was wondrous.

Sienna turned to T'Mur and smiled, "Do you like it? We have it for the night." She spoke quietly, looking for approval from T'Mur. "We're going to be going sightseeing tomorrow and I think Quinna wants to come along with us. If you would like?"

T'Mur was observing the accommodations from two sides. First was her own aesthetic appreciation, and the second was through the excitement of her mate through their link. She smiled a rare smile.

“It reminds me of you,” she finally admitted. “It a dwelling of a fairy princess.” She reached out and stroked her love’s cheek, “and you are *my* fairy princess.” She kissed her softly, as if she might break. “And yes, Quinna is always welcome... well, except for tonight. Some things I am unwilling to share.”

Sienna blinked and her own returning smile blossomed, and she made a soft sound of desire. “We could sleep under the stars. Or in here. There are treats in the cold box, and everything but the chocolate is vegan...” An image of a naked Sienna sitting on a blanket beside the Falls, with T’Mur feeding her by hand, and the afterwards of that as it inevitably progressed. “I wish we had more than 48 hours of this, but we will make the most of it. I hear the water is warm enough in the lagoon to swim in...” Her voice trailed off hopefully. ::And this is Betazed, no one will care that we are swimming naked.::

::That will be convenient as I do not possess swimwear,” she replied. She played her own image of swimming in the lagoon as it was described.

“But vegan chocolate?” she made a questioning face. T’Mur enjoyed Sienna’s fascination with chocolate, or at least the emotional responses that it invoked in her. However she had not quite got the same response.

“Well, most chocolate is made with milk, which is not something that you tolerate, so I got you vegan chocolate and me the real thing.” She smiled happily, “But everything else is vegan, I hope. I got all kinds of yummy things, and maybe went a bit overboard, but none of it is replicated and it’s all fresh.”

T’Mur sent a please feeling through their bond, ::That was very thoughtful. Perhaps I can learn to enjoy the chocolate. But I suspect I will never have the same preoccupation as you do.::

She moved to the cold box and opened it to view the contents. She pulled out a plate that held a variety of chocolates on it. One was clearly marked vegan. She picked up a piece and examined it carefully. Then she raised an eyebrow and looked over at her mate. Slowly she placed the morsel in her mouth. It was a stark contrast to typical chocolate, more in the lines of the dark chocolate that Sienna enjoys so much. She allowed the chocolate to melt slightly on her tongue and opened her mind to share the sensation with Sienna. She was allowing her to be a voyeur on her trial.

Slowly she closed her eyes and began to chew the piece. It was... delightful. “Mmmmmmm...” was all she said for a minute. “That is very good.”

Sienna's mind was wide open to her mate and the delight of chocolate echoed from T'Mur through Sienna who closed her eyes rapturously and enjoyed the sensations. Soft moans could be heard as she experienced the taste, the pleasure of chocolate.

"That is almost as good as eating it myself." She moved over to the cold box and took out a tray of fresh veggies with three different forms of hummus. There was also a tray of exotic betazoid fruits which had been cut into various shapes. There was a tiny box of bite sized cakes to round out the experience. Sienna looked up at T'Mur for approval as she shook the blanket out and placed it on the grass right outside the pavilion.

Now T'Mur was allowing herself to give a genuine smile, "You know how I enjoy picnics.

Sienna stripped off her comfortable, civilian clothes - a thin camisole with a built in bustier, and the matching skirt in a rainbow of colors, standing before T'Mur for a moment, the moon shining down on her pale skin and dark hair. Here, here she looked and felt like the Betazoid that she was, almost a pagan goddess from the past. Then the moment passed and she seemed herself again, sitting down on the blanket, kneeling comfortably next to T'Mur.

T'Mur took in the sight of her love, in all of her splendor, ::My fairy princess:: Then followed suit. Although her clothes were more utilitarian, black leggings with a grey tank. She enjoyed watching Sienna in bright clothing, but had a difficult time wearing them herself. It went against her training to draw attention to herself with her clothing. However, now, with nothing on, her athletic build belied her actual strength. She ran her hands down the side of her body, feeling a sense of freedom she did not usually allow herself to feel.

She moved over to the blanket with cat-like grace, sitting down with her legs bent to the side. She picked up a piece of fruit and held it out to Sienna.

Sy leaned in to take the bite of fruit from her mate, licking her fingers as she finished the bite. Sienna's dark eyes were twinkling in the starlight. ::You are..the most beautiful woman I have ever known:: Sy smiled and stayed in that position, leaning slightly in towards T'Mur.

T'Mur picked up a piece of a juicy fruit that been dripping juice began to rub the juice on Sy's lips, then kissed the lips to taste the juicy, opening her mind again so they could both enjoy the flavor and the sensation together. She popped the piece in her mouth and returned to their embrace as the juice

flowed down her throat. She could feel the sensations in her mate's mind and passion began to drive them both into a frenzy.

Sienna took her half of the fruit from T'Mur and pulled back, happily mischievous.

"I believe we may need to build up our strength for this evening," T'Mur said, managing to create a small amount of distance between them.

"Mhmm. But it will be fun to do so." Sienna dipped a carrot stick into the spicy hummus and crunched it, eyes watering. "Oh. I thought that was the garlic one. Wow. That was way too hot for me." Sienna pushed the container towards her mate. "Enjoy."

T'Mur followed her mate's example and dipped the carrot stick in the spread and took a bite. She raised an eyebrow and looked thoughtful. "There is an over abundance of cayenne pepper in this recipe. Although it is not completely unpalatable I can see why it might be a bit spicy."

She took another large scoop of the humus on a piece of celery and began to chew. "Now that is much better." She looked over at Sienna and shrugged, "If you would care to taste some truly spicy food there is a restaurant on Vulcan that serves a sauce it calls the Forge, in reference to the landmark. They have a prize for anyone who can finish their meal using it. I still have that commemorative coin."

"You may have my portion then my love. That's just fine. I do not enjoy truly spicy food. I do like some spice however." Sienna dug for the one container and pulled it out. "These are roasted jalapenos with vegan cream cheese in them. I love these." Sienna took out one and ate it. It was a bit heated but not terribly spicy, and through their link T'Mur could tell that here, in this cheese, Sy could taste the difference since it was not replicated. "Mhmm. Not as good as the ones on Earth but pretty decent."

The sensation of tasting something through somebody else's experience was exhilarating. T'Mur could identify on her own taste buds where the heat was being directed. They were becoming one more and more. She wanted to play with this more.

She chose a sweet piece of fruit and a cream filled chocolate. First she pooped the chocolate in her mouth and let it dissolve. Then she ate the fruit, allowing the various flavors to mingle around her tongue. She sent the experience to her Sienna.

Sienna closed her eyes as the sensations washed over her, surrounding and filling her. "Wow. This is becoming more and more amazing as the bond becomes tighter." Sienna crawled the very short distance towards T'Mur and sat in front of her. Taking T'Mur's hand she placed it against her cheek in a silent invitation for the one thing that she loved the most.

T'Mur moved her hand to the side of her face and placed her finger tips at the pressure points. She started slowly. Entwining their surface thoughts. She skirted around the jagged edge of the bond that had been Luma. Then when she reached as far as that took her she plunged herself deeply into Sienna's deepest thoughts.

She opened her own mind as wide as she was able. Now was the moment they were one. Now they were inseparable. There were no secrets, nothing hidden. All their desires were shared and T'Mur poured her love into Sienna until her cup overflowed with it.

Sienna gave in and leaned into the connection with her beloved mate, sighing with joy as it reaffirmed and strengthened the bond between them. And her love reflected back to T'Mur. Nothing separated the two of them, and when joined like this, Sienna was the happiest and most content that she ever was with T'Mur.

Soon enough, too soon for Sy's tastes, the two separated and Sienna leaned back, blinking quickly to moisturize her eyes and reorient herself to the present. "Would you like to go swimming?" She asked T'Mur, sending along the images of what she wanted to do in the water.

T'Mur had laid down putting her head on Sienna's chest. She enjoyed hearing the pattern of her breathing and the sound of her pounding heart. Like everything else about her mate, it had a musical quality to it. She allowed the image of Sienna's proposal to flow through her mind.

"Sienna Williams-Verin," she said playfully, "you are incorrigible. And..." she paused for a moment and added, "and I accept your proposition. Let's go swimming."

"Yes my love, let's go swimming." Sienna covered the food and then hopped up and went running for the lagoon, diving in and coming up sputtering, laughing, happy.

T'Mur jumped to her feet and watched her love running away from her and couldn't help herself. Tonight she wasn't Vulcan. Tonight she was an amalgam of herself and her Betazoid mate. So she allowed herself the release of letting go. She laughed at what she believed to be the cutest thing she'd seen in her life. Then she ran to catch her.

The two women frolicked in the water until they were tired. They lay on the shore breathing hard. T'Mur watched Sienna's chest rise and fall heavily, as she tried to catch her breath. She swam the short distance to where her mate lay and crawled up the beach until she was positioned over her. Reaching out with her hand she stroked Sy's dark hair around her ear.

She leaned in and began to chew on the now exposed ear then moved down to her neck. After a moment she pulled her head back and looked into those deep dark eyes.

::I love you, do not ever doubt that.::

Accentuating the message with a long, passionate kiss she then sent, :: Can we go to bed now? I am exhausted.::

She stood up and held her hand out to help Sienna up. Hand in hand they walked back to their room. There was an air of suspicion that sleep was not going to be the first order of business.

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir and Mel G)

[illegible]

When the time came, Tavay re-entered the Bridge. “I have come to complete the updates to Tactical. Has everything checked out in order to complete the job?”

(Reply Bridge)

(Posted by Kris)

[illegible]

After checking in, Quinna slipped away for a little shopping. She had not put anything in her backpack with a possibility of staying on the planet. After finding a few little necessities, she found a loose thin fabric dress. The light emerald dress came to her knees and glistened under the light. It probably showed more of her than what she usually wears.

When the time came for dinner, Quinna made it back to her room showered and dressed for her date.

Michael had found a beige slacks and jacket and paired it with a pale blue shirt. He took time to shower and shave before dressing. He couldn't believe how nervous he was. It had been so long since he'd allowed himself to enjoy the company of a beautiful, intelligent woman without having an alternate agenda.

The agent knew that he was breaking every rule in his own book by perpetuating this relationship. It was going to have to come to close eventually, and then he would have a loose end in his life. Someone that they could get to that would affect him. But he didn't want it to end. For the first time, in a long time, he was happy.

He had made arrangements with the manager of the resort that they would have neighboring rooms. As soon as he was ready he left his room, went down to the next door and put his palm on the door chime.

Quinna stood at the door and pushed a button to open it. She looked at Michael. She thought how good he looked in the khakis. "You look amazing." Quinna leaned in for a kiss. She inhaled. His scent was intoxicating. She stepped back from the door to grab a shaw she packed last minute before leaving the ship.

Weston looked at Quinna, getting a full appreciation of the dress she had acquired. "I must say that I approve of your dress. You look... beautiful. You should show off your legs more often."

"This place you have brought us is great. I have a great view. How did you hear about it?" Quinna's attempt at chit chat seemed to be just that.

Michael was a little relieved to see that Quinna was as nervous as he was. The awkwardness of the conversation was not worthy of either of them. They need to be more comfortable with each other. He moved quickly, and wrapped Quinna in his arms. Then he placed a gentle kiss on her lips. When he felt her return the kiss he continued for about thirty seconds, then stepped back. The tension seemed to have disappeared.

"I don't want either of us to be nervous," he said. "This should be fun. After all, it's just supper. Let's not have it with expectations." He smiled disarmingly.

"Nervous, who is nervous?" Quinna said, "I am happy with you, Very happy with you. Sometimes I sound like a bumbling idiot. Sometimes I think I bore you. Though you would never admit that."

"I actually like the boring conversations," he said laughing. "It reminds me that there is still a world beyond SFI. However, right now, talk is not what I had in mind."

"I do want to talk to you though." Quinna said. "But Let's get down to dinner first."

Michael looked intrigued by the statement, "Really? That sounds daunting. Well then, by all means let's eat. This sounds like a conversation worth having."

“Ehh, it's not a conversation we have to have now. I am more interested in this non-talking thing that you have your mind on.”

“Well, if that's the case,” he smiled evilly, “then we should definitely eat. We may need our strength later on.”

They made their way to a table on the patio. A warm gentle breeze filled the air. She ordered spring water with a twist of Jacarine rind ([From Memory Beta website](#)). She moved her hand and intertwined her fingers with his. Her Thumb rubbed what could be reach of Michael's hand. Quinna looked into Michael's eyes. “A penny for your thoughts?”

Michael shrugged, and watched the server after he had ordered the Uttaberry wine. “If only they were worth that much. I was trying to remember the last time I was able to relax like this.”

The server came back with the drink, but Michael found himself slightly distracted by something he saw at the bar, or more precisely, someone. He tried to put it out of his mind and focus on his present company. She probably wouldn't see them anyway.

“My lifestyle usually doesn't allow me to let down my guard this much. I really appreciate being able to do that with you. Today has been ... fun. I hope you enjoyed yourself.”

“Today has been exhilarating.” Quinna started, “I don't think I have truly been awed like I was today. You should know, I find being with you the best parts of the last couple of weeks. We have to live for the moments we are given, for it will never be tomorrow.” Quinna paused as their drinks arrived. “Are you bothered by what happened? Letting yourself just be in the moment with no walls up today?”

He chuckled, “Bothered by it, no. I just find myself in unfamiliar territory. I've liked being able to .. rediscover myself. I guess I just keep waiting for the other shoe to drop.”

“That is not a bad thing, you know. Keeps you on your toes. I know deep down that things can change at any moment, but I would not give up ‘now’ for anything.” Quinna said. “With that being said. I hear there is a street festival tomorrow.” Quinna just laughed just thinking about how she was talking about being in the ‘Now.’

As if on cue an attractive Trill woman walked up the table and smiled at Michael. She was tall, athletic, and wearing a tight red dress that left little to the imagination. "Why Michael Weston, were you really going to see me across the room and not say hello."

Michael suddenly looked very uncomfortable, but worked at hiding it. "Fiona," he said coldly. "I must say you're nearly the last person I expected to see here."

Quinna could see the look on Michael's face. She sat there and watched him squirm at the sight. The Woman was definitely hot, in a 'I work the bar by the hour' kind of hot.

Fiona laughed, "Funny, I was thinking that this is the absolute last place I expected to see you."

Finally she gave Quinna some attention, "And who is this delectable morsel you have with you tonight? Definitely upscale from what I typically find you with."

Michael looked from the Trill to Quinna, and nodded, "This is Quinna. Quinna, this is Fiona. She's... an acquaintance of mind."

Fiona laughed, even her laugh sounded sultry. "Is that what I've been reduced to? An acquaintance?" She reached out a hand, "A pleasure my dear. Well... not yet, but who knows?"

Quinna reached out and shook the woman's hand. Quinna looked at Michael, "Sweetheart, why don't we invite Fiona to have a drink with us." Quinna turned back to Fiona. "I am sorry about my husband's manners."

Michael just about choked at Quinna's invitation and statement. He took a drink of his wine, and regrouped. He'd been in too many situations where he'd had to change his cover story at a moment's notice. Still, having Fiona join them was not what he had in mind.

"I'm certain Fiona has more important things to tend to, Honey," he said.

"Nonsense," Fiona replied, "I have nothing but time. My escort for the evening is otherwise detained." She moved towards the table.

Quinna scooted her Chair around to sit next to Michael and left enough room for Fiona to sit. “Did you two meet through work, pleasure, or a little of each??” Quinna asked and sipped her water.

Fiona found an unused seat at the next table and turned it around, sitting demurely, “Why I’d say a little of both. What would you say Michael?”

Weston shifted uncomfortably in his chair a little, between his “wife” and his old partner. “We most assuredly met through business. However, sometimes there’s a crossover between those lines. What brings you to Betazed?”

“Oh most definitely pleasure,” Fiona smiled. “Well... and maybe a little bit of business. As you say, the lines get crossed. Speaking of business, I heard you were... out of the game.”

“News travels fast,” Michael quipped.

“It’s a small universe,” Fiona responded.

“Let’s just say it was a... misunderstanding,” was all he was willing to say.

Quinna saw how much more uncomfortable she made Michael. She had to admit that she was a bit jealous. Physically she could not compete with Fiona. But Quinna looked and he was still holding her hand. She thought that was a good thing. “What have you heard?” Quinna hoped that a piece of the puzzle would fall into his lap.

Fiona smiled and looked at Michael, “Oh she is a sharp little thing, isn’t she?” Then she sat back slightly to take them both in. “You know, you hear certain things, from certain individuals. Death threats are made, money is exchanged, promises are made. All in the shadows, of course. However, the name Loron comes up quite often. You must have been a very naughty boy, Michael. Does your wife know where you’ve been?”

Quinna listened but waited for Michael to reply. The feeling that Quinna keeps deep down inside of her was starting to come to the surface. She started to really observe Fiona from a Doctor’s point of view. She was checking out for visible signs of anything.

“Let’s just say that we have an agreement to keep my business and our personal lives separate,” Michael said, getting control on the flow of information, hoping that what he had built with Quinna today hadn’t just been shattered. “It avoids unnecessary complications. My wife knows how I feel about her. I don’t marry just anyone.”

For the first time Fiona was a bit flustered, “No, no I suppose you don’t. Although there was a time I wouldn’t have considered myself just anyone.”

Michael knew how much that hurt her, “No, but that was a long time ago.”

“In a galaxy far, far away,” Fiona added.

“Any other whispers?” Michael asked.

Quinna was watching Fiona but her background became more interesting. She saw a person at the bar that was watching the table. She wondered who was being watched. Was it Fiona or Michael? Quinna leaned very close to Michael. She reached to kiss him and whispered in his ear. “Man at the bar has been watching your friend.”

Michael looked up at the bar and saw the man suddenly turn his head away and turn from his gaze. He frowned and leaned forward. “It appears that your... escort has concluded his business. Do I know him?”

“You might,” Fiona replied. “He certainly knows you. Although all of us together here is ... serendipitous. We are not here for you, yet.”

The man in the bar stood and started to walk over to the table. “Fiona, are you ready?” He then turned and looked at Michael. “Come on, let’s go.” He urged Fiona.

Fiona stood up. “I must be leaving now,” she announced. Then she leaned over the table, and whispered in Michael’s ear, “The next time you get married you might want to think about rings. Women like that kind of thing.” She pulled out a necklace that displayed a ring.

She turned to Quinna, “It was a pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Weston. All my best.”

She smoothed her dress down and took the arm of her escort. As she walked away her head turned and blew a kiss at Michael. Meanwhile he was trying to associate the face of the man with a name, unsuccessfully.

Suddenly he turned back to Quinna, still holding onto her hand. His face said more of an apology than his words could have conveyed. Still, the words came out. "I am so sorry about that. She was an old partner. I haven't seen her in five years."

"There is something about her that screams... Well sorry about the whole last minute wedding thing. I did like her though. NOT! She definitely does not have you in her thoughts in a positive way."

Michael laughed, "Let's just say that we did not part under the best circumstances. Which seems to be a pattern for me." He rubbed at his shoulder. "Still, now I am hungry, how about you?"

"I am ready to eat. I have been wanting to try Oscoid." Quinna turned. "Shoulder acting up? I can massage it later after dinner, unless you want to take care of it now."

"Just a memory," he assured her, "And the oscoid sounds good."

When the waiter came he ordered the oscoid and some Betazoid oysters. He came back shortly with a plate of kimden rolls, and a bowl of uttaberry jam. Michael offered a roll to Quinna and then took one for himself. He sliced it open and applied some of the jam. It had an amazing blend of tartness and sweet.

The food came out soon after that. They ate in amidst the hubbub of mindless chatter, and provided their own donation, purposely avoiding the earlier incident. When the waiter came out to ask about desert Michael turned his attention to Quinna. He was not particularly a desert person.

Quinna too passed on the dessert. "I am actually ready to go back to the room." She wanted to slip out of her shoes.

Michael made a motion to the waiter, who had already been on his way. The joy of being on a planet of telepaths. "Thank you for joining us for supper, sir," the waiter said. "I see that everything was to your satisfaction. Have a wonderful rest of your evening."

started after she took a few bites of the food. She felt calm and content like she had never left for starfleet .

(Reply Melodia)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

Hezuela was sitting in a rocking chair with a book open in front of her. She was incredibly fond of reading, but had never been able to bring herself to actually have a book replicated. She usually downloaded her own books from PADDs. But new experiences (especially if they were from the past) were always awesome. The Orion took a deep breath and allowed herself a moment to take in all the surroundings before sinking back into the book she was reading. It was an earthly tale of a dragon.

Dragons, she had learned from the endless database of encyclopedic bliss, were terrifying. Fire and wings and mighty powerful hordes of princesses and jewels. She understood that. She had heard from a professor or two at the Academy that fire and wings were the things he had come close to possessing in fatal combinations, but she had not understood the reference. The pity, however, she had understood very well.

Hezuela laid the book down on her chest and leaned her head back, strands falling wildly over her shoulder. It was so pleasant here, and almost all the Betazoids she had already met had been incredibly friendly. If life on Betazed meant a life without social evaluation, it would either be very rich, or very short. And somehow she had the impression that it would be very short when she started to think about what she sometimes thought.

A playful smile danced across the Orion's lips as another gust of wind wafted around her nose. The pink sky was simply beautiful. She folded the book closed and cradled it in her arms as she looked up and saw the clouds drifting. A little like her thoughts.

Sighing a little, she put the book away and stood up before going to her assigned suite.

(posted by Bogdana)

[illegible]

Hezuela was just putting the book back inside where it belonged when she heard Mason's voice. She turned her head slightly towards the man and smiled slightly as she slowly made her way towards him.

“Hi, Hezuela. I am glad to see you managed to get to the planet side for rest.” Mason said with a smile on his face.

"Hi Mason," she greeted him, wondering what he was doing here. Actually, she would like to fall into her bed now, satiated and tired from the new impressions, but for a conversation the Orion was always ready. Especially for a conversation with him.

“Look, I know it is late for dinner, but if you are not busy, would you like to go to the street festival with me tomorrow?”

Hezuela thought about his suggestion for a moment, street festival sounded loud, and honestly she had absolutely no desire for crowds or noises. But if he was with her, she would definitely be able to do that.

"I'd love to," she finally replied, walking a little closer to him so that he could also hear her when she whispered. "Good night and see you tomorrow, unless you want to spend the night at my place"

(Reply Mason)

(Posted by Bogdana)

[illegible]

(Betazed - vacation suites - ME Mason Quincy - 2230)

Mason decided that it was time to take a vacation. He beamed down to Betazed and hoped to have an opportunity to be someone else. His plan changed when he saw the stunning green lady across the room. He decided the heck with it. It was time to move on. He moved in her direction and stopped her just short of her leaving the lobby of the hotel.

“Hi, Hezuela. I am glad to see you managed to get to the planet side for rest.” Mason said with a smile on his face.

(Reply Hezuela)

“Look, I know it is late for dinner, but if you are not busy, would you like to go to the street festival with me tomorrow?” Mason asked. He had an eye for the young doctor. He thought it would be a great opportunity to get to know her more and she could get to know him.

(Reply Hezuela)

“How about we meet in the lobby at about 0900 in the morning? Make sure you wear great walking shoes.” Mason suggested.

(Posted by Kris B.)

(Posted by Kris B.)

"Okay," she mumbled a little breathlessly, looking up at him. For someone who wanted to get to know her better, he was quite brave.

Noses together, she looked at him and returned his second kiss as well. This time, however, with a little less restraint.

"Good night," she whispered and gazed after him for another half minute or so. Then she grinned slightly, shrugged, and giggled. She liked this guy.

In her suite, she took off her evening gown and changed into pajamas. The Orion woman quickly set a vibrating alarm clock and then regulated her sense of hearing down so that she was deaf. It was much easier for her to fall asleep that way.

And so Hezuela curled up in the blanket, grabbed the pillow and snuggled in. Then it was only a matter of minutes until she was already asleep.

(Reply Mason)
(Posted by Bogdana)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 4 - Personal Quarters - Temas Laredo- 0320)

By the time that Tamas had finished meeting Luma he was exhausted. It was freeing to be able to open his mind to her, but now, out of her influence, he found himself having to work to keep his focus from wandering to the minds of the others on the ship. He lay on his bed, building the walls between his mind and the rest of the universe. Slowly but surely the songs of the stars disappeared and he was once again alone with his thoughts. Finally he was able to sleep.

Sleep was always a tricky time. To allow his mind to relax enough to let his body rest, and still manage to maintain control over his abilities was a fine line. He was certain that most of the time the dreams that he recalled were not his own. This night was one of those nights. Although he could not actually read people deeply he could pick up surface thoughts, especially dreams, when he was asleep.

~There must be a way to complete our mission.~

It was a thought that held malevolence and deep anger. Strong emotions that he could not block out without a certain amount of concentration. It was strong enough to wake him up. Laredo sat up in his bed. The room was completely dark, but he was able to feel his way through it, and now he was alone. But that feeling stayed with him. It wasn't a prevalent thought, and he could not identify where it came from, or who it came from, but it was clearly there.

He knew it was against the rules, but there was something about the thought that bothered him. He may have finally found a home and he did not want anything to upset that. Not from others, and not from others realizing what walked amongst them. If they truly knew what he was capable of would they fear him? He was pretty sure that Riven would have filled Sekal in. That Vulcan had a fantastic control over his mind. However, maybe the wild mind of Verin knew too. She might be a problem, but he could handle that. But did they really know? Only a few in the Temple had full knowledge of what he could do.

Shaking his head to clear those thoughts he closed his eyes and breathed deeply. As he breathed out he stretched his mind throughout the minds of the crew. Those who were asleep were calm, with no sense of the malevolence he had felt before. Those who were awake had busy thoughts. But not busy with plots. He refused to probe further. That would do more than stretch the rules as he was doing now. Riven would not be pleased as it was.

Centering his mind he fell behind the walls of his shielding and opened his eyes. Maybe it was nothing, but he did not think so. And he wasn't sure who he should tell. Riven would know. He would see Riven later. Reaching out the glass of water that had been on the table was in his hand. He took a drink and sent it back to the table. He didn't like having containers close to the bed when he slept. He tended to thrash about in his sleep.

Laying back down, Tamas closed his eyes again, and found himself too concerned to go back to sleep. Slowly he began to play games with himself, and listen to the music of space. Suddenly he felt an urge to play his piano. He sat backup and pulled the rollup keyboard from under his bed. Getting up he moved to the table.

"Lights," he called out and the lights came on.

He unrolled the keyboard on the table and powered it up. Reaching with his mind he heard the music in his mind, then began to play. It was slow, beautiful melody, with multiple harmonic components. The music filtered from his room out to the hallway. If a crewman had walked by at that time they would have gotten quite the concert.

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

T'Mur woke up and lay in bed holding Sienna in her arms. She was taking the time to enjoy feeling the pattern of her breathing, and listening to the song of her mind working. She touched gingerly around the point of Luma's violation, noting the intensity of activity coming from around it. Then she left it, so her mate could sleep. She began to withdraw, leaving the impression of her feelings, and a slight suggestion to stay asleep. She was not used to the level of activity from the night before. She kissed the small bruise that was forming on her thigh, and the welt on her buttock, then rolled out of the bed smoothly.

She walked over to the open double doors that led to the balcony patio and soaked in the sunshine that was just starting to spill over the horizon. She had to admit that the view would cause even the most stalwart Vulcan to a sense of aesthetic appreciation. She was beginning to feel the urge for physical activity, and decided it was time to go for a run. Going to the closet she pulled out a sports bra and spandex shorts, and put them on. She grabbed a pair of socks and running shoes, pulled them on then headed for the door. Before leaving the room she looked back at the naked form of Sienna, laying on her stomach, breathing more easily than she'd seen in a while. As she tied her hair back into a pony tail T'Mur could sense their bonding begin to solidify.

When the door closed behind her, T'Mur headed for the elevator and for the outside. As she reached the resort exit the concierge quickly intercepted her. "Can I help with a route for your run, Ms. T'Mur?"

It was a little disconcerting to have someone already know what you're doing, without asking, but the Betazoids knew better than to simply dive in and read the thoughts of others. "I was just out for a light twenty kilometer run. Something I can accomplish in less than an hour."

The concierge smiled, "I know just the course. If you turn left after you exit and go up the hill, you will be on a beautiful trail. You might find it a bit challenging."

T'Mur raised an eyebrow. She was not interested at all in the view of the trail, but the idea of the challenge appealed to her. "Thank you," she said, and stepped outside.

The air was a little cool, and caused goosebumps on her exposed flesh. She stretched her muscles for a few minutes, concentrating on her breathing. Then she turned with a hop and began to jog up the hill the concierge directed her to. At the top of the hill there was a half marathon marker that led into the jungle area. She nodded and picked up the pace of her run. As she passed the trees she took note of the plant life that she was observing, thinking how Sienna would enjoy studying and "playing with" the brightly colored vegetation. Everything seems so much more vividly colored. And now, as the sun continued to rise, the odd pink hue of the sky became more apparent.

She had allowed herself to be distracted by what she saw and checked her wrist chronometer. She was behind schedule, and her heart rate was not at a level that would give her the desired affect. She

urged her muscles to work harder, and her pace picked up. She no longer had the time to make the small observations that she had been, but only get general impressions. She had come across another group of runners, and quickly passed them, leaving them behind. The Vulcan could feel the sweat start to drip down the back of her neck as her pony tail attempted to swat at it. A quick check on her statistics and she was more gratified by the results, but nowise had lost time to make up and picked up the pace a little more.

By the time she was approaching the end of the run her breathing had become a more acceptable rate of labored and sweat was flowing steadily down her neck and back and the sides of her face. As she approached the final leg of her run she could feel the sense of peace and serenity wash over her. It was as though her Vulcan mindset were coming back to her. The past few weeks had created a sense of lack of control. She knew that her blood lust was part of the process, but she had begun to miss her sense of self. She knew that she had come to the end of her Pon Farr. Now it was a matter of living her life with her new mate. A prospect that appealed to her greatly.

T'Mur had never gone through the training to completely repress her emotions. She had not been part of that sect. It was mostly pursued by the scholars than the artists and merchants. In some ways they needed to be somewhat in touch with emotions to understand how others were feeling. However, like all typical Vulcans she had total control over hers, until recently. She was gratified to find that by the end of her run she could feel that control return.

She stopped running at the marker. There was a tall Betazoid waiting there, holding out a towel, urging T'Mur to take it. "Compliments of the concierge," was all he said. T'Mur took the towel and nodded. As she wiped the sweat from her face and body her mind went back to Sienna. Even from this distance she could sense her. She could feel the change in her sleep pattern. And she could feel her own urge to be there when she arose.

She dropped the towel over her shoulders and headed back to the resort. This had all the marks of a promising day.

(Reply none)

(Posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

As the light of the sun filtered through the balcony on Quinn's room, she awoke. She slept amazingly well. She turned to the warm body next to her. She smiled just to see him there. She dared not to wake up.

She maneuvered to get up out of bed. She had to tug on her dress as Michael laid on top on the edge. A sigh of relief came over her as she did not wake him. She grabbed her swimsuit and shorts and headed to the bathroom. She wanted to get out of her dress from the night before and change into something more practical.

Quinna looked at herself in the mirror. She noticed the indentions of the Buttons of Michael's shirt on her face. On her stomach was his belt buckle. She chuckled at the sigh. As she continued to clean up and get dressed.

When back in the room, Quinna ordered breakfast. As her order was being processed, she moved about the room. She picked up and moved their shoes to the side and she almost face-planted herself on the floor as she almost tripped over her shoe. She then reached into her bag and pulled a PADD. Yes, Quinna brought her studies on vacation.

The breakfast Quinna ordered was beamed onto the patio table. Coffee, Juice, Fresh Fruit, and a variety of pastries were available. She decided to wait for Michael to join her before she ate, but went ahead and started on her caffeine consumption. At that point, she felt she could get accustomed to this lifestyle.

(Reply None)

(posted by Kris B.)

[illegible]

T'Mur came back into the room to find Sienna still asleep. She peeled off her sweaty running gear and crawled into the bed to snuggle into her mate, letting her mind wind among Sienna's surface thoughts, which were quite personal. The Vulcan slowly caressed her partner's body and nibbled at her ear lobe.

:: Good morning love::

Sienna turned with a soft smile, still over half asleep. :: Is the sun up yet?: Sienna asked hopefully, knowing that T would not have woken her up if it was not yet. She yawned, stretching and leaning into the petting. :: Hi my beautiful girl.: Sienna was positive that T'Mur was the most beautiful woman in the universe.

T'Mur glowed with the compliment, :: The sun has been up and calling to you for a while. I've already enjoyed the climate with a run. I may be a bit sweaty::

With that thought she sat up, “I saw people setting up for a street fair. They were calling it “The Festival of Love.” We should go.”

Sienna snuggled her very beautiful mate and did not care about the sweatiness. :: If you want to go, then we can go. I have never been to a street fair before... but we have to keep an eye on the time. Dr. Mias is going to be showing us around the Temple and I think I need to do that.: Sienna kissed T'Mur then rolled out of bed, albeit reluctantly. She really was difficult to get up in the morning.

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI Michael Weston - 0735)

Michael noticed the lack of weight on his chest and reached over to find the empty space, still slightly warm, next to him. He opened one eye to see the natural daylight streaming into the room. He could hear Quinna moving around the room, attempting to not wake him. He didn't want to upset her plans so he remained in position playing through the events of last night.

He had carried Quinna into the bedroom, and laid her on the bed. They had taken their time to enjoy each other's embraces and deep kisses. He could still taste her lips. They snuggled into each other and before he knew it she was sound asleep. He wasn't sure whether to feel happy with her comfort or disappointment that he wasn't able to keep her awake. He went with happy and had drifted off himself.

The smell of coffee brought him out of his reverie. He sat on the edge of the bed and stretched. Then he pulled off the shirt he had slept in and stretched a second time before standing. He followed his nose to the patio and looked at Quinna with a smile.

"Good morning," he said lightly. "Sleep well?"

(reply Quinna)

He sat down in a chair and poured himself a cup of coffee. He blew on the edge of the cup and took a sip.

“Ahhh, that’ll wake you up in the morning,” he said, looking at the work she had around her. “So what are your plans for this morning?”

(reply Quinna)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice - 0740)

"Good morning," he said lightly. "Sleep well?"

“It just so happens, it has been one of my best nights of sleep in a long time.” Quinna said excluding the night she spent in his Quarters where she slept for 13 hours. “How are you feeling this morning?” Quinna watched him sit in a chair and get his own cup of coffee.

“Ahhh, that’ll wake you up in the morning,” he said, looking at the work she had around her. “So what are your plans for this morning?”

Quinna looked down at the PADD in her hand. “I am open.” Quinna put the PADD down like she was a child that got caught with her hand in the cookie jar. “These are some reports I am reading as the new 3rd officer. There is plenty around to do. The Pool, the lake, the waterfall, me, the lagoon, Street fair, the options are plentiful. What pleasure are you interested in doing?” Quinna then put the PADD she had on the table.

(Reply Weston)

Quinna rose and moved over behind Michael. She draped her arms over his shoulders as if they were the arms of a sweater on a Preppy at Harvard. Her finger traversed the scars on his chest as she leaned over and gave him a kiss on the side of his neck. “If you have other ideas I am open.” Quinna then stood up straight and began to give Michael a shoulder rub.

(Posted by Kris B.)

Michael had to smile at the guilty look on Quinna's face. She pushed the PADD aside as if it were a Christmas present that she found a few weeks early.

He leaned back in his chair and weighed the options, “Well I certainly like the you option, and I’m certain it is a pleasure I interested in doing. But I might like to keep you awake long enough for us both to enjoy ourselves. I had been reading about the street fair. That sounds like fun. Why don’t we plan on doing that after lunch.”

"If you have other ideas I am open," she offered.

"I have other ideas," he whispered in her ear. "Depending on how far you're ready to take this."

(Posted by Al Muir)

"If you have other ideas I am open," she offered.

“Mmmmm...,” he moaned gently as she rubbed the knots of muscles in his shoulders. Then he grabbed her hand and pulled her into his lap. He looked into her eyes, and kissed her gently on the nose, then on her lips. He began to move his kisses down to her chin, then he nuzzled into her neck.

"I have other ideas," he whispered in her ear. "Depending on how far you're ready to take this."

Quinna had no words. It was time. She stood and pulled him to her. She led him back into the room and onto the bed where they continued to kiss as she wrapped her arms around him.

A knock came to the door and Quinna's arms fell in frustration. The moment was lost. "Let's ignore it." Quinna said but the knocking did not go away.

The knocking stopped. Quinna looked into Michael's eyes and knew. Not this time.

(Reply Weston, IYW)

(Posted by Kris)

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI - Michael Weston - 0752)

Michael closed his eyes and felt Quinna press herself into his body. He wrapped her tightly in his arms and returned her passion. He pulled the shoulder strap from her shoulder and stroked the bare skin gently before he moved his kisses to the sensitive area. Quinna bent her head to give him full access.

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. He stopped and looked at Quinna, then at the door, then back Quinna's newly bared skin.

“Let’s ignore it,” Quinna said, but he could already feel the urge slip from her. And the knocking came again. It was a persistent knock that he couldn’t ignore, and had put him in full alert, and not romantic at all. He looked in Quinna’s eyes and realized that the moment had passed.

Shaking his head he laughed softly, "It's plot." He stepped away from the woman and went to the door. On the floor was a large basket of decorative fruit. There was a card attached to the basket. He picked up the basket and pulled off the card.

Hope you and your "wife" enjoyed your evening as much as I did on Tarvin 3. Love, Fiona

Michael shook his head and folded the note, putting it in his pocket. If the mood hadn't already been killed that would have completed the task. He smiled and turned back into the room.

“Compliments of the management,” he said, presenting the basket.

He put the basket on the table and pulled out a piece and took a bite. “I know something that tastes better,” he smiled evilly to Quinna.

(Reply Quinna)

He gave Quinna a light kiss on the lips and stepped back, “Look, I know that you have other things you need to take care of,” he indicated to the PADD on the table, “and to be honest, I need to get a little exercise in if I plan on eating my way through this street festival this afternoon, which I do. So I’m going to give you some time, and take a little time to myself at the resort gym.”

(Reply Quinna)

"I will come by around 1200," he said, "if that's okay with you?"

(Reply Quinna)

(Posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

"Compliments of the management," he said, presenting the basket.

"Ok, That was nice of them." Though Quinna was curious as to why they would send one.

He put the basket on the table and pulled out a piece and took a bite. “I know something that tastes better,” he smiled evilly to Quinna.

"You come over here and have another taste." Quinna hinted.

He gave Quinna a light kiss on the lips and stepped back, “Look, I know that you have other things you need to take care of,” he indicated to the PADD on the table, “and to be honest, I need to get a little exercise in if I plan on eating my way through this street festival this afternoon, which I do. So I’m going to give you some time, and take a little time to myself at the resort gym.”

“I understand but make sure you save some of that stamina for later. I may need it.” She walked to the door with Michael.

"I will come by around 1200," he said, "if that's okay with you?"

Quinna leaned in and gave him a deep goodbye kiss. "You can be sooner if you like."

(Reply Weston, IYW)

Quinna watched Michael leave and then moved back to the balcony. She picked the PADD up and then put it back down. She was no longer interested in reading. She wanted to be more self-indulgent. She decided to go back to the hotel boutique. She wanted something special, something special to wear. Just for Michael. “Live in the now,” Quinna said to herself.

(posted by Kris B.)

[illegible]

Hezuela stood in her suite getting ready. She was wearing a black dress that ended about five inches above her knees and she had put on black lipstick, as most of her species did. At least the woman did. Makeup didn't show with her skin color, so there was no need for her to bother.

Punctually, the Orion stood at the meeting point she had arranged with Mason yesterday and waited for him. She was very much looking forward to today, but especially she wondered if his plan to get to know her a little better would work. In any case, she wasn't going to make it that easy for him.

Mason came to the lobby of the hotel. He saw Hezuela and she did look good in black. He had ideas of her in other colors as well. He walked up to her. He felt a strong attraction. He moved close and gave her a kiss on the cheek. He then held out his arm, "Shall we go, My Dear?"

“Yeah, let’s go”, she answered him, kissing him softly. She was definitely looking forward to today and was very curious to see how it would end.

The two-headed out of the Suites and into the streets. There they started down the road in search of a good time.

On the way, Hezuela's hand searched for his until she finally found it. Hezuela took Mason's hand in hers and glanced at him to make sure the man wasn't about to take flight.

"Did you sleep well?", she asked him, smiling slightly

[illegible]

Tavay made it to the Officer's mess a bit before lunch. She found a seat. She was not sure who else would be joining her and Commander Gregory. She dared not get her food before those joining have gotten their food.

She wondered how it was going to go. Even though It had been a couple of generations since the destruction of the Romulan Society, she was still an outcast among the students she went to school with. It was her grandparents that sat down with her when she started 6th grade, and with her parents to explain their family history. Her Great grandfather was a Romulan Vice - Proconsule and her Great Grandmother was a high-ranking official in the Tal Shiar.

She met them once, they seemed old at the time. Tavay was scared of them as they would not even say hello. Now that she was older, and Romulans have been integrating into Starfleet she felt more comfortable. She was raised away from the harsh Romulan life as her parents opted for a more human lifestyle.

When Commander Gregory entered, she stood in respect for his rank. If it was the other way around, she would not have, “Commander Gregory.” She greeted the Commander.

(Reply Gregory)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Street Fair - CMO/3XO Lt. Quinna Solice/ SFI Michael Weston/Ensign (jg) Hezuela/ME Mason Quincy --1200)

Quinna was ready for the street fair. She managed to cash in latinum so she had plenty to spend. She also was ready for Michael by wearing a light blue one-piece suit where the pants were flowing and the top was more of a halter-type top. Her back was completely exposed. The feel of the air on her back gave her a scandalous sensation that she liked.

Michael stepped up to the door of Quinna's room. He felt good after his workout. He'd managed to get the stretch that he needed and worked on some forms to keep his body limber. When he got back to his room he stopped down, showered, and then dressed for the fair. He wore a pair of dark blue board shorts and a white button-up shirt, but he left the top three buttons undone.

He pressed the door chime and waited for Quinna to answer.

“Come,” Quinna called out as she was looking out her balcony at the crowd below. It seemed that everyone. She turned to see Michael enter the room.

Michael watched her turn around and raised an approving eyebrow. “Wow, now that is an outfit. You look wonderful.”

He stepped up to Quinna and wrapped his arms around her, kissing her softly.

“You should feel Special. I only dress this way for you.” Quinna teased. “Shall we go? The street is getting packed.”

With a twinkle in his eye, he said, “Mission accomplished, I definitely feel special.” Holding her hand he stepped back to take another appreciative look. “Special indeed. By all means, if we do leave now, I may not want to.”

With that, he headed out still holding Quinna's hand.

As they walked down the path between vendors the smells and sounds of what was happening surrounded them. Michael didn't usually feel comfortable in a crowd. However, on a planet where negative intent can be easily picked out of a group he was able to lower his level of caution enough to enjoy Quinna and watch her enjoy the festival.

“Now which festival is this?” he asked.

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2 - Officers Mess 2/O LCDR Dieter Gregory - 1201)

Being on beta shift was a nice change of pace for Gregory. He was able at more normal times, and reestablish his lunch rituals. Spying his lunch meeting, he walked over to the table where Ensign Tavay was sitting.

As he approached, she stood. "Commander Gregory," she said.

"Hello Ensign, please take a seat," he said as he waved the crewman over. "The usual, please," he said to the mess attendant.

"Of course Commander, an excellent choice. And for you Ensign?" he asked

(Reply Tavay)

Orders placed, Gregory pushed his chair back, "Welcome to the Illuminar, Ms. Tavay. The reason I wanted to meet with you is that I'm trying to get a handle on the bridge officers to assess their strengths and weaknesses, and design simulations to help develop a cohesive esprit de corps. We've had some turnover and changes in status so it is imperative that this type of training and assessments be performed."

He paused, "I've read your file and academy transcripts, but those don't tell the half of it. What I am interested in is your assessment of your skills. What you feel most comfortable doing and areas that you feel you need improvement. I am, of course, happy to answer questions you might have as well."

"By way of breaking the ice," he began as their drinks were brought to the table.

Taking the cup of tea, Gregory took a sip and smiled. "Sorry, nothing like a cuppa to keep the day going strong," he said. "As I was saying, to break the ice, I am trained in physics and engineering. My honors thesis was on tachyon particles and their impact on warp fields. I anticipated going into engineering, but have found a hope in operations, and now the command track. Outside of Star Fleet, I am a runner and mountain climber," he said.

(reply Tavay)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2 - Officers Mess -- Bridge Office Ensign Tavay -- 1205)

"Of course Commander, an excellent choice. And for you Ensign?" he asked.

“Grilled cheese and tomato soup, please,” Tavay ordered.

Tavay listened to Dieter's candidness. She was easily impressed by his extra activities. She wondered how he would do with a fencing joust. She might like to find out.

“Impressive, I focused on an all bridge person. I have made sure that I can take any station if needed. I like to be in the background. I enjoy fencing. I am also a hiker. I come from a small Romulan community in the Appalachian Mountains on Earth.” Tavay reflected

(Reply Gregory)

“My parents wanted me to be raised like other human children. Our family is grateful for being taken in after the destruction of Romulus.” Tavay opened up. She normally kept herself bottled up.

(Reply Gregory)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 6 - NCO Quarters - SO PO3 Hercules Devers - 1205)

“Come on Collier, we got shore leave and I hear there is an amazing street fair today.” Devers called out to his roommate.

“You are a taskmaster there Herc,” Collier replied as he finished putting on his civilian clothes.

The two looked like something out of a classic movie, Collier has on a loose-fitting, brightly colored shirt with explosions of flowers and pineapples while Devers wore a purple shirt that had a dragon taking up the whole back.

"OK, I'm ready," Collier said.

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Street Fair - SO PO3 Hercules Devers - 1210)

The two security officers rematerialized just outside the area where the festival was being held. Sounds of laughter and music filled their ears, while the smells of a food captured their noses.

“No matter how good the replicators can make food,” Collier said, “It just isn’t the same as real cooked food.”

“You got that right,” Devers replied, “Next time we’re near Earth, I’ll take you to my hometown and show you the most amazing food around.”

Entering the street, it was clear that this was going to be a good day. The first booth they came to was one selling Uttaberry crepes. “I wonder how these are compared to what my mother made, the crepes that is,” Devers said. Taking the offered delicacy, he bit into it with gusto. A smile came across his face “Oh, this is delightful,” he said to Collier.

At the next booth, the two watched as an artisan was making hand-blown glass objects. “You should get one for your girl,” Devers said to Collier, “I’m sure she would love something like that,” he pointed to a bird hovering next to a flower. The iridescent flecks in the glass caught the light and made it sparkle in all the right ways.

Quinna was waiting for something to catch her eye. Food was always good, but a trinket stand caught her attention. She moved off to the left to take a look. A small trinket caught her attention. “How much?” Quinna asked as she fingered the details. Quinna negotiated for a better price but paid the price anyway. “How did you come about a Bajoran Relic?” Quinna asked the Betazoid Merchant.

“Who knows why? But it was meant for you.” The old lady said. The old lady came around and placed something in Quinna’s pocket. “This is also for you to look at later.” Quinna turned and noticed that she had managed to wander off from Michael. And when she looked back, the old lady was gone too.

Michael had been looking at a few art items when he noted that Quinna had wandered away. He shook his head thinking that he would never have been so careless two weeks ago. He began to scan the crowd for his companion when he felt someone behind him.

He turned to find Fiona smiling at him. She was dressed in a low-cut short dress that barely covered her ... body. Michael gave her an appreciative look.

“Fiona,” he finally said, “you’re looking good.”

“Aren’t I,” Fiona replied with an evil grin. “You’re looking pretty relaxed. Where’s the little woman.”

Michael looked confused for a moment then laughed. "Oh Quinna," he gestured to the rows of vendors, "she's out there, somewhere, looking for something "interesting"."

Fiona moved beside him and put her arm around his, "It looked like she already found something interesting last night."

Michael shrugged. He'd never really trusted Fiona when they worked together. Nothing had changed. "What are you doing here Fe?" he asked. "And don't say you're on vacation."

Fiona held her breath for a moment then laughed, "A job, what else?" she replied.

Michael's eyes narrowed, "Please don't tell me I'm the job."

Fiona laughed hard, "No. But after Algeron I might take that job." They began to walk through the crowded fair, looking quite comfortable with each other.

"I made sure that you'd been released from that prison before I left."

"You were the reason I was in that prison, to begin with, Michael."

"Yeah, well I had to do something to stop you from blowing that embassy. That was not in our mission parameters."

"Pish posh parameters," she chided, "It would have taken out our target."

Michael was about to respond when he caught sight of Quinna.

Devers and Collier had stopped to admire some hand-crafted knives. "You should get one Herc," Collier said.

"Oh, you know how I abhor bloodshed," he replied.

"Especially your one, right, Herc," Collier said.

Devers stared intently at one of the knives. It was quite reflective, and he noticed movement in the reflection. "Hey Collier, turn around slowly, at 3 o'clock, is that the character Weston? And who's he with?"

Collier made a casual turn, and locked eyes on the target, "I don't know Herc, but she's a looker. I'm telling you, I'd be happy to explore her assets."

“Yea, what are they doing?”

“Looks like an intense conversation. I’d guess they know each other,” Collier replied.

“Merde! “ Devers said, “I don’t like this one bit. We should follow her, figure out what she is up to. Captain just added him to the crew, and while I am not privy to what officers think, I don’t like the idea of him meeting with a strange hussy especially with all the shit going on.”

“What about him?” Collier said.

“Roshambo?” Devers replied.

The two security men put out their hands, “One, Two, Three,” they both counted. Devers chuckled, “Paper covers rock,” he said. “I’ll follow the lady, you watch Weston.”

Collier feigned his disappointment. “Copy that. It is a nice knife,” he said.

Devers nodded and put some latinum down as he took it and the scabbard off the display. “Playtime is over. Game on,” he said as he went into security mode.

At that moment, Quinna walked up behind them, “Hey, Guys. You two look serious.” Though Quinna did not hang with them, she did know them as she was the ship doctor. “Who are you scouting out?”

“Just looking around, Ma’am,” Devers replied, “Getting to know what is here, and maybe looking for some food and drink. Festivals are a hungry and thirsty affair.”

“Yea, there was a glassblower up that way,” Collier pointed towards the east, “You might find his wares appealing, Ma’am.”

“Is there anything you need from us, Ma’am?” Devers asked.

“Actually I seem to be missing someone. Have you seen Michael Weston?” Quinna asked. “I seem to have lost him.”

“Indeed Ma’am, I thought I saw him with you before we stopped to admire this man’s craft,” Devers said.

“Yea,” Collier replied, “Just after you started stuffing your face with that uttaberry crepe.”

Devers put his hands up, “Can I help it if I have to test out the food. My mother makes better crepes,” he said, “Ma’am when we get back to Earth, I will take you to my hometown and treat you to the best food in the galaxy.”

Collier cleared his throat, “Ma’am, there he is,” he said, pointing to the northwest.

“Thanks.” Quinna said, “And Mr. Devers, I am going to hold you to your offer.”

Meanwhile, Hezuela and Mason walked into the main area of the fair. Mason found a stand that served some grilled fruits. Mason bought for the both of them fruit and fed a berry to Hezuela. “Good right?”

Hezuela had a berry shoved into her mouth and chewed on it a bit for the flavor to develop before nodding. “It tastes delicious, what is it?”, she asked him. She hadn’t seen what kind of berry it was, but it tasted really good.

“I am not quite sure, but I love how the sugar on the fruit caramelized.” with his hand, Mason wiped some fruit juice off of Hezuela’s chin. “The sun makes you sparkle, Hezzie.” Mason tried the short name to see how she would reply.

“As long as it tastes good”, she replied, closing her eyes briefly as he wiped the fruit juice off. She bit her lips, careful not to ruin her lipstick.

When he called her Hezzie, she pulled up the corners of her mouth and grinned. Was he serious? She giggled. In response, she ran her fingertips along his jaw and stroked his face, to which she was just getting more attracted by the second.

“Thank you”, she replied to his compliment, considering for a moment whether kissing him here would put her in an awkward position.

Mason leaned in for a kiss but something caught his eye. He turned his head to see Michael Weston getting up close and personal with a woman who was not Dr. Solice. “What the hell?” Mason then turned to face Hezuela. “I am sorry, see that man with the woman with nothing much on. He is dating Dr. Solice.”

“Hezzie, what do you think we should do?” Mason asked. He was not sure if he should interfere or not.

Hezuela shrugged her shoulders. “Look, I’m assistant Chief Medical Officer and it’s my job to do the things that Dr. Solice gives me to do. But it’s not my job...”, she began and looked at her boss, who went to the man. She saw the man kissed Solice on the cheek and she looked back at Mason. “I think

that's taken care of", she whispered, kissing him on the lips. Her hand searched for his and she just enjoyed the moment.

"You're right. Let's go." Mason said. "Sorry I got a bit worked up. She is almost a sister." Mason pulled Hezuela away from the crowd and onward down the fair.

"It's okay. You were worried if everything was okay between them", she said, running after him as he walked with her down the fair. "Do you want to go somewhere special or do you want to look around first?", she asked him.

"No, she made her choice, let's just do it," Mason said.

T'Mur and Sienna walked hand in hand through the crowded festival. They had stopped at several of the vendors to check out their wares, Then there was a series of chocolate vendors, that were giving out samples of various types of chocolate. T'Mur thought that Sienna was going to have some form of a seizure with her level of excitement.

She began to sample bit-sized morsels, sending waves of pleasure through their connection. At one point T'Mur was certain that she was having an orgasm. But the worst of it happened at a station that gave out a cup of hot chocolate drink with a spice that accentuated the chocolate's flavor. Even T'Mur had to admit that it had a delightful flavor.

It was at that moment that Sienna caught sight of Quinna walking towards Weston's location. But he was with another woman, on his arm, and they seemed to be deep in conversation. T'Mur just sat back and observed, trying to help Sienna remain calm.

Quinna could not see Michael but walked in the direction that Collier indicated. As soon as she got to a certain vantage point, she saw Michael and Fiona close. She stood there to watch what was going on. Thoughts started to flood her mind. It seemed obvious that Fiona was not letting go. This was a fight or flight situation. Should she stay or should she go? Quinna took a deep breath and marched over to Michael. "Oh hello, Fiona," Quinna said and then took Michael's hand. "Everything ok, Sweetie?"

Michael was never more relieved to see Quinna, and worried. He moved over to her and kissed her on the cheek.

"Yes," he told her. "I ran into Fiona and we were just talking about the old days."

"Yeah," Fiona chimed in, "we were reliving the time your "husband" sent me to prison for something I didn't do."

"And got you back out," he reminded her.

Fiona nodded, "Then disappeared for... what... five years?"

"It was for the best Fe," Weston said. "Look at you, living it up with..." he pointed to the man she had accompanied last night, "who that is."

"Yes, well," Fiona said, "a job is a job. This job is protecting some rich guy. It has its perks." She gestured to her clothes, which clearly hid no weapons. Of course, Michael was well aware that she needed none.

Devers and Collier broke off and headed in different directions. Knowing that Weston was from SFI made Devers wonder who his lady friend was. Devers took to walking slowly, looking at the booths while keeping an eye on the girl. Solice had walked over to the couple and the three were talking. Grabbing a drink from one of the vendors, he paused as he sipped the refreshing liquid.

P'Rah decided to come down to Betazed for some fun. A world full of telepaths seemed daring to the mind but he needed room to run and stretch his legs. He found his way to the fair. Things were bright and colorful. The trinkets attracted P'Rah. He moved over to Devers "Did I miss much?"

"P'Rah," Devers said. "Great, I could use your help," he said. "It seems that Dr. Solice's squeeze, Michael Weston, ran into an old friend. From the looks of the body language, Collier and I were concerned."

"It's that woman there who's walking away from the good Doctor. You know when you get that sense? The one at the back of your neck," Devers said, "Well they are standing up and tugging."

"So, I could use your help, P'Rah. Two tails is better than one."

"You got it. I am with you." P'Rah agreed. So Betazed would be exciting after all.

"Michael shall we move along or would you like to stay with your 'friend' and catch up?" Quinna gave the option. She grew tired of this woman. She was not sure how long she could be 'polite.'

Michael shook his head, "No, unless you have more business for me, Fiona." His question held more to it than he wanted to say in front of Quinna.

"No," Fiona replied. "But if that changes you'll be the second to know."

She turned on her heel and headed towards the man she identified as her client. There was something about the man Weston recognized but it wasn't coming to him for some reason. Perhaps he was just being paranoid.

Then he turned his attention back to Quinna. "Let's go check out the food. I'm starving," he said in an attempt to change subjects.

"I am too," Quinna said but dropped the 'not just for food' part.

Mason was finally happy being away from the others. They managed to find an elaborate candle stand.

"Welcome, my children, Welcome." Melonia, the stand owner, said as she turned to the shoppers. "Oh, I know just what you two lovebirds need." Melonia looked around. "I know where it is at. Please look around while I look for it."

Hezuela let herself be drawn to the candle stand and then looked at the stand owner with a smile.

"See, lovebirds", Hezuela whispered, giving him a kiss on the tip of his nose. Then she turned back to the stand owner. "Okay", she said, winking at the woman. Hezuela was curious about what she was looking for the two lovebirds.

"Ahhh here we go." Melonia produced a candle. "It is a Betazoid Love knot. When lit, it will heighten your experiences. "You kids go and enjoy yourself.

"Thanks", Hezuela said to the stand owner, smiling appreciatively at her.

Mason paid the woman and the two took a couple steps away. "Well, Hezzie, what do you think?"

"I think we'll definitely have to light the candle this evening", she said,

"Where would you like to go?" Mason asked as he put an arm around Hezuela.

"I don't know, maybe we'll just stroll around here for a bit", Hezuela suggested as she rested her head on his shoulder as she walked.

Mason then offered Hezuela his arm, "My dear, let's go."

Hezuela snuggled into his arm and nodded.

"Do you want to talk or just walk around?", she asked him. She didn't really care as long as they were going to do it together.

"Why don't you tell me about your past. Who is Hezuela?" Mason asked as they casually walked around the fair.

Hezuela took a deep breath. If it were that easy to answer..."Long story", she began. Sometimes she got tired of telling the full story of her past, but she also knew she had to be honest with him. "I was dragged to the Federation when I was three years old. After that, I was adopted and lived in the Federation", she said, then shrugged. Of course, the actual story was longer, but they could talk about the details tonight over a hot cup of tea and the lit candle. It wasn't that she didn't want to tell him more about her past, but there wasn't anything important for her. Although..."When I was nine years old, the effects of the virus I contracted on Orion began to show. I lost my hearing. A little later, a translation matrix was established and I could hear again. Otherwise there isn't very much exciting from my life", she said, looking in his eyes. "Sorry, I'm not really good at telling stories", she apologized and smiled slightly. She certainly could have told the story a little more elaborately, but sometimes she just couldn't think of the right words.

Then she decided to turn the question around. "What about you?"

"I grew up on Earth. I did not want anything to do with Starfleet. Can you imagine me stepping like a soldier? I went to med school. During my first year, I met Whitney, my wife. She was studying to be a teacher. We married when she graduated. I graduated and was considered a resident. My first job was as an Emergency Room Physician. There had been a terrible accident. We lost one patient that night. My first patient that I lost, ended up being my wife. At that point, I decided I could work with the living or dead, so I chose the dead since I did not have to deal with patients dying. To get away, I became a Starfleet contractor. And I am one of the only medical examiners. It is supposed to keep some of the stress off the doctors." Mason shared.

Hezuela and Mason were following other couples until they came to an event area. They enter the area without knowing what they were getting into.

"I'm sorry", Hezuela said, pressing a kiss on his cheek. Somehow she had the feeling that she understood him a little better than before. "Thanks for telling me", she whispered, putting her arm around his shoulder.

Meanwhile, Quinna walked with Michael to a food area. She stuck with him so they are not parted again. Quinna managed to find a frozen fruit concoction similar to sorbet but more crystalline in texture. "Do you want to talk about it?" Quinna asked Michael.

Michael shook his head, "We were ... partners for a few missions... maybe a bit more. But she was a bit more exuberant about certain parts of the job. So I had to put an end to it." He thought for a

moment and then took a breath. "Yeah, I can't say more than that. Let's just say we didn't part on the best terms."

"I am here. You got me." Quinna offered.

He smiled and took her hands, kissing her gently, "Well that's good to know. Because I'm tired of women's last words to me being "I'm going to kill you"."

Quinna took a deep breath, "I seriously doubt it is a coincidence that she is here." Quinna took a deep breath, "I am afraid that she is going to make you an offer that you will not be allowed to refuse." Quinna let a tear form in her eye. Quinna promised herself that she would not show any sad emotions with Michael. "I am going to say this, but I am not sure how tactfully it will come out, but I am not done with you. There is so much more I want to do with you." Quinna looked at Michael with a smile.

Weston smiled and put his hand on Quinna's cheek. "And I," he said with a wink, "am not through with you. I'm also pretty sure she will not be able to tempt me away from the Illuminar any time soon. Although I do agree her presence is not a coincidence."

That thought had already gone through Michael's head several times since he first saw her. He felt that she was either there to kill him or to get him to join her on an... adventure. He wasn't looking forward to either prospect.

Suddenly he saw a food vendor that had some kind of meat on a stick. "Ooo look, kabobs. After we eat maybe we can start to head back and find an ... other way to occupy our afternoon."

"Now that sounds good. Can you see if they have anything cheesy too?" Quinna became really hungry. Quinna sat at the small table with the two chairs and she looked around the area. She saw Mason with Dr. Hezuela. She did not know they were seeing each other. But what surprised her more was they were entering an area with a bunch of other couples for a mass wedding ceremony.

Michael soon returned with a couple of trays of food and a couple of glasses with what appeared to be a fruit punch. He placed them on the table, noting Quinna was distracted.

"What are you looking at?" he asked, following her gaze to the cordoned-off area, with a sign that only bore a symbol.

"I am debating if we should go over or something. This could get interesting." Quinna said.

"Over there?" Michael asked, pointing to the sign. "You, uh, know what that is don't you?"

"I was watching couples enter the venue. They are all excited to be going."

Still unsure if she knew what the area was, Michael looked at her with disbelief.

"Want to wander over there with me?" Quinna asked

"Are you thinking of participating," he asked, "or as a friend of the bride and groom? Why would we be going?"

Quinna laughed a bit. Apparently, she forgot some details but she was loving this. "Well, you know what they say, 'When in Rome.'" Quinna ran her fingers along Michael's chin line.

Michael's jaw worked but the sound was not quite coming out other than, "Ummmm..."

"Relax," Quinna said. "I saw Mason and Hezuela go in there." Though Quinna would have said yes if Michael asked and if they had been in the relationship a lot longer. "I wonder if they know where they are going."

Relieved, slightly, he too was curious about that duo. "Yeah, we might want to check that out, before you become related to an Orion."

He picked up a skewer of meat, and took a long drink of the juice then stood up and held out a hand to offer Quinna help up.

Quinna took Michael's hand and they headed over to the venue.

"Oh, I am sorry. We have begun the ceremony. I am so sorry, you cannot get in." the Usher said.

"We just want to watch," Quinna said.

"Sorry, no Spectators" The Usher replied.

Quinna turned Michael and bit her lower lip. "I guess we can't be in there."

"Do they even know where they're going?" Michael asked. "I mean, they really haven't known each other that long. But I don't know Mason very well, beyond his basic desire to not see you get hurt." Michael recalled their brief conversation a couple of weeks ago.

"Should we wait for them?" Quinna asked. She was tired and was ready to go back to the room.

"Well, if nothing else," Michael smiled, "we can congratulate them." He looked up at the sign and smiled. "I wonder if they got naked."

Meanwhile, in the Venue, Mason held Hezuela's hand. Most everyone there removed their clothing and held each other close. With many mixed races, clothing is optional. Mason leaned over to Hezuela, "I think I will pass on the stripping. I wonder what kind of show this is."

A larger than life man appeared Naked and in the center of the couples. Next to him was his naked boisterous wife. The man spoke as not all the couples were not Betazoid. They welcomed all couples. He spoke Traditional Betazed without any translations. After 10 minutes they were done. Every couple was given a piece of paper before they left. "So do you have any idea what just happened?" Mason asked Hezuela.

"No", Hezuela simply replied. She had no idea what was going on. "I...I think we should go," she said then. It was certainly very interesting here and Hezuela couldn't say that the missing clothes would bother her (a very Orionic opinion), but maybe it would be really better if they should go.

Quinna and Michael stood there and waited for the pair to exit. She wanted to be the first to congratulate the happy couple. But as they walked out Michael could clearly tell that they had not one clue what had just happened. This was going to be fun.

As they stepped over to the newlyweds he could see that Quinna was not nearly as amused as he was. Michael offered his hand.

"Well hello Doctor," and he looked at the Orion woman, "and Doctor. Did you enjoy yourselves?"

"I can't believe you did that." Quinna Said. She turned to Mason, "When you leap back into life, you jump off the cliff." Quinna said.

Mason had a puzzled look on his face, "What are you talking about."

Michael put an arm around Mason's shoulder and gave him a wink, "My friend, you really know how to show a girl the best of times. Did you notice something... odd about that ceremony? Like was everybody... naked?"

"Um. Not everyone. But this Betazed. Look around, there are plenty of naked people here." Mason noted.

Sienna and T'Mur joined the group that had gathered around the joining area. T'mur looked at the paper in the hands of Dr. Quincy.

“Dr. Quincy,” she asked, “did you just go through the marital ceremony that just occurred? I know that I have been distracted lately, but I did not realize that your relationship with Dr. Hezuelaa was that serious.”

Quinna turned and gave T’Mur the evil eye. She wanted to tell him.

“Say What?” Mason said and quickly turned to read the signs. ‘Mass Marriage Ceremony. Clothing optional.’ He then turned to Hezuela. “Ummm did you see that?”

Hezuela pressed her lips together to suppress a laugh. That was certainly interesting.

“I’m not sure,” she replied to Mason before allowing a grin. So that would be the number one awkward situation for today. “Well then ...”, she continued undeterred and looked at everyone involved to see if anyone could say anything else.

Michael was enjoying the fact that Hezuela was completely at ease with the situation. She was an interesting woman. He clapped Quincy on the shoulder again.

“Congratulations,” he said laughing. Then he went over to Hezuela, “And to you, the lovely Mrs. Doctor Quincy.”

He gave the Orion a hug and a kiss on the cheek, “And we didn’t even have a bridal shower for you. We’ll have to take care of that. We should have a banquet tonight, in honor of the newlyweds. My treat.”

Mason turned to her “We need to talk.” Mason said. He took her hand and pulled her to the side.

“What are you thinking?” He asked her hoping she would give an opinion on if she wanted to go with it or get the marriage annulled. This was certainly a spontaneous thing. He wanted to respect what she wanted.

Quinna had turned and walked away. There was nothing to be said. Her emotions were all over the place on this. It did not bother her that Mason was married. In a way, she felt that this fit Mr. Hide-In-Autopsy. She needed time to process.

Michael watched Quinna walk away and went after her. Perhaps he took his fun a little too far. He caught up to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

“Quinna,” he said softly, “What’s wrong? I’m sorry if I took my joking a little far. But really, it is kind of funny, isn’t it?”

“I think it is really poetic justice for them. I just felt like I needed to step away.” Quinna said. She felt a little pain of mixed emotions. “Sometimes do you ever feel like you are the token party pooper at the party of the century.”

Michael chuckled, “All the time. Except for my party-pooing usually ends with some kind of explosion or violence. Why, what you thinking?”

“Sorry, it is a personal problem and has nothing to do with you,” Quinna said. “We can go back so you can plan their party,” Quinna said. She had a tone that said she was giving in just so she does not have to talk about it and truly reveal her thoughts.

Michael shook his head, “No. That may be good enough for everyone else, but not for me. WE,” he emphasized that they were in this together, “do not just give up on something that is important to one of us just out of... convenience.” He stepped in front of Quinna to block her way and grabbed her hands. “Talk to me Quinna... please.”

“What do you think is going on here?” Quinna asked. “What are you saying?”

Michael shook his head, “I’m not sure what you’re asking. What is going on where? Here with us, or here with Mason? What am I saying? I’m saying that I don’t just throw myself at women, contrary to popular belief. You are special to me. What is important to you is important to me. If something bothers you, then it bothers me. I’m saying I have more than a passing interest in you. I thought you felt a similar way.”

“Michael, I love you,” Quinna said the words that she had never uttered to anyone before. “I just got lost in thought. My emotions are tangled up around things. My emotions are fighting with reality. I hope I am making sense.”

Michael moved his right hand from her hands to her chin and kissed her. “I find myself in unfamiliar territory, Quinna. I love you too. That was harder to say than you can imagine because saying that out loud puts you in danger. Fiona is a reminder of that. She knows that if she hurts you, she hurts me. I should have walked away from you Quinna, but I can’t. I feel too strongly about you. So I do understand tangled up emotions.” He swept Quinna into his arms and kissed her.

Quinna just laid her head on his chest. No one seemed to care that Quinna did not mind the danger. Michael was worth it in her eyes. Quinna knew that she had to live in the now. Then she remembered that this has been only 14 days. “Think we should go back to the happy couple?”

Michael smiled wryly, "We could... or ... we could go back and explore how we feel about each other more."

"I wouldn't mind going back to the room," Quinna replied as she looked into his eyes with more than desire in them.

T'Mur stepped over to the conversation between Quincy and Hezuela. She was still uncertain as to how it was possible for them to accidentally get married, however, there had to be a clue.

"Doctor," she said, "I apologize for the interruption, but may I look at the document you received?"

Mason handed T'Mur the document. She looked at the paper and then noticed something odd. She looked at it more carefully and then raised an eyebrow.

"I see," she finally said. "Doctors, you are not yet married. According to this document, this contract of marriage, your union must be recognized, and notarized, by an official of the Betazoid administration before your union is complete, within the next day. You will also be required to ... consummate your union first. If you do nothing, this marriage will be null and void after tomorrow. Unless, of course, you plan to consummate it and visit an official governmental office, which I assume would be close."

"Oh yeah, really?" She replied to the Vulcan and then looked back at him

"So not married after all," Mason said. "To think what could have happened." He smiled at Hezuela.

"As I understand it," T'Mur said, "I could always witness your consummation, and then act as an arbiter to the government, if you wish."

Mason thought for a moment, "Um, thank-you but no thank-you. If there is any consummation going on, it will be spectator-free."

T'Mur shrugged, "As you wish." She turned and headed back to Sienna, put her arms around her neck, and kissed her passionately. She looked back around at Mason and raised an almost challenging eyebrow.

"What could have happened?" Hezuela asked Mason and pressed closer to him

"Well" she said and ran her hands over his hips before working their way up to his necks. Hezuela leaned his head forward and kissed him.

Mason looked around and then said, “What the Hell?” He leaned over and took Hezuela into his arms. He leaned in closer, kissing her neck and stopping just at the ear. He Whispered, “Do you want to make this official or not? No matter your decision, I do not plan on going anywhere.”

Hezuela giggled as he busied himself with her neck and then answered his question. Did she want to make it official or not? "I better start looking for a wedding dress", she whispered and smiled.

Mason suddenly had a ‘deer in the headlights’ feeling, “Wedding dress?” He muttered silently to himself.

(Reply none)

(Posted by:

Mel - Seinna Verin

Al- Michael Weston, T'Mur

Bogdana- Hezuela

Kris- Dr. Quinna Solice, Dr. Mason Quincy, P'Rah

Tim- Devers and Collier)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - Deck 2 - Officers Mess - 2/O LCDR Diter Gregory - 1215)

Gregory listened to Tavay as she described her upbringing in the Appalachian Mountains.

"I am not too familiar with the area, having grown up in the UK and spent the rest of my time in cities," he replied. "We'll come back to your training in a minute," he added.

“My parents wanted me to be raised like other human children. Our family is grateful for being taken in after the destruction of Romulus,” Tavay said.

Gregory nodded, "And that prepared you for Star Fleet. Turning back to your training, I would like to propose that you come join my team in Operations,we could use a team member with your background."

He paused, "While operations has the overall mission of ensuring that the ship is running efficiently. We have the pulse of the ship at our fingertips. Your experience will help the team to understand some of the other issues that the rest of the crew need to deal with. I'd especially like to assign you to beta shift, so if there are issues, you can move to another station and I can slid over to operations. It will give beta some extra support."

Gregory leaned back, "What do you say?"

(Reply Tavay)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

He paused, "While operations have the overall mission of ensuring that the ship is running efficiently. We have the pulse of the ship at our fingertips. Your experience will help the team to understand some of the other issues that the rest of the crew needs to deal with. I'd especially like to assign you to beta shift, so if there are issues, you can move to another station and I can slid over to operations. It will give beta some extra support."

Tavay listened to Gregory's offer. It would involve narrowing down her specialty. There was something tantalizing about coming out of the standby room and into a duty station.

Gregory leaned back, "What do you say?"

“I am not one to stay with just one thing. If that is where you need me, I am willing to give it a try.”

Tavay answered. “Let me ask you... Why are you not taking off with the others on the planet?” She knew why she was going. She had drawn the short stick and stayed behind.

(Reply Gregory)

“Don’t you deserve some time off as well?” She asked.

(Reply Gregory)

(Posted by Kris B.)

[illegible]

"I am not one to stay with just one thing. If that is where you need me, I am willing to give it a try," Tavay responded.

"Excellent, I will have the necessary transfer paperwork drawn up," Gregory replied.

"Let me ask you... Why are you not taking off with the others on the planet?" Tavay asked,

"I have several projects to oversee on the ship and being planet side is not conducive to that. Additionally, I've got to oversee the resupply of the Illuminar, especially after the drain on our resources from two battles and such," he said.

"And besides, Risa is a better place to visit." Chuckling, "And have you ever played poker with a telepath? It never ends well. Since we are here for only a few days, I'd rather save shore leave for next time."

(Reply Tavay)
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

Lee had intended to have a quiet lunch before going back to work. It's not often that the opportunity to work in an environment where you not interrupted by various demans. As the ship was orbiting Betazed and as there were few people on board ,he 'grabbed the bull by the horns' moment. He had no interest in going down to a planet occupied by what were essentially a population of telepaths! It was hard work attempting to keep his mind closed from possible interfering busy bodies. What was so special about the planet anyway?. Mountains, countryside and oceans were the same anyway where ever you go in the Galaxy. He might consider getting some fresh air later and a walk somewhere.

As he looked for an empty table, he was waved over by two crewmen who were from the Science department. Dr Mary Belington and Dr Roger Battensburg..both of whom were physicists

“Chief, please will you join us” said Mary “We’re having a discussion that might interest you!”

So much for a quiet undisturbed lunch as Lee took his seat.

“May I asked you something personal about your post? You’re probably sick of people asking you the same questions time and again.” Said Mary

“Go ahead.” said Lee . He knew what Caroline was going to ask. He was used to people asking questions about his experiences of being out of his own time..serious questions, sometimes downright amusing .”Let me guess..you want to know what was it like back in the 21st compared to now..Right?”

Mary slipped her glass of water and nodded.

Lee took his cue from Mary and also sipped his drink. He was so used to the culture that he was living in that he had nearly forgotten about his old life. What?

"Well... it was different, that's for sure. Compared to now... life was obviously restricted to living in one area because of the problems related to travel technology... no faster-than-light systems, just atmospheric flights. I once lived in old London... it wasn't as big as we know it now but the place was... er... compact, if you see what I mean! Ground vehicles ran on internal combustion techniques so there was pollution and uncontrolled weather. Times were uncertain and different groups sought their own alternative lifestyles and some extreme trying to achieve it through crime, terrorism and war!! I read

some history books about life in the late 20th/early 21st century. To be honest with you, most of it is absolute rubbish and inaccurate. I've started writing about it from my own perspective but nothing worth publishing. You're talking to a man who was a history teacher and had distinguished military career and mentioned in dispatches. Then ended up in this Century only to be told in not some many .that I was a non-entity!! Everything that I experienced was practically useless in this era!!"

Lee paused, glancing at Caroline. "I actually had a nervous breakdown for several months...not surprising really...the medics gave it some long sounding term..but not coping with changes in new time and culture. I think I prefer to call it – culture shock!! Anyway counsellors helped me through it. To look at it as new opportunities. New changes and challenges. Not everyday I can make a fresh start in life..erase any mistakes!!" Lee remembered the countless adjustment orientation sessions conducted by a couple from Starfleet's specialist refugee displacement Operations. Nosey shrinks. Infact the two who were assigned to him were from Betazed!

Mary listened intently and said, "I've studied that time period some and particularly liked the clothing and have replicated some Jeans-they're pretty comfortable. But I'm what would have been called a geek then.

"Actually a geek would have been the wrong term to use..I can't exactly remember the term." Lee mused.

"Perhaps Tom boy would be more fitting." She laughed.

"mm...I been studying about time travel." Interrupted Roger. "I wrote a paper on Temporal Mechanics.. I would love to gone to the Guardian of Forever to ask questions but that's off limits. Mary has read my paper. That's what we been discussing. Especially the ethics of it all."

Mary said, rubbing her chin "I'm not even sure how the Prime Directive comes into play here"

~neither do I~ thought Lee, but decided to keep quiet. Instead he said "I always wondered assuming that the means of time travel is possible, would we not have bumped into a bunch of observers from the future by now?."

Roger lifted his mug of coffee to his lips and, took a slip before he started talking. WWhat you have describe is known as the Fermi Paradox. In June 28, 2009, physicist Stephen Hawking carried out a scientific experiment which was meant to answer this question once and for all. He brought snacks, balloons and champagne and hosted a secret party for time travellers only – but sent out the invitations only on the next day. If no one showed up, he argued, that would be proof that time travel to the past is not possible. The invitees failed to arrive. "I sat and waited for a while, but nobody came. But you imagine if multiple time travellers could upset the possibility of a fixed and consistent timeline!"

"Actually, talking about paradoxes. "said Mary as she joined in. "In the same way ... oh, suppose I went back and prevented er..for example the American President John Kennedy from being assassinated. Won't that change the course of history?

"No," said Roger "You see. It's rather as if the time continuum were a mesh of tough rubber bands. It isn't easy to distort it; because the band will snap back to its uh 'former shape. The question of what happened If President Kennedy was prevented being assassinated...it would probably happen that someone else did the shooting and the assassin got blamed anyway. It is like the grandfather paradox"

"The grandfather paradox. What is that?" interrupted Lee .

" The grandfather paradox comes from the idea that if a person travels to a time before their grandfather had children, and kills him, it would make their own birth impossible. So, if time travel is possible, it somehow must avoid such a contradiction." Explained Roger

"Tell me Chief You actually travelled through time..what was it like?" asked Mary

Lee stopped eating. "I actually have no idea. Apparently I was unconscious when I came through a temporal distortion so I knew nothing about it until I was revived and discovered I was in the future!! Can't help you there, I'm afraid." He could see the disappointment in their faces

"Let ask you a question?" asked Roger. "What if you had the opportunity to actually travel in time. Would you do it?

That wasn't something Lee was expecting. The chance to go back in time. To correct mistakes that have been in the past. Recover and hide lost treasures for future recovery. Kill Hitler before he comes into power. He could even visit September 11, 2001, and warn airport security about the terrorists boarding the planes. Assuming, of course, I could correct the right things in the right way, without making things worse. Even investing on the stock markets. Not that having money would be any good in this society!

Instead he said "Of course, wouldn't anyone?. Observe events in history as a passive observer. Then correct whatever misconceptions we have today. Maybe observe a possible future to see how decisions and events played out."

"That's quite amiable, Lieutenant" said Roger who looked suitable impressed.

I think there is a temptation that is someone is able to go back to correct mistakes that have been made In the past." Chipped in Mary "I suppose in theory, if you go back in time far enough, any changes you make won't have major effects in your own time, because history has a kind of inertia and tends to get itself back on track. So if you kill Napoleon as a baby, France still has an early-nineteenth-century empire and a protracted war with England, and by 1900 everything is right back where it would have been."

"I believe If I can go back in time, I reckon I can make any changes I want in the past and I would continue to exist." Said Lee. "I think the idea of the very act of traveling in time takes you outside the timestream and removes you from the effects of changes in history. Of course, you can make changes that destroy your own society and the timeline. There is the butterfly effect as you don't really know the full repercussions of your actions"

The lunch time conversation actually continued for a good part of the afternoon which made Lee realised that he was behind in what he was doing. After the two scientists left, Lee remained behind deep in thought starring at the planet. If he had the opportunity to time travel, would he do it? Perhaps return to his own time and live out his life then knowing he could influence the timeline in some way because of what he knew. Somewhere in the Federation, there must be someone or some being who have perfected the means to travel the space time continuum? What was this Guardian of Forever he had heard about. Now that would be an adventure. In the meantime he would have to settle with the historical programs that he written on the holodeck.as an alternative.

(reply anyone who happen to be in the Officer's Mess)

(posted by John)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar -- Officer's Mess – EO – Ensign Bohb - 1315)

Bohb had been trying to decide what to do with his day. He had worked most of the morning on his project, and then helped with a realignment of the warp coils that were needed since the battle. By the time lunch time had come around he was quite hungry. However, he had forgotten how replicated food missed a certain quality that freshly grown food had. An ineffable flavor. Still, it did have a great variety. He got his meal and sat at table against a wall. He had selected a seat that was reasonably secluded.

It appeared Lt. Lee had the same idea, as he was looking to sit alone in the same area. However he had gotten called over by a pair in blue uniforms that he had seen in the science department, but was unfamiliar with. However Lee joined them at their urging. Bohb was close enough to be able to hear their conversation, which was intriguing. They began by asking him about his own experience with being from a different period in time. Bohb had heard about this man from the early twenty-first century, and was a little curious himself. He recalled reading about a character from Lee's time called Buck Rogers. Perhaps this was the reason for the crew's preoccupation of that time period.

Lee gave a brief overview of the differences of the times. Most of which could have been researched. He would have liked to know about how those differences affected him, or how his therapy helped him cope with the changes. How did his mindset change? And what led him from being an academic to security. And why he came to the conclusion that he was a “non-entity.” What is a non-entity anyway? Bohb knew how it felt to be outside his zone of comfort, socially. To his knowledge he is the only Magillan to have left his home world. Which is one of the reasons he didn’t feel that he could go back.

Then one of the scientists brought up the subject of time travel. Now Bohb's attention was brought into full focus. He was amazed that someone would bring up the Guardian in general public, as it was, at least it was thirty years ago, a taboo subject. The Federation didn't want people vacationing in different time era's changing the events of history. Then he mentioned the ethics, and that was when Bohb felt the urge to join in the conversation. How was it possible that physicists, versed in the science of time travel was completely unaware of the "temporal prime directive."

"I always wondered assuming that the means of time travel is possible, would we not have bumped into a bunch of observers from the future by now?" the female asked. Again Bohb wondered how it was not possible for them to know of the visitors from other times. They were well documented and well outside the 100 year rule. When the man brought up Fermi's Paradox the Magillan literally smacked himself in the forehead. ~What to they teach these kids in the Academy these days.~!

Hawking's "experiment" was in no means conclusive, as it worked on a premise that someone would accept his invitation, which would have changed the course of history just by having that visit. He was having a hard time keeping his seat, but he wanted to see how far this rabbit hole went.

It went pretty deep. The grandfather paradox was another inconsistent argument, which literally argued against the possibility of time travel, which has already been disproved. It's almost like these modern day scientists were working on twentieth century theories today. It is almost like cavemen thinking of the possibility of reaching to the stars.

Finally they started asking about the chief's own experiences in time travel, which was something that interested Bohb as well. And it gave him time to settle himself down. Even his own explanation of coming through a temporal distortion affected the argument of the two scientists. Then they asked if he would travel through time if he had a chance. Bohb thought that was a strange question since he, obviously, already had. But he admitted he would. He started out strong by talking about observing events that occurred, and seeing how they played out. That made sense from a historian.

Then the female made a comment about going back in time and “correcting mistakes, and how those changes would not really have any affect on the history, since history has “inertia”. But when Lee said that he lived outside the timestream it was more than the engineer could stand.

He got up and moved over to the table, "Excuse me but I couldn't help but overhear your conversation, and I have one question. Did any of you take the course on temporal mechanics and quantum physics of temporal displacement? The things that you have brought up are astoundingly short sighted. There has been so much evidence of small changes in a timeline creating universal changes in the historical timeline. Many of them were reported by the early writings of Admiral Kirk from his experiences on the Enterprise. How can you sit there and say you can change a main historical event, and then think that there are no repercussions? And you haven't even touched on the idea of creating an alternate universe that might pop up because of that change. And which universe would you go back to after you made that change? As scientists can you really be that short sighted?"

(reply Lee, Bellington, Battenburg)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

Gregory had finished his meal with Ensign Tavay and decided to stay in the O Club to work. It was a good place to sit and observe the comings and goings of the officer cadre in a less formal setting. It

wasn't spying per se, but let he get to know a bit about the crew outside the job, and not as crazy as karaoke nights.

The chief of security, Lieutenant Lee walked in. Now that was someone Gregory had to have a chat with. He needed to understand the Chiefs philosophy of security and defense. Lieutenant T'Mur was chief of tactical operations, and he appreciated that the Captain has separated Security into those two posts.

He barely turned his head when he heard two of the science team wave Lee over. Cross pollination between departments was a good thing in his opinion. You never knew where the next good idea was going to come from.

Gregory continued to sip his tea as he people watched. Mr. Bohb made his way into the mess hall. It had been several days since their conversations with the two, by all accounts brilliant and yet eccentric scientists. He was wondering if the Magillan had made any progress based on their ideas. Ensign Matrix was busy prototyping the cloaking device for the Hillary, and Gregory was eager to being actual field testing of the cloak so that once Bohb had solved his issues, they would have a emergency fallback if needed. Based on the recent string of luck, it was more of a when than an if.

Turing to his PADD, he started reading some notes when he heard the Magillan's voice. Even when he tried to keep it down, he had a distinctive sound that you could not ignore. Casually as he could, he turned around, nothing a few other gathered crew had done the same thing.

The conversation was on temporal mechanics and it seemed Bohb had some concerns over what the scientists were saying. Now granted temporal mechanics was a complicated issue in n dimensional space, and the bane of many a cadet's existence. It did separate the wheat from the chaff, so much so that many cadets took the math free version, which was kind of like taking a phaser marksmanship course with a rock and sling.

Standing up, he walked over to the table, "Mr. Bohb, Chief," he said by way of greeting, "And lets see Drs. Bellington and Battenburg, if I recall." He paused for a moment, "Far be it for me to interrupt the freeflow of ideas and scientific discussion among the crew, but it seems there may be an issue here?" Looking around, he noticed the crew had turned back to their meals and were not observing the group any more. "I just don't want to frighten the crew, if you know what I mean."

(Reply Bohb, Lee, Bellington, Battenburg)

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI - Michael Weston, CMO/3/X Lt. Quinna Solice- 1845)

The sun was on the verge of setting when Michael and Quinna made it back to her room. The Music from the fail filtered into the room. A soft ballad played. A reason to slow dance with the one you love. Without words, Quinna pulled Michael closer to her and started dancing while she rested her head on his shoulder.

“This day has been one of the most interesting days of my life.” Quinna felt a chill on her back. Quinna moved them out to the balcony to take advantage of the last of the evening’s warmth. The lights of a thousand candles began to illuminate as the last of the sun’s light dissipated in the evening stars. Quinna stared into Michael’s eyes as she went in for a long kiss.

Michael leaned in to meet Quinna’s lips. When they finally parted he could feel his breath catch slightly. This was the moment of truth for him. He knew that if he stayed here with Quinna that his life would be completely changed. He would have an anchor, somewhere in the universe. Someone that he cared about enough to compromise himself over. He would be accepting the fact that he is out of the game.

He looked into the face of the woman in his arms, and then took in the scene around them. His mom would tell him to look for the signs in life, as the universe is trying to tell you something. He realized that perhaps this was all no accident. The universe was talking to him. He just needed to listen.

He brought his hand to the side of her face, and brushed her hair back over her ear. “This day has held quite a few surprises. The greatest, for me, was the realization that I really do love you.”

Michael drew her in, holding her as if he never planned on letting her go. He turned his head and kissed her deeply, reveling in the flavor of her lips. His hand moved up and down, caressing her bare back.

Quinna moved back a second. She took hold of Michael’s hands. With a wanting look, Quinna said, “I love you.” She gently guided the pair into the room and off the balcony. On a normal given day, Quinna would have a million things going through her mind. This moment there was nothing but Michael in her mind. She was strictly with him in the here and now. She moved closer and kissed him.

Michael advanced into the kiss, backing Quinna up to the table. He reached his hands down to the back of her thighs and lifted her onto the table top. Then he pulled her hips forward, into his own. The intensity of his embrace grew as his caresses became more passionate.

Quinna tightened her hold around Michael. Her hands moved to the back of his neck and intertwined her fingers in his hair. She pulled back to take a breath and regained her eye contact. Michael returned the look, allowing his feelings to show through his eyes. He was looking for a hesitation in Quinna’s face when he dropped his hand to her knee.

Slowly he ran his palm up her thigh, watching as she caught her breath from the contact to her sensitive flesh. His hand moved slowly under the hem of her skirt. He bent his fingers and raked his nails back down her thigh and watched her reaction.

Quinna closed her eyes with the new sensations. She wrapped her legs around him indicating that she was ready for him to take her. He untied the back of the halter at her neck and let the straps fall. He kissed down her neck to reach her shoulder, and gently bit the flesh at the joint.

Quinna moaned softly at the contact and pressure, hoping he would take and lay her on the bed. She wanted Michael to go where no man has gone before. Michael lifted Quinna off the table, her legs still wrapped around him, and carried her into the bedroom. Lowering her feet to the ground he grabbed the edge of her garment and pulled it up, over her head and off. Quinna pulled off Michael's shirt in a similar manner, if not a bit more frantic.

Michael pulled her in, feeling the electricity of their skin touching. As an SFI agent he had been with several women as part of the job. But there was little behind it. This was different, and he could already feel it. This time it was because he wanted to, and he didn't need anything. This time it was to create an emotional connection. This time was for love.

He gently lay Quinna down on the bed, feeling her tremble beneath him slightly beneath him. He smiled lovingly, and whispered in her ear, "I love you, Quinna."

(Reply none)

(Posted by Al M. and Kris B.)

DAY

[illegible]

(Betazed - Jarren Falls- Resort Suites - SFI - Michael Weston - 0543)

One of the things that had kept Michael Weston alive during his years of service as a covert operative for SFI was his ability to recognize when he was in danger. This sense of danger had woken him up. His eyes opened and he was immediately aware of his surroundings.

His body was still entangled with Quinna, who was still fast asleep, her steady breathing showing no signs of changing. Carefully he managed to remove himself from their post love making position and sat on the edge of the bed, his senses trying to attune to things outside of their suite. What had caused him to waken.

Still naked he stood up and wandered into the living area of the suite. There was the sound of the elevator down the hallway, and soft, slow footsteps. Then there was a sound out the back door, onto the patio balcony. This was the one that caused him to get in a defensive posture.

The door burst open and four armed people in tactical gear came running in. At the same time, the front door opened and six more people in identical gear filed in, all pointing weapons at Weston. Michael found himself a little caught off guard. If he'd been clothed he might have tried to fight his way out of the situation. However, he wasn't. Then the next voice made him freeze.

Quinna was startled awake. She actually had fallen out of the bed. She looked up and saw Michael was gone. She panicked and wrapped a sheet around her just as her bedroom was invaded by a tactical team.

"Yes, that's him." Fiona walked in with a ranked official of the defense forces. "And I must say, he looks almost as good as I remember."

The official stepped forward and addressed Michael, "Michael Weston, I am Prefect Danzon Curr. I am hereby placing you under arrest." He held out a pair of wrist restraints, as if he expected Weston to put them on himself.

He looked at the Prefect in disbelief, "Arrest? On what charges?"

The Prefect smiled a wiled smile and said, "For the assassination or the Betazoid Undersecretary for Agricultural on Deneb V, Miri Achoxur."

Now Michael was completely lost, "Who?"

He was well aware of who Achoxur was, she'd been part of his investigation before he arrived on the Illuminar. But he wasn't planning on making this easy for them.

"We have a reliable witness that puts you at the place and time of her death," Curr announced and looked over at Fiona.

Quinna exited into the living space. "What is going on here? You cannot just take him. He is a federation citizen." Quinna turned to Fiona. She knew that woman was trouble. "Let me guess, you are the reliable source?" Quinna then turned to the man issuing the warrant. "You need a Starfleet representative to arrest him. Afterall he is a federation citizen and a member of Starfleet."

Fiona simply watched on and smiled as Quinna made her protests. Curr also smiled, but not quite with the same malevolence. However this woman who was barely covered up with a robe was very distracting.

“Madam,” he replied, “I can, and in fact am arresting him. We are part of the United Federation of Planets and as such have jurisdiction in this matter. If you wish to debate that, take it up with the magistrate. As far as Mr. Weston being a representative of Starfleet, I have a document here that states he is no longer covered by any agreement we have with the fleet. Off of the Illuminar he is an ordinary person, barely a citizen.”

He flashed a PADD that showed the official masthead of Starfleet and of the Federation. The first lines read, “To all it concerns, be known that Michael Weston is no longer a reliable asset, and information received from him must be in question. He must be considered disavowed by Starfleet Intelligence and no longer under the protection of Starfleet.”

“Can’t blame a girl for trying. At Least let us get dressed. I don’t like to share.” Quinna stared at Fiona as she started to move closer to Michael. She knew she needed to get ahold of Sekal. She needed to get Michael back on the ship and safe.

Curr nodded, “Of course, but you’ll excuse me if I do not trust you Mr. Weston. Dr. Solace, if you would care to bring him his clothes so he can dress in our presence that is acceptable.”

Michael had considered fighting his way out of this situation. He might have made it out of the room, but had no idea what was waiting for him outside. Plus he did not want to take a chance of Quinna getting hurt in a crossfire. No he was going to have to let him play this out.

Quinna brought him his clothes. He dressed then held his hands out for the Prefect to attach the restraints to his wrists. “Let’s get this show on the road.”

“A sensible position to take,” Curr said, taking a noticeable sigh of relief. He hadn’t been looking forward to a physical confrontation. He put the restraints on and led Weston out of the room. Outside, the hallway was lined with security personnel all the way to the elevator.

Before following, Fiona looked over her shoulder, “You can always visit him in prison, my dear. Get used to the disappointment.” Then she too left.

Quinna moved and touched Fiona’s arm. “What have you done? Why?” She needed to understand the hatred that Fiona had for Michael.

Fiona shrugged and smiled, “Don’t take it personally, sweatie. It’s just business. And today, business is good.”

smoke screen. You, my sweat Michael, are not meant for the life of marital bliss. Face it, you'd tire of that life pretty quick."

Michael turned around finally to face his old partner. She was wearing a thin white halter top with matching shorts. The sun flowing into the room back lit her making the top near translucent. He knew she was looking for that effect, and he knew that it worked. He couldn't help but think of their past relationship.

"Perhaps," Michael agreed grudgingly, "but it would have been nice to give it a go, for a while."

Fiona shrugged, "And then you'd leave her high and dry, just like you did with me."

Michael shook his head slightly, "Maybe not exactly the same way."

"True," Fiona said, "you wouldn't have to get her sent to prison."

"Quinna wouldn't need that deterrent from killing hundreds of people," Michael said. "Besides, I got you out."

Fiona nodded and stepped closer to the security field holding Michael in. "I am here to return that favor. I want to offer you a job."

And there it was. He had to admit, he was still a little surprised that the job offer came from her. He leaned forward on the cot he'd been sitting on, putting his elbows on his knees.

"Oh really," he said with suspicion in his voice.

Fiona produced a chair and sat facing Weston, "It's pretty simple really. We want you to join our little organization. We need a man of your abilities. To be honest, I'm tired of dealing with the amateurs and idiots that they've been recruiting. I need someone I can count on to get a job done. And not some religious zealot who would "lay down his life for the cause." And now you have no real connection to SFI. I mean look at you. Just like that they tossed you aside. You deserved better than that."

Michael looked up, trying not to look too interested in her compelling argument. "And what is it you want me to do? Kill Saleke?"

Fiona laughed, "Oh my God no. That was just stupid. That's the last thing we want. People will answer for what they've done, or haven't. They will, of course, want proof of your ... commitment. After that we can talk about your true mission."

She paused and let it all sink in, and sat back in the chair, putting her hands behind her head. Michael also sat up and watched Fiona carefully. At this point he was pretty sure a refusal would be met with an untimely end in this security cell. Accepting the offer would give him time to figure a way out. He was also pretty sure they would be aware of that mindset and would have something in place to ensure his... cooperation.

"Come on Michael," Fiona finally said, "SFI and the Federation have screwed you one time too many. Now is the time to be your own boss. Or at least stop taking orders from the lost."

~And start taking orders from the disillusioned?~

Michael shook his head, "You're right. Of course your right. I'm pretty much done with this fleet crap. But I can't just get off the Illuminar. That burn notice made that pretty clear as well."

"Perhaps," Fiona leaned forward again, then stood up, "we can help you with that as well... after the mission."

Quinna sat in the waiting area. Many, many things were going through her things at this point. Quinna found an office, "I am looking for Michael Weston. He was brought in here?" She was told that they had no information. "Then I wish to see Prefect Danzon Curr." But her request went on deaf ears. Quinna noticed very little, meaning she had not even seen Fiona. Quinna knew she needed help. She sat down in a chair and crossed her legs. She thought about who she could call. She was not ready to make that call to Captain Sekal yet. She thought about T'Mur. She seemed like the most logical person at that time but opted to wait a bit before she made the call.

Curr came out of an office and caught sight of the doctor in the lobby of the security office. "Ah Doctor Solice, I assume you have come to see Mr. Weston?"

"That is the primary reason. I want to see him now, please."

"Of course, let's go see him," the Prefect said.

As he headed toward the entrance of the detention area the door opened and Fiona stood there, looking directly at Quinna.

“Oh look, Michael,” she said while smiling at the doctor, “the cavalry has arrived to save you.” She addressed the next comments to Quinna. “He’s all yours honey, meanwhile.”

Then she looked at the Prefect, “He’s not your man, Prefect Curr. You can let him go.”

Quinna could not believe what he was hearing. She wondered what happened.

Curr looked at the exiting Fiona, his changing from confusion to anger then back to confusion.

“But you said..” he began.

Fiona stopped and turned to face Curr, “I know what I said. I was wrong. What can I say? Sorry. You should probably let him go. And off planet. He’s still persona non gratis.”

Curr rolled his eyes, barely able to contain himself. He breathed heavily for a minute then finally shouted, “Fine! Get him out of here.” Then he turned to Quinna, “And get him off planet within the hour. Got that?”

“Got, it.” Quinna answered.

The Prefect went over to the control station and shut down the security field. Once the hum stopped Michael stepped out of the cell. He walked up to Curr and nodded.

“Well Prefect,” he said, “this isn’t the first planet I’ve been kicked off of, but it is one of the nicest. Thanks for the hospitality.”

He took hold of Quinna’s hand and kissed, “Let’s go sweetheart. I think our shore leave is over.”

Quinna walked with Michael out of the building. They had about a 20 minute walk back to the hotel. “What happened? Why did Fiona change her story? I seriously doubt it was out of the goodness of her heart.” Quinna asked.

Michael shook his, “To be honest I’m not exactly sure. But I am certain that this is not over. We’ll be seeing her again.” Now was not the time to talk about Fiona’s offer.

“Well I for one am glad we are out of there, but I say the sooner we pack and get back to the ship the better.” Quinna said. Quinna had time to think while waiting. There were new things that were bothering her. She turned her head looking back at the station. “This is a trip I will never forget.” Quinna reached for things to say and not reflecting on what just happened.

"Nordic setting so cold climate. Sword and magic which is cool, I could use some fine tuning of my sword skills. A variety of playable races and magic types. Skill trees, the whole works. I'm going to give it a go."

Luma was currently occupied so he stated his preference to the computer and entered the holodeck. The large room held a big surprise. Models fitted with leather and fur gear, a simple pack and an array of rough swords. He had expected something a bit more... grandiose. He walked to one wall with a monitor and began cycling through the player races and picked one then chose the gear that fit it. Nords were typically taller than him so he chose an Imperial which was another playable race. He had wanted to be a variety of elf but learning a bow for the game would come later and maybe he would give one a try later but to introduce himself to the game he started simple. Imperials had an interesting power as well that might prove useful.

His clothing couldn't be called armor, the leather was much too thin and the cold iron shortsword probably wouldn't get him far. Fortunately the gear selection would improve as he got farther into the "game".

"You look a bit romanesque without the toga old boy." He muttered as he looked down at himself after dressing. "And let's hope it's not too cold. This thin cape isn't going to be much of a covering." Satisfied finally he spoke. "Computer open the arch."

The ground was covered with rough patches of grass and the landscape was heavily covered in trees with golden leaves. The sun was low in the sky and the air had a chill with a nip to it. The clouds scuttling by to one side were dark and hovering over a line of mountains which weren't too high except for one notable peak which was hidden by the cloudbank. He turned 360° and drew his sword which he tested. "A piece of cheap junk, no one would arm themselves like this. Should have imported mine from the other program." Among other things it was poorly balanced and didn't appear to have a good edge. "Iron swords are soft and won't hold an edge, that's why there's steel."

There was a sudden clamor in the nearby trees with many shouts, whoever was there, well there were a lot of them. "Too many. Discretion as they say." He turned and broke into a trot only to see men and other creatures in leather armor rise up from where they were hidden in the grass. "Dang it I've stumbled right into a trap." Several had nets and they were all armed. Steven was not about to suffer a death so easily, he had no chance.

"Drop your weapon and surrender Stormcloak." The one who had spoken was human, he stepped forward with sword out.

"I'm afraid you have the wrong guy." Hammons made no move for the sword yet. The soldiers he was facing wore leather armor which looked vaguely Roman as well but the officer who faced him was wearing a steel helmet that could have come right off of a Roman centurion. The resemblance was uncanny.

"Drop your sword or die."

The officer and his troop moved forward and were pressing close.

Steven shrugged and loosed the clasp of his belt, the scabbarded sword fell at his feet. He lifted his hands so that his palms were the height of his head in the universal sign of surrender. "You've still got the wrong guy but I surrender. We can talk about this misunderstanding.

The black haired guy shook his head. "I stole a horse and was riding south to get away from the war. I'm tired of the killing. I just wanted out."

"Then you were unlucky to get swept up in their net brother. Shor watch over you."

"Who is that guy with the gag and dressed in finery anyway? Are they afraid of him?"

"That is Ulfric Stormcloak, Jarl of Windhelm and true high king of Skyrim."

The horse thief's face went pale. "Not Ulfric Stormcloak! That makes you.... Mara, Dibella, Shor protect me! We are doomed!"

"But we will meet again in Shor's halls."

The blonde northman turned his eyes to Steven. "And why are you here Imperial?"

Hammons shrugged. "Wrong place at the wrong time. Seems to be my lot in life."

The man chuckled. "Indeed. I am Hadvar, welcome to the tender mercies of your empire."

"I owe them no loyalty."

"Then why are you here? What brought you to Skyrim?"

"I wanted to see the sights and enjoy your chilly climate. I hear it's beautiful in the north this time of year."

Hadvar gave a laugh at that one. "Perhaps there is Nord blood in you or at least spirit. It's too bad we will not get to know each other much further."

It was at that point the soldier driving the cart called back an order to quiet down which didn't stop the talking though voices were lowered.

(Reply: Any)

The track started down the hill toward a decrepit stone fortress that had its better days long behind it.

"Ah, Helgen keep, I once knew a maid here who made the finest juniper berry mead." Hadvars tone was wistful. "Now the end of our journey."

The horse thief began to sob brokenly.

"Ah cheer up, something tells me there's more to this tale that is yet to be told." Hammons then grinned.

(Reply: Any)

There were several carts already parked ahead of them as they pulled up close to one of the stone walls. They were inside in a large courtyard flanked by stone towers. The Imperial commander was still sitting astride a horse and the three with him appeared to be elven.

"Damned Thalmor." Hadvar grated as they began to dismount from the cart. "It's no surprise they are here with General Tullius."

The commander got down from his horse and neared the center of the courtyard as a scribe took down their names. At his turn Hammons chirped. "Conan the Barbarian, what's yours?"

"Conan eh?" A lower ranking officer looked at him questioningly. "What are you doing in the north cousin?"

"I was on a walkabout to see the sights and got captured unlawfully. I demand the right of appeal."

"You are in a war zone cousin." The guy looked over a paper. "Lieutenant here is another one that is not on the list. What should we do with them?"

The woman wearing a centurion helmet walked over. "Keep them in line with everyone else." She looked at Hammons haughtily then turned away.

"Sorry cousin. Follow the others. There's nothing I can do. For what it's worth I am Ralof, Shor watch over you."

Hammons shrugged. "Just don't get in my way when I break out of this joint Ralof and we are square."

Ralof gave him a shake of his head and turned to the next.

(Reply: Any iyw)

"Ulfric Stormcloak you are guilty of treason against the empire and the murder of your king, after you have watched your men die you will get the justice you deserve." The general was standing not far from a wooden block and basket in the center of the courtyard. Standing on the other side of it was a man wearing a black hood and holding a large axe that gleamed menacingly.

"Three guesses where this party is going." Hammons mumbled.

"Send up the first."

One powerfully built, black haired northman though trussed as the others stepped forward. "I've got a powerful thirst and there is mead in Shor's halls. Take me first so I can quench my thirst. The rest of you get what is left."

The Stormcloaks laughed until the man's arm was grabbed by a soldier and he was led to the block.

"Goodbye Jared my old friend, I will be with you shortly." Hadvar spoke as Jared was forced to his knees over the block and the axe fell. Jared's head found it's way to the basket.

"Next!"

There would be no next as a strange roar that had begun in the distance quickly grew loud and a winged shape flew overhead blotting out the sun. The dragon of midnight black perched on the tower on the other side of the courtyard and bellowed a roar as it spread its wings.

"Dragon!"

It was pandemonium. Soldiers were firing arrows at the creature as flame from its mouth torched people and buildings alike. Hammons was running with a group that included Hadvar and Ulfic and were following screaming citizens to the gates who were trying to escape.

"Stay close." Hadvar bellowed. "Don't get separated and we may yet get out alive."

The gates were opened by soldiers to let the citizens out and they weren't terribly concerned with the prisoners while the dragon was creating havoc. Hammon's last sight of Ralof was him leading a squad of archers. The dragon wasn't presenting an easy target but flying from tower to tower.

They ran stumbling into a copse of trees then hunkered down. The ropes on Hammon's wrists was soon cut and he began massaging his wrists as Ulfric and a handful of his men spoke nearby.

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles G)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar- Deck 4- Holodeck 2 - SecO, PO1 Steven Hammons - 1345)

Steven panted as he caught his breath and was genuinely surprised at how running with tied wrists from a terrifying dragon emptied the air from ones lungs. The dragon had been almost impossibly huge.

The voice of Ulfric Stormcloak, deep and commanding had been released by his freedom from the gag. "There have been no dragons in Skyrim for a thousand years. Akatosh sent aid to free us and we cannot dally here."

"But not in time to save one of our brothers."

He looked at Hadvar. "Nor those who fell on the battlefield within the day past."

A roar rose from Helgen as the dragon took wing above it, circled for one pass then flew off overhead, everyone hunkered down until it was a dot in the distance though their presence was screened overhead by the trees.

"It flies north."

"Yes it does. Word needs to be taken to Riverwood. Hadvar you have kin there do you not?"

"I do."

"Then warn the village. I will meet you later at Windhelm."

"As you have ordered my Jarl."

"Soldiers come from the fort searching for us."

"Then let us be off quickly." The jarl and his men melted into the trees with Hammons following Hadvar.

The amicable Nord turned when he heard him fall into step. "Where do you go kinsman? You are now a wanted man."

"As are you." Steven chuckled.

Hadvar smiled. "I am. Come with me and I will introduce you to my kin. You can rest there."

They slipped through the trees and met the rocky road farther south. When they were well away from the fort and coming to the crest of a knoll Steven could hear swiftly flowing water beyond.

"The Whiterun." Hadvar gestured to the narrow flow coursing over rapids. "Come, there is something you will wish to see."

Steven's eyes were fixed on the hill so tall it was almost a small mountain beyond the flow. Its upper reaches were white with snow but it was the ancient ruins at the crest that held his attention. They were dark and radiated malice.

He trotted up to Hadvar who was well down the road below the crest and standing by a circular foundation. There were three standing marker stones on it that had a hole as large as his head through their center. Their peaks were pointed like a spear head.

"In ancient times heroes came to the stones to receive their blessing. Such has been withheld from me but perhaps you should try it."

The air hummed with power like standing near to an electrical field. Steven stepped upon the dais and moved to each one in turn to look them over.

"Warrior, mage and thief." His Nord companion spoke as he stood before each one.

Steven returned to the warrior stone, hesitated then reached out to touch it. Blue energy rippled up lines carved into the stone until reaching the center then the energy gathered in a roiling ball in the hole. His fingertips tingled from it and his eyes were dazzled momentarily.

"The stone has accepted you, there will be many tales told of you in the future I wager. Come, Riverwood is nearby and it will be nearly dark before we get there."

Steven followed the man back onto the road which paralleled the river.

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles G)

[illegible]

Comm traffic was light due to the relative inactivity in the system outside of standard fighter patrols at the periphery. Sensors are great things to have and use but having personnel keeping their fingers on the pulse of activities in the case of someone attempting to slip through the cordon was crucial. Part of his duties were to confirm readiness through the system by networking with the other platforms and vessels that were part of system security.

=^= Fox 3 reporting no unusual activity in zone 5. Continuing patrol. ^=

Abel picked up the mug of coffee and took a sip as platform 1 confirmed the report. This was routine and mind numbing but important nonetheless. Once again his mind returned to the potential that resided on the 4th planet and he wondered for the thousandth time why Commander Adams simply hadn't destroyed it as Dr. Morbius had instructed rather than handing the Federation a steaming pile of dung. They were stuck now with a planet that held more danger than the mind of man could conceive since playing with the machinery could loose creatures from the subconscious. The Krell had once inhabited many planets in many systems but the invention which was supposed to have been their pinnacle of achievement had wiped them out everywhere. What would happen if even one individual penetrated system security and seized control of it? In his estimation it needed to be destroyed not guarded. Roanoke was always looking for new technologies to advance Federation control in the quadrant but not one member was stupid enough to even consider getting close to it.

=^= Lieutenant Breckinridge report to Commander Hardy. ^=^=

He tapped the comm. "Acknowledged. On my way." He waved a stand-in over and proceeded out while wondering why Outrider 1 was calling.

[illegible]

The door opened at the chime and he walked in to see the Android seated behind the desk but he immediately popped effortlessly from the chair. "Come in Lieutenant and have a seat."

The masquerade got a bit complicated at times. Technically Abel was the senior Roanoke representative aboard and Outrider 1 followed his orders but the farce of replacing Commander Hardy with the Android necessitated him acting the part of the underling until they were assured of privacy.

"Computer seal the room." Sometimes the computer and Android seemed to be in a symbiotic relationship and that made Abel nervous now and again.

[[Room sealed.]]

Abel immediately dropped the act. "What do you need?"

"Need?"

"Why did you call for me?"

"Ah." The not Commander Hardy gave a shrug. "I have some questions."

"About what?" Abel gave him a perplexed look. What questions might he have that were not over operational routine?

"It is about Commodore West's visit."

Abel's mouth went dry, the news of his arrival wouldn't be confirmed for 3 more days and Abel hadn't told the Android. How had he found out? "Has Starbase 32 sent out a preliminary notification? I haven't seen it."

"No, I saw it noted in your communications."

Abel sat bolt upright in the chair. "What do you mean you saw it in my Communications? Those messages were coded."

"In the form of reports to the Starbase yes. They are easy to decipher. You have been using RC 321, a simple letter switching code with the pattern altered by the preceeding numbers."

Abel's blood ran cold and his face went red. "How did you know about RC 321 and why are you reading my reports?"

Commander Hardy's face changed expression but it wasn't apologetic. "The professor downloaded standard codes along with the names and locations of contacts should the data be needed."

Abel had shot up out of the chair and he was holding onto his temper by a thread. "He was not authorized to do that! Why did he?"

The android held his look. "It was his intention that should something happen to you or the operation I would be able either to withdraw safely or continue the operation alone."

Abel stepped forward and his voice was a hiss. "When?"

"After he was sure of my loyalty."

~He has known this the whole time and me completely unaware.~ "Do you realize how dangerous it is for you to have that information? How it endangers the operation?"

"In what way?"

"In the way that all you know can be downloaded by the enemy." Abel roared.

"Which enemy are you speaking of?" Outrider 1 asked the question innocently while wondering what enemy might be able to penetrate system security to abscond with a Starbase Commander.

"They are all around you!" Breckinridge roared again. "If this masquerade is ever found out you will be on their most wanted list and they will have access to the information you carry."

"You consider Federation personnel to be an enemy? Interesting. The professor considered them unenlightened cretins, weak minded and foolish. They are members of the Federation and brothers in arms who are unwilling to take the steps necessary to vault the United Federation of Planets into the supremacy that is required to safeguard its citizens."

Abel throttled back the curse that threatened to explode from his mouth. "They are the enemy Outrider 1. They consider us subversive elements and if they find out who we are and what we are doing they will mercilessly hunt us down and lock us up. Do you understand this?"

"About the punishment for our activities? Yes."

Abel spun away from the android and forced himself to take a calming breath. He had not anticipated this and it scared him. He turned back around. "What other classified intel did he give you?"

"Nothing but what I have already told you."

Abel found himself desperately wishing he could believe the Android on the matter but uncertain he should. ~What if he's lying? A machine can't lie but a Soong Android is not like other machines, they've been found to be sentient and living beings can lie. Can I even trust him now?"

"I understand the Commodore wishes to meet me."

"Yes, that's part of the reason he's coming. As you no doubt already know." The fact Outrider 1 was already aware of his secret communications was chilling.

"Yes. I believe my performance so far to be faultless. I was also able to persuade Admiral Haynes not to condemn the platform but repair it. Those repairs are almost complete. Had platform 7 been condemned the operation would have been dismantled."

"Yes and the personnel sent to other stations. I am aware of that. You have held up your end."

"Thank you."

"Is there anything else?"

"Not for now."

"Then I need to get going." Breckinridge turned and walked out after the room was unsealed. He had news to report to the Commodore along with concerns but that would have to wait until he saw him in person. He didn't dare send them out in even a coded message.

(Reply: None)

(Posted by Charles G)

-----END TRANSMISSION-----