

USS GALILEO

EPISODE 00

PRE-DEPLOYMENT

February – March 2012

Old Friends, New Career

Posted on 01 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: San Francisco, Starfleet HQ

Timeline: MD 01 - 1350 hrs

[ON]

Water dripped from her face and hair and down onto her body as Lirha slowly climbed out of the large pool. The smell of chlorine once again seeped into her nostrils. Exhausted from the numerous laps she had just swam, she sat on the edge of the concrete with her feet dangling in the water and panted to catch her breath. Despite still being late Winter, the last few days had been hot and humid, and she guessed the temperature was in the upper eighties. She was used to warm summers, having spent four years at this same facility for her Academy training, but it had been quite some time since her last visit. With a sigh, she looked around the large recreational complex. Various off-duty personnel were busy frolicking in the pool and socializing at nearby benches while others were off playing basketball and tennis at the adjacent courts. Most of them looked young and Lirha guessed many of them were in their first year or two of course work. A group of male cadets sat nearby, also observing the scene and she glanced over curiously while catching the eye of one of them. He returned her gaze and gave her a mischievous wink which she couldn't help but grin at. Ignorance was bliss, and she guessed no cadet would ever approach an officer in such a manner while in uniform. Unfortunately, she wore only a white two-piece bathing suit which revealed nothing about her except for large areas of her green skin.

Somewhat rested now, she got up and moved to a nearby pool chair and delicately spread her towel over it before flopping down on her back to relax. She pushed a couple wet locks of her hair behind her ears and put on a pair of dark sunglasses to shield her eyes. Content and happy for the moment, she laid out in the sun and let her skin soak up the rays. Lirha closed her eyes and began to doze off as she contemplated her current situation. She had

been pulled away from her last assignment without any notice and transferred back to Starfleet Headquarters with no real explanation. Normally she wasn't one to question orders but as the days had passed without any developments or briefings, she began to wonder what was going on. When she first arrived back in San Francisco several weeks ago, she had checked in with Starfleet Command to inquire but had only been given a couple PADDs full of starship specs and orders to stay on the facility's premises. Now, she was growing impatient, despite being given the opportunity to rest and relax.

A large cloud had been blocking her sun for almost a minute now and Lirha opened her eyes to investigate, only to discover that it was no cloud. A blond woman in a Starfleet uniform stood next to her chair, patiently waiting for her to acknowledge her presence. Lirha pushed her glasses up onto her head and looked curiously at the woman, slightly confused as to why she didn't announce herself. "May I help you?" Lirha asked politely.

"It's good to see you too, Lirha." the woman said with a warm smile as she looked down at the green lady. "I wasn't sure if it was you at first, but you're the only Orion I know in Starfleet who would come to the pool wearing next-to-nothing." she said, commenting on Lirha's scantily clad body.

The Orion immediately recognized the woman's voice, one which she had not heard in a long time, and looked closer at her. It took only a couple seconds before she realized who she was. "Jen?" she asked as her light green eyes lit up with excitement. She stood up from her chair and quickly wrapped her arms around the Human woman in a tight hug before letting her go and looking her up and down, inspecting her old acquaintance.

Jen, or Jennifer Rosewell, had been Lirha's best friend while they were in school at the Academy together. Jen was two years her senior but they had been bunked together during Lirha's freshman year due to overcrowding on the dorms. Originally from Texas, Jen was a farm girl from a small town who had been the first of her family to enlist in Starfleet. She and Lirha shared many of the same hobbies and interests as well as coursework, and found each

other to be mutually pleasing. They had spent most of their free time together while in school and Lirha had been quite sad to see her go after graduation. They had kept in contact the first year after Jen was deployed but slowly lost touch over the next two years as the young officer's missions had placed her far away from the Alpha Quadrant. Now, it had been almost six years since they had last spoken and Lirha was thrilled to see her again. "I can't believe you're here...and back in San Francisco with me... what are you doing here?" the Orion asked with a big smile. She took a look at her friend's red collar and noticed four solid gold pips. "And you're a Captain now?" Lirha asked incredulously.

Jen chuckled and squeezed Lirha's arm affectionately. "Yes, for three years now. I've had my command for five years but Starfleet finally came to their senses and promoted me."

Lirha tilted her head in surprise. "Your command?"

"The *Kato*" she replied with a nod and another grin. "She's a great ship, Excelsior Class and a bit old and rusty but our Corps of Engineers definitely know how to build starships to last. I thought you would have known that already..." Jen remarked slyly with a hint of amusement.

With a laugh, Lirha put her hands on her hips. "Now how would I have known that, Jen? I'm don't work in the command department and I sure don't get updates on every new Commanding Officer and their assignments."

The blond woman flicked her eyebrows up and down with a glint to her blue eyes and unclipped a PADD from the back of her belt, then presented it to Lirha. "Well, you do now." she said with a smug look on her face.

Lirha blinked and stared at the captain with a blank look on her face. "What?" she asked after a long pause, then finally took the PADD from her hand to hastily read over the transfer orders. She wouldn't put it past her friend to play a cruel joke on her but she also didn't think that this would be an appropriate time for such jest.

"Congratulations, Commander," Jen started, "You're

officially the new Commanding Officer for the *Galileo*."

A flood of emotions rushed through Lirha's head as she stared wide-eyed at her new orders. She felt honored and privileged, yet also slightly scared and tentative. She had no previous command experience and she wondered why Starfleet had chosen her for the assignment. "Jen...oh my..." she said to the Captain, unsure of what to say. She sat back down slowly on her pool chair and ran a hand through her dark hair as she contemplated the repercussions and her immediate future.

Seeing her young Orion friend suddenly flustered was enough to make Jen sit down next to her and put an arm around her shoulders. She gave Lirha a tight squeeze and pulled her close to help explain the situation. "Lirha, this was my decision. I've just been reassigned to Starfleet Command and am losing my command for a desk job," she said in a soft and quiet voice, "At first I was so upset...I even filed a formal protest, but then I realized that this my new career path. My new job is Task Force Commanding Officer for the 7th Fleet, which is where you are now assigned, so I'll be able to look after you. I know we lost touch with each other for a few years, but you're still my friend, and have been a great officer. Your experience in operations and intelligence made you a perfect candidate for command, and I know you well enough to say that you'll do just fine."

"Jen...I don't think I'm ready for this." Lirha answered quietly and nestled her head into her friend's shoulder. Despite her apprehensions, it was a comforting feeling to have Jen be the one to break the news to her. She had always looked up to her throughout the Academy and it was only fitting that she was now the one to help her transition into her new career.

Jen patted her shoulder and whispered in her ear, "You'll do just fine, trust me. I wouldn't have chosen you if I didn't think you weren't up for the challenge."

Lirha glanced around and noticed that the two of them were getting a few stares from nearby cadets. She pulled away and sat upright while adjusting her

top in an attempt to cover herself more. She suddenly felt awkward about her appearance and the fact that the young male cadets at the pool were scouring a new Commanding Officer with their eyes. "When do I depart?" she asked her friend, finally accepting her new position.

"Five days. The *Galileo* is at our shipyards here in San Francisco. She's already been christened but our engineer's are finishing installing her final systems. When you get a chance, take a shuttlecraft and do a quick inspection... I think you'll be impressed." Jen replied with a sideways smile.

"And my orders?" Lirha replied curiously.

Jen looked at her friend with a serious and professional face. "You'll have to report to me at 0930 tomorrow so I can brief you, as well as receive your ship's manifest. Your first mission will be volatile, to say the least." she said with a warning tone to her voice.

"I should expect as much, right?" Lirha answered with a sigh. She had the feeling that she was going to be thrown into the mix, and not in a gentle manner.

"With Starfleet, always." her friend replied, then gave her a final pat on the back before standing up. "I'm going to be busy for the rest of the day but I finish at 1900. How about we go for some drinks later tonight and catch up? You can tell me about all the interesting men," she paused, "and women who you've met in the last five years?" she said with a big grin.

"Mmm...I'd love some good gossip," Lirha replied enthusiastically, "Meet at my quarters, 1945?"

Jen leaned over and gave her friend a strong hug and a kiss on the cheek. She was happy to see her, to say the least, and excited for their plans for the night. "Sure. Just don't out-dress me like you always do."

"Not my problem, maybe you should learn to wear matching colors." Lirha answered smugly and gave her a wink.

The blond captain stood up and looked down at Lirha, not saying a word, instead giving her an inviting look. She walked off calmly out of the pool area and back towards the headquarters while nodding at several junior cadets and officers who had stopped and stood at attention while she passed. Lirha sighed again, slightly envious of her friend's career progression and also excited about her own. She figured she would ask more questions that same night after a couple of drinks, and maybe get to the bottom of what she saw was a pre-arranged command.

[OFF]

LCDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

CAPT Jennifer Rosewell (NPC)
Commanding Officer
USS Kato

Another New Lady

Posted on 02 Feb 2012 by Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: Golden Gate Bridge Recreational Area
Timeline: MD 01 – 1830 hrs

[ON]

Markum sat on a park bench that overlooked San Francisco Bay, enjoying not only a beautiful sunset, but the company of his only child, Marcus. "I'm glad you're home dad. I was hoping you'd be home soon, but this is unexpected. Mom told me she had never seen you home from deployment so soon. She seemed surprised too." Markum smiled at the mention of the boy's mother. The two had met during the Senior Chief's time with XRD. She was a civilian consultant, assigned to Markum's team. The two had a sensuous love affair for almost two years, until, well until it became complicated.

"Yeah, not as surprised as I was. I thought we'd be out there for a while longer. It's complicated son. You'll understand once you're out there." Marcus smiled "Yeah, I can't wait. Did you know that I was selected for...."

A yeoman rushed up to the two sitting on the bench. "Sir, I am..." Markum held up his hand, "Yeoman, I am not an officer." The yeoman blushed a bit, then continued. "Sorry Senior Chief. I was ordered to deliver you this PADD from Captain Wiles, at Starfleet Command. Markum took the offered PADD and scrolled through the orders, slowly a grin developed across his face. "Well, well." He looked up at the young man, "Thank-you. I will report to my new CO as ordered." the Yeoman did an about face and departed.

"What was that about dad?" Markum leaned back and placed his arm around his son's neck. "Looks like your dad has been assigned to a new ship son. The USS Galileo." Marcus exclaimed, "What?! The new Nova-Class that is over at the San Fran Fleet Yards? How do you keep getting assigned to new ships?" Markum let out a chuckle, "Yeah, that is the very same I guess. As for how I keep getting assigned to new vessels, well, just lucky, very

lucky." He looked over at his son and smiled, "So, tell me about what you were selected for, I want to know everything son."

[OFF]

Senior Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn
Chief Engineer, *USS Galileo*

Second Year Cadet Marcus Quinn (PNPC)
Starfleet Academy, Health Sciences

Your Orders, Sir? (Part 1)

Posted on 05 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Briefing Room

Timeline: MD 02 - 0900 hrs

[ON]

A high-pitched repeating noise suddenly blared in her ear and snapped her from her dreams. She reached out and smacked the alarm clock to silence it, then let out a groan as she rolled over in her bed and onto her back. With weary eyes, Lirha looked around her room and noticed the bright sunlight seeping through the edges of her window's blinds. She took a glance at the clock and noticed that it was already 0800 hours. Her first command briefing was scheduled in an hour and she felt like hell. What was supposed to have been a quiet night out the previous evening had turned into an all-night adventure, as Lirha and Jen had hopped from bar to bar until 0300 while consuming copious amounts of Saurian brandy and Romulan ale. Now, she knew, she would pay the price.

She sat up and placed her feet on the ground, then dropped her head into her hands as a painful throbbing sensation pounded through her skull. After a few moments she composed herself and got to her feet, stumbling slowly to the sonic shower and finally collapsed in the corner as the pulse-vibrations sent a soothing feeling through her naked body. She cursed herself for drinking so much the night before and she knew she wouldn't have time to report to the infirmary and take care of her headache before the briefing started. Lirha leaned her head back against the wall with a sigh and slowly passed out.

A soft chirp from the shower's automated timer woke her up and she blinked in confusion, unaware that she had fallen asleep again. She scrambled to her feet, exited the shower, and looked at the clock, which read 0845. "Merka'h", she cursed in her native tongue, knowing that it would be almost impossible to get dressed and take care of her hair

before getting to the briefing room in time. With urgency, she rushed to her closet and pulled out a fresh uniform then hastily dressed herself. She stopped briefly in front of the mirror to properly position her rank pips and pulled her hair back into an unorganized pony tail. Grabbing a PADD from her desk, she rushed out of her quarters and towards the briefing room.

Seven Minutes Later...

Lirha arrived outside of the conference room and glanced down at her PADD to check the time. It read 0859. With a sigh of relief, she stepped forward and the grey doors parted with a swish. She stepped inside, then stopped in her tracks as eight senior officers and admirals sat around a large black table staring at her in a hushed silence. She must have misread the time of the briefing on her PADD because the staff appeared to be already in the middle of it, judging from the information displayed on the large wall-mounted LCARS monitor.

"I apologize for my tardiness, I was under the impression the briefing was to start at 0900." she said, suddenly embarrassed and flustered.

"Commander Saalm, thank you for joining us. Please have a seat." said a rear admiral sitting at the head of the table. "Relax, you're not late, we were just going over some information regarding your mission before you arrived."

She nodded and let out a breath of relief then took an empty seat in-between two intelligence officers. She felt a sharp kick on her shin and looked up to see Jen sitting directly across from her with a smug look on her face. Though Lirha might have been able to hide her hangover from the rest of the staff, she certainly wasn't able to fool her old friend. The Orion narrowed her eyes and returned the look with one of her own, a friendly warning for Jen to keep her mouth shut.

"Let's get this over with quickly and smoothly, I have a luncheon with the President of the UFP at noon," said the admiral who had just addressed her. He stood up and moved in front of the large display screen, then pulled up a map of the Beta Quadrant for everyone to see. "Before we begin, I'd like to

remind everyone that this mission is classified and the knowledge contained in this briefing room is to stay between us."

Lirha, now slightly intrigued, glanced around at the different faces in the room. After a brief silence, the admiral continued. "Commander Saalm, what do you know about Starbase 152?" he asked bluntly.

"That's one of our primary repair and resupply facility in the outer-Beta Quadrant, right?" she answered slightly unsure.

"No," he started, "That's what we want people to believe. In reality, the facility is a research and development center for most of Starfleet's theoretical technologies."

Lirha paused for a second, slightly confused. "Wouldn't a R&D center be easily identified? Even civilian sensors can tell the difference between research laboratories and supply crates. Let alone the advanced arrays on ships of the line." she asked.

A female Romulan intelligence officer next to her piped up, "Without getting too technical with you, Commander, the starbase uses a complex holographic and sensor refraction system to project false sensor readings and images to passing ships. It's a technology we began developing during the Dominion War and we have found it quite effective in practical use." she said.

"I see," Lirha replied, "So what is so special about this particular R&D facility as opposed to the others here in the Alpha Quadrant?"

The admiral next to the monitor glanced around the room briefly before turning his eyes back to the Orion woman. "This starbase contains Project Sienna and its development staff." he said simply. "I know what your next question is going to be, so I'll turn the floor over to Vice Admiral Reshman, our head of R&D. Admiral?" he said, then sat down and was replaced by an older man.

To be continued...

[OFF]

LCDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

CAPT Jennifer Rosewell (NPC)
Commanding Officer
USS Kato

LCDR Sanara Lemot (NPC)
Intelligence Advisor
Starfleet Command

RADM Michael Kilby (NPC)
Fleet Strategic Operations
Starfleet Command

VADM Jacob Reshman (NPC)
Fleet Research and Development
Starfleet Command

Your Orders, Sir?

(Part 2)

Posted on 05 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Briefing Room

Timeline: MD 02 - 0915 hrs

[ON]

"For almost two hundred years, Starfleet has been exploring alternate methods of faster-than-light travel, commonly known as FTL. Warp propulsion has always been efficient, yet limited by a maximum sustainable velocity. This essentially puts a cap on how fast we can travel and limits our operational capability. In the early 2280s, we began experimenting with Transwarp drives, however we discovered that dilithium becomes unstable at such high velocities, and we were never able to break the Warp 10 barrier."

"I thought it was impossible to achieve a velocity greater than Warp 10?" Lirha asked while trying to recall her Academy courses in warp theory.

"Perhaps, Commander, but there are certainly alternatives. Also, consider that four-hundred years ago, they were saying the same thing about warp speed. Even the lead scientists at the time declared that it was physically impossible to achieve a velocity greater than the speed of light."

Lirha nodded. The admiral had a valid point and she was now more curious about the matter. "You mentioned alternate methods, Sir?"

"Yes. As you know, warp propulsion operates by generating a subspace displacement field around a vessel which causes space to distort around the ship, while keeping anything enclosed in the field relative to our own space-time physics. It is this field which prevents vessels from disintegrating the moment they enter warp. And it is also this field which limits our maximum velocity. Fortunately, we've made some breakthroughs in the past few years. We have discovered that instead of attempting to increase our speed over distance, the smart thing would be to simply decrease the distance traveled."

She ran a hand over her head and shook her head in confusion. "I'm not sure I follow you, Sir. How do you decrease the distance between any two static points in space?"

"By *folding* space-time." he said simply, then tapped the monitor to bring up a display of the space-time curvature. "Take two different points at different areas in space, fold the curvature of space-time so that those two points coexist for a brief moment, send a starship through, then revert space back to its normal form." he said, then stopped to let the words sink in.

Lirha brain went to work as she considered the theory and practical applications behind such a technology. It would allow almost instantaneous travel of ships from any two points in the galaxy, as well as open up all types of operational capability for the fleet and the Federation. "I take it that this is not a theory anymore?" she asked.

"No. This is Project Sienna. Our scientists at Starbase 152 have created a Magnetic Core Drive which is capable of producing the required gravity-well to manipulate space. The project has been under development for five years and we are close to making a substantial breakthrough." the admiral answered.

"I see," she answered, "So my mission is to test this prototype drive?" she asked.

"No." said the Rear Admiral who walked next to the Vice Admiral to replace him at the monitor. "Your mission is to travel to Starbase 152 and retrieve the experiment as well as the rest of the development and support staff currently stationed there. Twenty-two personnel in total. After you have successfully evacuated the facility, you will travel back to the Alpha Quadrant and deliver the prototype and scientists to Starbase 001, so that they may continue their research and testing."

"Why the change in location?" Lirha asked as she stared at the monitor which now displayed a map of her destination. She also noticed that she would have to travel through a small portion of Klingon territory going both ways.

The intelligence officer next to her spoke again and motioned to the map being displayed on the LCARS terminal. "As you can see, Commander, the research facility is close to Klingon territory and even closer to the Neutral Zone. Our treaty with the Klingon Empire allows us to send medical and resupply convoys through their space, which we have been doing for several years now with no trouble. Recently, however, many of our cargo ships have been stopped and searched, and one was even boarded several months back. We cannot resupply and maintain this research center with the type of scrutiny our vessels are currently subjected to. The terms of our alliance do not give us much leverage for protest, since we are sending ships through their jurisdiction."

"You think the High Command has become aware of the project?" Lirha asked the Romulan.

"We do not know, but it would explain a great deal as to why our cargo ships are constantly being scanned and harassed. With Project Sienna safely back in the Alpha Quadrant, we would be able to continue the experiment without any intervention."

She nodded, "I see your concern." then turned towards the admiral. "May I ask, Sir, why are you sending the *Galileo*? She's only a small survey vessel...certainly there are larger and more capable starships in the closer vicinity?" she asked.

"On the contrary, Commander, we believe that a 'small survey ship' would be the perfect discreet method to successfully carry out this operation. Yes, we have larger and more heavily armed vessels, however if we sent even a Steamrunner or Akira through Klingon territory it would set off all types of alarm bells. Chancellor Martok is a smart man, and he has plenty of experience working with the Federation. He knows we would never send a cruiser for a simple supply mission. The *Galileo*, on the other hand, is a very capable alternative solution. You will deploy under the guise that you are charting the nearby Z'Tarnis Nebula, then discreetly make your way to Starbase 152 and recover Project Sienna."

"And the Klingons?" Lirha asked, unsure of who or

what she might encounter.

Having been silent throughout the briefing, it was Jen's turn to speak up. "That's why we chose you, Lirha. You have a strong intelligence background and you are well-versed in dealing with customs. I know you speak the language and you have a knack for smooth-talking even the toughest competition." she said in a professional manner.

The admiral switched the wall display again and zoomed the map in on the Neutral Zone. "Chances are good that you'll be escorted across their territory, whether you are aware of their presence or not. In the event that you make contact with one of their vessels, I expect you to do everything you can to accommodate them while maintaining your cover. If in fact they are suspicious of us, which they might be, they will probably test you and prod you for information. Make sure your cover story and your ship's demeanor match. This project means everything to us and we can't afford to lose it."

"Yes, Sir." the Orion woman replied. "When do we depart?" she asked.

"0845 hours next Wednesday. That gives you four more days to assemble your crew and get the *Galileo* prepped for departure. Engineers are still installing many of the final systems and the primary computer core won't arrive until tomorrow, but other than that she is almost operational. On your way to the Neutral Zone, you will need to make a quick stop at Starbase 234 to receive your full torpedo compliment and pick up a few new crew, but I expect that should take less than six hours to complete."

"Full torpedo compliment?" she asked with a frown. "What are you send me out there with?"

"Unfortunately, Commander, we have just launched two Saber Class escorts as well as refitted and rearmed the *Venture* and the *Sybaal*. Our munitions depot will not be resupplied until next Friday and concessions had to be made. We have allocated you five Mark-VI photon torpedoes, and you may rearm once you reach Starbase 234."

With a sigh, Lirha looked down at the table in disappointment. Five torpedoes would only last them seconds in a fight, and she would have to take extra precautions to stay out of harm's way. Fortunately, they would be staying inside of Federation territory for the first leg of the mission, but she knew any pirates or raiders would have a good chance at picking off her small vessel if they so chose. "Yes, Sir." she said quietly.

"Good," replied the admiral. "Dismissed."

[OFF]

LCDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
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Fleet Strategic Operations
Starfleet Command

VADM Jacob Reshman (NPC)
Fleet Research and Development
Starfleet Command

Reporting for Duty

Posted on 09 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ - Briefing Room Exterior
Timeline: MD 02 - 0930 hrs

[ON]

Striding along the corridor, John Holliday made his way towards the last reported position of his new CO, at least, as far as the computer HQ knew. The briefing rooms made sense, after all, any new captain is going to have to pick up their orders before leaving.

He was needless to say, a little apprehensive about meeting her for the first time, it was a while since he had been required to adapt to a new command heirarchy, even if it was now the one in which he served as XO, rather than as Tactical Officer as he had been before now. Protocol was definitely something that John was going to stick to, he had done it since the first day he had entered the academy, and there was no way he was going to stop just because he had changed ship.

HQ was always an odd place to him, so many people, and everywhere you looked there were flag officers, fleet admirals, captains, you name it, they were here, in fact right now, having passed nobody less than a full blown Commander up to this point, he was feeling no better than a brand new Ensign fresh out of the academy, the most junior person in the room.

Upon reaching the briefing room exterior, he noted that the doors were currently sealed - his CO must have obviously not quite finished picking up her orders yet, a set of orders that hopefully he would become privy to in the near future, after all, how else was he expected to serve as XO without a better understanding of what they were going out there to do.

"Knowing my luck....catagorise gaseous anomalies and examine a few asteroids..." He mentioned to himself with a visible lack of enthusiasm - he made a note to ensure he found out who exactly it was

that had recommended him for this transfer, so that he could thank them personally. His father might have been a man of science, but he certainly wasn't, he had left that life deliberately over 15 years ago, and had no desire to go back now.

Eventually, he noticed the door controls unlock themselves, whoever had been issuing the briefing inside must have finally finished, and subsequently dismissed all concerned. As the doors slid apart, he noticed a pair of flag officers coming towards the corridor, he instinctively snapped to attention as they passed, a good officer knows to respect an Admiral as the pass, be it on a ship, or in a corridor on a planet.

Eventually, a Lieutenant Commander walked past, and he felt he could relax, at least in this situation they were of equal rank, and he had no need to show any kind of particular protocol. At least he had narrowed down his choices for his new CO, he knew she would be wearing the pips of a Commander, and nobody of that rank had yet walked past.

Keeping an eye on the door, he soon spotted a thin silhouette moving towards him, with a skin tone that didn't quite match what he had expected

"Green?" he thought to himself silently "Damn the woman's an Orion...that's all I need, a pirate or a dancer, or worse, a combination....this is going to be interesting"

By this time the Commander had managed to pass relatively close to him, and he decided now was the time

"Commander Saalm?" He stated in an inquisitive voice, ensuring to maintain decorum as he did so, no point making himself look like a first year cadet.

He waited for her eyes to focus on him before continuing any further

"Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday reporting ma'am, I'm your new XO"

He awaited her reply...

Lirha looked up at the man and gave him a tired smile. She was severely hungover from the previous night but tried her best to look presentable to the new officer. "Ah, Commander Holliday," she said, "What a pleasant surprise... I wasn't expecting you to arrive until tomorrow."

Glad that at least his CO could remember his name, Holliday allowed himself to stand a little further at ease, either consciously or subconsciously, he felt he could relax around this particular captain, although whether or not it was due to her rather...unique physiology, medically regulated or not, he wasn't sure.

"No ma'am, I caught an earlier transport from Deep Space 3, managed to get back planet side a little swifter than I had originally planned, I hope it isn't too much bother."

He was well aware of how annoying it could be when the best laid plans are ruined by people not doing exactly what they had been expected to do, although he hoped that in the interests of efficiency and with the aim of getting this ship out into space as fast as possible, Commander Saalm would not have been overly put out by his early arrival

"No bother at all, Commander, and welcome to San Francisco." she replied while forcing a friendly smile on her face. Her headache had gotten worse during the briefing and she was beginning to feel nauseous. Despite her woes, she was impressed that her new XO had managed to find her outside of the briefing room. It was a good gesture, she thought, and showed her that he was a man to take the initiative, not sit back in his quarters and wait to be summoned.

"I..noticed that you were in there with several flag officers ma'am, would that have been to issue our standing orders perhaps?"

Lirha gave him a slow nod and sighed. "Yes, and I wish we had time for a shakedown cruise before we get thrown into the mix." she said. The briefing now had her concerned for a number of reasons and she had several doubts about their upcoming mission. But first things first, she needed some food in her belly to calm her agitated stomach.

"I'm going to the cafeteria for some breakfast, would you care to join me?" she asked her new XO. It would give them a chance to discuss matters pertaining to the ship as well as get to know each other.

It seemed to John at least, that his new CO had a lot on her mind, understandable given the rigors of command and the stress that any new ship launch must cause. He was glad that he hadn't caused her any additional trouble by arriving early, and was glad to see that for now at least, she was more than devoted to her ship.

"No shakedown cruise ma'am? Seems rather against standard procedure? I guess we'll just have to hope that the Engineering Corps weren't half asleep putting any of the systems in! Might be worth running a set of diagnostics before we even think about leaving the dock"

Lirha glanced at him out of corner of her eye giving him a cautious yet approving look. "Trust me, I completely agree with you, Commander. Unfortunately, our mission doesn't give us the luxury of time and we need to depart as soon as our final systems are installed. I have our Chief Engineer working with the dock crews to help speed up the process, but like you just said, I think we need to run a couple systems checks before we lift off." she said. Her mind turned back to breakfast as her stomach grumbled.

An offer of breakfast with the CO on his first day? Well this was a turn up for the books, it seemed he was going to have to get used to these kind of events more often, afterall he was probably going to be issuing reports to Saalm on a daily basis anyway, let alone the time they would be spending occupying the two centre chairs on the bridge of the Galileo.

"Breakfast sounds great ma'am, I'm not too au fait with the layout of this place though, been a while since I was last here...would you care to lead?"

"Sure...but just to warn you, I'm starving. I hope you can keep up." she replied with a grin, and began to walk at a brisk pace down the corridor towards

the turbolift. After a short ride to the second floor of the HQ, the doors parted and they stepped out and walked down another series of corridors before finally arriving at the main cafeteria.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

Breakfast of Heroes

Posted on 10 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Mess Hall

Timeline: MD 02 – 0945 hrs

[ON]

The trip to the mess hall had been more than a little disconcerting for John, it had definitely been a while since he had last spent any considerable time here, usually just passing through between assignments, or to pick up his new orders. In fact he probably remembered his way around his first posting better than he remembered these corridors!

Nevertheless, he had to admit he felt a little bit more at ease having someone to follow, although he was never going to openly admit that here, not where anybody walking past could hear it! He would have to make a note to thank the Commander at some point where there was a lull in mission proceedings.

The mess hall in HQ was no different to any other part of this facility, big, grand, and generally rather imposing, sort of a symbol of the power of Starfleet even after the damage it had taken during the Dominion War several years earlier. Earth was meant to be the embodiment of paradise, and this would extend even into its military facilities. Officers bustled around in a kind of organised chaos, everybody knowing where to go and what to do, even the first and second year cadets on assignment here seemed to be fitting in just fine. This many people was heading towards being rather too much for John, but he would make an attempt to control his frustrations for now, there was no point showing weakness in front of a CO he had only known for a few moments.

"I see this place hasn't changed since I was last here...although back then I was only an Ensign, and I had a Lieutenant leading me around in a group insisting that we understand the facility layout...so much for that lesson sticking"

The young Orion grinned as her own memories of her Academy days flooded her thoughts. Her XO was right, the mess hall looked pretty much like it did seven years ago when she had graduated. Some of the tech had been upgraded and the uniforms were slightly different, yet the building and rooms had the same old Starfleet look and feel to it.

He mentioned in passing as the two latest additions to the Galileo crew headed towards the bank of replicators located along one wall of the cafeteria. Of course being Earth there were also freshly cooked alternatives on offer, but this wasn't exactly an efficient use of time or resources, the replicators, as far as John could tell were just as good, and if anything reminded him more of home. Even with the advanced terraforming used over the course of Mars' development, crop growth was still relatively minimal, most of the space available was designated for either Starfleet, or civilian population living space, and only a small amount spare for anything else. Thus, he had grown up around replicated food, and saw it as a kind of comforting option.

"Eggs - scrambled on white toast, with coffee, black, double sweet."

He announced to the replicator, in all honesty he wasn't particularly hungry, and a small offering such as this would be more than sufficient for now. Usually he would have declined the option of breakfast, but he didn't exactly feel like saying "no" to the person who was soon to be his boss. At the adjacent replicator, he watched as the meal choice of the Commander materialised in the familiar slot

Lirha's breakfast consisted of a grilled cheese sandwich, two strips of bacon, and a large glass of orange juice. She normally would never dare of eating such a high-cholesterol meal, but she figured the greasy food would be soothing for her stomach. During her time on Earth as a teenager, she had become quite fond of Human's culinary tastes, and found their indulgence in fatty and sugar-laced foods to be quite exquisite.

With food and drink in hand, Lirha grabbed a set of silverware and led them over to a small table near the corner of the room which was away from the

most crowded area of the cafeteria. She took a seat and glanced at her XO as he joined her at the table.

"So, Mister Holliday...tell me about yourself." she said with a friendly smile as she picked up her sandwich and took a large bite.

After settling into his breakfast, John remained rather on edge, it was the first time he had dined with CO, and he wasn't entirely sure what to expect. Being asked about himself was a rather unusual question in his eyes, he would have preferred just to stick to the mission at hand, instead of sidestepping it with personal requests.

"Not much to tell ma'am, I was born on the Martian Colonies, entered the Academy as soon as I could, and spent the last two years ferrying Romulan survivors around and making sure the Klingons didn't pick them off too easily"

He took another forkful of his breakfast, and with an awkward expression on his face, realised that he probably could do with revealing a little bit more information than that, the extremely abridged version of the best part of 20 years of his life might have seemed a little bit..short.

"Before that I served at the Academy, instructing in Starship Combat, apparently the new recruits these days need a good kick in the pants to realise which button fires the phasers...that didn't last long though, lets just say I had a slight....disagreement...with the Academy Commandant and took the first assignment out of there...not that I enjoyed that much more. Sure it was a Tactical posting, but there's only so many refugee runs you can do before you start realising that being stuck out in the Beta Quadrant just isn't the way to progress. Hence how I ended up here."

That was probably more than enough for now...that said he knew that Saalm had done some work for Intelligence...she was bound to come up with more questions, those Intel types always did, so John decided to try and 'head her off at the pass'

"What about you ma'am? I heard this was your first command posting, would I be correct?"

"You are correct. And I see you've done your homework." she replied with a smirk. "I most recently served aboard the *Athens* as Chief Intelligence Officer but my background is in Operations." she said, then took a few more bites of her sandwich and reveled in the fantastic flavors which stimulated her tongue.

"I was recalled back to headquarters on short notice and reassigned to command of the *Galileo*." Lirha added. She didn't want to go into too much detail about her strange transfer to the command department but she felt it was important to share her previous experiences and know-how with her new XO. "So you are a tactical man, Mister Holliday?" she asked with a small smile as she wiped her mouth clean with her napkin and took a sip of her juice.

"Yes ma'am" He replied, with an obvious sense of pride in his statement

"I specialised in Starship Combat and Tactics at the Academy, some people enjoy using words to solve their problems, I much prefer arming the phasers instead"

Giving it a moment for the information to pass through to his CO, John picked up his coffee, took a sip, and held the cup with both hands in front of his chest, looking down into the dark liquid as if reminiscing about some past experience, before looking back up again.

"Diplomacy is all well and good, but there will always be a need for people like me, people who aren't afraid to step up to the plate when the going gets a little rough. That said, the *Galileo* isn't exactly a warship, so how much of that we'll get to do I don't know"

A pained expression spread across his face as he considered the tactical abilities of a Nova-class starship..a few phaser arrays, a couple of torpedo launchers..not exactly the Sovereign class assignment he had dreamed of during his academy days.

Lirha considered his words for several moments. Though she wouldn't admit it at the moment, she

was thrilled to have her First Officer come from a tactical background. She, herself, wasn't well versed in starship tactics or strategy, and she had struggled with even the basic entry-level Security Protocol and Tactical Techniques courses while she was in the Academy. Now, to have a man who was experienced and well-versed in the field was a great relief to her...especially considering their newest assignment.

"So why did Starfleet transfer you to the *Galileo*?" she asked curiously. "Certainly there are more impressive vessels which would suit your field of expertise better?" she asked, then paused. "Or perhaps you requested this assignment?" she said hopefully then picked up a slice of bacon and slowly chewed on it.

And there came the moment that Holliday had dreaded, the moment where his new CO wanted to know why exactly he has been assigned to her command...his sense of duty told him that he had to tell her the truth, the whole story of his past mistakes, but the honour in him wanted to keep it quiet, play it off and make it look better than it really had been.

It took a few more moments, and another sip of coffee before John spoke again, hoping that the sweet, caffeine enriched broth would soothe the sense of bitter embarrassment at his situation.

"Let's just say, when I left the Academy teaching staff, it might not have been on the best of terms...in fact my last meeting with the Academy Commandant didn't end on a high...I think I might have referred to him displaying remarkably similar characteristics to a Risan dung-beetle, and have about as much backbone as a jellyfish...needless to say I was lucky I avoided a court martial...so when I requested reassignment from the Romulan relief mission to a new post, that same Admiral's name was written there in black and white on my new orders. I think he probably enjoyed sending the man of warfare to a ship of science."

She looked up at him with amusement sparkling in her green eyes. Not that she thought his current plight was humorous, but rather his past troubles with Starfleet. Lirha was a traditional 'good girl'.

She had done everything asked of her to the tee and had never had a single reprimand recorded on her record throughout her entire career. "Well don't worry, Commander," she said, "Our little ship can outgun most other frigates in our class. Starfleet has given us a very capable and durable starship." she said proudly while also trying to reassure him.

It took all his composure to keep that rage bottled up inside, he was by no means a perfect officer, and now his CO knew all about it, if she didn't already from doing her own digging on her new crew members.

"But I'm hoping from a fresh start, a new ship, a new CO, and to be honest, the quicker I get away from San Francisco the better, I never felt entirely comfortable on Earth. When you don't really call this planet your home, it doesn't seem to have the same...place, in your heart as some other native Terrans might have."

By this point the last few pieces of breakfast were rapidly descending down his throat.

"So how about we take a look at this new bird of yours? See if the Engineers have managed to spell the name right on the hull or not?"

Lirha took a few final bites of her sandwich and finished her last piece of bacon, followed by a long swig of her orange juice. With her stomach finally settled, she still felt a bit woozy from her hangover but was much more energized. She knew she couldn't deny her new XO a chance to look at the ship when the drydock was only five miles away, but she had other matters to attend to at the moment. She was due to arrive in Savannah, Georgia in a little over an hour to meet her new Chief Medical Officer.

"I can't right now, Commander," she said softly, "But you are welcome to visit the docks today to conduct your own inspection." she finished, then thought for a second. "Tell you what...tomorrow, 0730 hours, meet me on Landing Platform Three and we will do a walk-through together?" she asked him, hopeful that he would want to look over the ship's internals with her.

"Yes ma'am"

He said with a slightly withdrawn voice, he was rather eager to get a look at this ship and see exactly how well built it had been. He knew that Starfleet had designed the Nova class to be able to hold its own in combat, at least for a while, the Type VIII phaser banks were probably the most out of place weapons system on such a small ship.

"I have very little else to do for now ma'am, with your permission I'd like to head over to the drydock and get my gear stowed away, then tomorrow by all means we can examine the ship from stem to stern?"

The green skinned woman smiled at him as well as his initiative. "Of course, by all means make yourself at home." she said, then stacked her plates and silverware neatly in a small pile. "I will see you promptly at 0730 tomorrow." she said and stood up.

Watching his CO begin to stand, John too leapt up from his seat, after all, it was only professional courtesy to be standing when a superior officer makes the decision to leave.

"See you tomorrow ma'am" he said, watching as Saalm disappeared out of the cafeteria, and headed out.

"I guess I better go find this ship of mine..." He muttered to himself, as he too headed for the exit.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

A New Ship, and a New Start

Posted on 10 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: *USS Galileo* Drydock, Earth
Timeline: MD 02 - 1000 hrs

[ON]

Having left the mess hall, John was glad to be out of the command building, no matter how many times he came here, he never felt any more at ease. His breakfast with Saalm had gone well, he didn't think he had put his foot in his mouth too many times, and hopefully nothing he had said was going to stand against him.

She had struck him as being rather unusual, far too "by the book" for his liking, although most of that supposition he had gotten from reading her service record, not a single complaint, disciplinary, or negative comment in the entire file. These were the kinds of officers he usually butted heads with, those who thought that the only way to do things was by following what had been written by stuffy admirals and fleet commanders many years ago, to the letter, and with absolute blind faith. He secretly hoped that he would have the chance on this mission to prove that this was not necessarily the best way to act.

Stepping out into the corridor, the Commander started making his way towards the myriad of transporter rooms that lined this section of the building, with officers and support staff regularly beaming from place to place in order to speed up their daily tasks. Five miles from HQ to the drydock could be covered in a matter of seconds, and disappear in the blink of an eye.

Approaching the transporter room, he acknowledged the Transporter Chief standing behind the panel with a simple, yet courteous nod, and made his way onto the pad.

"One to beam to the Galileo drydock"

With a simple return of his own nod, the chief

tapped a few controls on the panel, and soon the familiar whirr and bright light that one associated with being transported molecule by molecule could be heard, and John disappeared in an instant, before rematerialising elsewhere.

The drydocks were a very different place to the command buildings, instead of being lined with Federation symbols and potted plants, whilst swarming with flag officers, the drydocks were a much more spartan affair. Everything here had a purpose, nothing was just there to take up space, after all, the Starfleet engineers were nothing if not efficient.

A short walk down the main walkway brought him to the viewing platform, and his first glimpse of his new ship. Most of her running lights were still offline, the warp core not yet brought up to full power, afterall, it wasn't like that she would need weapons or warp engines sat in the middle of a dock! Yet even from here, he could see the familiar markings on the hull, the emblems of Starfleet, and there, in the middle of the saucer, the name *USS Galileo* .

Around him, engineers and support staff were busily attending to their duties, and every so often the sound of a plasma cutter could be heard, as the last few external components were being fitted. It was clear to anyone who had spent any time on a starship that this launch was being somewhat rushed, many more officers and staff than usual involved in making sure this vessel would leave on time.

Passing junior officers and engineers alike, he quickly found himself at the airlock, moored as usual to the dock, giving an easy point of entry to the ship. As he approached, he noticed security officers on duty, phasers on their hips, stood at attention waiting to challenge any and all individuals that might try to board.

"Can I help you sir?"

One of the officers caught his attention, a tall man with darkened skin and a shaved head, he didn't look much older than his mid twenties, and displayed the rank of ensign on his collar. His colleague, a man of similar build and size had not

yet said a word, and had simply aimed his eyes at Holliday.

"Lieutenant Commander Holliday, I'm the new XO of this vessel, and you gentlemen are in my way"

For a moment, the two officers said nothing, before one of them moved to a small terminal to the right of the commander, and began looking through the crew manifest, to make sure that he was indeed who he said he was.

"If you could step this way sir, I need to confirm your identity"

Starfleet security measures had been ramped up in the few years, and many of the protocols developed during the Dominion war had been maintained. With a sigh, John moved towards the panel, and laid his hand out flat in the alcove as required, whilst the computer passed a scanning beam along it, checking for any tell-tale signs that the Commander might not be who he said he was.

After a few moments of waiting, the system beeped, and a green light appeared under his palm

"Satisfied?" He said with an inclination of sarcasm in his voice.

"Thank you sir, welcome aboard the Galileo"

John lifted his palm from the panel and entered the airlock, watching as the doors snapped open in front of him, and he stepped inside. A few moments later, the system cycled, and the doors through which he had just passed dutifully closed, followed a few moments later by the doors ahead of him opening, and the vessel interior was revealed.

The ship was still far from finished, as he entered, he virtually tripped over a deckplate that had been lifted up so a nearby engineer could get at what looked like an EPS relay buried in the floor. He would have to watch his footing whilst the last few installations were done. He decided that the first place he was going to head were his quarters, afterall, right now, he was the ranking officer aboard, and he had already met his CO. It was time to get his belongings stowed, and take a look at how

this Nova-class was shaping up.

It was a short walk to the nearest turbolift, and the doors slowly opened, before he stepped inside.

"Deck Two" He announced to the computer, which dutifully beeped, and closed the doors, before the familiar movement of the lift began.

Looking forward to a short journey, the commander was sadly going to be disappointed, as the turbolift began to slow down, before stopping entirely, he knew there was no way they had reached deck two yet, and his suspicions were confirmed as the lights went out, leaving him with only the standard issue emergency lights in place.

"What the hell...."

He spoke, knowing full well he was the only one in the carriage. Examining the now-dead panel next to the turbolift doors, he soon realised he was going to have no luck getting this thing moving himself. With a sigh, he slapped the combadge on his chest impatiently

"Engineering, this is Lt Commander Holliday, what in blazes is wrong with the turbolifts around here?"

It took a few moments before a young female voice came back to him.

"Sorry sir, we're having a few problems with the power distribution systems...erm...hold on I think I might have managed to...wait...yep...got it!"

The lights quickly reappeared in the turbolift, and it began to resume its original course

"Much obliged....make sure you pass my regards onto the Chief Engineer when he gets here....seems there are still plenty of bugs to work on on this ship....."

And with that, he closed the comm channel, just in time to see the doors open ahead of him. His quarters were only a short walk from the turbolift, and he quickly found his assigned door number, thumbing the control as he approached, and watching the doors slide open.

Although a small ship, the quarters for senior officers were by no means spartan, in fact these were probably the largest quarters he had ever had. He headed for the couch in the corner, and sat down, glad to take the weight off his feet after his journey through the vessel.

"Computer...send a message to the Chief Engineer as soon as he comes aboard, ask him to report to me directly to discuss the status of this vessel."

The computer took a moment to record the data before replying

Acknowledged, message recorded and sent for immediate delivery."

And with that, he picked up a PADD, and began his first onboard log entry, hopefully, the first of many.

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

The Start of a New Adventure

Posted on 18 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: San Francisco Bay

Timeline: MD 02 – 1000 hrs

[ON]

Dru sat on a boulder at the edge of San Francisco bay as she read the PADD in her hands, which contained details of her new orders. She was being relieved of duty off of the *USS Gladiator* and being reassigned to the *USS Galileo*. As Dru raised one hand to tuck a strand of loose hair behind her ear, she tried to figure out how she felt about all of this. The counsellor smiled slightly as the old saying came to mind, 'who is going to counsel the counsellor?'

Drusilla had always found it easier to pick apart another person's mind than she did her own. She found that she could never find a balance inside of herself, but she never allowed this to effect the job she was there to do. She enjoyed listening to people and helping them sort through their own issues, she felt it gave her life meaning.

Dru's thoughts flicked back over the past 6years she had spent on the *USS Gladiator*. The friends she'd made, the friends she had lost, the relationships which were never meant to be. The ship's mission had been of deep space exploration, the crew she had was small in numbers and thus they'd had to adapt to depending on eachother. It meant that people were close, making her job a little easier, but in some sense her job had been much more difficult also. She had made friends herself and had relationships but being the only counsellor onboard meant she had to try be counsellor to these people also. How does one separate work from relationships and friendship was a question she asked herself alot. Over the years Dru struggled with this the most.

Part of Dru was relieved to be finally leaving the ship. It allowed her a brand new start, a chance to

start afresh. But part of her still pulled back, felt scared. She would be leaving the people who knew her the best, the people she felt most comfortable with who she had served with since leaving the academy.

As Dru set the PADD aside, she picked up a small box and opened the lid. Lying inside was a hollowed out pip, her indication of her new promotion from Ensign to JG Lieutenant. There had been no big fan fair or hullabaloo over the promotion. When her Captain had handed her the PADD with her new orders, he had placed the box ontop of it and just told her it was all outlined in the PADD. With a quick word of congratulations and a nod of his head he had just dismissed her, wanting to move on with getting the ship ready for her new mission.

Dru smiled sadly as she recalled the encounter. She had always thought the Captain a friend, a person for her to lean on when she had nobody but his dismissal of her only went to show, he did what every Captain needed to do, be there as as support for his crew, alongside his Commander, and nothing further. It's something, if she was to be truthful to herself, had shown up during their routine counselling session. He preferred to distance himself. He understood the crew needed his support on a deep space mission but there was apart of himself that he always refused to hand over, this refusely meant in some senses he maintained his distance.

Dru run her finger over the pip finding it difficult to attach to her collar. She had grown used to her rank of Ensign, she'd had to for 6years and was afraid to loose the identify it gave her. Dru smiled as she realised the recommendation she would give anyone else in her position would be to recognise what they were being given. A chance of moving on within Starfleet. It wouldn't be a loss of identity, it was a new chapter. Dru wondered if she would ever be able to start taking her own advise at some stage.

Dru closed the lid over on the box, not yet ready to place the pip in her collar. As she collects up the PADD and moves to stand, Dru looks out at the bay stretched out infront of her. She watched the water softly lapping against the surrounding boulders as if

it was slowly but surely trying to beat back the boulders holding it in. The young counselling smiled softly realising she really needed to stop seeing counselling analysed in everything she saw.

Dru swung her bag over her shoulder and set off back to grab a shuttle back up to the *USS Gladiator* in order to pack up her belongings for transport to her new home, the *USS Galileo*.

[OFF]

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

In The Valley

Posted on 11 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD

Location: Savannah, Georgia

Timeline: MD 02 - 1120 hrs

[ON]

Lirha walked out of her office, still hungover from the previous night's adventures, and stared at her personnel PADD which contained all the information regarding her new crew assignments. One of them in particular stood out amongst the rest. A Doctor Robin Hilyer, M.D., who had recently been deployed on board the *USS Baylor* and had just been reassigned to her crew. She scanned the man's files for more notes and information yet there was little to be found, except for the vessel's history. The *Baylor* had been a Prometheus-class light cruiser, destroyed in a recent battle with the Tzenkethi in which many lives were lost, including Hilyer's Commanding Officer, Captain Royce. As Lirha read through the Doctor's service record, she couldn't help but feel his pain for the unfortunate circumstances in which he was involved. With a mental sigh, she clipped her PADD to her belt and walked to the nearby shuttlecraft hangar.

After checking in with the Chief Support Craft Controller, she made her way across the tarmac and found her designated shuttlecraft, a Type 9 named *Jennifer*. It was ironic, she thought to herself, considering the adventures her and her friend Jen had partaken in the previous night. She did a quick inspection of the outer hull then opened the main doors to the craft and stepped in, then began her pre-flight sequence. Lirha was ready to go after several minutes and brought the craft's main propulsion online as she contacted the control tower for clearance to depart.

Her journey wouldn't take long, only a short hop from California to Georgia to personally greet her new Chief Medical Officer. She estimated that she would be there and back within two hours, and hopefully, with her new crew member aboard. As

she cleared the departure pad, Lirha put her shuttle into high-altitude cruise mode and made her way towards the former-American Deep South.

A Short Time Later...

Fifteen minutes had passed and she was already exiting Texas airspace with her destination only ten minutes away. She leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes as the autopilot guided her craft to its destination. Lirha did a mental rehearsal of the speech she was about to give her new officer and hoped that he would be a willing participant in his new assignment.

Her craft came to a slow hover at the designated coordinates and Lirha put the shuttle down in a multi-craft parking lot, several hundred meters away from his house. She grabbed several of her belongings and started walking. After ten minutes, she finally came to his residence and stopped at the front door to adjust her uniform and push her dark hair out of her face. She gave a firm knock on the door.

Robin was seated in a dark corner of his father's office pouring over the details of his travel from Earth to Mars. He was to visit a friend whom had moved there to be a Chief of Medicine at the Fleet Yards. Though it was only a day trip; the travel itinerary made the short journey seem to take days.

"Doctor Hilyer," Edyta called from the door. The stout domestic stood at the threshold holding her ever present dust rag in one hand and a cup of tea for his father in the other. "There is a green commander at the door. She is quite lovely and wishes to speak to you. Should I send her away?"

Robin looked up from the computer console and turned it off. "No, Edyta it's okay I will meet with her in the garden. Don't expect me for dinner."

"Yes Doctor." She stopped Robin as he approached the doorway. "Your father how is he?"

Robin took a long sigh, and looked up at the ceiling. In his mind's eye he could see his father laying in

the king size four poster bed, coughing. His mother holding his hand. Dr. John Hilyer never failed to remind people to see him yearly, rarely ever took his own advice. And now the great "Doctor John", once at death's door was now surviving Pneumonia which is an easily curable disease in the late 24th century. "He'll be fine as long as he has you and mom, he'll be back on the links again in a week."

"I hope so Robin, I just got over your grandfather's death. I don't want to face it again."

Robin could see a tear start to form on the old maid's eye, "Don't worry Eddie, he'll be okay." He embraced her and left to the large glass doors that lead towards the front garden.

The front garden was a vast space of green grass, weeping willows and hyacinth bushes. A large marble stair case lead to a stone courtyard. In the center was a old fountain hadn't worked in centuries surrounded by stone benches. Robin glanced towards the fountain and found standing near a bench was a beautiful green woman in a Starfleet Uniform. "Lieutenant Commander Saalm," he said as he approached her. "Welcome to Gambol House."

Lirha had been busy staring at the luxurious and gorgeous green garden when she heard her name being called. With a turn of her head, she looked over to see a tall, blond-haired man approaching her. As he moved closer, she recognized his face from the personnel report she had been reading over in the shuttle. "Thank you," she replied with a genuine smile, "Doctor Hilyer, I presume?" she asked him as she extended her hand in greeting.

"Yes, sir and you must be Lieutenant Commander Saalm. It is a pleasure to see you. I would give you a tour of the house but my father has been ill and my mother isn't presentable to greet guests." The Doctor took a seat on one of the benches facing the fountain. "So what can I do for you?"

She took a seat next to him and placed her bag down on the ground as she admired the view, then turned her attention back towards the doctor. "I came to give you your transfer orders...and to pay you a personal visit. But I'm guessing that you

might have been expecting me?" she said and arched her brow while giving him a small grin.

"Partly yes, I knew that you were on Earth and figured you're the type of person to make a personal visit to your crew." Robin smiled widely. "That and I saw your arrival from the visual security sensors."

Lirha pushed some of her dark hair out of her face, slightly embarrassed that she had forgotten about household security systems. "And I suppose I'm not too hard to pick out from the crowd." she said jokingly, referring to her skin tone. She adjusted herself on the bench and turned to face her new Lieutenant. "Tell me a bit about yourself, Doctor. I'm always curious when I meet new people, especially those with whom I'll be working."

"There's not much to tell you Lieutenant Commander," Robin sat up straight. He kept his gaze at her eyes. "I've been a doctor for nine years. And until recently, I have been serving Starfleet all that time. I love being a doctor and an officer. Of course I am probably sound like I am in a interview." Robin turned red with embarrassment. "I apologize."

"It's quite alright, this is informal and off the record so try and relax." she said in a light voice to put the man at ease. "What is your medical specialty? I know you're a fully qualified medical officer but I imagine you have an area of focus?" she asked.

"Yes, on paper I am an Emergent Care Physician." Robin shifted easily on the bench. "I would have been a surgeon like my father but I love the excitement of jumping into the fray when many would run. Also, I find the joy even in the tedium of small injuries."

The edge of Lirha's mouth curled up in a slight smile. "You find joy in injuries, Doctor? That's a bit...morbid, no?" she said trying to suppress a laugh. She had an quirky sense of humor and often found things to be funny which were not, but she couldn't help but be amused by her new Chief Medical Officer.

"Well not so much the injury than the work to fix them." Robin tapped his foot on a cobblestone. He

stood up from the bench, "When is our launch date?"

"We depart in four days but we have a preliminary systems check the day after tomorrow. It would be best if you report to San Francisco soon. I've already arranged your quarters and if you'd like I can give you a lift when we leave? That is...if you're ready?" she asked. Lirha remembered the doctor mentioning that his father was ill, and was unsure if he wanted to spend more time at home with him.

"I have some things to clear up before I leave. If you can give me an hour or two I'll be ready. In the meantime feel free to wander the grounds. There is a large Koi pond in the West Field you might enjoy." Robin pointed toward a dirt path that wound it's way between a copse of elm trees.

"Absolutely, take your time, Doctor." she said and looked around at the spacious and lovely grounds of the former plantation. "I think I just might take you up on your offer." she said with a smile, and headed down the dirt trail with her hands clasped behind her back.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer MD
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

What's That Sunny?

Posted on 08 Feb 2012 by Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*
Timeline: MD 02 – 1400 hrs

[ON]

Markum walked through the security checkpoints uninhibited this time. The Ensign that he had his run in with just the night before nodded and replied very respectfully, "Good-afternoon Chief. How are you?" Markum replied with a smile, and a firm handshake after snapping to attention. "Fine Ensign, fine. Thanks." Markum continued on his way to the vessel. His hands were sweating, he had butterflies and was almost going to laugh out loud until he saw it.

Markum walked up on the remaining scaffolding and next to a Chief Petty Officer, "What are you trying to do here Chief Petty Officer, blow up the entire aft section of this vessel?" The CPO spun around with a curse on his lip, but it never made it all the way out when he noticed the rank of the insulter. "Ahh, no Chief, not at all, but it's the fastest way to load the torpedoes into the magazine." Markum looked at him with a bit of confusion upon his face. "What? Why not use Transporter Room Two. From there it's just down a short corridor to the Torpedo Magazine." The CPO shook his head, this couldn't be good. "Transporter Room 2 is inoperable at the moment Chief. we have someone lookin....." "Inoperable? Someone, looking at it? Chief Petty Officer whoever you are. Are you assigned to this ship as crew, or are you Yards staff. Not another Torpedo is going to be loaded into this ship until the Transporter is operational. One of your juvies gets careless and does something stupid, this whole place will be farmland." Markum left the Chief Petty Officer speechless as he descended into the ship.

Markum walked through the cargo bay and into the turbolift. "Deck-Four." The door opened and Markum walked toward his destination. As he entered transporter Romm-2 he was beheld by

several enlisted, and two junior officers. All were standing around asking what they should do next, or what went wrong. The panel was off the main control board, and two pads were removed. It only infuriated the Senior Chief Warrant Officer further. He walked to the group of loiters and spoke. "Sirs, Mates. Looks like you either are trying to fix the transporter, or someone broke it even worse. Which is it?" On of the officers smiled and approached the old engineer. "Hey Chief. I'm Ensign Crow. We are trying to fix it, but we are missing the manual. Besides, we have the Docks Transporter Chief Coming to take a look at it. He should be here by tonight. So we are just trying to..." Markum placed his hand on the young man's shoulder. "Sir, with all due respect to you and the Lieutenant j.g. over there, this is a disaster. You are an engineer right?" Ensign Crow nodded hesitantly, and the other officer shook his head, "I'm Tactical Chief." Markum sighed, "Well, no one is perfect sir. Maybe you could go check on the group of crewman that are attempting to bring the torpedoes through the cargo bay turbolift. I think they need an officer, and we have Ensign Crow to supervise us sir." The two officers looked at one another and nodded. Now only one junior officer left to deal with, and all these crewman and petty officers third class.

"Okay," asked Crow, "So what's next Chief?" Markum already liked the kid. "Well, first we need to locate the major malfunction, and then trace it to all secondary and tertiary systems." He looked at the enlisted standing closest to the transporter pads. "You three. Get over there and put those back together. And do it right, if the annular confinement beam doesn't register properly whatever gets transported over here will end up looking like a Klingon gourmet dish." The three chuckled a bit and went to work with an "Aye-aye Chief."

Markum and Crow walked to the open panel, along with the remaining two crewman. Markum go down on all fours, followed by the rest of the observers. Despite his intolerance, and occasional brashness, the Chief Engineer enjoyed teaching. It was a passion of his to pass down his knowledge to the younger generations. He pulled out a small light pointer and shined it into the opening. "See that big blueish jelly looking thing" that's one of the neural gel packs. That there is the ODN that connects to

the the Heisenberg Compensator. Now, it should connect to the molecular imaging scanner that sits over top the transporter pads. Now, this is not connected properly through the ODN/neural network cable relay." Markum nodded to Crow, while handing him a small screwdriver and pointing to the relay, "That bad boy there sir, needs just a quarter twist port. Then that cable can be connected to the compensator." Ensign Crow did exactly as instructed, and then with a small "Hummmmmm" noise, the circuitry light up and the transporter came alive. "Excellent work Ensign Crow. You;I make a good engineer yet ,after I un-teach what the Academy taught you. Filthy habits they learn you." smiled the Chief. "Thanks Chief. I learned in the Academy that you old timers are all full of interesting ways around the book. I guess they were right." Markum laughed and tapped his combadge =\=Galileo to Docks Loading supervisor. Transporter Two is up and running. Ensign Crow is going to oversee the transport of the remaining torpedoes into the magazine.=\= After a short pause, they were given a reply. "Aye-aye. Ensign Crow, we will contact you in a moment with the transport coordinates.=\= Markum slapped Crow on the arm, "Once again, sir. Great job. It'd love to stay and tell you lies, but I already spoke to my child's mother today. It's chow time for me."

[OFF]

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

First Impressions

Posted on 20 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 02 - 1400 hrs

[ON]

The news of her new command still took some adjusting to and Lirha wasn't settling into her role as quickly as she would have liked. Her reservations about her classified mission were being overshadowed by the daunting task of preparing a starship for launch. Of all the complex and detailed procedures she had to follow, she found the most relaxing one to be the personnel interviews. Lirha had always been an outgoing lady with a friendly personality and she felt comfortable around most people, regardless of their species or gender. As she looked over her crew's manifest while sitting in her office, she noticed that she had been assigned a new chief counsellor who had just arrived in San Francisco. Unsure of where the woman was or if she was wearing her commbadge, Lirha pulled a PADD from her drawer and sent an interview request to the counsellor's PADD. Hopefully she would receive the message promptly and arrive soon.

Dru looked around her now bare quarters onboard the *USS Gladiator* and paused for a moment. This had been her home now for 6years, being witness to all of her possessions being boxed up and shipped out, took more out of Dru than she had realised.

Of everything she had had to do to prepare for her new assignment, the hardest part had been saying good bye to Dexter. He had been the ships the Assistant Chief of Engineering and Dru's closest friend. When she had always needed a support, professionally or personally, she always knew that Dexter had been there to turn to. Dru smiled slightly as she remembered how happy he had been when she went to say goodbye. Dexter had received notice himself of new orders to report to the *USS Avenger* of their new Chief of Engineering. It had always been his ambition to become a senior officer

and now those dreams were coming through. Dexter had promised to keep in touch but Dru was fully aware of the distances space caused between people, she was just happy that they had had the last 6 years of friendship to make memories to move forward with.

As Dru wiped away her last tear, she realised the PADD beside her was flashed. As she picked up the PADD she saw the message requesting her presence in Starfleet head quarters in order to meet her new Captain. As Dru pressed the confirmation button and added a message asking to be given 20 minutes, she picked up her shoulder bag and walked to the transporter room, turning her back on her old life as she headed for the unknown.

20 Minutes Later in Starfleet Head Office...

Dru stood at the door of her new Captain and straightened her uniform jacket. She closed her eyes for a few moments, taking a few deep breaths in order to calm herself. As Dru reopened her eyes, she lifted her hand to press the door chime.

The Orion captain stood at her office's replicator and watched a glass of refreshing orange juice materialize. A soft chirp echoed throughout the room signalling the presence of someone outside of her door.

"Enter." she replied in firm voice, then turned to see who had arrived.

As Dru stepped through the door she stopped in front of the desk and stood at attention, "Ensign Drusilla McCarthy reporting for duty Ma'am"

Lirha walked over, took her place behind her desk, and took in the sight of her new counsellor. She was a shorter woman who possessed brown hair and blue eyes, and she looked very presentable judging by her crisp uniform and professional appearance.

"At ease, Lieutenant." she replied, then gave the woman a small smile. "Please have a seat." she added and motioned with her hand to the empty chair nearby.

As Dru heard Lirha address her as Lieutenant, she suddenly went white. She realised she'd never put the pip into her collar and had just introduced herself as an Ensign. Dru took the seat indicated to her, "Ma'am apologises my uniform is not in full order. My new pip is in my bags on the *USS Galileo*, with the changeover and everything I never got a chance to put it on." Dru looked down at her hands, mentally kicking herself for making such a small but important mistake.

"Yes, I noticed." Lirha said with a raised eyebrow and a hint of amusement on her face. "However, it's quite alright with me if you would like to run around my ship pretending to be an ensign." she remarked light-heartedly, then sat down in her chair and took a sip of her juice as she stared at Drusilla. "I see you just arrived in San Francisco. How was your trip?"

"The trip was fine Ma'am. I was stationed on *USS Gladiator* and we only arrived back from our deep space mission. To be honest, it's nice to see Earth again. It's fine getting to see the rest of the universe, but sometimes what you really need is home Ma'am." Dru tried to relax into her chair but she was still upset at herself for forgetting her new rank and pip.

"Well, welcome back. At least for the next few days." Lirha said while nodding at the mention of home. She hadn't been back to her homeworld in almost five years, instead spending her time bouncing from ship to ship with occasional visits to Earth and Luna. The green-skinned captain noticed the lieutenant seemed a bit tense and she hoped she would relax throughout the course of the interview.

"So what brings you aboard the *Galileo*?" she asked, curious about reason for her transfer.

"I served onboard the *Gladiator* for 6 years as the sole counsellor, it was my first position but Starfleet couldn't spare another counsellor to work alongside me. After what happened with the *Dominion*, they needed to ensure they spread out their counsellors. 6 years is an extremely long time to serve on a ship, especially where deep space exploration is involved. Overtime my abilities to

counsel people became diluted, the people were friends more than crew members, the lines became blurred. The ship needs a counsellor to help people, even though counsellors like to be seen as friends, there is still a thin line we must ensure we don't cross and the situations and passage of time meant I was reaching a point the line was starting to become crossed. This was the sign that I needed to transfer. "Dru stopped and took a deep breath, suddenly realising she is rambling. The counsellor blushed slightly. "Sorry Ma'am."

"No need to apologize, I asked a question and you gave me a good answer." she said with approval. "I agree with your sentiment, and six years is indeed a long time to serve aboard a vessel."

Lirha paused and took a long swig from her glass, savouring the lovely flavour of her juice. Orions had a fruit known as lokra'n which was similar to an orange yet was horribly bitter. She personally couldn't stand the taste and had become quite fond of orange juice over the years as an acceptable substitute.

"Will this be your first time aboard a Nova Class vessel?" she asked the lieutenant.

"I'm afraid so." Dru suddenly smiled slightly. "After being onboard a sovereign class ship, I believe I am in for a culture shock over the size of a nova class. I am looking forward to it though. A smaller crew is easier on me, means I am able to be more readily available for crew members should they need me."

"The *Galileo's* a small ship, that's for certain." Lirha replied at the mention of culture shock. "She's a bit cramped in some areas and we certainly won't have all the amenities of a long-range explorer, but she's a state-of-the art survey vessel."

"Have you got final numbers yet of how many crew we will have? Will we be carrying the full crew capacity?" Dru settled back into her chair as she felt on safer grounds talking about her job and what lay ahead for her.

The captain remembered the information which had been presented to her at the mission briefing, as well as the details of their hasty departure. "Our crew compliment is ninety, that includes officers

and enlisted personnel, and we also have capacity for up to ten civilians. Unfortunately, we'll be launching with a skeleton crew of only about thirty, and we will pick up our remaining personnel when we dock at Starbase 234." she replied.

Dru nodded her head. "How long is it expected that it will take us to reach Starbase 234? I can use that time to help the initial crew settle in, it will help me spread the work out."

"At most, a couple of days, although our current mission requires us to make haste. I'm going to try and get us there in forty hours." she answered, not wanting to go into too much detail about the specifics of the assignment. "I'm sure the crew will be grateful to have you aboard...an outlet of sorts for all the stress and tension which inevitably arises on board a starship." Lirha remarked.

"Have you spent much time in the Beta Quadrant before?" she asked, changing the subject slightly.

Dru shook her head slightly. "We were within the Alpha Quadrant for our previous explorations, I have to say, I'm looking forward to the change in scenery." Dru smiled slightly. "Is there anything you can tell me about what will happen after Starbase 234?"

"Unfortunately, no. That information is classified until we depart the starbase." she answered simply. Although she wanted to explain the situation to her new curious lieutenant, Lirha knew that she had to observe protocol. There would be plenty of time for questions in the *Galileo's* briefing room.

"How do you feel about serving on board a science vessel?" she asked. It was a question she rarely presented, however the counselor seemed like a rather honest and open person, and Lirha was curious to hear her thoughts on the matter.

Dru looked at Lirha in surprise, "You know what Ma'am. I've never really given it much thought. When you're a counsellor, your focus is the crew themselves. Of course environment enters into it but I would consider it to only be a minute detail."

Dru paused for a moment as she thought the

question over in her head before responding. "I guess it'll be an easier job for me than my last vessel. The *Gladiator* had both a Marine and Fighter presence which *Galiaeo* obviously won't. Marine and Fighter presence can cause tension on a ship which people, in say a medical or science background, are not that comfortable with. I assume the environment on a science vessel will be more relaxed in the sense of how people are outside of their work."

Lirha nodded at the well-presented answer. She was already beginning to like the woman and couldn't agree more with her statement. "We do not carry Marines of any kind aboard our vessel." she said with pride. "Instead, you will be dealing with some of Starfleet's brightest young minds, as well as many civilian personnel. These are people who are not used to the discipline and doctrine of Starfleet life and might take some time to adjust. As a counsellor, I expect you to help them make the transition. Are you comfortable with that?" she asked somewhat bluntly.

Dru was a little taken back by the statement Lirha had just made. "I'm going to be a little blunt Ma'am. I'm here to emotionally help people. If they are struggling to readjust I will help them find a balance which they are comfortable with. I won't force anyone to make a transition they are not ready to make. Instead I'll help them cope so as they can continue to do their job to the best of their ability and to interact with the crew members to the best of their ability. I can't make people do things they are not ready for."

"I'm not asking you to force anyone to do anything," she answered in a soft voice, "I was simply asking you to help our personnel adjust to the everyday routine of ship life. I'm sure you will get some gripes and complaints during the first few weeks, but it is essential that we all function as a cohesive unit. And the bottom line is that we all serve on a Starfleet vessel. I simply want my crew, Starfleet or civilian, to be mentally and physically healthy and to be prepared for the eventual unknown scenarios which we will encounter. If I have offended you, I apologize, but I have faith in your abilities and I wouldn't be a good commanding officer if I didn't push you a little bit." she said with a smile.

Dru looked directly into the eyes of Lirha. "Ma'am I know my history doesn't look good. I'm still young. I was an Ensign for 6 years with no accolades against my name. And then, I turn up here seeming forgetful in relation to a privilege I've been given with a new rank. Despite all of this, there is one thing you will never have to doubt, I know how to do my job and I know how to do it to the best of my abilities. I'm prepared for gripes and complaints; I'm even prepared for people to not like me but not having a choice but to work with me as I am their only counsellor."

Dru took a breath as she tried to gather her thoughts and recompose herself. "I understand you need to push me Ma'am but understand in return, I will do everything, to the best of my ability, to provide you with a crew who can operate as a cohesive unit. Where this is not happening, or where I feel there is a concern, I will not hesitate to report this to our XO and to find a solution where possible."

Tilting her head to the side while staring at the lieutenant, Lirha stood up and slowly walked around the desk and stood next to the young woman. She put a gentle hand between her shoulder and neck and gave it a soft squeeze as she knelt down on one knee to look her close in the eyes. She wanted to put her counsellor at ease and help her to relax, and she did so in the most traditional and affectionate Orion manner.

"Please relax, Drusilla." she said, then rubbed the back of her shoulder for a moment to reassure her. "I have no doubts about your ability, and I'm grateful to have you on board. Despite what you think about your service record, it is impressive, and I would not have accepted your transfer if I didn't feel that you were a fine Starfleet officer." she said.

Dru froze slightly, unused to the intimate level of contact her new commanding officer had just shown. In her position, Dru often had to use gestures such as a squeeze of an arm or a hug but she was not used to it being done to her in return. Dru closed her eyes and took one deep slow breath before looking back to meet Lirha's eyes. "My apologies Ma'am, I'm trying to readjust myself to this new situation. I've known for awhile I would be

transferred but I only found out this morning it had been finalised and it has been a rush since. You can have no doubts of the quality of counsellor I will be to your people, I just sometimes forget to stop and counsel myself." Dru smiled slightly.

Lirha stood up and sat on the edge of her desk, still close to the lieutenant. "Everyone needs someone to talk to, at some point or another." she replied warmly, then extended her olive-green hand towards the woman for an official handshake. "Welcome aboard the *Galileo*, Lieutenant."

Dru stood up and took Lirha's offered hand. "Thank you Ma'am. I'm looking forward to what serving onboard her will bring."

The captain rose to her feet in a formal manner and nodded at her new counselor. "Very good. You're dismissed, Lieutenant. Get some rest and enjoy the bay area. I will see you promptly at 1800 hours Friday for our crew banquet."

As Dru exited the Lirha's office, she let out a deep breath and mentally kicked herself, *Well done Dru, fantastic first impression*. Dru headed in the direction of the dry dock in order to get her first look at her new home and to get herself settled into her quarters and new office.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

Look At Her

Posted on 04 Feb 2012 by Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards

Timeline: MD 02 – 1700 hrs

[ON]

Markum stepped through the initial security checkpoint without much difficulty. Not many wanting to question the doings of a Senior Chief Warrant Officer in Engineering Yellow. Markum walked for several minutes through the clutter and scaffolding. Then, as he turned a corner he saw the port hull of the new Nova-Class vessel, and another checkpoint. Markum approached the security officer on duty. He was a young petty officer that snapped to attention as Markum stopped before him. "Chief, how may I help you?" asked the young man. "At ease petty officer, I'm on my way to inspect the *Galileo*." Just then an even younger looking ensign walked out from a door, "Just where do you think you are going Warrant Officer?" said the smug Andorian officer. Markum forced a smile across his face and stood erect in proper respect to the cocky officer, then help up his PADD. "Sir, I am Senior Chief Warrant Officer Markum Qui..." the ensign stepped closer, "I did not ask who you were, I asked you where you are attempting to go?"

As she walked around the dock admiring her new command, Lirha heard a slight commotion in front of her but out of sight. Judging from the tone of the voices she had just heard, there seemed to be some type of problem. She walked several paces with curiosity before turning the corner and arriving at the scene. She saw two enlisted men, one young and one older, as well as a young Ensign who seemed to be getting in the older man's face. Lirha sighed and moved to stand next to the three of them.

"Is there a problem here, gentlemen?" she asked in an even tone while looking back and forth between all of the men's faces.

Markum immediately took notice of the young woman's rank and stood a little straighter, "Yes ma'am. I was trying to explain to the Ensign here

that I was trying to gain access to the Nova-Class vessel so I could look her over. I even tried to show him my orders here on the PADD ma'am." Markum offered up the PADD to the superior officer.

Lirha took the PADD from him and browsed through his transfer orders, and a small smile spread on her face as she realized he was her new Chief Engineering Officer. "Oh yes... you're Mister Quinn my new CEO. I've heard a lot about you, I read through your file this morning and it's quite impressive. I'm happy to have you aboard." she said enthusiastically and offered her hand to him in greeting. "I'm Lieutenant Commander Saalm, Commanding Officer of this fine little ship." she said and motioned to the large metal hull in the background.

Markum smiled and took the offered hand, then shoot a wink at the ensign. He then looked toward the vessel and replied. "Nice to meet you Commander Saalm, and thank-you. I am eager to get my hands on that dual deflector array." He took a brief pause, then added. "Just look at her, she's a real beaut. You must be proud ma'am. not many get a new ship as their first command, even less get one so advanced."

"Mmm," she replied with a nod, "Very much so. And don't worry, you'll have plenty of time to play with her in the next few days. But first things first..."

She flicked her eyes to the Ensign still standing next to them. "Do you often get hassled by young, naive, and arrogant officers?" It was a rhetorical question addressed to her new engineer but Lirha had said it loud enough for the young officer to hear. Without waiting for a response, she walked up to the Ensign with an angry glare in her green eyes.

"Don't ever harass one of my crew again," she said to him in a firm voice, "This man has ten times your experience and one hell of a service record. And you would be wise to learn from his example. You're an officer so start acting like one and get rid of your power-trip. Understand me?" she said and folded her arms while waiting for his response. Lirha had an extreme dislike for disrespectful people, even more so when it came to matters

involving her crew. She had no qualms with filing a disciplinary report and confining him to the barracks for the night.

The Ensign stood stiffly in front of Lirha with his feet spread at attention. "Y-Yes, Sir." he replied with a cautious look on his face.

"Do I look like a man to you?" Lirha replied and tilted her head to the side.

"No, Ma'am. Sorry, Ma'am." the Ensign replied while averting her angry stare.

"Good," she said with a nod, finally satisfied with his response and demeanor. "Dismissed."

The Ensign turned on his heels and hurried away down one of the open walkways, and Lirha walked back to her new engineer with a grin on her face. "That was fun." she said with amusement in her eyes.

Markum chuckled a bit, "Yes ma'am. Always the young ones that are the most arrogant. Kids these days. Whatever happened to respect ones elders?" Markum could already tell that despite her apparent young age, his new skipper was not to be tangled with. He liked it.

"I couldn't agree more." she replied with a mental chuckle. She was only twenty-nine years old herself but the days when she was frolicking around at the Academy seemed like a distant memory to her now. "So, Mister Quinn, tell me a little about your last assignment. The *USS Valiant*, if I remember correctly?"

"She was a good ship, and the CO was a fine man. Our last mission was, well, let's just say we were required to stay cloaked for the entire mission. Funny thing though, The CO resigned his commission, and just disappeared. Our initial shakedown cruises and all else went almost flawless, minus the typical Defiant-Class cloaking system flaws. Next thing we knew, Command came in and cleared the ship. I came back home here to spend time with my son." Markum shook his head then continued, "I don't know ma'am if he went crazy, or if he got into some sort of trouble. It's a mystery to

me."

Lirha furrowed her brow in thought as she listened to the man's story. It wasn't unheard of for captains to have mental breakdowns but she suspected something else might have occurred. "Hmm, I agree, that's a strange occurrence. What was your captain's name? I worked in Intel for several years before I was assigned command of the *Galileo*... I might be able to pull some strings and find out what happened. Call it a favor." she said giving him a wink. "That is, if you're interested.."

"Bill Conqulin, Lieutenant Commander. I'm just not sure I want to know. I don't want to be disappointed, or lose any respect for him." Markum looked at his new CO and grinned, "Intel person? No wonder you had that kid shaking in his boots. Something spooky about Intel Officers." Markum let out a chuckle. "So tell me about yourself ma'am. Where was your last assignment?"

She glanced at the Chief, curious and slightly impressed that her new department head would ask such a question of her. But she slowly realized that a man of his age had probably dealt with all types of senior officers, especially someone who had been in Starfleet as long as he had.

"I was stationed aboard the *Athens*, flagship of the 2nd Fleet. I was only an assistant department head when I was first transferred, but was promoted after two months on the job," she said, "I'm good with languages and I guess Starfleet has a thing for Beta Quadrant natives." she said in jest while referencing her Orion origins.

"Hmm, Athens. Galaxy-Class, right? I remember when I served on the old Galaxy. By then most of the kinks were worked out...mostly. Linguistics you say? It's hard to find someone that can use proper syntax while orating. It's a skill I don't have." The engineer smirked, "Mine would have to be bluntness, and getting my hands covered with grease because the kiddies cry whenever they have to do more than press a button."

Lirha let out a small laugh and pushed some of her hair from her face. "Bluntness is a great trait, especially for a department head." she commented,

"I spent my early life aboard trading vessels negotiating prices and bartering, so I sort of struggle with it at times. And I agree about the 'buttons', it seems we're all too dependent on LCARS these days. On my family's old ship, we only had four touch-sensitive consoles aboard the entire vessel." she said.

She looked up at the older man and changed the subject slightly. "So you are a family man, Mister Quinn?"

"Well, sort of." answered Markum. "I only have one child. A son. He is here in the Academy. Second-year Cadet. His major is Health Sciences, Pre-med. He's a bright lad, just has a lot of his father in him. His mother is a Federation scientist that specializes in quantum mechanics and xenopropulsion systems. We met during my time with Starfleet's Xenotechnology Research Division." Markum sighed and shook his head some. "Found out the hard way, after she was twelve weeks pregnant with Marcus, she was married to the Federation's liaison to the Andorian Defense Force. Needless to say that went over like a turd in the punch bowl."

She raised her eyebrows in surprise and amusement. "I would imagine that would be a bit complicated." she replied with a chuckle. So far, Lirha liked the man. He was a seasoned officer who, she thought, had a great sense of humor. She imagined he would be the type of man to entertain her for hours of conversation.

"Do you have any questions about me or your new assignment? I can't tell you *all* of my secrets," she said in jest, "But if you're curious about anything, I'll answer as best I can."

"Yes ma'am," replied Markum with a nod, " just one for now. Where, or what is our first assignment going to be?."

"Now, see, that qualifies as a secret." she answered with a grin. "I was briefed this morning by Starfleet Command and the nature of our mission is...covert, to say the least. I'm not authorized to disclose any information regarding our destination, but my advice would be to brush up on your Klingon and learn to enjoy some *Gagh*. I have a feeling we

might be in for a rendezvous with our friendly neighbors at some point." she said with a hint of skepticism to her voice.

"They should call that stuff, *Gag* instead." answered the engineer. "The only Klingon I ever bothered to learn was, nuqDaq 'oH IIj ale, which translated means, where is your ale? Maybe it'll be a dinner party!"

"Wouldn't that be delightful?" she said sarcastically and smiled. "Well, Chief, I have to get going and finish some of my administrative work at the dock's office. I'm excited to have you aboard, to say the least. Feel free to take a look around the ship if you would like." said said, then looked down realizing she was still holding his PADD in her hand.

With a few delicate taps, she entered in some data then pressed her thumb onto the bottom screen and a small acknowledgement chirp sounded. Lirha handed the PADD back to the man. "I've just given you full access to the ship's engineering and operations sections, so you're welcome to go inside and inspect her. Just try and stay out of the engineering teams' way, I think they're still installing some of the plasma relays and power couplings." she said.

Markum took back the PADD with a smile, "Aye-Aye Captain. I'll do my best, but those kids doing the install probably need adult supervision."

"Well now that's what I have you for." she said and gave him a pat on the shoulder. "Welcome aboard the *Galileo* Mister Quinn."

[OFF]

Senior Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn
Chief Engineer, *USS Galileo*

LCDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Care for A Drink?

Posted on 02 Mar 2012 by Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD

Location: Starfleet HQ, Lounge

Timeline: MD 02 – 1930 hrs

[ON]

Markum set his empty beer bottle down on the small table he was seated at. The view was beautiful, the waves had slight white caps, and the gulls were flapping into the oncoming sea-breeze. Then he heard them. "You jokes go flying around looking at stars and counting dust particles, while the Marines do all the hard work." The little snort's comment stirred a few laughs from his fellow Marines. He noticed the remarks were coming from a bald-headed Andorian. It was always the Andorian's that were the loudest when it came to bragging about fighting. Then they did it, they really did it. "Anyone see that tin can in the fleet yards? I've shot down bigger tu..." Markum stood up and walked over to the small group of Marines. "You miscreants need to sit down and be quiet, or I'll take that tin can out there and ram it right up your rucksacks at Warp Eight. That vessel is the *USS Galileo*, and I'm her Chief Engineer. I also out rank everyone of you dogs so each of you can keep my beer supply going for the rest of the night."

Robin entered the Lounge and saw the brewing of a fight before him. He only caught a glimpse of what the taller man in Services yellow had said. He was the Chief Engineer of the *Galileo* his fellow officer. Robin walked quietly over to Markum's side and touched him on the shoulder. "I know you'd like to defend her honor Chief but I don't think is the time or place for it. Besides these fools are just bored from sitting on their hands all for the last twenty years. If it wasn't the tin cans they wouldn't have a fight to begin with."

Markum nodded in agreement to the Lieutenant. "Yes sir Lieutenant." Markum motioned back to his table with his thumb, "It's probably a good thing you showed up Lieutenant. Care for a seat and a beer? My treat sir." Markum smiled then held out his hand, "Senior Chief Warrant Officer Markum

Quinn, Chief Engineer of the Galileo. Everyone just calls me Chief. What are ya drinking, sir?"

"Well it looks like you and I have something in common. Dr. Robin Hilyer, Chief Medical Officer of the Galileo. Since we'll be working together what ever you're drinking it fine." He slapped Markum on the shoulder. "Just remember, I'll be keeping an eye on you."

Markum laughed and offered the doctor a seat. "So where do you hail from Doctor? I'm guessing not Andoria."

"Savannah, Georgia." Robin replied. "And yourself?"

"Beautiful city. Been there a few times. Love the Historic District. I was born in Utopia Colony, Mars. I haven't been back though in over thirty years. Ever since I joined Starfleet. San Fran has been my home when I get back to the Sol System. My kid is in the Academy here too. Met his mother here, and her husband. Yup, I love this city."

Markum smiled as the server walked to the table, "What are you boys drinking? she asked.

"Beer. As usual please."

"The same," Robin nodded to the server as she walked away. She seemed familiar, probably one of those trysts so many years ago, when he was much younger and more avarice than he felt lately. Robin smiled to himself at the thought of those days. He shook them off and allowed those thoughts to pass. "So tell me, Chief what do you think about our mission?"

"Well, to be honest Doc, I have been so consumed cleaning up the messes left by the design teams, that I haven't paid much attention to anything else. I can tell you though, that I am elated to get out of town for a while. My son's mother is back in town, and I really don't want her to take any of my bickering away from the Shipyard's construction teams." Markum became fidgety when he spoke about her. He hated it, after all these years she still did it to him.

Sensing his unease Robin spoke up, "Well I am just happy to get back on the road. I almost blew up with the ship in my last assignment and my parents house is a like living in a museum. I'd rather be making history than looking at it behind glass curio cabinets." Robin smiled widely.

[OFF]

Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn
Chief Engineer

Lt. JG. Robin Hilyer
CMO

Preliminary Preparations

Posted on 17 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*

Timeline: MD 03 - 0730 hrs

[ON]

Lirha walked down the main docking ramp which lead to the control office of the primary construction bay. All around her she could see her new ship's hull. Though small in size compared to other Starfleet starships, the Nova Class was still a formidable vessel to see in person. Standing on the main access ramp, she gazed in awe at her new command. The hull was freshly finished in a light metallic composite and the hull plating looked flawless and fully intact. Turning her head from side to side, she could barely see from the front of the saucer section to the rear nacelles. Jitters began to spread through her stomach as she slowly realized the importance and significance of her first command.

Various personnel scurried all around her while making their way to and from the *Galileo* while carrying all sorts of intricate parts and supplies for the ship. She was impressed at the work which the dock workers and engineering staff had completed so far. Externally, the ship looked fully completed and ready to deploy. But she knew that despite appearances, most of the work would have to be done on the interior.

She let out a tired sigh as it was still early in the morning and waited for her XO to arrive for the walk-through.

After a relatively slow day onboard, Holliday had found himself reading status report after status report, the Engineering Corps having a habit of filing a report on pretty much every nut and self-sealing stem bolt that had been used in the construction of this vessel. With a padd in hand, which he quickly passed to a crewman in the corridor, he headed into the transporter room, and

gave the instruction for the chief to beam him to the inspection platform to meet with his CO as ordered.

A few moments later, and the system deposited him exactly where he had requested. Straightening his uniform, he looked around him, and saw the familiar green skin of Commander Saalm, and headed towards her, approaching from behind and to her right.

"Good morning ma'am, not a bad ship is she?"

He called out as he got close enough to greet her, before joining her at her side, looking out at the hull of the ship, gleaming in the early morning sunlight.

"Good morning, Commander." she replied with a friendly smile, then pushed some of her dark hair out of her face. "She's beautiful..." Lirha said softly as she marveled at the fleet's newest Nova-class starship.

"I forgot how good a new ship can look like this....I doubt we'll get the luxury of seeing her from this angle too many times, rather too cold out in space for regular walks on the hull."

He chuckled to himself as he remembered his first few hours onboard

"Just a tip though...watch out for deckplates, and broken turbolifts...trust me, they're not the best way to start your day...I think our chief engineer is going to have their hands full for a while"

"Noted," she replied with a nod, "Though I have the feeling that he rather enjoys bossing around all the young engineers." she finished with a grin. "Let's have a look, shall we?"

"Lead the way ma'am" He replied with a wry smile of his own

The Orion led them up the ramp and to the starboard access hatch, where they passed through the open airlock and into the interior of the ship. She glanced around at the exposed conduits and uninstalled terminals lining the floors of each corridor. Taking her XO's advice, she carefully maneuvered herself around various construction

tools and items while delicately stepping over several sections of unfinished deckplating.

"Hopefully the bridge will be a little more...shall we say, finished, than this...otherwise you might end up having to commission this mission sat on the floor rather than in the centre chair! I haven't had chance to set foot up here yet myself, so this is much a surprise for me as it is for you!"

John was certainly excited to get a look at his new bridge, that XO seat and he would probably be getting rather well acquainted, and plenty of hours spent nestled up here in the absence of his CO.

Lirha walked through an open door and entered the bridge, then stopped to look around. There was still much to be done apparently, as junior engineers and dock workers scuttled about while working on various consoles and securing overhead bulkheads and panels.

"How hard is it to place a number-five deck screw with a washer? But noo, these kids these days take the short and easy way. It's not even hexagonal for cripes sakes." The Chief Engineer was under the Blue plush Command Chair, face first. His small tool box next to him. The Chief had just spent the better part of two hours repolishing the woodwork and cleaning the tops of the numerous LCARS screens with a dust and static streak free solution. The Bridge still had that new smell to it, and a few missing lights. On the seat of the CO's chair was an open box, with foamed pieces full to the top, and some spilled about.

"Glad to see you here bright and early, Chief." Lirha called out to her Chief Engineer as she approached the center of the bridge. Though she couldn't see his face, she recognized his voice and distinctive manner of grumbling. She glanced at the seat of her captain's chair and curiously looked at the open container. As she picked it up, she pushed some of the foam peanuts out of the way and exposed a large golden rectangular emblem. It was the *Galileo's* dedication plaque.

"How did you get this?" she asked incredulously. Usually the dedication plaques were kept under safeguard by the head dockmaster until launch day.

Markum smacked his head as he tried to jump up after being caught off guard by the arrival of the CO. "OUCH!" He quickly stood up, rubbing the back of his head, not realising he was spreading grease across his head, and face. With a curt smile he replied, "Yes ma'am, about that. Umm, the dockmaster is a big time card player, so I just happened to run into him last night down at the Wharf. After tossing several drinks back we returned to his office and started a friendly game of poker. So he ended betting more than he had, and apparently he never was hustled before. So, being the generous, sincere person that I am, I told him I'd forgive his entire debt if he would hand that baby over to me." Markum pointed to the plaque, then smiled broadly. "I wanted it to be a surprise ma'am, so.... Surprise!?"

The green-skinned woman couldn't help but smile at the story as well as the beautiful plaque she held in her hands. "Well played, Chief." she replied with a wink of approval, then passed the plaque over to her XO for him to look at. "I believe some introductions are in order," she said, as to her knowledge, her two current senior officers had not formally met yet. "Mister Quinn, this is our new Executive Officer, Mister Holliday." she said, "And Mister Holliday, this is Mister Quinn, our Chief Engineer." Lirha finished as she stepped back to let the two men greet each other.

Markum smiled and wiped his hands on his pants-legs, then offered his, not as dirty, hand. "Lieutenant Commander, pleasure to meet you sir. I'm Senior Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn, at your service."

Glancing down at the less than pristine hand of the engineer, Holliday reluctantly reached out and shook the Chief's hand, before releasing his grip and checking his palm out the corner of his eye to see just exactly how much grease he had managed to transfer

"Good to meet you too chief, tell me, hows our bird looking? Is she going to fly?"

"Aye-Aye XO, she'll fly alright. She'll fly circles around a Galaxy of Normandy. Is more agile than

the Sovereigns too." Markum took one step back and then motioned to the port side of the bridge. "On the port side, up on the lifted stations is the Galileo's several science and research stations. The station that is down front here, to the port, is flight control, next to it here sir is your station. Then the forward, starboard-side console just right of the main viewscreen is tactical. It is usually only manned during specific alerts, if you go by the book, sir. Then the first station on extreme port is Ops, followed by Security, then ending with Diplomatic Affairs." Markum then pointed to the MSD directly behind the Command Chair, "There an engineer will be stationed at all times, in case of a catastrophic event in Main Engineering."

John made sure he listened carefully as his new engineer explained the layout of the Bridge. Whilst he was not entirely happy that Starfleet had made Tactical a secondary station use, he was at least glad that they were relatively accessible systems. Of course worst case, he could just reroute the controls to his station if necessary

"Excellent Chief, excellent, I guess I best get acquainted with this chair of mine, hows Engineering looking? Got things working the way you'd like?"

Markum shrugged his shoulders, "Well, I'd let a preschool class of toddlers eat off the floor, Engineering is so clean, but these people at design have obviously never worked on a vessel while not in drydock. We will have some bumps along the way, I'm sure sir, but we'll keep her together."

"You're doing a fine job so far, Mister Quinn." Lirha said from the background, then stepped closer to the two men. "I'm going to take a look around so I'll leave you two to your own devices for a while." she said, quoting an old Human idiom. PADD in hand, she stepped over several containers and power tools and made her way into the captain's ready room to inspect it.

Watching his CO depart, John was suddenly under the realisation that for now, he was the most senior person currently stood on the bridge, essentially in command until Lirha returned. Striding over to the XO chair, he quickly leapt into place, and felt the seat adequately supporting his back.

"Not bad..." he muttered to himself as he looked down at the console next to him, at the moment showing the armada of jobs still to be completed, and a constantly updated status report on the ship.

"Well then" He announced to the bridge crew "lets figure out how much work there is left to do, I want level three diagnostics run on all primary systems and a report back to me within the hour, lets move people there's still a lot of work to get done"

And with that, he began entering his own commands into the console, the Tactical systems would need checking over, and until their Tactical Officer arrived, he was the next best thing, watching happily as the diagnostic panel began to run in front of him.

Markum picked up his small tool kit and walked over to the turbolift. The door slid half open, then stopped. "Well," remarked the Chief Engineer, "better now than at Red Alert I guess." He looked to a young Bolian, "You, Engineer's Mate Second-Class whoever you are. Give me a hand with this door please." The two went to work, in an attempt to fix the stuck turbolift doors.

Twenty Minutes Later...

Lirha emerged from her ready room with sweat dripping from her brow and a small metal table clutched in her arms. She let out a huff as she dropped it on the ground with a loud clang, then wiped her forehead and pushed several wet strands of hair from her face. "Can someone get rid of this table and find me something a bit more...aesthetic? Maybe with a wood finish, instead of this depressing grey color? My whole office is grey...the walls, the desk, the chairs...even my couch!" she said out-loud with an exasperated sigh to anyone who was nearby. She paused and looked around the bridge for any signs of her XO or Chief Engineer.

Looking up from his diagnostics, the XO was bemused by the sudden arrival of his commanding officer, and the state she had managed to get herself in over something as simple as a table. Tapping the panel, he stood up and headed towards her, safe in the knowledge that the diagnostic would complete

itself.

"Starfleet standard issue ma'am, looks like the interior designers didn't have time to do their normal flurries of aesthetics. Anyway, grey isn't that bad, on a ship this small, we're lucky to have it!"

Nodding to two junior crewmen who were on duty on the Bridge, they quickly came over, collected the table, and headed for the nearest exit, whilst the turbolift was down, it was going to be the jeffries tubes

"I'm sure the chief can work something up, engineers are pretty good these days apparently!" He said with a tone of joking in his voice.

"Ma'am on a more serious note...our tactical systems are...pretty much non-existent, whats going on?"

The green-skinned woman walked over to her XO, now curious as to his question. As far as she was aware, the *Galileo's* torpedo launchers and phaser arrays should have already been installed. "What's the problem?" she asked.

"well ma'am, apparently we have nothing more than a half dozen torpedoes, and our phasers appear to be purely decorative, surely HQ wouldn't send us out here without the ability to defend ourselves?"

With a sigh, Lirha remembered what she had been told in her mission briefing about the lack of supplies at the munitions depot. Now was probably as good a time as any to break the bad news to her first officer. "Apparently," she began to say with irritation permeating her voice, "Starfleet has just launched the *Jernoble* and the *Nevada*, and has just refit the *Venture*. The main armory has been depleted for the week and we've been pushed to the back of the line, as far as torpedoes are concerned." she finished, and paused to let the words soak in for her XO. "Our full compliment is waiting for us when we dock at Starbase 234. What's the problem with the phaser arrays?"

Frowning as he listened to the poor situation in terms of the main armoury, he tapped a few more commands on the panel ahead of him, and brought

up a diagnostic report of the main phaser subsystems.

"Well, if I'm reading this right, the emitters have been installed, calibrated and primed, but there are still no phaser couplings installed to link the EPS grid to the primary chambers, essentially we can fire, but the phasers aren't currently getting any power to generate a beam."

He tapped a few more controls

"It might be possible to set up some kind of bypass, feed the EPS grid directly into the phaser arming chambers without going through the couplings, but if they overload, we'd lose the entire phaser subsystem in one fell swoop..."

"Check with our Chief Engineer, first. I would prefer you hold off on the bypass for now. Let me go check on the status of our couplings." she said, then stood up. "I'm going to go find our dockmaster and give him hell...see if I can't find out what's going on. You have the bridge until I return." she said, then walked off towards the turbolift.

Standing up from his console, he nodded to his CO as she headed off the bridge

"Aye ma'am, I have the bridge" He confirmed, as he headed for the centre chair, and slowly settled himself in, it was going to take some getting used to being this central, he was must more used to being positioned at a station, and felt rather exposed in the centre of the bridge.

"Mr Quinn, if we can get some phaser couplings how fast can you get them installed and online?"

Markum scratched his chis for a few seconds, "About two hours, sir. That's a pretty easy fix, depending upon the location that is."

"Understood, have your teams ready to work the moment Commander Saalm sends word from the Dockmaster, I'll be damned if we're going out there without phasers."

Tapping a control on the command chair, he opened a communications link between himself and his CO.

"Bridge to Saalm, ma'am Mr Quinn confirms we can have phasers operational in a couple of hours once we get our hands on those couplings, any luck finding out where they are?"

Standing inside of one of the drydock's offices, Lirha was growing impatient while she waited for the dockmaster to retrieve the updated supply manifest for her starship. She heard her XO's voice echo through her communicator and gave it a firm tap to signal her reply. "Stand by, Commander," she said with frustration, "I'm still in the supply office waiting for an answer. I'll keep you informed soon as I get word." she said, and began to slowly pace back and forth around the room while grumbling Orion expletives under he breath.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LTCDR John Holliday
Executive Offier
USS Galileo

Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn
Chief Engineer
USS Galileo

The Morning Sun

Posted on 23 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: San Francisco, Ocean Beach

Timeline: MD 03 - 1100 hrs

[ON]

Laying with her back on a beach towel on top of the course grey sand, Lirha stared up at the bright sun which beamed down on her exposed body. It was late morning on a clear and sunny day, and the Orion was determined to spend at least a few hours indulging herself in the serenity of the beach. She knew she had to report back to Starfleet HQ after her lunch break but wanted to make the most of her free morning. With a content sigh, she adjusted her black and gold bikini and wiggled herself deeper into the sand while feeling its warmth rise up into the back of her legs and chest.

Having decided she needed some air, Dru walked across the sands of the beach. Her head hurt slightly from the stress of moving ships over the last 24hours and she had felt that maybe the sea air would help. Dru had tied her hair back in a braid, to prevent it being blown about in the breeze and had decided to leave her uniform behind, given she was off duty for a few hours. In it's place, she wore an old acedemy t-shirt and a pair of 3/4 lenght trousers. She held her runners in one hand, preferring to be able to feel the sand under her feet.

A few people passed back and forth around Lirha, many of them giving her the all-too-common stare because of her green skin and exotic appearance. It was something which had upset her throughout her first few years on Earth, but she had since learned that it was more so a reflection of Human curiosity. The Orion rolled on her side to shift her exposure to the sun, then glanced curiously at a familiar figure who was making her way towards her. She could have sworn that it was her young Chief Counselor whom she had met the previous day.

"Lieutenant?" she asked as the brown-haired woman came within earshot.

Dru had been caught up in her own world, trying to find a center at which she could manage to rid herself of her headache. As she walked along she suddenly realised someone had called out her name. Looking around her, Dru's eyes were immediately drawn to a green skinned woman in the sand and Dru grimaced slightly. *Great...now I've interrupted the CO on her downtime*

Dru realised it would be impolite to ignore the hail and so walked over to Lirha's side and smiled down at her. "Apologises Commander. I didn't mean to infringe upon your personal downtime."

"Infringe?" Lirha said with a bit of incredulity in her voice, "Of course not. Please, join me." she requested, and patted an open area of the sand next to her. Despite being off duty, Lirha was a very social person and relished the opportunity for company whenever it presented itself. She also hoped that she could put her new counselor at ease a bit, considering she had seemed somewhat uptight and uncomfortable during their interview the day before.

Dru looked down at the sand beside Lirha and bit her lip. Slowly she shrugged her shoulders and lowered herself down onto the ground. "I guess I should warn you in advance Ma'am, I might not be the best of company right now with this niggling headache I feel coming on." Dru pulled her legs up to her chest and rested her arms against her knees. "How are you enjoying your morning?"

"It's quite relaxing," the captain said as she pushed a few strands of her dark hair behind her ear, "It's not often that I get to relax in such a calm manner. Starfleet doesn't give us much time for luxuries, and I have the feeling I will get even less free time as our launch date approaches." she finished, then looked at Drusilla. "And you? How is your day so far? Did you get a chance yesterday to head to the drydock and see the *Galileo*?"

As Dru rested her cheek against her arms, she turned her head away from the glare of the sun. "I did....I do have to say she's a beauty. It all seems so real now having actually seen the ship which is to become my new home. You must be proud of her ma'am?"

"Mmm," Lirha said lightly with a nod, "Very proud. She's a beautiful ship and our dockworkers have done a great job preparing her for departure on relatively short notice." she said, then rolled onto back while casually looking over at the counselor. "So, Lieutenant, tell me about yourself. Any hobbies or interests? Are you married or have children?"

Dru suddenly laughed. "As the saying goes, I'd need a man before I get either of those Ma'am. Single and childless, I'm young enough yet for those Ma'am. What about yourself?"

The Orion grinned and adjusted herself again on her towel, staring up at the sun. "I was almost married once," she began as she recalled the months after her graduation from the Academy, "I entered a serious relationship with one of my former instructors following my graduation." she said in a soft voice. "Unfortunately, he wanted to keep me out of harms way and took it upon himself to assign me to administrative duties at the HQ."

Lirha looked over at Drusilla with green eyes which had darkened due to the bright sun. "I wasn't happy, to say the least. I had spent the last four years training to travel the galaxy and my fiance had suddenly decided that it was his place to determine my future career path. We never really saw eye-to-eye after that." she finished with a barely audible sigh.

"There's a certain element of us women that want that man who is a knight in shining armour, to protect us and look after this but at the end of the day, our independence usually wins out. It can be difficult to find the balance in the middle which allows us to maintain a relationship in which the man nurtures and protects us but we would still have our independence to do what we want and to achieve what we want." Dru moves to balance her chin on her arm as she looks out across the horizon stretching across the ocean. "Has there ever been anyone else since?"

Being a full-blooded Orion, Lirha was one of the more sexual beings she had encountered, and she had definitely had her fair share of lovers over the years. Unfortunately, her job with Starfleet required

her to maintain discipline and put her duties before her personal life. "No," she answered, "No one of serious interest. And I'm a commanding officer now, so the chances of that happening are slim." she admitted to the young counselor. "I've found that it's hard to find romance within our ever-changing lifestyle."

"It's always difficult to balance a relation, where marriage is not involved, with duty. Starfleet doesn't make it very easy given at any one time one of you is likely to end up being given new orders and transferred half way across the galaxy. Two officers in a relationship would really have to be very committed to each other. Sometimes it's better to learn to be on your own, maybe have flings there and then." Dru smiled over at Lirha, "In my counselling history I find that romance has a habit of occurring out of the blue. As the old human saying goes, don't count your chickens before they hatch."

"I've never heard that one before." the captain replied with approval. The anecdote was accurate, despite being a bit crude. She pushed herself up on her elbows and slowly sat up while leaning forward to stretch her back. Inadvertently, she gave Drusilla a clear view of her numerous tattoos which ran from the back of her neck all the way down to her waist, and around the edges of her shoulders and upper arms. Most of them were inked in her native Yverish tongue, a mix of circular and vertical-lined glyphs, however others were more elaborate and displayed a combination of crests, both her family's as well as the Orion Empire.

Dru winched slightly at the sight of the body art on Lirha's body. "Did they hurt? I've got an unnatural fear of needles, it's difficult enough getting me to have my regular vaccinations, never mind trying to have an image inked into my skin."

At the mention of needles, Lirha craned her head to look at the ink on the back of her shoulder, then turned towards Drusilla. "Of course they hurt," she replied with a grin, "But that was part of the fun. I'll admit, I was a bit over-adventurous when I was younger. Do you like them?" she asked curiously. It wasn't often that someone got a chance to see her intricate body art, since her ever-present Starfleet

uniform usually covered them from sight.

Dru adjusted herself slightly in order to get a better view of the body art, "Hum...I like that one", Dru pointed to a place between Lirha's shoulders blades, being careful not to actually touch her.

Unable to see her own back, Lirha guessed she was referring to the large vertical letters which ran down her spine. "*Rhadaman Anthus Ni Koledru Venari*. Translated into English, it roughly means 'A Thieves' Honor is not fit for a Princess'."

"Why choose that phrase?" Dru studied the letters as she tried to make sense of the foreign language which had been used.

The captain shrugged, "Like I said, I was young at the time. And I thought very highly of myself." she said with a smile. "*Koledru Venari* is the code of the Syndicate and I wanted to distance myself from them as much as possible. My species has a questionable reputation throughout the Quadrant, and I wanted to show people that not all Orion women are slaves and servants."

"Do you still find it difficult to have people look beyond you being Orion and seeing who you really are?" Dru felt herself slipping into her counsellor frame of mind but she decided to allow it to happen, it often helped her feel a little bit more comfortable in social situations.

"Is this a professional evaluation, or private?" Lirha asked with a raised eyebrow and an amused expression on her face.

Dru smiles over at Lirha, allowing the smile to reach her eyes, "Well we are both off duty right now. Consider this a free session or just consider it to be two friends having a casual chat."

"Very well, I'll indulge you...for now, anyway." she began with a friendly wink. "To answer your question, no, I don't find it difficult to be accepted, but most of that has to do with the uniform I wear. Most of the time, people look at me as another Starfleet officer." she said, then paused to recall her youth. "When I was younger, however, things were certainly different. I served aboard a trade vessel

with my family and I can't begin to tell you the feelings that went through my mind when some of our customers tried to barter with my parents for ownership of me."

"It was a struggle for me, definitely, and I think that's why my mother relocated on Earth, and also part of the reason I joined Starfleet." she added.

"It's amazing sometimes how two totally different people can be such opposites but have similarities. I'll share this much with you, to show this isn't a counselling session", Dru looked down at the sand, "I used Starfleet as a similar escape, to be able to build a life for myself rather than have others build it for me. I never knew the fear you must have felt though, in your experience with those customers. No one should ever have to live through that." Dru gently placed her arm on Lirha's arm.

Lirha looked over at the brown haired woman and gave her a warm smile, then put her green hand on Drusilla's and gave it a gentle squeeze. "You're quite a counselor." she remarked in a soft voice. Despite the counselor's somewhat quirky nature during their initial interview, Lirha was growing quite fond of the woman. "So what do you do in your free time other than listen to people's problems?" she asked, and pushed more of her hair from her face.

As Dru looked down at Lirha's hand on hers she quickly pulled it away, unused to such contact. As she recomposed herself, Dru looked back out to the horizon, avoiding eye contact with Lirha, not wanting her to see the slight panic in their depths, "Um...I love swimming when I have the opportunity. There's something about the sensation of water around you as you pull yourself through it, that has a calming influence on me. I find it helps me clear my head. Also when I want to push myself a bit, I enjoy a game of tennis on the holodeck, I guess it's another stress relief, something about whacking a ball hard which gives me a great deal of satisfaction," Dru smiled softly to herself.

The captain took note of Drusilla's uncomfortableness with her physical contact. It had been the second time in as many days, the first being when she tried to comfort the woman during

her interview. Lirha didn't give it too much thought, however, as she knew she could be rather open at times, compared to Humans. She also remembered what the counselor had just told her about her seemingly-implied sheltered youth, which she assumed might have something to do with her shyness.

"Tennis seems to be quite a popular sport on this planet," Lirha remarked, "I remember seeing many of my classmates playing while I was a student here in the Academy, and it doesn't look like much has changed." she said. "As for swimming, I prefer mud baths instead of water."

"Mud baths? Hum...well I guess they say mud is good for the skin. Give me regular water anyday either in swimming or just a bubble bath to relax in and I'll be at my happiest. Why mud? Or would that be like asking me why water?" Dru blushes slightly as she realised she not making much sense now.

Lirha finally leaned back and laid down on her towel, her firm belly and legs soaking up the hot sun. "Maybe one of these days I will arrange one for you and you can experience it for yourself." she proposed in a quiet voice. She reached over into her small duffel bag and pulled out a new beach towel, then handed it to the counselor. "Lie down and relax for a while, if you like." she said to Drusilla.

Dru looked at the towel being held out and hesitated slightly. She had a few more minutes to spare before she had to head back to work, why not enjoy herself. Dru smiled slightly at Lirha and took the towel. As she stretched out she closed her eyes, allowing herself to rest and relax.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JP Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

The More Things Change...

Posted on 23 Feb 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: Temporary Quarters of Tarishiana Barel
Timeline: MD 03 - 1120 hrs

[ON]

"Lestian...NO!" Tarishiana's words came loudly, despite her cool appearance. "Your mother is going to be the death of me." She looked into the dark eyes of Lestian Tomick. His expression was unchanged as if the pair had been speaking of the weather on Betazed. "Tarishiana, my mother is intent on having a grandchild and as the only son she sees it as my duty to give her one." His tone was calm as he did his best to explain the situation.

Tarishiana looked down before burying his face in her hands. She let out an exasperated sigh before she once again looked up at the screen. "Does she think that by moving our wedding up...then I will give you a child sooner?"

For the first time since the conversation had begun Lestian's demeanor changed. His face softened as he too let out a sigh, "Little dove..." He started in a soft tone. "I understand where you are coming from..."

Tarishiana cut him off before he was able to finish. "You have no idea how I feel...our marriage is a death sentence...I will have to give up the life I have built for myself. Our parents are not going to let me stay in Starfleet...they will expect me to keep your house and bear your children." Her tone was sad and still angry as she spoke, but her voice was not loud. "How do you think it would make me feel, if I had to live on a Starship as a civilian?"

The adoration Lestian held for his fiancée was apparent in his face as Tarishiana spoke. "Little dove, Don't worry about what they want...what do you want? Do you even want to marry me?"

Tarishiana allowed a small smile cross her face as he once again said 'Little Dove'. It had been his pet

name for her since they were teenagers. She didn't know if she wanted to marry him. She loved him, that was something she would never deny. He made her happy and she could easily see spending the rest of her life with as his wife. "I don't know...it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world...I just hate the idea of making your mother happy..." She said the last part of her sentence as seriously as she could, but the pair couldn't help but laugh. "But I do love you Lestian...I always have." She touched the screen softly. "Can I ask you something?"

Lestian gave Tarishiana a questioning look. "You can ask me anything....you know that."

"Do you want children?...I mean...not because your parents want us to have children, but do you want to be a father?" Tarishiana did her best to keep her dark betazoid eyes on his, but it was harder then she thought it would be. She wasn't sure if she was ready for his answer, whatever it was.

Lestian's face showed no signs of change as he began to speak. "To be honest, I have never had any desire to be a father...always knew I would be...my mother made it clear that it was expected of us." He paused, but before he continued a soft smile crossed his face. "But, nothing makes me happier then the idea of having a family with *you*"

Tarishiana has let her eyes move from the screen as Lestian had began to explain his lack of desire for children. She wanted to be a mother but that was only after she had found her love of Starfleet, she didn't know if she was ready to give it up for the ability to have a family. It wasn't until the last work he spoke registered in her head that she looked back up. She smiled and let out a sigh. "Fine...tell your mother I will retire in two more years...the wedding can be then."

Lestian smiled, "I will take this news to her, and see what I can do to buy you some more time...Little Dove, I know you think I don't understand...but I can't imagine giving up this life for the one you describe...I do love you...and I promise I will make you happy." Tarishiana nodded as the transmission ended.

She let out sigh as she leaned back in the chair she

had been sitting in. She had spent the last ten years having these arguments with Lestian's mother though Lestian. She hated it. She could only hope that after her wedding, the arguments would end. But she knew she wasn't that lucky.

[OFF]

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Lestian
Possible Boyfriend
NPC'd by Barel

Life's a Beach

Posted on 26 Feb 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: San Francisco, Ocean Beach

Timeline: MD 03 - 1200 hrs

[ON]

Tarishiana was fuming. Her mother just wouldn't let it go. "I still have two years." she reassured herself quietly as she walked along the beach. She had been told that her new commanding officer was located out this way and she had a feeling that the fact that she was an Orion female would make it easier to locate her. That might have been true had Tarishiana not received a communication from her irritating mother just moments before.

It didn't matter how much Tarishiana accomplished since she wasn't barefoot and pregnant she was a failure. Lestian got to have his career, but not her. She let out a huff as she kicked the small lump of sand just in front of her foot. With her hands on her hips it took her a moment to realize what she had just done. "Perfect" she said softly, "I am so sorry." She started as saw who she had assaulted with her temper tantrum.

Fortunately for Lirha, her eyes had been closed as she dozed off on the sand underneath the morning sun. Feeling a shower of coarse grain suddenly pelt her face and chest, she pushed herself up on her arms and violently shook her head to clear the sand from her face. With her free hand, she took several moments to wipe her skin clean, then looked up to identify the offender. The sun was right in her eyes and she couldn't clearly see the person, but the dark and curvy silhouette suggested that it was a young woman. "What was that for?" the Orion demanded in a fussy voice. Lirha rarely became angry, but she was definitely displeased with the woman's actions.

"I assure you the only person that was meant to assault was my mother in law." Tarishiana said apologetically. "I will be sure to be more careful when I decide to punish the beach because of a self righteous Betazoid." She added as she lowered down next to the women and began brushing the

sand off the women's towel. "With how my luck is going lately, I am going to assume that you are Commander Saalm." She smiled as she finished brushing the sand from where she could reach.

The Orion stood up and ran her hands through her dark hair to rid it of the sand, then adjusted the top of her bikini to relieve herself of the uncomfortable sensation. "I am," she replied as she looked into the woman's dark eyes, "And who might you be?" she asked with a stern face, still not happy with being rudely roused from her morning relaxation. The woman in question was not wearing her uniform and it was impossible for Lirha to tell what rank or position she might hold.

"Master Warrant Officer, Tarishiana Barel." She started. She could sense the irritation coming from the women who didn't yet know she was her new commanding officer. "I am your new Chief Science Officer." She continued, "Not my most impressive first impression I assure you." She added with a light almost nervous laugh.

The captain took in the woman's appearance. She was average height, a little shorter than herself with a slender frame and brown hair and striking black eyes. *Betazoid*, Lirha thought to herself. She had been around the Alpha and Beta Quadrants a few times and had learned to easily spot her species. Although she wasn't prejudiced, Lirha found herself slightly cautious around them due to their telepathic abilities.

"I'm not sure I've read your file, yet, Miss Barel. Are you a new transfer?" she asked honestly.

"Yes, Ma'am" Tarishiana said with a nod. "Was in San Francisco for some needed shore leave when I received my new orders." She looked over the Orion for a moment. "I had heard that you were out here and had intended on doing a little recon before we met...but that was before." she smiled trying not to obsess over the long list of things she hated about Lestian's mother.

With a sigh, Lirha calmed herself a bit as she realized she was probably being somewhat unpleasant to her new science officer. "It's nice to meet you. Please, have a seat." she said, and

motioned to a nearby patch of sand while she sat back down on her towel, legs crossed. Almost fully exposed in her small bikini, her green skin was beginning to turn a deep olive color under the sun and contrasted elegantly against the multiple black tattoos which littered her back and shoulders. At the present moment, she looked anything but a Starfleet captain.

Smoothing the fabric of her dress beneath her as she sank into the warm sand Tarishiana couldn't help but smile as the breeze from the ocean touched her face. She took a deep breath before turning back towards her new captain. "I really am sorry about the whole sand thing." She had felt how that had gone over at the time and she was honestly apologetic. "Last time I will apologize I promise." She added with a smile.

"It's alright, you just happened to catch me in one of my more quiet and tranquil moments." she replied, finally returning the woman's small with a small one of her own. "So you are my new science officer? Was that a request, or an assigned transfer?" she asked Tarishiana, curious as to her current career situation.

"A little bit of both actually." Tarishiana started simply, "The Genevieve was being decommissioned. The CO had been granted a new command and the crew was given an option to stay or to go." As she spoke her finger found its way into the sand. Moving it around an abstract picture began to take shape. "I chose not to...so I was assigned here." she looked back up at the Orion. "Not many officer enjoy working below enlisted personnel."

"I see," she replied, and adjusted herself on her towel. "You must be a very competent officer to hold such a high enlisted rank. You appear close to earning your commission." Lirha stated, unsure of what prospects the warrant officer had on the horizon. "What is your service record like?" she asked, wanting to know a brief run-through of her previous postings and positions. She could have reached into her bag and recalled the information from her PADD but she wanted to hear it from a first-person perspective.

"I enlisted in 2378." Tarishiana began as she thought over the dates in her head. "I was stationed on the USS Kodiak Island until 85 as a language specialist until I was transferred to the USS Genevieve as a science liaison...Now I am on the Galileo as your Chief Science Officer." She could go into more specifics but most people didn't want to know. A general run down was her best bet.

The captain's ears perked up at the mention of linguistics. "Language specialist? *Ench'ru mar ulik Thakolarivaj*?" she asked with a raised eyebrow and also hopeful that she might be able to speak her native tongue with someone on her crew.

Tarishiana smiled for a moment as her mind quickly dissected the phrase. *Thakolarivaj* was the orion word for their empire. With in a few moments she was able to finish a rough translation. "Lecht Elt mar ulik Thakolarivaj, et keheru " She finished with a smile. The fact that she was a telepath made it a bit easier to understand a new language. While she had been introduced to the Orion language, she had never mastered the higher form.

"Excellent," Lirha said with a smile, then paused to try a more practical language. "*tIhIngan Hol Dajath'a*?" she asked Tarishiana in Klingon, as her mind wandered to her upcoming mission. It would be extremely helpful to have another crew member well-versed in the language in case of any possible encounters with the Empire.

Tariahiana laughed lightly as she nodded. "Klingon, Tellurite, Andorian, Vulcan, Romulan, Ferengi, Denobulan." She started, "I have a working knowledge of quite a few more. I pick up languages quite quickly so I can usually stumble through the ones I don't know."

"Well I think you'll fit in quite nicely with the crew, Miss Barel. We have quite a diverse range of species on board, especially amongst the enlisted crew." the captain replied with a nod of approval. She unfolded her legs and once again stretched her body out on the towel, then laid back with her hands clasped behind her head. "Have you been enjoying shore leave in San Francisco so far?"

Tarishiana scoffed slightly, she hated shore leave. It

was the one time she couldn't use the excuse of her job with her parents. "I love San Francisco...Not such a huge fan of shore leave." she looked out over the ocean. That last thing she needed was to have her new commanding officer think she was some mental case. "When you have parents in high social circles, being easily found is never a convenience." she added with a bright smile as she turned back to the Orion. "How about you? Other than getting covered in sand."

With a smirk, Lirha turned her head to the dark haired woman and looked into her Betazoid eyes. "I wish I could say that I was also on shore leave, but I was assigned my command two days ago with a launch window of only five days. As you can probably imagine, I don't exactly have time for vacation...only the occasional few hours when I can sneak away from the HQ." she said with a wink.

Tarishiana understood what Lirha meant. In the 11 years she had spent in Starfleet she had seen her fair share of the work COs put into getting their ships off the ground, or out of dock as it were. "Well if there is anything I can help you with, I am more than willing to cut my shore leave a little short. I may only be a science officer, but I know my way around a starship." she finished by returning the Commander's wink.

"We have a systems check and an all-crew banquet in two days, but other than that, just relax and enjoy the rest of your vacation." the Orion replied. "Would you like to relax for a while with me? I think I need another hour under the sun before I'm fit to go back to work..." she commented with a mischievous smile.

Tariahiana appreciated the offer, but she had some arrangements to deal with. "Thank you, ma'am." she started, "I appreciated the offer but I have a few more sand piles to accost before I call my mother." she didn't even try to hid her disdain for the event, but it was necessary. She had to inform her mother of the change in date before Leviana Tomick did it for her.

With a nod, Lirha gave the woman a final smile before she departed. "Well, Miss Barel, it was a pleasure to meet you. I expect to see you for our

systems check in two days?" she asked, "I will send the information to your PADD."

"Thank you ma'am." Tarishiana said with a polite nod and a smile as she brushed the sand of her skirt. Turning to head the direction from which she had come. She had wasted more then enough time. She had a call to make.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Life's a Stress

Posted on 28 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Mess Hall

Timeline: MD 03 - 1330 hrs

[ON]

Despite still being late morning and having eaten breakfast only a few hours ago, Lirha was starving. Perhaps it was the anxiety of launching a new starship, or maybe the new pressure of being a commanding officer, whatever the reason, she needed to escape her office and get a meal. She exited the small room and made her way down the corridor and down a flight of stairs, then continued on until she entered the large main cafeteria. Lirha made a beeline straight for the buffet-style service line, grabbed a plate and some cutlery, then procured her lunch from the crewmen who were working the mess. Plate in hand with a glass of water, she squeezed her way through the crowded room and took a seat at an open table in the corner.

Dru walked into the mess hall, her stomach grumbling from having had missed breakfast due to some early morning appointments. She hadn't managed a good night sleep last night due to being concerned about the crew and how they were handling the stress and pressure of reading the ship for launch. As Dru walks over to the table she grabbed a sandwich, uncertain if she could manage much more, her stomach seemed so unsettled.

Glancing around the large room, Lirha somehow managed to catch a glimpse of her counselor, Drusilla, making her way through the crowd. Hopeful that she would have some company, she raised her green hand in the hopes that she would join her.

Dru noticed someone waving their hand at her and saw it was Lirha. She hesitated slightly, uncertain if she was in a form right now that company would feel comfortable with her.

The captain flashed a smile after making eye-contact with the brown haired woman, then

motioned for her to come sit at her table. She had enjoyed Drusilla's company over the last few days and wanted to return the favor.

Dru looked down again at the sandwich in her hand, confused about what she should do. On one hand she didn't wish to upset the Commander but on the other hand, she felt she might distress the Captain if she realised the state Dru was building herself into.

Dru closed her eyes and took a few deep breaths to compose herself, before walking over to the Commander's table and taking a seat beside her, hoping that the side view would hide the dark rings under her eyes. "Commander, how are you today?"

"I'm well, Lieutenant, and yourself?" she asked as she glanced over at Drusilla, noticing she seemed a bit fatigued.

"I'm fine Ma'am. Just decided I need a breather from the work and I needed something to eat." Dru held up her sandwich and smiled slightly. Suddenly Dru's stomach was heard grumbling. As Dru blushed she looked down at the table in front of her, "Apologises Ma'am, I guess I'm hungrier than I anticipated."

"You got here just in time, then." Lirha said with a smile, then started taking a few bites of her own salad. After a brief pause, she wiped her mouth and looked back over at the counselor. "Has our new crew been keeping you busy?" she asked, wondering what kind of work load Drusilla had undertaken in the past few days.

Dru picked at the crust on her sandwich as she composed a response, "Well I've already seen half of the crew coming with us at this point. Nobody I have any concerns over, a few I will need followups to keep an eye on certain issues, but overall your crew seems to be in good order Ma'am."

"That's good to hear," she replied with a nod, then took a sip out of her water glass, "Please, Lieutenant, when we're on duty, call me 'Captain'. Ma'am just seems so..." she paused to think of the word, "Formal." she finished with a grin. Lirha was happy to have Drusilla with her, as it provided her some much-needed company in an otherwise busy

and administrative-filled day.

Dru smiled softly at the Commander's request, "I guess I can do that M...Captain. I know the feeling of formal really isn't nice sometimes. When I'm seeing people in sessions, I always telling them that ranks are left at the door and I'm Dru or Drusilla and I ask them permission to call them by their first name while they are in my office."

"That seems like a good technique." Lirha commented, then pushed a few more fork-fuls of salad into her mouth followed by another sip of water. "So when we are off duty, I may call you Dru?" she asked. She hadn't been aware her counselor had a nickname but she liked it nonetheless.

Dru looked up at Lirha suddenly glad she had sat down with her. Dru was starting to feel slightly more at ease and relaxed which surprised her, she hadn't expected to feel that way around Lirha given as she was Captain of the ship, most stress and pressure would be placed on her. "I much prefer Dru, I find Drusilla to be a bit of a mouthful and everytime I hear it I imagine hearing my mother yell it because I've done something wrong."

"I'll be sure to remember that. You may call me Lirha when we're off duty. And I know that feeling all too well." the captain replied with a sideways grin. "I used to get a mouthful from my parents every time I acted up... which was pretty often, considering I was the only child stuck aboard a two-hundred meter cargo freighter. I had a tendency to wander around in places I shouldn't have." she said.

"What was that like Captain, growing up on a cargo freighter? I'm guessing if it was two hundred meters, you'd plenty of space for hide and seek?" Dru pushed away her sandwich, still feeling a little unsettled in her stomach.

"Oh yes," she replied with bright eyes as she looked at Dru, "Plenty of places to hide...and to get lost. I once trapped myself inside of a maintenance conduit for fourteen hours. The whole crew was searching for me and I was hysterical and traumatized by the time they found me." she said as she recalled that frightful day.

"And how do you feel now about enclosed spaces? It can't be easy living onboard a spaceship." Dru ran her hand through her hair as she watched Lirha.

The captain ate some more of her salad as she pondered the counselor's question. She wasn't particularly fond of tight spaces, but didn't necessarily fear them either. "I'm impartial to them, I guess." she said with a shrug. "I'd rather not be stuck in a Jeffries tube for hours at a time, but I don't feel uncomfortable inside of one."

Dru suddenly blushed slightly, "Sorry Captain, counselling side of me is kicking in, I do have a tendency to sometimes over analyse situations."

"It's quite alright, Lieutenant. You know, sometimes it is effective to simplify things a bit. Especially for your own piece of mind. In my experience, over-analyzing can sometimes have negative effects on a person's decision making ability." she suggest to the blue-eyed woman, then took a couple more bites of her salad.

Dru looked down at her hands as she felt a level of upset building, her earlier feeling of being relaxed deminishing, "One would say my job is to over analyse to a certain degree. How else do I get people to talk about their true emotions...If I sat around all day in a chair there'd be no point of me being there. People may just speak to a wall."

Lirha finished her salad and wiped her mouth clean, then deposited her napkin on the empty plate. "You're anything but a wall, Lieutenant," she said and gave her a reassuring smile, "I know it's your job to think and to question things, but if you ever feel overwhelmed, don't be afraid to step back and simplify things." she added, "At least, that's what I do."

"It's difficult to simplify things when sometimes you need the complicated to get through to people and to understand people. Counselling isn't as easy as it seems. You need to be able to pick up on the smallest of things and to pick it apart." Dru pinched the bridge of her nose. "Maybe I should go have a lie down."

"You do look a bit tired. I wasn't going to say

anything earlier when I first saw you, but you look like you had a rough night." she commented in a quiet voice, then looked up into Dru's fatigued eyes. "Is everything okay?" she asked with concern. It wouldn't do any good to have her new counselor wearing herself out and unable to help other members of the crew.

Dru raised her hands to rub the palm of her hands against her eyes, "I'm alright Captain. I'm just having the same stresses as everyone else, trying to settle in and get read up on all of the crew files and evaluations."

Lirha nodded, "I feel the same way sometimes. It's been a challenge to get the *Galileo* ready for launch." she said, then patted Dru gently on the leg. "Go get some rest until 1600 hours. Captain's orders."

Dru rested her elbows on the table as she kept the palm of her hands against her eyes, "Is there anyway I can get out of those orders? I'm not certain my schedual will allow me that much time off Captain." Dru moved her head to the side and smiled softly at the Captain, realising she was lucky to have a Captain who cared for her crew as much as Lirha was.

"I'm sorry Dru," Lirha said, breaking her code of on and off duty formalities, "You need some rest and I need my counselor to be in good mental health if you are to perform her duties competently." she said as she looked at the dark bags under the counselor's eyes. "It's only two hours of down-time, but I expect you to use it to get some rest." she said firmly.

Dru realised that Lirha might be right as she rubbed her eyes again, "Ok Li...Captain." Dru closed her eyes as she realised her mistake, when Lirha had address her by her name she'd forgotten she was still talking to her Captain.

"I'll see you later tonight then, Lieutenant." she said with a smile as she shooed away her counsellor back to her quarters.

Dru dragged herself to her feet, suddenly realising how exhausted she was, "Till then Captain. Good night I guess." Dru dragged herself off to her

quarters, hoping there would be a bed available not covered in equipment.

Lirha watched her counselor slowly and tiredly walk out of the mess hall and into the hallway. She was more than concerned, at this point, and pulled her PADD from her belt to enter an appointment reminder to go visit Dru in a couple of hours. With a sigh, she stood up and maneuvered through the crowd in the cafeteria, finally making her way to the large exit doors and out into the hallway.

[OFF]

CDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

A Chow Down Run In!

Posted on 21 Feb 2012 @ 7:16am by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: *USS Galileo*, Mess Hall

Timeline: MD 03 - 1900 hrs

[ON]

As Dru looked around her office, she groaned. There were still wires sticking out of the walls and panels missing. She had no idea how on earth the room would be ready before the *Galileo* left the drydock.

It was so important to Dru that the office was in total order before she stated seeing people. She would need an office in which people felt they would be able to relax and open up to her. In its current state, all this office would achieve would be people meeting a stressed out counsellor.

Dru checked the time and decided she needed a break. She figured this would be as good an opportunity as any to go visit the mess hall. It would give her an opportunity to maybe meet some of the new crew and get a feel of how they were settling in. Dru smiled as she realised if other areas were like her office, everyone was probable going to be in a stressed out state like her.

Having spent most of the evening reading through a seemingly endless supply of status reports, ship completion schedules, and debating the finer points of LCARS access with a still-as-unresponsive computer as ever, John had decided that it was about time he put down the PADDs and get something to eat.

The mess hall, luckily enough, wasn't an excessively long distance away from the XO's office, one of the perks of his rank he had decided, and he was more than happy to see the mess doors part ahead of him and welcome him inside. At this time of evening, the mess hall wasn't exactly busy. Even with only a skeleton crew of a few dozen individuals and the occasional engineer wandering

through, the mess hall was not exactly a focal point whilst half the ship was still being finished. A couple of crewmen and non-coms were hanging around in one corner, huddled on one of the sofa sections as they continued their discussion, standard replicated plates and cutlery in front of them giving the slightest hint at the meal that they once contained. Heading to the replicator itself, John placed his order.

"Hasperat, extra spicy" He had decided he had a hankering for something with a bit more of a kick to it, the replicated stuff wasn't as good as what he had experienced during a trip to Bajor several years ago, but it would more than suffice. With its usual whirr and glimmer of light, the replicator completed his request, and the dish appeared.

Removing it from the small receptacle, he headed towards a table in the opposite corner from the other crew members on board, and sat down, PADD in hand, continuing to review the starship's schematics with one hand, whilst collecting a portion of hasperat with the other.

As Dru stood surveying the mess hall trying to balance a plate in one hand, a glass with her cutlery in her other hand and a PADD under her elbow. Dru took in the numerous groups of people laughing and enjoying themselves and decided it might be a little awkward to ask them to allow someone they don't know to sit with them. The counsellor suddenly noticed one table where a person was sitting on their own. Dru decided he seemed to be her best option, at least if he didn't wish to talk; they could sit in companionable silence, each reading their own PADD.

As Dru walked carefully over to the table, she cleared her throat to try catch the man's attention, "Excuse me? Do you mind if I sit here?"

Several bites into his meal, the Commander was pulled out of the world of status updates by a voice in rather close proximity. Looking up he saw a woman wearing the uniform of the science division, someone he had not yet met.

"Of course, feel free Lieutenant..." he left his sentence open to hopefully get her to reveal her

name, if he was going to have to get used to having such a small crew, then he may as well start here.

Dru smiled nervously as she suddenly noticed the pips in the collar of the man. Realising he was looking at her awaiting an answer, Dru pulled herself up slightly straighter, "Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy, Commander. I'm sorry if I'm interrupting, I can find another seat."

"Nice to meet you Lieutenant, please take a seat, I'm Lieutenant Commander John Holliday, first officer."

He took another bite from his dinner as he tried to think where the name had been familiar to him from; it took a few moments for him to put the events of the past few days together, before he hit upon an answer.

"Our new counsellor I presume? I think I might have seen your file during the crew evaluations"

Dru carefully set her plate and cup on the table, trying to ensure she didn't drop or spill any of it, before she took her seat. "That's me Sir. I've only just been reassigned, less than 48hours now I think. The last few hours have been a bit of a whirlwind Sir. How are you finding your new ship?" Dru picked up a fork and started moving her food around her plate. She hadn't been thinking when she requested a spaghetti carbonara and suddenly realised this could be a bit a messy.

"If I'm honest? She's...small. That's the only word I can find to describe this ship right now. I'm used to bigger vessels, Galaxy class, Sovereigns, that kind of thing, these Nova classes are going to take some adapting. The first two days on board I don't think I left my office for more than a few moments at a time...I'm still holed up in there a lot these days....my first XO posting you see....I don't want to mess this one up."

He realised by the end of his sentence that John had done little more than ramble for the last couple of minutes, and was basically unloading himself onto this poor Lieutenant.

"Sorry, long day, probably got low blood sugar or

something...what about you Lieutenant? What do you think of *Galileo* "

Dru smiled over at John suddenly feeling far more at ease. "Well low blood sugar I'd recommend either a visit to the ship's Doctor or a bar of chocolate. Personally I'd prefer the chocolate. I thought I was the only person who found the *Galileo* small. After 6years on board a Sovereign class ships, I am slightly worried I might find the *Galileo* claustrophobic. Mind you, the fact that the number of staff is less than 1/4 of what I am used to it'll be somewhat easier."

Dru took a drink of her water before looking back over at John, "Your first XO position? Well you should be careful not to wear yourself out before the crew even get here. You should take this time to gently ease yourself in."

Nodding in agreement as he continued his way through his meal, John took a sip from his own water glass, and continued on.

"I couldn't agree more, but I tell you, I'll be much happier once all the engineering work is done and we're out of here, sitting in a drydock on a planet just doesn't feel right to me. I was born on Mars, never did quite see Earth as home, doubt I probably ever will."

Taking another bite from his rapidly disappearing plate of hasperat, John let the flavours bounce around his mouth before continuing any further.

"Hopefully Commander Saalm will get us out into space on time in a couple of days, we have a mission accomplish after all!"

Dru continued to push her food around her plate before taking a few mouthfuls and grimacing slightly. She made a note to talk to engineering about the salt content the replicator seemed to have put into her food; it was already salty enough with the bacon pieces then adding anymore. "Mars? I have to say I've only been a handful of times. What is the planet really like? I'm not sure I could give up the oceans we have here on Earth easily, the Atlantic Ocean has always been home to me, my one beacon within the depth of space."

Dru blushed slightly as she realised she was getting a bit poetic. She tilted her head down to take another mouthful of food to try covering it up.

"It's nothing special....the terraforming process over the past few years has pretty much made it into a copy of Earth...albeit not quite as wet! Some of the old colony domes are still in place, they use them like laboratories, or as overflow storage, but in general, the planet is heading towards being M-Class itself."

He chuckled for a moment as he saw a look of humiliation or embarrassment on his subordinates face.

"Nothing wrong with the oceans though, just not much call for them in space! What about you lieutenant? Where's home?"

Dru blushed further as she heard the Commander's chuckle and mentally kicked herself, *You made a fool of yourself in front of the CO and now you've done it in front of the XO Dru, way to go hun*

Dru cleared her throat, "I'm from the west coast of a small island called Ireland, if you don't know Earth well you may not know of it. The Emerald Green Island is the old nickname for it. I come from a very rural area in the North West, millions from civilisation." Dru laughed softly, "As rare an occurrence as it is these days, there is still rural areas left in Ireland. I haven't been there since I left for the academy though.....Not sure when I'll ever manage to get back."

Dru looked back down at her food; suddenly realising she'd lost her appetite. "Anyway Sir....so given you're the person I report to, does that mean I can lodge a complaint with you about the state of the counselling suite?" Dru smiled up at John but the smile didn't reach her eyes as she'd hit a sore point within herself.

As yet another issue came into him, John was sure that the hasperat in his mouth suddenly became even spicier, as if reacting to the continuous onslaught of work that he had to get done in time for a launch.

"Let me guess, you're missing half your walls, and there's a real danger of you falling down a Jeffries tube because the floor hasn't been put down properly?"

Taking a large swig from his glass, he felt the heat begin to dissipate.

"My office wasn't much better when I came aboard...I tell you what, I'll have a word with the engineering teams tomorrow, see if I can't at least get your room looking somewhere near finished? I can't promise much though; the dock master is less than pleased when I reallocate his men!"

"Sir...I was joking, a bit of light humour...maybe I'm not that great at it" Dru bit her lip and looked down at her plate. "You've more than enough on your plate then to be fixing a counselling suite. If worse comes to worse, I can counsel people in any location available in which a crew member feels comfortable. You've a lot more important matters to be dealing with."

Dru hesitates slightly but realises, she's on duty she should do her job, "Are you getting a lot of hassle from people trying to get the ship ready?" Dru intentionally drops the Sir and Commander as she never feels she can try to counsel people when they have to stand on formalities with each other.

"Heh, you could say that. With Commander Saalm tied up with the fun of paperwork and dealing with Admirals who want an interview with the latest member of the fleet, a lot of the lower ranking stuff becomes my responsibility...we didn't even have phasers operational until this morning." he sighed and finished the last of his meal.

"Don't take it personally, I just haven't been getting a huge amount of sleep the last couple of days....I'm hoping once preparations are completed, I can get my head down and recharge, command is nothing if not a challenge."

"Just remember, you need to pace yourself. Once the ship gets under way you'll have the day to day running of the ship and its crew to try manage, if you run yourself into the ground at this point you'll find it difficult to try recover afterwards. Have you

tried just going for a walk even? Go visit friends?" Dru sat back in her seat and took another drink of her water.

"I'm not exactly a friends sort of guy...I usually prefer my own company, either that or a few hours on the phaser range, that usually breaks down some of the tension...I might have to commandeer myself a holodeck later"

He finished the end of his water.

"You're welcome to join me if you'd like Counsellor? Even a therapist needs to keep sharp with a phaser right?"

Dru tilted her head down as she blushed once again, "Well...to be honest...I'm not that great with a phaser. Being a counselling I'm about negotiating rather than fighting, also the clumsy aspect of me doesn't agree with phaser. If you don't mind ducking a lot when I try to take shots I don't mind. Might do me good to get some training in."

"It's your lucky day then!" John perked up at the chance to train someone in tactical matters.

"I was an instructor of tactical training at the Academy up until recently. If there's anyone who can get you hitting the target rather than your shipmates, it's me. Just make sure we leave the safeties on in the holodeck!" he laughed, trying his best to get some humour into the conversation to make up for his earlier failure.

"I don't know....I kinda like the idea of hitting shipmates accidentally should they get on my nerves." Dru smiled softly at the thought. "But sure....with such a small crew I guess I really should be as best prepared as I can...I'd love to take you up on your offer."

"Ok well once we get this bird in the sky, I'll schedule in some holodeck time at the end of a shift, call it official business, rather than just R&R....I'm sure you're going to be busy yourself with a new ship and a new crew to help integrate! My door is always open if you need a hand with anything." He quipped before wiping his mouth with a napkin.

Green Women

Posted on 27 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Nesh Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Lirha's Quarters

Timeline: MD 03 - 2030 hrs

[ON]

Despite still being somewhat early in the night, Lirha was exhausted. She had spent most of the afternoon sitting in her office conducting personnel interviews and reading over mountains of paperwork in order to prepare the *Galileo* for launch. When the sun had finally set about an hour ago, she had breathed a sigh of relief and packed her bags, returning to her quarters shortly afterwards.

Now, she sat on the bed in her room wearing a tight Starfleet tank-top and a pair of old athletic shorts. The Orion reached over to the desk next to her and grabbed the small, portable console and set it on her bed. She adjusted herself and laid down on her belly as she flipped the screen up and began to tap away at the communications screen. It had been several months since Lirha had spoken with anyone from home, and she was quite anxious to find out how her mother and sister were doing. It didn't take long for her to find her family's comm channel, and she pressed the transmit button to open a visual link to whoever was home. While she waited for someone to answer, she pushed a stray lock of dark hair from her eyes and tucked it behind her ear.

Nesh had been sitting at her desk attempting to avoid doing her school work. She hated school. Ok, it wasn't that she hated school she just didn't see the point. It was boring and lead to things like college or the Starfleet Academy. She wanted neither. A smile crossed her face as she need for a diversion presented itself in the form of an incoming communication. Excitement ran though her as her sister came into view on the screen. "Oh my god, Lirha." she stared with a larger then life grin. "I was hoping you would call soon."

Lirha smiled back with bright eyes at the sight of her sister on the small screen. "Hi," she said in a

"Sir...doesn't official business defeat the purpose of you using the opportunity to unwind?" Dru laughed as she gathered up her PADD which she had left on the chair beside her. "And you know the same goes in return; my door is always open if ever you need a chat or someone to bounce things off of that is my job after all."

"Haha it might do, but it does mean precedence over people who just want the holodeck for fun, one of the perks of being the XO I think. Well then lieutenant, I've got some paperwork left to sort out.... *after* I get some sleep, counsellor's orders right" He smirked, before rising to leave.

"At least 6hours Commander, if not more." Dru smiled to herself. "And if that doesn't work I might see about getting the CO make you spend some time on the beach, at least there you have to lie back and enjoy the sun, even if you've a PADD in your hand you'll relax with the sun and stay there, and if we are lucky enough the sand will get into your PADD and render it useless."

"Haha yes ma'am" He jokingly replied, before getting up, returning his tray to the replicator, and heading back to his quarters for some sleep, hopefully more than the two hours or so he had been managing up to now. This ship would soon be heading into space, and he needed to be ready.

[OFF]

LTJG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

soft voice as she took in Nesh's appearance. Although it had only been a few months since they had last spoken, she seemed to have grown up by a few years. Her normally long and curly black hair had been cut short around her chin and straightened, and her skin's natural eye shadow had finally developed. She looked more like a woman than the little girl Lirha was used to seeing. "It's good to see you...hope you weren't busy when I called?" she asked.

"No!" Nesh responded quickly. "Just trying to avoid doing my school work." she looked over her sister for a moment with a big smile. She had missed Lirha, more than she cared to admit on a normal day. "And don't go giving me the lecture about how important an education is to my future...I hear it constantly from mom." she rolled her eyes in remembrance of that exact conversation earlier in the day.

Lirha chuckled and stared back at her beautiful little sister. "Of course not, Nesh. You know, I wasn't very fond of school either when I was your age. Mom and I got into quite a few fights over the years... I'm sure she's told you about some of them, by now." she said with a smirk. "How is she, by the way?"

"Busy." Nesh responded easily. "She is still running that little shop down on Baxter. Business has been good, but we have dinner together every night." She fight back the loneliness that crept into her voice. She was happy for her mom and for Lirha, she really was. It didn't change the fact that she wanted to start living her life. "She misses you...she tells me I remind her of you a lot...and I mean A LOT." she laughed, "How are you? I heard you got your own ship command thingy."

"I'm okay," she answered with a sigh, then propped her head up with her hand under her chin. "I've been busy also... and yes, I've got my own 'ship command thingy'." she said with a light laugh. "It's called a starship, Nesh. The *USS Galileo*, to be exact. She's a small survey vessel and is just finishing construction here in San Francisco." she said, then picked up a PADD from her bed. She queued up a picture of a Nova Class ship, then transmitted the image to Nesh's console for her to

look at. "What do you think?" Lirha asked, hoping for her sister's approval. She had the feeling that Nesh wasn't particularly fond of Starfleet, but Lirha had worked hard for her newest command and was proud of her accomplishments so far.

Nesh downloaded the photo and look over it quickly. As far as she was concerned the ships all look the same. "It's nice." she said with a smile towards her sister. "Survey vessel...that's pretty cool." she was glad that she wasn't on one of the more ominous sounding ones. "So since you are in San Fransisco.." She started as her tone turned a little more hopeful. "Does that mean you are going to get a chance to come see me? I mean us?"

"I wish I could, but I'm too busy right now with my duties." she answered apologetically, turning her eyes away from her sister for a moment. She knew Nesh wouldn't be very happy, considering they were in such close proximity to each other at the current moment.

A rather genius idea suddenly flashed through Lirha's mind and she looked back up at her sister with a hopeful smile. "Do you have any plans for tomorrow? Other than school?" she asked.

"I was going to go help mom at the shop since I don't have school tomorrow." Nesh started, their mother had wanted her to do more something more constructive then sitting at home talking with her friends. "She just wants to keep and eye on me...Why do you ask?" Her face curled up inquisitively as her mind began to wonder what her sisters intentions were.

"Do you want to come visit me at Starfleet HQ?" she proposed with a raised eyebrow. "I can pick you up in the morning and we can spend some time together during the day and later that night... I haven't seen you in so long, I really miss you." Lirha said softly with a smile. "You can tell mom that I kidnapped you." she said with a mischievous grin.

Nesh's smile soon matched Lirha's as she thought. "I would love that." She could think of nothing better then spending the day with her big sister. Lirha may not know it but Nesh idolized her. She hated that

she was gone so much but she was grateful her big sister was so happy. "But we should at least tell Mom...after you come get me...I don't want her thinking I ran away again."

Lirha paused, then narrowed her eyes. "Ran away?" she asked in a cautious voice. "What did you do, Nesh?" she demanded in a sisterly manner.

Nesh had realized her mistake as soon as the words had left her lips. An uneasy almost guilty smile came to her face as she thought about playing it off. "A month ago...there was this boy." she started. She couldn't look at Lirha while she retold the story. "He had tickets to a concert and Mom wouldn't let me go since I had school the next day." She looked back up at the screen. "So she thought I was at school and I was really in Huntington Park with Markus." She shrugged, "Mom was pretty pissed...I just got ungrounded a few days ago."

Lirha sighed and shook her head in a disapproving manner. "Aren't you a little young to be running around with a boyfriend?" she said. The sentence was phrased as a question but Lirha didn't give her time to respond. "If I was mom, I'd be pissed too. What is it with you always pushing her and making her job tougher?" she asked, scolding her younger sister.

Nesh let out a huff at Lirha's comment. She shook her head for a moment before she looked her sister in the eyes. "You don't get to yell at me from a million miles away about what I should or shouldn't do with Mom. No offense Lirha but you aren't exactly around anymore...and you aren't my mother. Can't you just be my sister...for once!" She looked down at her hands in her lap once she had finished speaking. "He isn't my boyfriend." she mumbled.

"Listen, young lady," Lirha began in a firm tone which resembled that of their mother's, "I might not be mom but I still care about you just the same. I know I'm not around much and I'm sorry, but you know what my life is like..." she said, letting her voice trail off softly at the end. She didn't want to get upset with Nesh or give her a hard time, but she really did care about her.

"You're right..." Nesh started meekly. "I know

exactly what your life is like." She finally looked up. "But have you ever thought as to what *mine* is like?" Just like her sister had before her, she didn't give her a chance to answer. "I am the one that sees how sad Mom is when she thinks no one is around. I am the one she holds on to so tightly because she doesn't hear from you or Livana for months." She shook her head slightly. "So yeah, I went to a concert with a friend even though mom told me no, and for one night...I got to be a normal kid." She felt for her mom and while her tone was harsh the statement held truth.

Lirha looked down and swallowed a lump in her throat. She knew her absence was probably tough on their mother but had never realized the extent until this moment. "I'll be right back." she whispered, then muted the screen as she slowly got up off her bed and walked to the sink in the bathroom. A flood of painful emotions swarmed through her head and it took her several moments to gather her composure. Swallowing a large glass of water, Lirha paused to look at herself in the mirror. Her eyes were red and wet, and she hastily wiped the tears from her face. She finally returned to her bed, un-muted the screen, and looked back at Nesh. "I'm sorry." she said quietly.

"I am too." Nesh said almost as quietly as Lirha. She raised a hand up to her cheek and wiped away the tears that was perched on her emerald cheek. She stayed quiet for what seemed like forever. Just staring at her hands. She finally looked up, "So...are you still going to come get me tomorrow? I promise to tell mom."

"Of course I will," she answered with a warm smile. "How does 0730 sound?" she asked, hoping that her sister would be awake and ready to go by then.

Nesh's sadness faded into a large smile. She was so relieved to not only get to see her sister but that she wasn't *that* mad at her. With a vigorous nod she finally replied. "I can be ready by then...and Lirha...thanks."

The captain winked at her younger sister, happy that she would be ready at the proposed time. "I can't wait to see you," she said softly and stared at Nesh through the screen, "You've grown up into a

beautiful lady." she added, happy that she had received the better parts of the family genes. Lirha put two of her green fingers to her lips, kissed them, then pressed them against the screen for Nesh to touch.

Nesh's cheeks flushed a pale amber at her sisters compliment. She gave an embarrassed smile. She didn't say anything, but she did mimic her big sisters movement. Placing her fingers to her lips and then to the screen where her sister's were. "I love you *ReeHee*." Her lips curved into a genuine smile.

Lirha felt her heart melt after being called *ReeHee*. It was Nesh's pet name for her, first adopted when she was still a baby and could barely pronounce Lirha's name. "Love you too," she said, "Get some rest tonight because we have a busy and fun day ahead of us tomorrow. That's an order." she finished with a big smile.

Nesh put her hand together as if to clap but with the repetitive motion. She spoke with an excited nod, "I will...you get some rest too." With that the transmission was terminated. With a renewed gusto Nesh returned to her studies. If their mother was going to let her go tomorrow she would have to have proof she had finished her homework.

After the screen turned dark, Lirha closed her portable console and returned it to her nightstand. She rolled over in bed with a satisfied smile on her face and stared at the grey ceiling as she thought about what activities Nesh might enjoy while she was in San Francisco. The captain still had a full day of work ahead of her tomorrow, but she was confident she could make some arrangements to keep her sister happy and busy while she was stuck in the office during the day.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Nesh Saalm
Little Sister
NPC'd by Barel

Counselor's Counselor

Posted on 02 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm &
Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Lirha's Quarters

Timeline: MD 03 - 2115 hrs

[ON]

After speaking with her sister for the better part of a half hour, Lirha was in good spirits. Though she knew she had a lot of work to complete the following day, she was nonetheless excited that Nesh would be coming to San Francisco and spending time with her at the HQ. She would have to work out something for Nesh to do while she was at work, but she felt confident that she could arrange plans for her. Lirha laid down happily on her back, then curled up on her side as she picked up a PADD from her nightstand and began to read through an updated supply manifest.

Dru walked up and down the corridor a few times, unsure if she should really be doing this. After their conversation earlier, Dru felt that Lirha was someone she could talk to, to share her concerns with but part of Dru also said that the woman is her Captain. Captain's can't fully be friends with their crew, they need to remain somewhat set aside. Dru had a feeling Lirha was different though...she wasn't sure why but it was a feeling. Dru hit the chime of the Captain's door before she could have second thoughts.

Hearing a soft chirp echo throughout her quarters, the captain sat up somewhat surprised. It was late in the evening, and to her knowledge, she wasn't expecting any visitors. "Enter." she said quietly as she folded her legs on her bed and looked to see who was outside.

As Dru walked into the Captain's quarters she had to prevent herself from running back out of the room again. As she stepped forward she looked around, finally locating the Captain who was on her bed, "Oh! I'm so sorry, I'll leave. I didn't mean to disturb you while resting." Dru moved to leave the room.

"Dru, wait..." she called out as she watched the brown haired woman start to leave. "There's no need to go, you aren't bothering me." she said in a soft voice, then moved out of her bed and to her feet. She was wearing her night attire and barely clothed, but hoped that Dru wouldn't mind seeing as her visit was unannounced. "Please, have a seat." she said, then flicked her eyes to the small couch near the window. "Can I get you something to drink?"

Dru looked away as she realised Lirha's state of undress and stumbled slightly. She was only ever used to seeing men in states of undress, she had never witnessed it with a woman before and was uncertain she was comfortable with it, "I really don't want to put you out Ma'am." Dru realised her mistake once the word Ma'am slipped out but she felt so flustered she didn't know what to do.

Seeing her counsellor once again flustered invoked a range of emotions within Lirha. She had hoped that after their casual lunch conversation earlier in the day, she would have been more comfortable around her. Yet despite her best attempts to put the woman at ease, Lirha was beginning to feel increasingly upset with herself as the moments of awkwardness persisted. "Dru, please call me Lirha. Especially at this time of night in my quarters." she said quietly with a small smile. "I'm off duty right now and the last thing I want to be called is Ma'am or Captain." she said, then sat down on the couch with her green legs crossed.

Dru turns back to Lirha and noticed the nightie riding up her leg. The counsellor quickly closed her eyes, trying to block it out, "Ma...Lirha...Can I ask you for a favour...Could you put on a night gown? A pair of bottoms? Something?" Dru opened her eyes and looked straight in Lirha, feeling so confused and uncertain, "Please Lirha?"

The captain nodded and gave Dru an apologetic smile as she stood and went to her chest of drawers. She rummaged around for a moment and pulled a pair of grey sweatpants and a loose white shirt from the drawer. She quickly slipped into them and returned to her seat on the couch, then pushed some of her out of her eyes. "My apologies."

"I'm the sorry one. I'm not used to seeing so much of a woman's body in such an intimate situation. I know Orions are comfortable with their sexuality and bodies but it isn't as easy for some humans, like myself", Dru smiled graciously.

"Yes, I've noticed." she replied with a sigh. "It was hard for me to adjust to Earth culture when I first arrived, and I still find myself occasionally putting people in uncomfortable situations." she added. "So, what's on your mind tonight?"

"I...I...um..." Dru looked down where her hands were playing with the helm of her jacket, "I guess I needed a friend and I wasn't certain who else to go to."

"You're always welcome to come talk to me." Lirha replied, "Please have a seat." she said, and moved over on the couch so Dru could sit next to her. Despite the late hour, she was actually happy to have some company, as it took her mind off other matters. "Did you finally get some rest this afternoon?" she asked.

Dru hesitated slightly, uncertain if she would be able to sit at Lirha's side as she was still slightly shaken up from seeing Lirha half naked. Realising she might upset Lirha, Dru moved over to sit on the edge of the couch. She had come here looking for a friend, she didn't wish to distress Lirha in anyway. "Well I followed your orders and went to bed, I wasn't able to switch off my mind so it was a very restless nap that I managed."

Lirha learned her head against the cushion and stared at her blue-eyed counsellor. "At least you tried," she said with approval. "Are you feeling overwhelmed by this new assignment? Or is there something else going on, maybe something personal in your life?" she asked Dru. The captain didn't often venture into the personal lives of her crew, but she was somewhat concerned at the moment for the woman's mental well-being.

"I'm finding it difficult to readjust. I..." Dru looked down at her hands as she tried to figure out what she wanted to say, "I thought a small ship would be easier compared to a bigger one but it isn't. Even

though on my last ship we all knew each other, at the end of the day you saw other's so briefly that distances could be maintained. When I saw people days or weeks would pass before I had to see them again, I could shelve away their troubles and issues. Already I've only been here two days and the strain of trying to read up on crew bios, trying to retain the information is weighing down on me. I..." Dru reaches up a hand to squeeze her eye lids shut, "I don't know how I can console a crew when I can't even handle my own emotions and feelings. I...I don't see how I can help them."

The Orion captain watched her counsellor intently as she voiced her concerns. "You can help them just like you have done with every other crewman who's stepped in your office." she said reassuringly, and tilted her head to the side as she turned her body to face Dru. "Just because the ship might be a different size or configuration from what you're used to doesn't mean that your duties should be any more complicated. Your job is to help the crew and help them work out whatever issues they might be having." she said quietly. "When was the last time you had a night to yourself or were able to relax without any interruptions?" she asked curiously.

Dru thought back through the last few months, "It's been awhile. Being the counsellor on a ship the size of the *USS Gladiator* meant I was 24/7. Since getting back to Earth I'd had to get ready for the change of ships and since getting here, I've had all the crew reports to go over, make myself available for the crew who need me and try get the gel packs off of my desk."

Lirha grinned at the reference to her disarrayed ship. "Do you have any friends or family here in San Francisco?" she asked, thinking of something to help Dru take her mind off of work. "When I start to feel overwhelmed, I like to talk to my siblings and my old friends. Helps to keep me grounded, in a way." she added.

Dru shook her head, she really didn't want to go down that route right now. She couldn't try cope with settling in and cope with her family aswell, it was all too much. "I try to use other methods to unwind and ground myself but noone of them are helping right now...thus why I thought having a

friend might help."

"I'll do my best," she replied softly, then thought for a moment as to what might make Dru feel more relaxed. "Are you by any chance fond of floral arts?" she asked, wondering if the brown haired woman wanted to see her small collection in the back room. It was a hobby which Lirha was rarely able to indulge, but she had nonetheless acquired a few exotic species of plant life over her years of travel.

Dru looked up at Lirha with a small smile on her face, "Flowers? I'd love to see it." Dru always had a passion for flowers, they were the innocents in the world, there to show their beauty, to share it with the world.

Standing up and stretching her back, Lirha led Dru into the back room of her quarters, a small area which contained the kitchen and storage cabinets. Several different species of flowers lined the inside ledge of the counter, each in their own separate pots and vases. She stepped to the side so that Dru could walk past her and get a closer look.

As Dru steps inside the door she can't believe her eyes, "You have a bajorian lilac?" Dru careful reaches out to trace her fingers across the pink and red petals of the flower, leaning down to smell the scent the flower is giving out. As she straightens back up, a flash of dark blue, "a midnight orchid?!?" Dru spun around to face Lirha with a big smile on her face. They are all so beautiful.

"Yes, I'm quite fond of the orchid and I haven't found another quite like it in many years." she replied, then shrugged. "It was a gift from my last boyfriend. We didn't exactly see eye-to-eye but he was very adept at indulging me." she added.

Dru turned back around to stroke her fingers across the leaves of a rose. "Your lucky...noone has ever bought me a flower. Did you know they all have each of their own meanings? The earth rose for example. Red is for love/seduction, yellow is for friendship, white is for mourning and pink is for joy." Dru picked up a discarded petal between her fingers and lightly rubs it with her fingers tips. Lirha raised a curious eyebrow. "No, I wasn't aware

of that." she said as she went over to the replicator and materialized two glasses of water. "You seem to be very well versed in the subject. I usually just pick them because I like the colours and the smell." she said with a smile, then walked next to Dru and handed her one of the glasses. She was happy to see her counsellor finally happy and enjoying herself, considering the state she was in when she first entered her quarters.

As Dru takes the glass of water she turned back to the flowers, "But they are so much more than that Lirha. They are living and breathing like you and me. All they want is to be taken care of. If you tend them with a gentle and caring hand, they will always reward you in the end. When they open up to you, they'll show you their in beauty, their vibrant colours. They are saying thank you."

Dru's lovely sentiment and passion for the plants had a warming effect on Lirha, causing her to lean contently against the wall as she watched the young woman delicately inspect the plants. "Would you like to have one of them?" she asked. It wouldn't be right not offer one to her, especially since Dru had much more of an appreciation for them than she did.

Dru shook her head to show a negative response, "They belong to you Lirha. No matter the reason they were given to you, they had reasons behind them. Whether it was a boyfriend saying sorry, or a boyfriend saying here take this and get off of my back, it doesn't matter. They each have a place in your life."

"Yes, I suppose you're right." she replied thoughtfully. Her mind turned to her sister's visit tomorrow, and she wondered what Nesh would think of them. Hopefully she would be able to appreciate them as much as Dru had. While Lirha's mind was on the subject, she remembered she needed to make arrangements for her sister while she took care of her duties during the day. "What are your plans for tomorrow?" she casually asked Dru.

Dru stood gazing down at a vulcan orchid, "Tomorrow? I guess more reading of crew bio's and also I have a handful of evaluations scheduled. How about yourself?"

"I have more administrative work and a few additional interviews. It seems more of the crew have arrived and I need to speak with a couple new senior officers." Lirha answered in a quiet voice. "I also made arrangements for my sister to come visit the HQ, but am struggling to find something for her to do while I am occupied in my office." she added, then looked into Dru's blue eyes. "Would you mind if she spent some time with you during the morning?"

"I'd love to Lirha. What age is she?" Dru turned to smile at Lirha while setting her empty glass on the table.

"Her name is Nesh, and she is fifteen." the Orion answered. "I haven't been able to see much of her over the past year because of my career, but she's a smart and savvy young woman. And she's growing up fast." she added with a sense of family pride. Lirha walked back into the main room and retrieved a PADD, then returned to the kitchen area and handed it to Dru. Displayed on the front page was a large portrait of Nesh from several months ago.

As Dru looked down at the picture she smiled slightly, "I'd say you've plenty of problems keeping the boys away from her. She has your eyes, not just the colour, but there's a small twinkle in it which I sometimes notice in yours."

Lirha smiled at Dru's compliment. "Yes, she's quite beautiful. And unfortunately, she seems to already have a boyfriend of sorts." she added with a disapproving sigh. "I get enough stares from the men here in HQ on a regular basis, I don't want to add to that by having my sister with me as well."

"People are always going to look no matter who you are with. It doesn't matter what race you are, humanoids are naturally inquisitive." Dru handed the PADD back to Lirha.

"I suppose." she said with a shrug. "Anyway, I really appreciate you looking after her. I was thinking I could drop her off at your office around 0930, and then the three of us can go to lunch together around noon?" she proposed. "I'm hoping to take her to the drydock in the afternoon so she

can see the *Galileo*. I think Commander Holliday will be on board, so hopefully he will be able to give her a quick tour."

"Sounds good to me Lirha. I'll try figure out something I can do with her to keep her occupied and I'll also ensure I keep my morning free." Dru moves to head towards the door, "Lirha.....thank you for tonight. I'm sorry about the state that I was in."

Lirha shook her head, dismissing Dru's apology. "It's quite alright, there's no need to apologize. In fact, you are the one who should be thanked, for agreeing to look after Nesh." she said with a warm smile, "Are you sure you're feeling better? You don't have to leave if you're not ready." she asked as she followed Dru to the door.

Dru hesitated slightly, uncertain if she did want to leave yet. She had been starting to enjoy herself and felt more relaxed with Lirha when she'd done in a longtime, she was loath to give that up. "Um...I don't wish to disturb you any further."

The captain put a green hand on her hip and tilted her head to the side. "Trust me, Dru, if you were disturbing me I would let you know." she said then retreated back to her couch and curled her legs up. "Besides, I could use the company."

Dru smiled over at Lirha and walked over to join her on the couch, "So Lirha tell me....."

The Orion stared back at Dru as they began to chat. She had no qualms with indulging her senior officer, and she smiled happily as the two of them began to converse.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief of Counselling
USS Galileo

Early Morning Pick Up

Posted on 04 Mar 2012 by Nesh Saalm & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Los Angeles, Saalm Residence

Timeline: MD 04 - 0730 hrs

[ON]

Nesh had found it hard to sleep knowing that in a few hours she would get to spend some time with Lirha. It has been forever. About an hour before she had planned on getting up her eyes popped open. Throwing her legs over the edge of the bed she was soon springing to her closet.

She emerged from her bedroom in a simple pair of well fitted jeans and black and gold camisole. Between the two dark fabrics was a strip of emerald skin that grew as she walked. The smile plastered on her youthful face was a mixture of excitement at getting to see her sister and relief that her mother was letting her leave. In a very juvenile fashion Nesh plopped down on the couch with her head resting on the back as she waited for the arrival of her sister.

Lirha set her shuttlecraft down in the main parking lot about a hundred meters from the house. Dirt and dust kicked up from the pavement as the shuttle's pylons finally made contact with the ground. The side door deployed with a slow whine and she quickly powered down the craft and stepped outside. She took a quick look around the neighborhood, noticing new buildings and playgrounds which weren't there several years ago. It had been a while since she had last visited her mother and sister, and she felt butterflies in her stomach as she walked down the sidewalk to their old house. Finally arriving at the front door, she gave it a soft knock and adjusted her Starfleet uniform so that she looked presentable to her sister.

Even if Nesh hadn't seen her approaching she couldn't have missed the sound of the shuttle setting down not far from the door. She heard the chime ring and practically jumped on her sister as she

wrapped her arms around Lirha's neck. "HI!" She exclaimed excitedly. She finally pulled back with a large smile on her face.

The captain was caught off-guard by her sister's friendly ambush and returned her tight embrace to the best of her ability, putting her arms around her waist and squeezing her tight. "Hi sweetie!" she answered as Nesh stepped back. "Did you miss me?" Lirha asked with a big smile.

"Nope." Nesh said with a single shake of her head she had a huge cheesy grin. Without warning she pulled her sister in for another hug. "So what are we doing today?" she couldn't hide the excitement that was in her voice.

"Well," Lirha started in a soft voice, "I'm going to bring you to the HQ and get you all settled and checked in with security, then I'm going to take you to meet a couple of my colleagues." she said, then paused for a second as she looked in her sister's green eyes. "I've got some administrative work to do this morning so you'll be spending some time with them. I'll come pick you up for lunch, then I have to go back to the office for a few hours in the afternoon..." she finished, then bit her lip as she hoped Nesh wouldn't be too upset with her for passing her off to other people.

Nesh's upper lip tensed slightly in disappointment. She nodded in agreement, "So when you are done...with work?...then I get you?" She didn't want to sound as desperate as she was to spend time with her sister. "It could be fun spending some time in San Fransisco."

Lirha walked forward and gave her sister another hug, then stroked the side of her face affectionately. "Of course. As soon as I'm finished with work, I'll take you out into the city for the night." she said, then glanced at the gold studs on Nesh's face, the result of a nose and lip piercing. Her eyes traveled downward to her sister's exposed upper chest, and noticed the tattoos which now adorned her green skin. "When did you get all of this done?" she asked, motioning to the girl's face and chest.

Nesh looked down over the front of her. "I started them a little over a little over a year ago." Her hand

touched the one just below her left collarbone. "This was the last one I got...maybe four months ago?" she said almost questioning as she thought over the adornments she had added to her emerald skin. "If you came home more often you would be so shocked." She had a large smile on her face as she couldn't help but give her sister a hard time.

The captain smirked as she noticed Nesh had grown to be taller than her by a few inches. "Hopefully mom didn't get too upset...she wasn't very happy when I got mine." Lirha remarked casually. She was about the same age as her sister when she first got into body art, and she felt a sense of pride seeing Nesh starting to take after her. "So are you all packed and ready to go? I want to get you checked in before 0800."

"I think after you a Livana there isn't much I can do to shock her." she replied with a little laugh. "Just have to grab my bag." Nesh called back towards Lirha, as she took a few steps back and retrieved the back pack she had readied the night before. "All set." she grinned.

Lirha grabbed her sister's bag for her and slung it over her shoulder, then watched to make sure Nesh locked the house before walking down the sidewalk with her. It wasn't far to the shuttlecraft, and they arrived after a few minutes at the silver-hulled craft. With a couple taps on the door's keypad, the side panel deployed and a ramp laid out for Nesh to enter. "How long has it been since you were last in a proper shuttlecraft?" Lirha asked.

"We tend to stick to using our transport credits." Nesh replied with a laugh. She wasn't big on the whole shuttle idea but as long as it stayed close to land she was willing to go with it. "So do you know who you are planning on pawning me off onto or you going to auction me off the highest bidder?" It may not have been the most tasteful joke for an Orion.

Climbing into the shuttlecraft, Lirha looked back and frowned at Nesh with narrow and unamused eyes. It was one of the more inappropriate jokes she had heard come out of her sister's mouth, and she bit her bottom lip as she tried to suppress her anger. "You know better than to say something like that."

she answered simply, then tossed Nesh's bag onto a nearby seat. She climbed into the cockpit and started the shuttle's pre-flight sequence, and glanced back to make sure Nesh was inside as the door closed.

"I arranged for you to spend time with my chief counselor, and I also want you meet my second in command, Commander Holliday. They're both nice people and good officers, and I think they'll be happy to have you tag along with them for a few hours." she finally answered.

"I thought it was funny." Nesh said quietly with a laugh to herself. She knew that being an Orion and with her family's history she shouldn't have said it. Nesh took a seat in the empty chair next to her sister. She wasn't looking forward to hanging out with a bunch of people who didn't really want her around, but it was only for a few hours. "Cool." She finally replied.

The shuttlecraft lifted off of the asphalt and began a slow ascent into the air. Cleared of any obstacles and other air traffic, Lirha engaged the craft's thrusters and took them on a direct course for Starfleet HQ. The distance wasn't far and was expected to take only five or six minutes. With a couple taps on the flight control console, Lirha activated the shuttle's autopilot, then turned in her seat to look over at Nesh. "So who is this boy you've been spending time with?" she asked, wanting to know the details of her sister's relationship.

Nesh rolled her eyes, she had known that when she told her sister about Markus she would want to know more. "Who Markus?" She paused for a moment and continued when Lirha nodded in acknowledgement. "He is a friend...we met in advanced chemistry. My friend Janell has the hots for him, so that is a little awkward." She turned towards her sister almost in panic, "We are not a couple or anything of the sorts...just so you know...I don't want you going down the same freak out road that mom did."

The older sister chuckled under her breath. "I was just wondering...and don't worry, I'm not freaking out." she answered with a wry smile. "I know I don't

get to see you often so I'm just a little curious about what you've been doing with your life." she added, hoping that her casual prompt would cause her sister to reveal more information.

Nesh laughed and nodded lightly. "School mostly. I help out mom at the shop when I don't have much homework...I get to hang out with Markus and Janell a few days a week but other than that Mom keeps a pretty tight leash." She smiled over at her sister. Unlike the last time that statement came up she didn't want to guilt Lirha. "I have been looking into colleges. I know it is early but if mom approves I can graduate a year early from high school."

"That's great news." Lirha replied with genuine interest. "Have you thought about which school and program you would like to enroll in?" she asked. Part of her wished that Nesh would take an interest in Starfleet, but she didn't want to push the issue. If she was content to take a more traditional course of study, Lirha would be equally as proud of her. Besides, she figured that bringing her sister to the HQ would give her a good chance to experience fleet life, if even for a day.

"I am been thinking about studying art history actually." Nesh started, she wasn't sure how her big sister was going to take the news. She wanted nothing to do with Starfleet even if the chance of getting to meet other cultures was a little alluring. "Baylor has a great program...and my grades are high enough for early admission but,..." her voice trailed off.

"But what?" Lirha asked in a cautious tone. When Nesh didn't finish her sentences it was often a prelude to some sort of bad news, or in this case, possibly a decision. "You've always been good at school, why would you forgo early admission?" she asked.

Nesh looked down at where her hands were in her lap. She was quiet for what felt like for ever. She finally looked back at her sister. "Baylor is in Texas...and with you in Starfleet and Livana on Rigel III...If I go to Texas, then who would be here for mom?" She paused, she wasn't really looking for an answer but she couldn't shake the guilt of leaving her mom. "I mean, I can come back every weekend,

but that still leaves her alone more often than not. I don't know if I could do that to her."

The shuttlecraft began its approach to Starfleet HQ and Lirha took manual control of the craft as they began their slow descent to the landing pad. Her green hands moved delicately across the console in front of her and she spoke to Nesh while keeping her eyes on the helm controls. "You know, Nesh, mom is a very strong woman and has sacrificed a lot to make sure that we were in a safe environment while we were growing up." she began in a soft voice. "I think it would be good for her to be on her own for a while and finally get to live her life without worrying about you, me, or Livana."

Nesh laughed and look up at Lirha, "You think that being away from home *keeps* mom from worrying?" She chuckled, "I will go to college, I can assure you of that...the location is the only thing up to debate." she smiled as she looked around. "So what do we need to do first? The sooner you get to work the sooner we get to spend some time together."

"Well, first we need to stop by my quarters so that you can change clothes and put your bag away." she said, then glanced over at Nesh's revealing attire. "You look nice, but I need to put you into a civilian uniform until I finish my shift." she added. "Then we need to visit the personnel management office and get your security clearance, as well as your visitor's ID. After that, I'll take you go see my chief counselor. Her name is Drusilla, but please call her Lieutenant McCarthy until she tells you otherwise. I asked her to look after you until lunch time and she agreed. I'm quite fond of her, so try and be nice to her?"

"Yes Ma'am." Nesh said with a mocking salute. "Are you fond of all of your crew for just this Lieutenant?" She couldn't help but give her sister a bit of a hard time after the whole Markus conversation. "I will try...I promise."

The shuttlecraft touched down slowly on the landing pad and the main thrusters let off a soft whine as they powered down. Lirha gave her sister a knowing smile in reference to her last question, then began the post-flight sequence. After several moments, the rear ramp deployed and Lirha grabbed

Nesh's backpack as she exited the craft. She breathed in a breath of fresh air and looked around at the numerous busy personnel hustling about green garden in the front of the main complex. "So... what do you think?" she asked her sister. It was the first time Nesh had been to Starfleet HQ and Lirha wanted to know her first impressions.

Nesh wanted to say wow, but the words wouldn't form. It didn't stop her lips from trying. She looked around amazed by what she saw. "Th-...This place is amazing.!" She finally said. She spun around slowly with each step as she moved along with her sister. "I mean, I have see quite a few cities and such, but this place is so...so...peaceful...yet bustling."

"It's very tranquil, I find." she said casually as she took Nesh's hand and led her down the long sidewalk and into the main building. Lirha nodded at several security personnel along the way and kept her sister close to her so that she wouldn't be hassled for her clearance. After a few minutes of walking, they finally arrived at Lirha's quarters and she set Nesh's bag down on the bed before going to rummage through her closet. She turned around and held up a grey Starfleet shirt and black pants. The shirt was sleeveless yet covered most of the torso, and was made of a firm cotton and nylon fiber, while the pants were form-fitting and ribbed around the thighs for support. "Are you okay with wearing this?" she asked.

"Do I have much of a choice?" Nesh asked as she tentatively took the boring fabric. She dropped it on the bed as she slipped off the black tank she was wearing. She hated how flat it looked against her skin. With a slight pout she finished changing. "I am definitely not joining Starfleet if this is what I have to look forward to." She said as she indicated the outfit she was forced to wear.

Lirha's ears perked up at her sister's casual yet disgruntled comment. "So, if the uniforms were different, you would join Starfleet?" she asked with an aura of mock hopefulness in her voice. The captain looked at her younger sister, who surprisingly looked very presentable in the uniform. "I think you look great." she added as she looked Nesh up and down.

Nesh laughed as she pulled her hair back in a pony tail. "Of course you do, you love this life." she replied with a smile. She looked around her sisters room for a minute. Her eyes fell on a photo that was sitting on a shelf near by. Her face broke out into a glowing smile that make her eyes twinkle, "I remember this day." She said as she picked up the photo frame and turned it towards Lirha.

The picture she held up was a family portrait of Lirha, Nesh, and their mother, Aila. At the time, Nesh was only eight years old and Lirha had just graduated from Starfleet Academy, and was still dressed in her blue and white graduation garments. It was one of Lirha's favorite pictures, taken almost seven years ago to this day. She walked close to her sister and put an arm around her shoulders, giving her a tight squeeze. "I take this portrait wherever I go. Helps remind me of you and mom when I'm on long assignments." she said.

Nesh would never admit it, but she was proud of her sister. The day in the photo she had been so excited for Lirha. It wasn't until she realized that Starfleet meant she wouldn't hear of see from her sister for months that she began to resent it. Her resentment soon turned into hatred. "Careful Reehee, you might make me fee guilty for being mad at you." She gave her sister a little wink. "Seriously...I am glad that you have this around." She looked back down at the photo with a laugh. "I have the same photo on my bookshelf in my room."

Lirha didn't reply, and instead just gave her sister a smile. Despite her lightheartedness about the issue, Lirha knew that Nesh hadn't been happy with her for joining Starfleet. The problem was not so much with Starfleet as it was the long and steady absences which Lirha endured away from her sister and mother. Lirha had her own regrets as well, but for the most part it had been a positive experience in her life. She was glad that Nesh was getting older and was becoming more understanding about the issue.

"We have better get going" Nesh said with another grin as she pulled on her shoes. "I don't want to make you any later." She gave her sister a little wink, "Besides...I need to meet this Lieutenant McCarthy...see what I can dig up about my big

sister." Putting down the photo she walked toward the main living area. She was anxious to get her day started.

"One second." Lirha said as she went to her desk to grab a small bag and a couple of PADDs. She quickly scooped up all of her important work items for the day, then walked towards the door. "Okay, let's go." she said, as she stepped out and into the hallway with her sister in tow.

They moved at a brisk pace and down several floors to the personnel management office. There, Lirha acquired the appropriate security clearance and ID for Nesh to be present on the facilities, then gave her a comm badge to wear for the day. "Here, put this on. It will let me keep in touch with you. If you need anything, just give it a tap and it will open a direct line to me." she said as she held out the silver and gold communicator for her sister to take.

Nesh looked up at her sister before tentatively retrieving the useful piece of jewelry. She clipped it to the lapel of her shirt much like Lirha wore hers. She was amazed at the efficiency of this place but it made sense. An organization that sent ships all over the known galaxy would need to be organized. "So what next?"

Lirha shook her head, "That's it, you're all set for the day. I took care of the other arrangements last night after we spoke." she said, then walked towards the exit as she push her dark hair behind her ears. The captain gave the security guard a polite nod as he stood at attention while she and her sister passed. "Let's go meet Lieutenant McCarthy, shall we?" she asked.

"Oh goodie." Nesh tried to hid the sarcasm. Her tone was slightly serious. She was looking forward to spending some time with the people her sister spent time with, but she had been looking forward to having the day with her sister, not a few hours that evening. At the end of the day, she would take what she could get. "Lead the way Commander." She replied with a cheeky smile.

The captain couldn't help but chuckle and shake her head at Nesh's vibrant and youthful personality. Together, the two of them made their way up to the

fifth floor of the HQ and stopped in front of the counselor's temporary office. Lirha turned to Nesh and quickly adjusted her comm badge which was tilted slightly to the side. "Okay Nesh, remember... whatever you do, please don't embarrass me?" she asked in a half-serious tone.

Nesh let out a laugh that she quickly stifled with her hand. "I promise to try and not embarrass you...to much." She said easily. "Maybe I should...it would give some motivation to come back and get me quicker." She looked up and down both hallways. It was weird, the building was so beautiful from the outside and do generic from the inside.

Lirha stared into her sister's green eyes for a few moments, trying to figure out if she was serious or just joking. She wouldn't put it past Nesh to find amusement in exposing her personal secrets and details. "Whatever." Lirha simply said with a shake of her head, then tapped the doors console to signal their presence to whoever was inside.

[OFF]

CDMR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Nesh Saalm
Little Sister
NPC'd by Barel

Two Favorite Girls

Posted on 15 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Nesh Saalm & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 04 - 0900 hrs

[ON]

Outside of Drusilla's office, Nesh and Lirha waited patiently after pressing the door's chime. The captain had quite a bit of work to do in the morning and was hopeful that the counselor was not late to report to work, else Lirha would have to drag Nesh along with her for the next hour. Needless to say, it wouldn't be the most exciting thing for the young woman to be sitting silently in her sister's office watching her read through PADDs and status reports.

As Dru pushed back her chair, surveying her cleared desk, she checked the time, happy to find herself bang ontime to meet Lirha and Nesh. Even though she was not on duty this morning, she had decided to get some paperwork done in order to free up more time for herself to be about to counsel patients. Given the morning that would be in it, Dru had left her uniform at home and instead decided to wear a pair of close fitting jeans, runners and a polo shirt with her combadge fixed to her polo shirt. She had left her hair down loose, pulling the sides back to fix them with a hair clip.

As she heard the door chime, Dru stood up, "Enter."

At the sound of the counselor's voice through the door, Lirha took Nesh's hand and led her forward through the swishing door and into the office. She stopped in the middle of the room and put a gave her sister's hand a reassuring squeeze. "Good morning, Lieutenant," she said with a smile to Dru. "I brought you some company."

"Good afternoon Captain." Dru smiled at Lirha briefly before focusing her attention on Nesh and stepping forward with her hand outstretched, "And you must be Miss. Nesh Saalm whom I have heard many things about?"

"I have heard about you as well." Nesh couldn't resist casting a knowing glance at her sister. While she had promise she would try and not embarrass her sister it didn't mean she would give her a hard time about it. She owed her that much. She looked over the counselor. With a twisted glance at her sister she wanted to ask the question that was forming in her head about her attire. Instead she kept her mouth shut and took the offered hand. "It is nice to meet you...uh...what am I supposed to call you?"

"If I'm to be your guide this morning then please, call me Dru." Dru grinned as she spotted the glance Nesh had thrown at Lirha and, "I hope your going to spoil me this morning of all of the stories about our Captain here. They'll be stories I'll be able to pass onto the rest of our crew during our missions. In return if there's anything you'd like to do or see I'm fairly certain I'll be up for it."

Lirha stepped forward and discretely kicked Nesh in the back of the foot as she passed. The conversation had already taken a turn for the worse and she had a feeling that the two women would soon be discussing every small detail and secret of her life. "Perhaps I should make you two sign a confidentiality agreement?" she said with a smirk as she rolled her eyes.

Dru winks at Nesh before turning to face Lirha with a smile on her face, "You can order me to sign one Captain but not Miss. Saalm. She can still tell me all of our secrets and as your ship's Counselor I will be forced to have to talk them over with you."

"Wonderful," she replied sarcastically then chuckled. "In that case, I hope you can clear your schedule for the next two months." she added with a mischievous grin as she looked at Dru. "Well, I must get going. I have a few more crew interviews to conduct and some paperwork to look through." she said as she addressed the two women. "I'll return around noon and we can all grab a bite to eat.". Lirha turned around and walked towards the door, casting a final stern glance at her sister in the futile hope that she would not embarrass her.

Dru smiled slightly after Lirha before she turns back to Nesh, "So where do you fancy starting?"

Nesh watched her sister leave with a crooked smile on her face. She turned back to women who had been saddled with the job of entertaining her. "I don't really know what there is to do...I have only been here once and that was a *long* time ago." She took a few steps into Dru's office. "Any suggestions?"

Dru paused as she raked through her head, "Hum....your 15? It's been so long since I've been that age that I'm not quiet sure what 15 year olds like to do these days. Actually...seeing as in starfleet head office, fancy a tour?"

Nesh thought for a moment, "We could leave the compound...maybe go see the golden gate bridge?" She couldn't think of anything she really wanted to do, but she had always wondered if the bridge was really as cool up close as it was in photos.

"Hum...sounds like a plan to me. I hope you don't mind transporter, I wouldn't trust me with a shuttle if I was you," Dru smiled across at Nesh before gathering a bag from under her desk and indicated for Nesh to follow her through the door. "You know you look very alike your sister."

Nesh smiled, "My mom tells me that a lot." She answered simply as she moved though the door just in front of Dru. She positioned herself next to Dru as the pair walked down the hallway towards the entrance. "I don't mind transporters so much...I better get used to them if I am going to be attending Baylor in a year or two." she turned her head to smile up at the chestnut haired women her sister was so fond of.

"Baylor? Hum...where's that? Sorry I'm an Irish native so outside of Starfleet HQ and Ireland I get a little bit lost", Dru smiled over at Nesh as she lead the way to the transporter room.

"Baylor is an Arts school in Texas." Nesh started easily. "I am going to study art history...hopefully something that keeps me far far from Starfleet" Nesh continued with a laugh as she entered the transporter room. She knew the drill. Stepping onto the padd she waited for Dru to give the request.

Dru smiled at the eagerness shown by Nesh, "Two to

transport to the Golden Gate Bridge please Chief." Dru steps over to the PADD and smiled over at Nesh before the beam caught them both, taking them away from Starfleet HQ.

Several hours later...

"That was so cool." Nesh giggled as they ended back at the transporter pad they had started at. "I can't believe how huge it is. And the color." She turned almost hyper, "I can't believe they still paint it every day like they did when they first built the bridge. You would have thought they would have changed it by now....Wow."

Dru threw her head back laughing. She had enjoyed the morning with Nesh, it was so refreshing to be around someone so carefree and young. She knew Nesh had her own concerns and worries like ever 15year old but to see the young girl laugh and enjoy herself for a few hours."Well sometimes it's nice to keep some things the same, it's a reminder of what we always have which will never change."

"Good point." Nesh said with an approving nod. "I can see why my sister thinks so highly of you." She said without thinking. She stumbled for a moment before continuing. "I had a lot of fun today...thanks."

"I'm happy to be of assistance. Your seeing Commander Holliday this afternoon? You'll have fun with him I'm sure. He's a nice guy when you can get his head out of a PADD." Dru smiled over at Nesh as she checked the time."The Captain should be here in the next few minutes. I must say, you've given me a small bit of ammunition to use against her in counselling sessions."

After a busy morning full of final personnel reviews and status updates, Lirha promptly made her way from her office to pick up her sister and chief counselor for lunch. Using the HQ's internal sensors, it didn't take long for her to locate the two and she returned to the counselor's office, pressing the door chime as she waited.

Having waited a few minutes in the transporter room, Dru had moved herself and Nesh to her

office, she didn't wish to block up the transporter room with the amount of people coming and going. As the chime on her door went off, Dru smiled over at Nesh, "Sounds like your sister is back. Enter."

The captain walked through the doors as they swished open, then closed, moving into the middle of the room while smiling at Nesh and Drusilla. "Well?" she asked, "Did you two enjoy yourselves?"

Nesh nodded quickly as she moved to stand a little close to Lirha. "We went to the Golden Gate Bridge." She said in an overly excited tone. She cleared her throat to cover her desire to calm down. "It was...ok." She broke into a large smile before turning back to Dru and giving her a quick wink.

Dru smiled broadly at Nesh before turning her attention back to Lirha, "Your lucky to have such a wonderful sister Captain. I must say we really did have a very enjoyable morning and she was great company."

"Yes, she's quite a handful." Lirha replied as she moved forward and put a playful arm around her sister's waist, giving it a squeeze. "So...what did the two of you talk about?" she asked, her eyes flickering between Nesh and the counselor. She was anxious to find out how much of her personal life Nesh had divulged to Dru over the last few hours.

Dru reached a hand up to her temple to rub it slightly before smiling widely at both women, "Don't be worried Captain, only enough to warrant me needing to see you on a regular basis for a month. We have ALOT to talk over." Dru wasn't sure what was happening to her. As she spent more time with Nesh she found herself happier then she had in a longtime and now and it seemed to have built up so much that she was comfortable out rightly flirting with Lirha.

The Orion captain smiled, happy that Dru seemed to be enjoying herself so much. Lirha had never seen the woman in such good spirits before, and wondered slightly at the meaning of her request to spend time together. "Well, I guess I have my 'wonderful sister' to thank for that." she said with a smirk, and firmly pinched the skin on Nesh's lower

back just above her waist.

"Oww." Nesh said slightly over acting as she jumped away from where she was standing. "Don't make me tell mom, *ReeHee*" she said the nickname for her sister loud enough and odd enough to make sure Dru heard her. She turned towards the young women she had spent the afternoon with and gave her a playful wink.

Dru laughed at the antics between Lirha and Nesh, "ReeHee? Hum....Thanks for that one Nesh, I'll add it to the rest of the information you've given me. Something tells me that might come in handy." Dru winked at Nesh playfully.

"Right, let's go get some lunch, shall we?" Lirha said, interjecting herself to stop the embarrassing conversation which was beginning to unfold. "I think you've learned enough secrets for one day, Lieutenant." she said with a smirk to the counselor.

Dru smirked, not quite certain what exactly was happening to her but feeling the headache behind her temple building, "For now Captain. I'll get more out of you before the mission is out I'm sure."

The captain took her sister's hand and led her to the door, anxious to get some food in her stomach after skipping breakfast.

Dru waved after Nesh and Lirha before sitting down at her desk and pushing the palm of her hands against her forehead. *I wonder if sickbay would be able to give me anything for this headache. Blooming heck.* Dru headed off to visit sickbay and change back into her uniform.

Nesh returned Dru's wave as she disappeared out the door with her sister. "Thanks ReeHee, I am having a lot of fun." The growling in her stomach rang out in the hallway. "I am starving...I can't wait to see what you have planned for lunch."

[OFF]

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galilo

Nesh Saalm
Little Sister
NPC'ed by Barel

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

An Interesting Impression

Posted on 16 Mar 2012 by Crewman Nazhzhah & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: *USS Galileo*, Science Lab 2

Timeline: MD 04 - 1000 hrs

[ON]

Nazhzhah, or rather as he'd come to prefer since his time in the Alpha Quadrant just *Ziyal*, was having a bad morning. Thrusting himself out of bed and knocking over his entire cabinet of trinkets and belongings had not been the best way to start the day. While having seven different prehensile appendages was good for cleaning, he had broken two of his favorite holonovel discs.

The tall alien sighed, his facial tentacles drooping in sadness (though most people didn't really realize he was anything except Cheerfully Cthulhu), and his eyes blinking a little as he made his way down the halls, into the turbolift, down some more halls, through the glass doors, down more halls, and finally came to a halt in front of Laboratory 2. He perked up slightly as he entered, excitement overtaking him.

This was his first meeting with the science chief aboard the *Galileo*. He wanted to make a good impression. He'd only been aboard the ship a few days, and already the head of the department wanted to speak to him! Well, that wasn't really too surprising, most people wanted to speak to him. He was *interesting*, after all. (A fact that never ceased to preen his budding little egotism.)

Ziyal strode across the room and placed all four hands on a laboratory table across from a woman clad in science blues who he knew to be the department head. "Miss Barel," he greeted with a few gestures here and there of his two main arms, the clawed hands coming to tap against his face as he leaned over. He hoped the greeting was satisfactory. He had to memorize formal address at the Academy.

Warrant Officers can be called either Warrant

Officer or Miss/Mister as acceptable forms of address... the thought floated through his mind unconsciously, in the garbled Federation Standard he'd been trying to learn as the rules were memorized over and over again. In his own native visual language, he thought, *Of course, Master Warrant Officers probably prefer to be called ...well...oh, she's looking at me!*

He looked up, blinking and making a noise of distracted sudden attention, and gave her his best sheepish expression. "I am Crewman Nazhzhah, but Ziyal is acceptable too. *Galileo's* biotechnologist. It is nice to meet you!" he said animatedly. Almost abruptly, he thrust out two of his tentacle-claw arms, then immediately put one behind his back. *One hand, remember.* Two years on Earth and even the most basic human nuances still mystified him. He offered her a blink, one of his antennae moving vertically a little.

Tarishiana smiled as her the new member to her department. She reached out and shook the offered hand like thing. "I am Betazoid," she stared sweet, "So I appreciate how difficult it is to learn the customs of other cultures." She was impressed by his translator despite the fact that is lost most of the nuance of his spoken tongue. "Welcome Ziyal, you can call me Tarishiana or Tarish...Chief if you absolutely have to use rank or title." She gave him another grin.

"Ooooooh!" Ziyal whistled, flailing one of his clawed fingers slightly and slumping. The translator didn't provide a translation for that, as he added, "Chief... yes, Chief Tarish," he compromised in an unusual way. He noticed she was staring at his translation crystals and smiled.

The smile however turned out to be a blink. (This explained much of people's misunderstanding, no doubt.) Fortunately, the woman was a telepath, so perhaps she felt the smile. "The *h'maik* crystals translate my thoughts," he agreed, bobbing his head. There was no translation provided for *h'maik* however.

"I helped doctors at Starfleet Medical make it accessible to the Universal Translator." Another blink-smile. After that, he seemed to appear a little

confused, which he also conveyed with a blink. It didn't look any different from his other blink. He gestured again and one of the tentacles on his face pointed at Barel as he spoke again. "Thanks!" he said, a little awkwardly.

She couldn't help but cock her head to the side slightly as she watched the various facial expressions of her new scientist. She knew which emotions he was trying to convey which was proof that her being a telepath was going to be useful. "One of these days you will have to let me hear your actual language...Being a xenolinguist I am fascinated by the structure as well as how you communicate with your translator. If you don't mind of course."

A few chirps and clicks could be heard as Ziyal modified the translator on his arm with one of his other tentacles. A holographic interface came up and he manipulated it again in a complex rhythmic sequence and his native language came through. It sounded like a mixture of whistles, hoots, chirps, clicks, clucks, along with some intertwined gestures flowing and feeding off of one another.

He tapped another button and a more familiar voice came through. "Most find the translator easier to understand." He clapped, and blinked in amusement. He gestured for her to follow him and he laid his arm out on the table, showing the interface structure. The holographic projection illuminated above his arm showing some alien looking mathematical schematics.

"The scientists on *K'q'kwez'xi I-123'new'Qey--*" he started, spitting out a random verbiage of syllables and consonants, "made it for me. I was born with *thr'iee'mjs*. It is a genetic defect..." Ziyal blinked a little. "It affected my developmental capacity. I had a hard time learning language. Now I know the language but I have a hard time translating my thoughts. It makes normal communication very difficult, so I kept it when I grew up. I am fourteen years old. How old are you?" he asked, tilting his head inquisitively, his antennae moving again.

Tarishiana let out a light laugh. In all the years she had been in Starfleet and all the questions he had been asked, she had never been asked her age. "I am

twenty-nine." She said easily as she looked over the translator. It was far more sophisticated than once she had seen, but the mathematical language generators were very similar to the ones she had spent her career interacting with. "Amazing..." she said slightly distant with a large grin on her face. "I think you and I are going to get long amazingly well."

Leaning over, Ziyal seemed also in tune with examining the device, before he looked back up at the science officer when she spoke. "Those are the Universal Translator codes combined with the data matrices of my translator. These," he said, before he moved another piece along with his hand and showed her a series of complicated and completely unintelligible symbols, "are the native matrices." They were absolutely indistinguishable from gibberish.

"Most humanoids operate in series of base tens. *W'qa'arr* operate by dimensional clusters. We use mathematics to describe the functions of our environment," he rattled off enthusiastically, bouncing with happiness and sounding far from *developmentally delayed*.

"They form dimensional axes with the program and shape it via a neurotelepathic process. It's for that reason that only *W'qa'arr* can use native *W'qa'arr* technology. I have had to adapt most of my technology to be compatible with Federation mathematical matrices." He grinned, though it just looked like a complicated series of blinks and flails. "I hope we get along," he added chirpily. "Where do you want me to set up my laboratory?" he asked as he turned off the holodisplay monitor.

Tarishiana merely nodded as Ziyal explained the mathematics. She could read more of the icons than the new scientist gave her credit for, but it wasn't important. "You can set up in Lab 3, it is just you and a virologist in there....for now." She taped a few controls on her console. "You are all set up, when you get in there you are going to have set a security code to lock your station and keep any specimens under your control"

"Yes, Chief Tarish!" Ziyal whistled out obliviously, and gazed bug-eyed at the orders before he gave her

a sort of gestural bow filled with far too many tentacles. "Thank you," he added again, and then sort of stood there unsure of what to do next.

Tarishiana returned with a slightly lean forward. "You are dismissed Crewman...unless you have any other questions." She was looking forward to what interesting interactions she would have with the members of her department and so far they were proving most enjoyable.

She was answered by a vibrant squeak, before the *W'qa'arr* crewman made his way out, his gait somewhat elegant but a little lumbering as he ducked through the doors.

[OFF]

MWO Tarishiana Barel

Chief Science Officer, *U.S.S Galileo NCC-80010*

CN Nazhzhah

Biotechnologist, *U.S.S Galileo NCC-80010*

The Need for Intelligence

Posted on 07 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 04 - 1045 hrs

[ON]

Lirha entered her office and plopped herself down into her large and comfortable chair. She ran a hand through her dark hair and looked around the room, taking in the sight of numerous PADDs littering her desk and chair. To say she was feeling overwhelmed by her administration duties was an understatement, but she had plans to try and recruit her XO to help out with some of the paperwork later that same day. Wasting no time, the Orion pulled a PADD from the top of a pile and began to look through it. She frowned as she browsed through the details of a Chief Intelligence Officer who had been assigned to her ship. Though Lirha herself had worked in Intelligence for several years, she found it strange that a survey vessel would have a member from that department serving aboard her new command.

It didn't take long for her to remember her mission, especially the classified and covert nature of it. Perhaps that had something to do with it, she thought, and she definitely wouldn't rule out the possibility that Admiral Kilby or Admiral Reshman had personally overseen the transfer. Whatever the reason, Lirha was anxious to find out. She brought her desk's computer console online and entered a message into the personnel communications system, requesting the officer to report to her office for an interview. After pushing the transmit button, she leaned back in her chair and began to look through the various inventory manifests while she waited for the crewman to arrive.

Evelyn was packing up her office, getting ready to transfer her belonging to the *Galileo*, when her console chimed with a message. She read it over and sighed. She walked around her desk and out of her office. She made her way down the hall and out

of the building.

The walk across the Green was pleasant, as things were relatively quiet at Starfleet HQ. Evelyn entered the main office building, and made it to her new CO's temporary office. She pressed the door chime and waited.

"Enter." the captain called out, and stood from her chair to greet whoever was outside. She hoped it was her new intelligence officer, but there was also a chance it might be someone from HQ, possibly one of her commanding officers.

Evelyn walked inside, and stopped in front of the desk. Arms behind her back, she greeted, "Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman your new Chief Intelligence Officer, reporting for duty."

Lirha looked up at the tall woman, taking note of her blond hair and crystal blue eyes. She gave her a smile and nodded politely. "At ease, Lieutenant," she replied, "I'm Commander Saalm. Please have a seat." she said, and motioned to an empty chair next to the desk. "I wasn't expecting a member of your department to be assigned to my crew. At least, not so quickly. Were you assigned this posting or did you request the transfer?" she asked, wondering about the reasons behind her assignment.

Evelyn thanked the Captain before taking the seat. "A little bit of both actually. I had expressed my desire to return to the field, to my superiors. They assigned me to the *Galileo*." She responded honestly, "I admit, I too questioned why a Nova-Class vessel would require an Intelligence department."

The Orion captain nodded as her own thoughts echoed the words of her intelligence chief. "Well, being a former intelligence officer myself, I'm glad to have you aboard. I think your expertise will come in handy on our upcoming deployment." she said, then sat back down in her seat with her hands folded together in her lap. "Will this be your first time aboard a Nova Class starship?" she asked.

"I have never served on one, but no, this won't be my first time aboard a Nova Class vessel." She answered honestly, leaning back in her chair. "Have

you had a chance to meet any other member of your crew?" she asked.

"I've met quite a few of them so far, however there's a large portion of the crew who will be transferred aboard at our resupply stop, shortly after we depart Earth. I haven't personally met any of them yet." she answered simply, then picked up a PADD and read briefly through the intelligence woman's service record. "I see that you have quite a long history with Starfleet. How do you feel about having served in the fleet for so long?" she asked.

Evelyn would have chuckled after hearing the question, but kept her cool composure. "It gives me a purpose. And to be honest, keeps me occupied. I originally came to observe Humanity, school project if you will."

"That's quite a long school project." she casually remarked. "So what are your impressions?" she asked, curious as to what the woman thought about Earth and the Federation.

"I've been a part of Star Fleet since practically the birth of the Federation. I've seen Humanity accomplish grand things, and coming short is a few aspects. The Federation survived many trials and tribulations that quiet frankly surprises me." She looked at her Captain, "It is no longer a surprise to me why the United Federation of Planets caught the attention of the Q Continuum."

Lirha nodded, "Although some would say that is as much a curse as a blessing." she replied, in reference to the omnipotent beings which occasionally harassed Starfleet captains. "Do you plan on being aboard the *Galileo* for long?" the captain asked as she still tried to decipher the reason behind the woman's assignment.

"Perhaps. If I would have to guess, I maybe on the *Galileo* for a while." She answered sincerely.

"That's good to hear," she responded with a smile, "I can always find a use for experienced officers, and I find it better for morale when the crew stays together after deployments. I must warn you, though, you won't have much in the way of departmental support staff. I can assign you a bridge

station and your own private office, but that's about the extent of my ship's capabilities." she said.

"I understand. As you know, I have a vast experience of various fields, so please don't feel limited in only assigning me Intelligence work to do. I'm more than happy to assist the other departments on this ship."

"Oh, I was counting on it." the captain replied with a friendly wink. "A small starship like the *Galileo* needs a flexible crew. And I'm sure you can help some of the junior officers and enlisted crew develop their skills." she added. "Do you have any questions for me, Lieutenant?" she asked, changing the subject. She wanted to give the El-Aurian an opportunity to voice any requests, comments or concerns.

Evelyn thought for a moment, "At what time will the *Galileo* be departing Earth?" she asked.

Lirha shook her head. "We are scheduled for a noon launch two days from now, but given the circumstances of our mission, we might be ordered to depart before then." she answered then shrugged, "That's the best I can tell you for now, but I'll be sure to keep the crew updated if our orders change."

"Understandable. Are there any questions you wish to ask me, Captain?"

"None at the moment." she answered as she played with her green fingers in her lap. "I look forward to having you aboard, Lieutenant. Surely you have a wealth of knowledge and experience that you can share with the crew, so I'm grateful to have you with us." she added. "I don't want to take up too much of your time, so you are dismissed if you have no further questions. We have a systems check and crew reception tomorrow, and I will be sending the details of both to your PADD."

Evelyn nodded, "Thank you, Captain, it was a pleasure meeting with you."

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

&

Lt. JG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

An Opportunity

Posted on 08 Mar 2012 by Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an & Si'tar Del'an

Location: Starfleet Academy, Earth - Red Squad Commander's Office

Timeline: *Backpost* - December 2388

[ON]

Mor'an hastened down the corridor to her commander's office. She received a summons a short time ago, requesting her presence to discuss a matter of importance. She thought she knew what it was about, but dare she hope that it actually was? Standing in front of the door, Mor'an took a breath to steady herself before hesitantly pressing the door chime.

Commander Prin Alor looked up when the door chimed and reached for a PADD. "Enter." He fiddled with the cusp of his Bajoran earring as he waited for his appointment to enter.

Mor'an entered and stood in front of her commander, at attention, of course.

"At ease, cadet," Commander Prin said, standing up and beckoning for her to approach as he walked around his desk.

"Sir," she said, nodding her head and walking closer to the desk.

"Red Squad is scheduled for advanced field training next semester." Prin reminded her, "However, you will not be assigned to the training mission. I'm placing you and several of your fellows in a special command training program for senior grade members of Red Squad, each of you will be assigned to a tour of duty aboard a different starship. The first officers of several ships have volunteered to take on a cadet; you will be trained under their supervision in command procedures and bridge operations."

Mor'an's eyes went wide at this pronouncement. This meeting was, indeed, what she had hoped it was. "Thank you, sir," she said, unable to say much

else.

The Bajoran handed her the PADD in his hand with a smile. "I'm assigning you to the U.S.S. Galileo, the Nova-class science vessel under construction at the shipyards. It's set to launch early next year. Congratulations, cadet."

"Thank you, sir," Mor'an said again, "I was hoping I would be chosen." In truth, she didn't once believe she would be refused.

Prin gave a nod. "Don't thank me, cadet, just do Red Squad proud. Dismissed."

[OFF]

Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an
Red Squad Intern
USS Galileo

Commander Prin Alor
Red Squad Commander
Starfleet Academy
played by Chauncey William Remington III

First Impressions

Posted on 22 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 04 - 1130 hrs

[ON]

After finishing her interview with her new Chief Intelligence Officer, the Orion captain was a bit unsettled. Though standard crew manifests aboard Nova Class starships did not normally include any such personnel, her covert assignment had required the need for such an officer. It was always good to see a member of her former department, she thought, but she wished it had been under different circumstances. Lirha picked up a PADD from the large stack on her desk and began to read through the remaining senior officers she had been assigned. She arched her eyebrow after seeing her newest crew addition, a lieutenant commander named Chauncey Remington III. Quickly tapping a message into her PADD, she sent off a request to summon him for an interview, then leaned back in her chair as she patiently waited.

After receiving his summons, Will had gone promptly to the commander's office. He paused outside for a moment, looking around, then gave a sigh and tapped the door console to chime in.

A chirp echoed throughout her office, signaling the presence of someone outside her door. Lirha rose to her feet and placed the PADD that was in her lap on the desk in front of her. "Enter," she said loudly, and watched the doors part as a gold-collared man stepped inside.

Once he was inside, the operations officer stood off to one side and came to attention. "Lieutenant Commander Remington reporting for duty, captain." His eyes studied Lirha intently, doing his best to hide his surprise.

Lirha gave him a polite nod accompanied by a friendly smile. "At ease, Commander," she replied, "Thank you for coming on such short notice. Please, take a seat." she said, and motioned with her hand

to a nearby empty chair. "I hope it didn't take too long to find my office?"

"Ah, no, not particularly, captain, thank you." The human walked towards the chair slowly, his steely eyes fixed on the captain as he moved. Rather than sit, however, he remained beside the chair he'd been offered. He waited for her to speak, unwilling to progress the conversation himself.

The captain looked at the dark haired man with intrigue. He had a quite striking appearance, with jet black hair and grey eyes, and she studied his face for several moments for a glimpse of his thoughts. Unable to decipher any, she slowly sat down and picked up a PADD which contained his personnel file. "I've just been informed that you've been transferred to the *Galileo*, under my command." she said with a bit of a sparkle to her green eyes. "I wanted to congratulate you and officially welcome you aboard."

His face remained unchanging and calm so that it was impossible to tell what he was thinking. When she spoke, his gaze faltered and he took a seat after a moment's hesitation. "Thank you, captain," he said, conjuring up a smile that might have been considered charming if it reached his eyes. Not that his eyes were dull, rather there was a certain liveliness to them, but it was a liveliness that made his expression all the more acute for being disconnected, as if the person behind them had his thoughts elsewhere.

"So," she began with a tilt of her head to the side, "What brings you to the *Galileo*? Did you request this assignment? Or did Starfleet go over your head and reassign you, as what usually happens to me..?" she asked with a small smirk. The green skinned woman folded her hands in her lap and curiously waited for his answer.

Will focused his attention back on the captain and gave a slight shake of his head. He seemed to have recovered from whatever bout of contemplation had assailed him. "Oh, not at all. I requested a transfer as soon as possible after my last assignment... ended."

Lirha nodded at the mention of his previous

deployment. "Yes, I noticed the report in your record regarding the *Phoenix*. She was a fine ship, I'm sure, and I'm sorry to hear about her." she said respectfully. "Were you ever able to identify the hostile ship responsible?"

Will peered thoughtfully at the replicator in the captain's office. When he spoke, his voice was sad in a way that was more sweet than melancholy. "If Starfleet Intelligence has been able to determine anything from the ship's logs, they certainly aren't about to tell me, even if I am the highest-ranking officer to survive. It was a good ship though, with a good crew." He glanced at Lirha and his lips twitched with an apologetic smile. "Forgive me, ma'am, I don't mean to garner sympathy. I'm eager to serve aboard the *Galileo*."

"I'm glad to have you with us, Commander." she replied with a genuine smile, then pulled a couple glasses from the shelf behind her and set them on the table. She grabbed her pitcher of iced tea and poured them both a glass, then handed one to the dark haired man. Taking a sip of her own, she placed her PADD delicately on the table and leaned back in her chair. "Will this be your first time aboard a Nova Class vessel?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied, "but I have kept myself up to date on starship design, I had to as chief operations officer on Starbase 235. So I am familiar with the Nova class. And with pre-launch; I was involved in preparing many ships at the starbase. Having the *Galileo* ready in time will be a snap."

Lirha nodded at his answer. With their launch date rapidly approaching, it was good to know that members of her crew were willing to put in the work required to assist the dockworkers and engineers with their tasks. "For all of our sakes, I hope it's as easy a task as you make it sound." she commented. "We have a systems check tomorrow morning at 0930 hours at the Fleet Yards. I could use your help." she said. It was more so an order than a request, but she had phrased the sentence in a polite manner.

The human gave her a smile. "Why, I never said it was easy, captain. I just do it with ease." The quick twinkle in his eye hinted at his mood lightening up

now that he was more comfortable. "I'll be at Fleet Yards."

"Excellent," she replied with a smile of approval. "Do you have any questions for me, Commander?" she asked. So far, the operations officer hadn't inquired much about the ship or the crew, and Lirha wanted to give him the opportunity to express any comments or concerns he might have.

he looked at her thoughtfully for a moment. "None, captain," he said at length. "Unless there is something you think I should know?"

The captain shrugged, "Nothing in particular that might stand out. But we are a small ship and I don't know if you've ever spent significant time aboard a vessel of this size before. Do you feel you will be comfortable being in such close quarters with the rest of the crew?" she asked.

"Oh, I'll be quite fine, I'm sure," he assured her.

Lirha stood up and offered her green hand for him to shake. "Well then, welcome aboard, Commander. I'll send instructions to your PADD regarding our systems check tomorrow morning, and I expect to see you bright and early." she said with a smile.

"Yes, ma'am," he said with a nod, taking her hand.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lt. Commander Chauncey Remington
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

Veritable Requisition

Posted on 22 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Crewman Nazhzhahh

Location: *USS Galileo*, Operation's Offices

Timeline: MD 04 - 1200 hrs

[ON]

Well, all that had to be done now was to actually *get* some of the supplies necessary to set up his lab. He had most of his equipment transferred from Starfleet HQ onto the *Galileo* but there were still a few things Ziyal needed. Containment fields, proper storage devices, labeling systems, and other boring equipment. Ziyal looked at the roster he held in his hands and exited the lab to find the chief of operations. Before he'd left, he'd made sure the man was at least aboard the ship.

"Ehh, hello?" Ziyal asked as he poked his head through Commander Remington's office, looking all at once bizarrely alien. He crossed the threshold fully, revealing the extent of his alien heritage as he did so. He waved two arms at Remington and gave him a hopeful blink. "I am Crewman Nazhzhahh," he introduced amidst a flurry of chirps. "I am given to understand that you are responsible for all supplies requisition aboard the *Galileo*?" he opened with, clasping two of his hands behind his back while the other two were wrapped around a PADD detailing his requests.

Will started when the alien walked into the room. "Crewman," he began with a slight frown. "I prefer you chime at my officer before entering." He didn't seem too upset though. "And watch your protocol. Let me see the requisition list." He held out his hand, "Unless there is something abnormal I will transfer this to the quartermaster."

Ziyal gave him a startled blink, not having the faintest idea what he was referring to, but nevertheless, "I did not intend to cause offense, sir." he stated amidst his usual flurry of clicks. He blinked again, more slowly. It might have been a nonverbal gesture, but most of his blinks just looked the same. He tapped a few buttons on the PADD and held it out for him to grab. "There is an

abnormal request which is why I sought you out instead of the quartermaster," he continued simply.

Among the standardized containment fields, shelving layers, technological equipment and biological samples, there was also an order for 1 liter of biomimetic gel and complimentary L647X7 storage device with a rather lengthy paragraph detailing its necessity in biotechnology and a qualifications doctrine of his capability of using it safely. While it appeared to be the only unusual thing on the list, it was certainly a very *large* unusual thing. "The Federation laws state that I have to go through starship operations requisitions, or else I would have already attempted to retrieve the necessary amount." He had a faint feeling that he was bothering the operations officer.

Will studied the requisition form, occasionally glancing up at the science officer. "A liter?" he asked, "I will authorize it, but you will have to go to sickbay and have Doctor Hilyar authorize it as well. Only the medical division has access to the gel itself. In fact, I happen to know sickbay has a modest quantity in stock. Will you need your own supply or can you use theirs?"

"I require my own supply," Ziyal replied with a bob of his head. "I require it for a large variety of genetic manipulation. That is the only way technological equipment can be adapted to the genetic and neurological codes of biological organisms. All of the gel that I use will be rendered obsolete when I am finished with it and therefore useless to sickbay. It will have to be stored in a very specific manner that can only be accomplished in my lab. A liter should suffice for the duration of our journey," the tall alien explained chirpily, before adding on a little sheepishly, "...Sir."

Will nodded absently. "Very well, you're authorized for requisition of one litre." He transferred the requisition to another PADD and gave his thumbprint before handing it to Ziyal. "You can take this to Doctor Hilyar then."

Ziyal took the PADD carefully and tucked it away. "Thank you!" he clicked happily, bowing his head, an antennae peaking in Will's direction. He seemed a little awkward, standing there, before finally

asking, "Oooh... dismissed?" Protocol, and all that.

Will quirked an eyebrow at the crewman.
"Dismissed," he said with a nod.

Taking that rather obvious clue, the young alien strode out of the room at his usual hyperactive pace, this time with PADD in hand.

CN Nazhzhah
Biotechnologist
USS Galileo

Lt. Cmdr. Chauncey William Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

Captain's Orders! (Part 1)

Posted on 21 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm &
Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Nesh Saalm

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*
Timeline: MD 04 - 1330 hrs

[ON]

After a short lunch with her sister and Chief Counselor, Lirha now led Nesh up the main access ramp to the *USS Galileo*. The dry dock facility was alive with personnel, many of whom were busy loading various types of equipment and supplies on to the ship. The captain had managed to acquire permission from the dock master to let her sister step on board the starship for a few hours, and she was quite grateful that Nesh would get the opportunity to see such a marvel first-hand and up close. It was an honor which most civilians, let alone teenagers, were not privileged with. The only hiccup Lirha could think of was finding a member of the crew who was on board and could spare the free time to entertain Nesh. The prudent thing to do would have been to contact her XO the night before and make arrangements with him, but she had been so busy with her administrative duties that it had slipped her mind.

With Nesh in tow, Lirha stopped in front of the main airlock and looked back at her sister. "Well? What do you think?" she asked, as she spread her arms to indicate the massive silver hull of Starfleet's newest starship.

Nesh hated to admit it but she was impressed. Impressed didn't even really cover it, she was stunned. Her lips tried to form words but nothing came mind that could even begin to describe what she was seeing. "Its...its...big" She finally said.

"Big?" Lirha replied with a sideways smirk, "This is one of Starfleet's smallest starships. You should see one of the larger ones, like a Galaxy or Sovereign Class." she said, then pointed towards the registry name and number painted on port nacelle. "She's called the *Galileo*, named after a legendary Earth

philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer. I'm quite impressed with her so far... I never thought I would get the chance to command a ship of my own."

Nesh bumped her sister playfully with her hip as they stood in front of the ship that by all accounts of the young orion was *massive*. "Well a shuttle is about the largest I have ever been on." She said in an almost sarcastic tone. "Not all of us spend our time on starships...some of us live planet side." It may not have been the largest ship in the fleet, but it was the largest one she had seen. She turned to her sister, "Do I get to go inside?"

"That depends..." she started, then moved next to Nesh and put a friendly arm around her sister's shoulders, "Do you promise you'll behave if I introduce you to my XO?" she asked with amusement in her green eyes.

"You have my word." Nesh said with a playful grin and held her right hand up like she was making a pledge. "I will be on *my* best behavior while in the company of your...uh...XO?.." She gave her sister her best shit eating grin as she wrapped her arm around Lirha's waist.

Lirha shook her head and chuckled. Her gut feeling told her Nesh was going to be anything but well-behaved, but a part of her was curious to see how Commander Holliday would react to her. "Very well, let's go then, shall we?" she replied, and walked with Nesh past the security checkpoint and into the airlock.

They walked slowly down the narrow corridors, a deliberate attempt by Lirha to let her sister view as much of the ship as possible. After a few minutes of travel and a short turbolift ride, the two of them arrived outside of the doors to her XO's office. Turning to face Nesh, Lirha gave her a quick uniform inspection, straightening her commbadge and tugging on the front of her shirt to remove a couple creases. "This is Commander Holliday's office," she said as she looked seriously at Nesh, "He's my second-in-command and next to me, the senior-most person on the ship. Show him respect, and if he tells you to do or not do something, listen to him."

"Yes, Ma'am." Nesh said simple as the desire to re-wrinkle her shirt was not so easily suppressed. She still didn't understand why she had to wear this boring thing. She adjusted her shirt a little. She watched as her sister rang the chime and simply waited quietly.

Standing in front of the door, Lirha silently hoped that the commander would be able to occupy Nesh for a few hours. She hated to drop by unannounced, especially with her little sister in tow, but she had taken a liking to her XO and thought that he would be a good person for Nesh to spend time with.

Status reports seemed to take up the majority of John's days right now, every few moments a new report would come in, either from a maintenance team, the drydock, or the various supply departments that somehow had to liaise together in order to make sure that this ship launched with a full complement of every conceivable item required for their mission to be successful. PADDs were piled high on his desk as he looked for the next report to sign off, quickly interrupted by the chime of his office door.

"Come in" he announced in a half-distracted voice whilst still searching through the pile in front of him, he dreaded it being yet another crewman needing yet another requisition order signed off.

Nesh cast a glance up at her sister. She was a little bit confused as to why LeeRee had picked the second most busy person on the ship to pawn her onto. She shrugged her shoulders as she waited to follow Lirha's lead.

The captain stepped into her XO's office and briefly glanced around the room at the stack of PADDs on his desk. She kicked herself mentally, realizing that he might very well be extremely busy for the remainder of the day. "Hello Commander," she started in a light voice, "I hope you're not too busy...I brought someone who I'd like you to meet." she said, then stepped to the side for Nesh to move forward and introduce herself.

The arrival of his CO had been enough to disrupt John's entire train of thought, in fact her appearance in the doorway, and his hectic attempt to stand up

and get to attention had caused him to launch a couple of the myriad of PADDs in front of him into the floor beside his desk. He was damned if he was going to ignore protocol just because he was busy.

"Captain! Good to see you ma'am, how can I help? A new crewmember you need bringing up to speed?"

Nesh stepped from behind Lirha and gave the man behind the desk an almost timid wave followed by a little grin. She couldn't help but feel a little awkward. Apparently her sister hadn't cleared it with him, before making this random decision. The thought prompted an escaped laugh which she quickly tried to cover with her hand.

"Erm.." John said with an air of confusion in his voice, this was definitely something new that he hadn't been told to expect. Unless the age rating for Starfleet cadets had dropped substantially, and there was no longer a uniform code for cadets, there was no way that this was going to be what he had expected it to be.

"Nice to meet you young lady" He said, raising his hand in a sort of... half-wave.. to return the girl's equally confused gesture.

"Captain, care to fill me in?"

"Yes...about that..." Lirha said as she cleared her throat and let her eyes stray down to the ground for a quick moment. "This is Nesh Saalm, my younger sister." she said as she gestured to the quite-similar looking Orion girl next to her, "Nesh, this is Commander Holliday, my XO." she said as she formally introduced the two of them.

"I was hoping...if you're not too busy...I could leave her with you for a couple hours this afternoon? She's been cleared with Security and has permission to be aboard the *Galileo*." she said with an imploring look in her eyes to the commander. "Perhaps you could give her a quick tour of the ship? It's her first time aboard a starship..." she added with a hopeful smile.

Sighing to himself, John closed down the PADD that he had been working on and laid it firmly back

down on his desk. It was true that he really didn't have the time to be acting as a chaperone to some teenage relative of another officer, but this wasn't just any other officer - it was his captain. Strictly speaking, he didn't really have much room to manoeuvre, an order was coming from his commanding officer, and as a member of her crew, it was his job to follow it.

"I err...yes ma'am" he replied, sounding a little deflated, although he was trying his best to cover it up.

"I guess we could start from the lower decks and work our way up...if you're sure she has sufficient security clearance for areas like the Bridge and Main Engineering?"

Lirha let out a mental sigh of relief and nodded. "Yes, I stopped by the Office of Personnel Management this morning and managed to get her the required clearance. She's not allowed near any weapons systems, but other than that, she is free to roam around...with an escort, that is." she finished with a wink at the commander.

"Well, I have to get back to my office." she added, grateful that Nesh would be looked after for the afternoon. "If you need anything, either of you, don't hesitate to page me." she said, and rubbed her sister's back reassuringly. Lirha glanced at John and silently mouthed the words 'I Owe You' before turning towards the door and exiting.

John felt his heart sink as his CO disappeared from the office, in his opinion, she definitely owed him more than one. That said, he was going to make sure that he got his own back out of this little arrangement. For now he turned his attention to the teenage girl now stood alone in his office ahead of him, her diminutive stature up against his 6ft frame making him appear to almost tower over her.

"So err...first time on a starship huh?"

"Uh...yeah." Nesh said as she cast a glance at the door her sister had just exited from. "I am sorry...uh..I don't know what to call you." She continued before he could reply. "Lirha promised me this cool day with her...and it seems to be I am

being pawed off on her crew instead...But thanks." She was a little nervous, she didn't want to get off on the wrong foot with the man who had her sisters back.

"Well, you aren't a member of my crew, so *Commander Holliday* is probably a little too formal, let's just go for John, easy enough to remember when there's only one syllable" He said with a smile on his face, he could see that the young girl was on the verge of terrified of being left alone on a strange ship with someone she had only just met.

"Trust me, I'm sure the Captain isn't just dumping you because she wants to, you see the pile of PADDs on my desk?" He said, gesturing to the precariously piled collection of equipment scattered across his never-to-be-tidy desk

"She's gonna have a pile probably twice as big as that...think of it like getting a whole year's homework in one go"

Nesh simply nodded she knew her sister was busy. It made sense she was the Captain of her own ship. She looked around the office for a moment. "I get that....at least I get to see her ship before it launches...that is pretty cool." She gave John a large smile.

"Heh, yeah she might be small, but she's perfectly formed, we can hold our own in a fight with a ship almost twice the size of ours. Not quite as fast as something like an Intrepid class, or a Sovereign, but we can shift fast enough!"

John realised that in the past couple of days he had become rather more fond of his ship and its abilities, even though it might not have been the battleship that he was hoping for, it measured up as being much better than an assignment on board a cargo vessel or a simple transport.

"So...where would you like to see first? The Bridge? Engineering? Mess Hall? take your pick!"

"Uh..I guess..." Nesh started, she didn't really know much about starships. She knew the bridge was where Lirha would spend most of her time. "I guess the bridge." Her tone made it sound more like a question than a statement. "It would be cool to see

where Lirha will be working all the time."

"The Bridge it is, stick close with me, its easy enough to get lost on these smaller ships" John guided her towards the door, and out into the corridor, destined for the nearby turbolift. The walk was not particularly long, and soon the pair found themselves approaching the familiar doors as they parted to reveal the waiting lift car

"Deck One - Bridge" John announced to the computer, which replied with its usual bleep and began to move. Turning to the young Orion, John had a mischievous glint in his eye

"Who knows, if she's not around, I might even let you sit in your sister's chair - someone has to make sure it all works properly before we launch after all"

A large smile crossed Nesh's lips. "That would be really cool." She said as her smile morphed to match the mischievous glint in her companions eyes. The lift ride didn't take as long she had thought and soon the doors parted to reveal a room not much unlike the ones she had seen in the books at the library. She took a few tentative steps out onto the bridge. "Wow..."

The Galileo's Bridge, although not at its usual peak efficiency, was nonetheless an impressive sight, most of the panels were now fully installed and active, and with the exception of a few maintenance staff, who did nothing more than look up to acknowledge the XO's arrival, before burying their heads back in their work to avoid missing their deadlines

"Not bad huh? The Bridge controls pretty much every system on the ship, down there you've got the helm, over there is Ops, Engineering, Medical, and my station" He gave a short dialogue, pointing out a few of the more vital stations to starship operations, before moving his hand back to the centre of the bridge.

"Aaaand that's where Commander Saalm sits....the Captain's chair, wanna try it out? Just don't press anything on the arms, trust me, everything on that panel does something!"

Nesh gave John a playful smile as she walked around to the Captain's chair. She looked at the chair and with a little twirl took a seat. It felt a little odd, but you could see almost everything from here. She turned in her chair to look behind her. A questioning look crossed her face, "So...She can only see ops and the helm from here? Does she have to turn around to see who is talking? or do COs not do that?"

"Well, she can if she wants to, although because we've all spent so much time getting the ship ready, your sister already knows which voice belongs to which person. Plus officers kind of expect that their captain might not decide to look straight at them when they give an order....they just know who's job it is to do what...like if your sister wants us to fire phasers, everyone knows that's for Tactical to do, and not say, the Science station"

John had never really dwelled on the design of starship bridges too much personally, the designs to him were meant to be functional more than they were meant to look pretty, but to someone who didn't have Starfleet training under their belt, he agreed it could look a little odd

"We just all have to make sure we're listening, even when we're particularly busy"

"Makes sense." Nesh said simply as she stood up from the chair. That chair had too many implications and all of a sudden she wanted to get as far from it as she could. She looked around the bridge at all the different stations. "This is pretty cool...what else is there to see?" She moved back around the chair to stand closer to Holliday.

"Well, there's the helm, which is basically like a giant map...or if you want, we can go and see the warp core? It's not active at the moment, but its still pretty big? I'd offer to let you see the phaser assemblies but your sister would kill me if I did"

"Weapons kinda of freak me out." Nesh said honestly as she gave John a large grin. She looked around the bridge. It was cool, but there wasn't much to see when you were a fifteen year old civilian. "So...this is the bridge." She looked up at John, "I have heard ships like this have...a...the

plant room thing...it starts with an a...arboretum?" She asked not 100 percent sure of her conclusion, "Does this ship have one?"

John couldn't help but giggle at the childlike analysis of an interstellar starship, and the existence of the so-called "plant room". He wished that sometimes he would be able to see starships with the wonder and amazement of a teenager, but that was many years ago now, and unlikely to ever happen!

"haha yes, yes we do have a plant room. The arboretum is down on deck 4 - wanna take a look?"

"Nope, was just checking if you had one." Nesh said with a roll of her eyes. She broke out into a grin before grabbing John's arm and tugging him towards the turbo lift. She let out a little laugh, "Of course I want to see it...that is why I asked."

As he was almost dragged towards the turbolift, John took a second to compose himself, before returning fire with a line of his own.

"Fair enough, lead on captain-in-training, just watch out for the Denobulan Tectrapod, its an insect eating plant normally but I hear the bigger ones tend to have a craving for teenage Orion girls who make fun of well-meaning human XO's" He laughed, heading for the doors.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LTCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

Nesh Saalm
Captain's Sister
NPC'd by Barel

Captain's Orders! (Part 2)

Posted on 21 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm &
Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Nesh Saalm

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*
Timeline: MD 04 - 1400 hrs

Previously, on Captain's Orders! (Part 1)...

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And Now, the Continuation...

[ON]

In a quite fitting show of her age, Nesh stuck her tongue out at the tall man sharing the turbo lift with her. "I will just make sure that I keep you between us...I doubt it has eyes, it might eat you instead." Her grin was playful, much like her sister's would have been in the same situation. She reached out and touched his arm slightly as she laughed. "Thank

you for showing me around the ship, but it's in my nature make fun of you a little if you walk into it." She held up her hand and using her first finger and thumb gestured when she said the word little.

"I'll have to make sure I swing past a weapons locker first then - I don't think I'll be able to keep up with your razor sharp wit without a phaser young lady."

As the turbolift doors closed around him, he called out to the computer "Deck 4 - Arboretum" and the carriage began its swift movement to the designated section.

Exiting out onto deck 4, the ship looked the same as it did on all its other decks, although this area was far more heavily populated than some other areas. Science labs, analysis suites and storage facilities dominated this deck, essentially, if you were a science nerd, then this is where you would probably be found.

"Aaaand here it is...the plant room!" John said with some rather put-on enthusiasm, like a parent entertaining a small toddler
"Care to lead the way? The door's open"

Nesh rolled her eyes as she walked through the door. The room was rather impressive. She had been to greenhouses in Los Angeles, but it was completely different to walk from a dark hallway into a room that made it feel like it was outside. She looked up though the trees and brushed her hand along one of the plants. "This ship keeps getting cooler and cooler." She turned quickly towards John, "Don't tell Lirha I said that."

"I'm sure I can try to leave that particular detail out of my report to Starfleet Command" John said as they began to wander through the carefully organised flora that would be travelling into the depths of space with them. Watching as the teenager gazed at the myriad of species within the arboretum, John couldn't help but crack a joke of his own.

"I guess I should be careful not to lose you in here, with that Orion skin I might never find you again amongst all these leaves!"

"Oh ha ha." Nesh said as she swatted at John's arm. "I would **love** to see you explain to your *boss* that you lost her one and only little sister while you were in charge." Her tone was playful and accented by her once again sticking out her tongue before she turned back towards the plants.

"So.." Nesh started as she leaned over to smell one of the flowers. "You know my sister well?"

"no more than any other officer on board does I imagine" John said as he passed his hands over the delicate leaves of one of the mimosa plants in the arboretum, watching happily as it folded up its leaves in self defense. He had last seen one of these particular plants on earth at the academy, moments before he was shouted at by one of the new groundskeepers for daring to touch one of their plants

"We only met when I was assigned to serve under her, apart from that I don't know anything other than what's in her service record "

"That must we...odd?" Nesh said questioningly. She couldn't imagine being in a profession where you distance was expected, "I would never want to live in a life where you can't get to know each other because of protocol." She had heard her sister talk about it over and over, *protocol, protocol, protocol...* "Granted, between Lirha, my mom and my sister Liviana, I am not allowed to get to know anyone on principle..." she gave John a little wink. "Being an Orion has its drawback." She added as she moved further down the walkway.

"

I guess you just get used to it after a few years in the fleet, it just ends up being second nature to us."

John took a moment to think in the point that the captain's much younger sister had brought up, he had never really taken long to focus on the matter as he was just so used to carrying out his orders.

Generally the rules were that officers did not do too much fraternising in order to avoid senior officers showing any kind of favouritism to their subordinates

"Tough family huh? Being the youngest? Don't

worry, now you're growing up you'll start being able to make your own decisions, decide what you want to do on your own terms, what you want to become"

"You **really** don't know my sister very well." Nesh said with a laugh as she shook her head. "The older I get the more they hold on." She turned to John as they reached the end of the walkway which put them back where they had started. "This place is really cool." Like a classic teenager with a short attention span, "What do we get to see next?"

"I'm going to have to probe you for more information on your sister before I take you back I see - that kind of intel could come in very handy for my next crew evaluation with her!"

John paused for a moment to consider where else there was to visit, there were certainly plenty of places to wander on a ship even this small, but it was the challenge of finding something that would appeal to a teenage girl that was the problem, a subject that John was pretty much flying blind on.

"well, there's Main Engineering, or the Mess Hall, or if you really misbehave there's always Deflector Control - trust me, that place is guaranteed to bore even the hardest Starfleet Engineer!"

Nesh let out a laugh. "Well then I had better be on my best behavior." She said with a mock salute. She thought it over for a moment, "I could use a snack?" She had just eaten lunch but she was kinda hungry-- at the very least thirsty. "Mess hall?" She walked backwards the few steps until she reached the turbolift call button. She tapped it waiting for the door to open.

"I'm sure there's no harm in letting you exploit the replicators for a while - what do you feel in the mood for? It's only a short ride once the turbo lift gets here so it's always a good idea to make your mind up in advance I find "

"Sweet tea and chocolate cake." Nesh replied as the doors parted. She stepped onto the lift. She leaned against the back wall as she waited for John do work his magic and have the lift moving again towards their destination. "I knew what I wanted before I asked the question." She continued simply

with a smile. She was glad that her *babysitter* seemed to be enjoying himself at least a little. She didn't want to feel like burden to anyone.

"that's a very human meal, you've chosen there - plenty of the on Earth will do that I suppose! Then again I hear chocolate is a universal love...alright then, lead on, the Mess Hall, is out of here, turn right, and follow your nose until you hit the big doors, you can't miss it, even when it's the middle of the night and you really want a snack!"

John had to admit, he was enjoying himself, something in the back of his mind was making him extremely pleased to see this Orion teenager enjoying herself, but he couldn't put his finger on exactly what it was.

"I have never been off planet." Nesh said easily. "My mom works a lot and neither of my sisters live at home so the replicator and I have a good relationship." She laughed a little as the lift came to a stop and she stepped off. "It can make Orion meals, but I have found that I like eating what my friends like." She turned to him as they were walking, "You strike me as a cup of afternoon coffee kind of person?"

"You're a rather astute young lady aren't you? In my entire adult life I don't think I've ever managed to say no to a good cup of coffee"

John had to admit, it had been a while since he had taken his last hit of caffeine, and his stamina levels were running rather low after running around keeping a teenage girl amused for the past hour or so. Right now the appeal of the replicator was almost unbearable.

"well then, I'll let the two of you get reacquainted" John smirked as the doors opened, revealing a rather quiet mess hall, with a bank of replicators happily humming away.

Nesh smiled as she walked over to the replicator banks. Tapping the button on the front, "Triple chocolate cake small slice and sweet tea 34 degrees...." She looked over at John realizing she didn't know how he liked his coffee. With a shake of her head she released the button and retrieved her

little treat. "I'll meet you at the table?" She half asked as she turned and headed for the nearest unoccupied seat.

Nodding to the young girl John approached another replicator a little further along the wall. His coffee had been the same for the past 6 years; double sweet with cream, he felt the extra sugar hit was always an extra benefit on top of the caffeine. As the mug materialised in the small opening, he deftly collected it with his right hand and headed over to meet his guest, sitting down opposite her as she tucked into her snack

"So how do our replicators shape up to the one at home?"

"Pretty close." Nesh said happily as she pulled the recently emptied fork from between her lips. A grin broke across her lips as she took a sip of her tea. The two sweets and the contrast of temperature were most refreshing to the young Orion. "I am surprised *ReeHee* hasn't programmed Mom's cake into the replicator storage bank yet." She grinned back up at John, "How is your coffee?"

Ignoring the comment regarding his coffee, John honed in on the unusual nickname that the young Orion came out with. He had no idea exactly to what she was referring, but something told him it was going to be useful ammunition next time his CO tried to bribe him as had happened twice now. In both the babysitting match and the crew reports meeting, Lirha had managed to best him and win some kind of advantage, this sounded too good to be true.

"ReeHee? Please tell me you mean Commander Saalm?" John laughed, hoping to get the scoop on his CO's dynamic with her sister.

Nesh's cheeks turned slightly amber as she realized the slip. "Uh...yeah." She admitted as she placed another fork full of cake into her mouth. She took this little delay to think over how she was going to explain this. With a sip from her tea she began, "Lirha is fifteen years older than me." She stated it simply enough, "When I was little I had a hard time with her name...for some reason I had a hard time with L's for a long time...so Lirha became *ReeHee*

and our sister Livana is *Vanna*." She set her fork down on the table and ran her finger through the frosting. Lifting it to her lips she placed it against her tongue and removed the sweet chocolate confection.

"Note to self, make sure I slip that one in somewhere" John had to try and avoid laughing as he took a deep glug from his coffee, it was refreshing to know that he might actually be able to get one over on his CO at some point before they were too far away from Earth. Looking to his left, he could see through the full length windows that made up one wall of their mess hall. Outside, the state of the dock seemed to be improving every hour, more and more of the excess equipment and personnel slowly began disappearing as time went on.

"Looks like we'll be launching on schedule...the dock's looking pretty empty right about now...lets just hope they remembered to put the engines together the right way round otherwise we might not be leaving as easily as we hoped!"

Nesh laughed as she once again took up the fork to finish the rest of her snack. With a sip of her tea she was once again speaking, "Are you like Lirha and itching to get back into space?" She grinned as she asked the question easily masking the sadness that promoted the question.

"Well...I guess the straight answer is yes!" John replied in a matter of fact tone, it was true that he never felt quite right sat on the surface of a planet, and the quicker he could feel the vibrations in the deckplates from a successful warp jump the better.

"I just feel more at home in space - I grew up on Mars, so Earth isn't really a home for me, it's just the place I went to the Academy at...now space, that's a different matter, out there its your wits and your skills against the unknown, its a real challenge....one that I miss"

Pausing for a moment, he took another gulp of his ever-depleting coffee, before returning to the conversation.

"How about you? Ever thought about following in

your sister's footsteps?"

"Oh no...no...no no." Nesh replied as she vehemently shook her head. "I am going to Baylor in Texas and studying art...I want no part of Starfleet regardless of what my sister wants." She finished the last of her cake and pushed the plate away. She washed down the sweet desert with the remainder of her sweet beverage. "Someone has to actually stay with on Mom..." She bit back the comments about her sisters, "So the responsibility falls to me." she finished with a smile before rising from her chair and placing her plate and glass in the disposal bin and returning to her seat.

"Responsibility huh? See you sound like an XO already" John laughed to himself as he finished the end of his coffee.

"And speaking of your sister, I'm sure she's dying to get you back to herself....I'm pretty sure she's in her Ready Room....wanna go track her down?"

Nesh let out a breath, "Yes...I think that would be a good idea." She rose from her seat. "Let you get back to your piles of paperwork." She grinned.

"Don't remind me...if I leave it much longer it'll start moving around on its own."

Standing up from the table, John led his young guest back towards the turbolift, and finally back to the Bridge. It was still quiet up there, nothing more than a few technicians wandering around, but the small room off to the side of it was his destination. Approaching the door, he pressed the chime.

"Enter." Lirha called out as she sat in her chair reading over a new intel report. She casually pressed a button on her desk's console and the display went dark as she turned her attention towards the door.

With permission granted, John pressed the release key and watched as the doors sprang open in front of him. Ushering Nesh inside, he stood to attention once again in the presence of his captain.

"Lieutenant Commander Babysitter reporting as ordered ma'am" he said with a wry smile on his

face, looking down at the teenager to his side.

A big smile spread across Lirha's gold lips as she looked up at her XO and little sister. "Did you two have fun?" she asked, noticing that Commander Holliday seemed in rather unusually good spirits. Rising from her seat, she walked around her desk and next to Nesh, putting her arm around her shoulders and giving her an affectionate squeeze.

"Well ma'am....it was....strangely enjoyable...you Orions must have some hidden ability to overcome the despair of a room full of PADDs"

John had to admit, it had been a nice change of pace to get out of his office and explore the ship, certain areas he still hadn't managed to see properly, like the arboretum, and this little distraction had been just the right opportunity for him to finish learning the layout of his new ship.

"Your ship is pretty cool ReeHee." Nesh said with an excited smile and twinkle in her eye as she returned the hug. She couldn't help but give John a little wink at the use of her sisters pet name. She quickly look up at her, "I can see why you like Star Fleet so much...but I still don't want to join." She finished with a laugh as she hugged her sister again.

"Well, not everyone is space-worthy." the captain replied with a grin as she looked at Commander Holliday. "I'll be sure to abduct you again the next time we pass through the Sol system." she said to Nesh, then turned back to her XO. "Thank you so much for showing her around, you have no idea how much of a help you've been." she said to him with a warm smile.

"No trouble at all ma'am, with your permission, I've still got a ton of work sat in my office to finish off...unless there was something else you needed?"

"No, I think you've helped quite enough for the day, Commander." she replied with a nod. "You're dismissed whenever you like." she said with friendly and appreciative eyes.

"Well then ladies, I'll leave you too alone, you know where I am if you need me."

Nodding to both Orion sisters, John turned on his heels and headed back out towards the Bridge, it had been a rather enjoyable afternoon for him, albeit a little different to what he was used to. Nevertheless, he hoped that it would happen again soon.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LTCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

Nesh Saalm
Captain's Sister
NPC'd by Barel

Personnel Reviews

Posted on 21 Feb 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office
Timeline: MD 04 - 1400 hrs

[ON]

The stack of PADDs on Lirha's desk was enormous and it had taken her most of the morning to make even a small dent in the pile. They were a mix of inventory items, checklists, intelligence reports, and personnel files, of which the latter were her biggest concern. Though the *Galileo* was a small ship with a crew compliment of only one hundred, she was still responsible for familiarizing herself with every officer, enlisted man, and civilian who fell under her command. At the slow rate she was going, it would take days before she could get through the entire manifest.

With a sigh, she tapped her commbadge. "Commander Holliday, please report to my office when you get the chance." she said, hopeful that he would be able to assist her with the daunting task. She also felt it would be good for him to get a first-hand look at the new crew they were taking into space with them.

From his station on the bridge, the XO heard the call come in over the comm, it must have been important otherwise she never would have summoned him all the way to the office.

"On my way ma'am" he replied after a quick tap to his ever-present combadge.

Giving command over to a young lieutenant who up to now had been busy reviewing the recent repairs to the tactical systems completed by the engineering team only a few hours earlier. A short turbolift ride was all that separated him from the mystery of his unexpected summons across the comm.

As he reach the CO's office door, he tapped the doorbell, and waited for a reply.

"Come in." Lirha replied loudly as a soft chirp from the computer had alerted her to the presence of someone outside of her office.

The doors slid open as soon as he heard permission to enter the room, and he quickly stepped inside, marvelling at the site of a dishevelled and stressed Orion surrounded by a mountain of PADDs

"I didn't realise command carried so much paperwork..."

She looked up from the monitor on her desk and leaned back in her chair with a sigh of relief. "You have no idea how happy I am to see you, Commander." she said and motioned with her hand to the numerous PADDs which littered her desk and lap. "Paperwork is one thing...but this is ridiculous. I don't understand how Starfleet expects me to conduct inspections of my ship *and* sort through all of these reports." she said with frustration.

"Please, take a seat." she said and gestured for him to sit across from her at the desk. "Hopefully you have time to help me with some of these personnel files."

Nodding to his CO, John took a seat across the desk from her, and began examining the pile of paperwork one at a time. He had never been required to do this before so there was understandably a degree of tension in his face as he tried to figure out where to start.

"So...how does this work ma'am?"

Lirha passed him one of the PADDs on her lap which contained an open personnel file for him to look at. The information displayed was a complete biography of the crewman along with a comprehensive service record and several notes from former commanding officers and supervisors.

"It's not so bad once you get started. I tend to skim through the personal information but I pay close attention to the service record. Promotions, demotions, department changes...that sort of stuff. If anything jumps out at you or is worth noting, just let me know and I'll take a look. Let's try to keep the files organized into two piles, one for officers and

civilians, and the other for the enlisted crew." she said to him.

"Lets get started then, I'll take the enlisted, and you take the officers? Best you know your department heads better than me ma'am. I'll have plenty of time to get to know them all once we've left port"

He defly picked up a pad with his left hand, and began entering various commands with his right, each time the system displayed the standard Starfleet crew file. A picture of the individual adorned the top right corner, along with standard personal details in the opposite left, place of birth, age, current rank, all the essential facts on any serving personnel.

"Wow you were right....the personal section of these records is enormous...psych evaluations, personal statements, strength/weakness analysis...makes me worry how much Command really wants to know about us!"

Lirha gave him a cautious look. "You really don't want to know. Or...maybe you do." she said quietly, then pulled a PADD from her desk's drawer which contained his personnel file. The Orion showed him the first page so he could see his name and the picture of himself, then waved it teasingly in front of him. "I'll let you have a look for ten bars of gold-pressed latinum." she said with bright green eyes.

"Ten bars? You Orions drive a hard bargain!" He laughed at the incredulity of his CO, attempting to bribe him for his own datafile. That little morsel of information being displayed was rather tempting, afterall, these files were usually kept top secret and only accessed by the correct people, at the correct times.

"How about, you hand over that file, and I'll take the first two hours of Alpha shift off your hands for the next week? Help you get over that hangover that I noticed the first day we met a little better?" He let his own smirk spread across his face with his counteroffer on the table.

"Either that or I could have a word with some of your old buddies at Intelligence in case I can do any snooping of my own on you Commander?"

Lirha paused to consider his offer, as well as his friendly threat. "Alpha shift for three hours, and you arrange mud baths for me throughout the week." she proposed with a smile.

Looking away to consider her offer for a moment, he tried to figure out if he could last with that much extra duty on top of the standard beta shift that he would be required to run as XO.

"Deal....go ahead....lets see what Command had to say about me shall we?"

He made a mental note to make sure he got his own back on her for this one, and John was nothing if not persistent.

She slid the PADD containing his personnel file across the edge of the desk for him to look at and watched his face intently as he began to read over it. She had the feeling that he would soon provide some amusement for her in an otherwise stress-filled day.

Loading up the file ahead of him, John began to skim over the short sections, each designed to appraise him in one manner or another, quickly he read through his service record, and quickly found his way to the psych and command evaluation.

"Look at this here.... *prone to emotional decisions, regardless of standard operating procedures, demonstrates moments of brilliance intertwined with moments of sheer insanity during combat operations* "

He pressed the close button on the PADD, deciding that he would take a look at it later on instead.

"I really hate admirals....did I ever mention that? You'll never catch me sat behind a desk at HQ when there's still exploring to be done"

"Lucky for you, the Milky Way is a big place." she replied with a smug grin, then picked up a PADD and began to read through another crewman's service record.

"Oh, this is interesting." she said as she browsed through the file. "A Staff Warrant Officer Petrov.

He's our Assistant Chief Research Officer...thirty-six years old, and by looks of it, should have earned a commission by now... except he's been demoted twice to do 'Conduct Unbecoming'. Says something about inappropriate relations with female members of a few different species." she said, then chuckled lightly.

"Sounds like he might benefit from a little bit of tough love...keep him in line, see if we can't shake him up and into shape before the end of this mission, crew discipline was always high on my list of priorities Commander."

He looked down at the PADD again, reading through a few more benign comments about a crewman who had yet to even arrive on board.

"Looks like I might have more on my hands than I thought...with a crew this small, my feeling is we're going to all have to get rather cosy with one another whether we like it or not.."

Lirha looked up from her PADD at her XO. "Does that bother you?" she asked, curious as to how he felt about being on board such a small ship.

Sighing and putting the PADD down on the desk, he rubbed the back of his head before continuing.

"Being totally honest? Yes ma'am, just a bit. I've never served on a vessel this small, my last assignment was a Galaxy class, over one thousand people, dropping down to a crew of less than 100 is a shock to the system. I thought with a smaller crew it would be less of a challenge to be effective as XO, but from my experiences so far, the smaller the crew, the tighter the bonds between them, I find myself having to know everything about everyone, where they were born, their family, the lot."

He stood up for a moment and paced around the room, before standing nearer the desk once again, not quite ready to sit back down, as if the movement around the room was helping his brain to process his thoughts into something tangible, something he could convey to his CO.

"This kind of challenge is what I thought I always wanted, and when the command training at the

Academy went on for so long about making sure you maintain a professional distance from those under you, I thought that it was going to be the same on every ship, but these smaller birds, they're more like families than crew."

He took a second to breathe, and then returned to his seat.

"That said, its probably a lot easier for you Intelligence types, I mean, it's your job to know everything about everyone right?"

Seeing her XO become a bit agitated was slightly unsettling for Lirha, and she wished he could relax himself. "Somewhat, but not exactly." she answered, not wanting to get into the details of her previous assignments at the current moment.

"That's why I asked you to come to my office and review these files with me." she said in a soft voice while looking up at him. "I have the feeling you will be a good influence on the crew, but it might take some time for everyone to adjust to one another and get comfortable. And that's part of your responsibility, to make sure everyone functions as a cohesive unit. A man with your experience no doubt has much to teach our young officers...including myself." she said with a small smile.

Feeling the softness in her voice, John realised that he may have gone slightly over the top with his last outburst, he had always been told even by his instructors during his Academy days, that John was nothing if not impulsive, acting with his heart before his head hasn't necessarily had time to kick in and rationalise his decision. Sighing deeply, he continued.

"I am to please ma'am, I'm sure I'll be able to pick a few tricks off of you myself...like how to drive a hard bargain!" he chuckled, thinking back to their earlier conversation and his personnel file.

"Mudbaths huh? I'll have to have a word with the ship's plumbing to pull that one off...not to mention a look at the culture databases! "

Lirha raised an eyebrow at his mention of the ship's plumbing. "Oh, don't worry about that, I've taken

the liberty of acquiring a few barrels of lowland Florida mud. It's the best I've experienced on this planet, so far." she said. "Have you ever indulged yourself in one before?" she asked, "It's quite the sensation. The wet soil is cool and refreshing, and it does wonders for your skin." she suggested.

"Can't say that I have before ma'am" he paused for a moment to think about how odd a sensation it must be, as far as he was concerned, mudbaths were best reserved for exotic aliens and Terran mammals trying to cool off.

"That said, with all the exploring we'll end up doing out here...I might be persuaded to change my mind, you know, in line with the *seek out new life and new civilisations* line, if I ever get time to get off the Bridge that is, with all the extra duty shifts I'll be pulling this week!" He chortled once again.

"A small price to pay for valuable information." she replied and smirked at him with amusement. "But let's focus on the task at hand and finish these reviews, shall we?"

"Sounds good to me, we don't want to leave it too long, otherwise we'll go back to the Bridge and find somebody forgot to install the viewscreen."

He picked up the PADD once again, and continued his way through the reports, looking up to see the smirk from his CO.

"Maybe this command won't be so bad after all" he thought, before immersing himself back into his work.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LTCMDR John Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

A Bright Future

Posted on 15 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 04 - 1530 hrs

[ON]

With less than twenty-four hours before the scheduled inspection and systems check, Lirha rushed through the day's remaining crew interviews and status reports. Only two PADDs remained on her desk now, the rest neatly filed in their appropriate drawers. The captain picked up one of them and slowly read over it, taking notes on her newest assigned crew member. To say she was interested was an understatement. The name on the biography read Im'er Mor'an, a young Tarkannan woman who was currently a member of Red Squad, Starfleet Academy's elite training program. According to her service record, Mor'an was quite an accomplished cadet and had just been approved to begin her command training program aboard the *Galileo*. Wanting to know more about her, Lirha sent a quick interview request to the cadet's PADD.

Looking down at the PADD in her hand, Mor'an saw a request from her new captain. She had been waiting for it, as she knew Lirha would want to speak to her eventually. Smiling ever so slightly at her prediction, Mor'an made her way to the office specified on her PADD. As she strolled down the corridors and around corners, Mor'an thought about this newest honor bestowed on her -- the consent to finish out her training on board an actual starship. She was proud of herself, to be sure. Reaching the office, Mor'an hit the chime.

"Enter." the captain called out as she set her PADD down and got to her feet to greet her newest arrival. She quickly ran both of her green hands through her dark hair and pushed several stray locks behind her ear in an attempt to make herself look more presentable.

"M'lady," Mor'an said, keeping her eyes down and nodding her head. This was a sign of respect towards one's superior. "You sent for me?"

Lirha raised an eyebrow after being addressed in such a formal manner and found a small smile creeping onto her face. "Yes, I did," she answered in a vibrant voice as she looked at the young Tarkannan woman, "Please, have a seat." she said as she motioned to a nearby empty chair. "Thank you for coming on such short notice. I hope you found my office with little trouble."

"Yes, thank you, I found it without any at all." Mor'an sat carefully in the proffered seat. As was her habit, Mor'an took in her surroundings with a quick sweep of her blue eyes. Satisfied, she looked back at her commanding officer expectantly.

"Excellent." Lirha replied as she studied the woman's face. The cadet's physical appearance was exotic to the captain, and her curiosity began to peak. "If you don't mind me asking, I am unfamiliar with your species, and I am familiar with most in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants...where are you from?" she asked with bright green eyes and a tilt of her head.

"I was born, raised and trained on the planet Arun R'lantha," Mor'an replied, studying the captain as the woman was her. "It is a very peaceful planet, as we are all trained from the day we are born in the ways of tranquility and serenity." She gave the captain a half grin. "But do not be fooled. I am an excellent fighter."

The captain returned the young cadet's grin. "From what I've read in your personnel file, I have no doubt about that.". Lirha paused and narrowed her eyes as she thought for a moment. "Arun R'lantha....." she said quietly in thought, "You are from the Delta Quadrant, no?" she finally asked, recalling several references to the planet from the *USS Voyager's* logs.

"No, ma'am," Mor'an said, "Arun R'lantha is in the Beta Quadrant. It is not a very well known planet to most everyone in the Federation, as they only made First Contact in 2348. I am the first Tarkannan to enter the Academy." She visibly swelled at these words, very proud of this fact.

"Ah yes, my mistake." she replied with a nod. "You will have to forgive me, I am always very curious

when I meet new and unique individuals." she added as she picked up the cadet's PADD and began to browse through it. "Since you are the first of your race to serve in Starfleet, what are your impressions? Are you enjoying your time here in the Academy so far?"

"Oh, immensely," Mor'an replied, nodding with enthusiasm. "I never thought I would learn so much outside of my training, but I have. It has certainly cultivated abilities I never knew I had. Being on Red Squad only makes it better."

The Orion captain smiled at the young woman, happy that she was enjoying herself. "That's good to hear." she said, then put the PADD down on the desk top, folded her hands in her lap, and leaned back in her chair. "Tell me about Red Squad." she asked simply. "I'm familiar with the program, but I want to hear your own thoughts and observations."

"It is not easy, to be sure," Mor'an said, "But I relish it. It challenges me and makes me think. All of my squad mates are close." She smiled again. "We give each other nicknames. Mine is," she paused, "Little Gecko."

Lirha smiled at the cadet's comment then tilted her head to the side in thought. "Why do they call you that?" she asked, unsure whether the nickname was a reference to her appearance, abilities, or some combination of both.

"My eyes," Mor'an replied, "Apparently the gecko lizards of Earth have unusual eyes and I guess they all thought mine were as well, what with them being so blue, along with my abilities to see things they cannot."

"Yes, they are quite...interesting." she commented as she stared into the cadet's clear blue eyes. "What particular abilities do you possess? You mentioned you can see things which others cannot?" she asked curiously. Lirha again picked up the PADD containing the cadet's biography and began to scan through the medical information for any details on her species abilities.

"I have the capability of seeing infrared and ultraviolet light," Mor'an said. "Being able to see

infrared is incredibly useful, believe me." She blinked rapidly a few times before continuing. "There," she said, raising a hand tracing a shape in the air in front of her. "I can see your heat signature."

Lirha gave the young woman a nod. "That must be a very useful trait," she said, then paused to consider the repercussions of such an ability, "If you can see in the IR spectrum, how do you differentiate between various colors and tones?" she asked.

"I cannot," Mor'an said simply, "Not very well, anyway. I can tell one color from another, but if you ask me to differentiate between the dark green spot and the light green spot, I just cannot do it."

"Well, I trust that you're quite competent and have learned to adapt to the monotonous LCARS color schemes." she said matter-of-factly, then changed the subject to something more formal. "I understand that you've been granted permission to participate in a command training program...under my XO, Commander Holliday, nonetheless." she added with a smile. "From what he has told me, you were a former student of his?"

"For a short time, yes," Mor'an replied, "I am mildly surprised he remembers me. He was a wonderful tutor."

Lirha nodded in agreement. "This will be my first assignment working with him but from what I have seen, he is a very competent officer." she said, then pushed some of her dark hair behind her ear. "As far as your training assignment aboard my ship goes, have you been briefed on the details?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am," Mor'an replied, "Commander Prin at the Academy briefed me before the *Galileo* was finished being constructed."

"Excellent." she replied. "How familiar are you with Nova Class starships? Have you had a chance to visit the Fleet Yards and see her up close?" she asked. When Lirha was a cadet, she had been in awe the first time she visited the dry dock, and spent several hours looking over the hull of a newly constructed Steamrunner Class.

"Relatively," Mor'an said, "I have studied various types of ships, but not any in particular to any extent."

"How do you feel about serving aboard a science vessel?" she asked the cadet. It was a question which she found provided good insight into her crew, as many of them had come from different backgrounds and specialties.

Mor'an shrugged with a delicate movement of her shoulders. "I am honored to be serving aboard any vessel," she said. "I cannot say how I feel about serving since I have yet to be of any service."

The captain flashed a small grin, "Fair enough." she said. "The reason I ask is because the *Galileo* is one of the smallest ships in Starfleet. Many officers and enlisted crew have never served aboard such a cozy and compact vessel before, and it can sometimes take a while to adjust to the narrow corridors and tight living spaces. Do you feel that you will be comfortable aboard such a starship?" she asked, then paused to add to her previous statement. "There are many other starships in Starfleet which you would be able to complete your training assignment aboard...I don't want you to feel like the *Galileo* is the only one. If you have any hesitations, I would like to hear them now, before we depart San Francisco."

"Captain," said Mor'an in a slow, gentle voice, "I require nothing for myself, as needs of the body are insignificant. The size of the vessel I serve is of no matter to me. All I want is to learn my assigned duties and do them well."

The cadet's statement was one of the most humbling and selfless which Lirha had ever had the privilege of hearing, and she smiled at the young Tarkannan woman. "Thank you for your honesty, and please don't take my questions the wrong way." she said, "I was merely trying to afford you the best opportunity. I found that when I was a cadet, I was somewhat intimidated by the idea of spending such a long period of time with the same personnel while confined to a small starship." she said, then chuckled as she realized she had just described the nature of Starfleet.

"Intimidation is a state of mind," Mor'an said. "I have lived for years with the same few people during some of my most intense training. It was an experience we learned from, one that drew us together as a single mind. It is my hope that, because of the small stature of this vessel, the crew will experience a similar phenomena."

"I also share that hope." she replied, then leaned back in her chair. "Do you have any questions for me, Cadet, about your assignment or the ship?" she asked, affording the young woman a chance to inquire about events to come.

"No, ma'am," Mor'an said, sitting up a little straighter in her chair.

"Very well then, welcome aboard." Lirha said with a sparkle in her green eyes. "I look forward to helping you with your training and I think you'll be a great asset to the ship." she finished.

Mor'an rose from her seat. "Thank you, m'ady," she said, "I hope I am able to fulfill my duties."

Lirha smiled one last time at Mor'an and watched her depart from her office. The captain had gone into the interview a bit skeptical of taking a Red Squad cadet under her wing, but their conversation had been productive and had reassured her that she was a very bright and capable young woman.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an
Red Squad Intern
USS Galileo

A New Arrival

Posted on 17 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an

Location: *USS Galileo*, XO's Office

Timeline: MD 04 – 1700 hrs

[ON]

From the window of his office, John busied himself watching as workbees, maintenance workers, and engineers crawled over every inch of the virtually-completed skin of the Galileo. This vessel had been in the works for months, evolving from nothing more than a requisition order to begin construction from Fleet HQ, to the gleaming metallic shell that stood here today.

Nodding to the sight ahead of him, the Commander returned to his desk, faced with a never ending pile of paperwork that was going to take more than a few hours for him to sort out, in fact, he highly doubted he was going to be finished here until launch day. Sadly, before he had the opportunity to lose himself in the next piece of documentation that crossed his path, the personal access terminal that made up the bulk of his desk began to flash with a sequence of numbers that he had not seen for some time, demanding his attention.

Settling back into his chair, John entered his authorisation code to identify the source of the transmission.

"Starfleet Command huh? I wonder what they want?" He muttered to himself as he confirmed the signature of the message was indeed as he had expected. Sighing gently, John punched in the final code sequence, and the familiar Starfleet emblem was replaced by the face of an Admiral he had met several times before.

"Admiral Keyes, long time no see" John spoke in a matter-of-fact tone. The grey haired human admiral was one of the officers that he had frequently butted heads with during his tenure at the Academy, finding himself having to explain his teaching methods a dozen times just to get his syllabus approved.

"Mr Holliday...I see your reassignment hasn't tarnished your sense of pride." The admiral retorted in his own arrogant way. The similarity in their personalities had served to be a constant source of kindling for the fire that often threatened to consume both of them when an argument took hold.

"Guilty as charged sir. To what do I owe the pleasure?" The Commander did not want this to last a moment longer than was strictly necessary.

"Certainly not a social call Commander, I'm here to give you new orders. Now before you start blurting out arguments, be quiet, that's an order."

The Admiral stopped John in his tracks, giving him nothing else to do but sit back and wait for his orders. Keyes reached across his desk, somewhere out of sight of the communications screen, and retrieved a small PADD, thumbing the controls for a moment and reading the words that appeared.

"We're giving you a special assignment. Red Squad are preparing to churn out their next batch of cadets, a damn fine class, but they haven't had any real world experience. After careful deliberation, Command has decided to begin assigning the more...adept...cadets to serving starships, so that they can learn from experience officers."

John coughed for a moment, trying to take in that Starfleet was essentially sending children out into the fleet without any real input from the officers already in the field. John knew full well from his time as an instructor that these cadets certainly still had plenty to learn.

"We're assigning Cadet Mor'an to you Commander, she was in your class for Advanced Combat Tactics, you yourself were one of the officers that recommended her for Red Squad, or have you forgotten already?"

"No sir" John quipped back "I'm well aware of the actions I took as an Instructor....what exactly are you expecting of me? With all due respect sir, I'm not a babysitter."

"And you aren't expected to be Holliday! Don't get smart with me, you always had a problem following

my orders. Your job will be to help prepare her for life as an officer, take her under your wing as it were, teach her command procedures, methods, tactics, then report back to Red Squad commanders as necessary."

"But sir I don't have time for--" The admiral quickly interjected, stopping John before any argument could even begin.

"Now don't even try that one John, anyway, she's already aboard your vessel, I believe she met with your Captain a few hours ago - don't make me pull rank here, you know I will. I'll expect a report from you within 48 hours. Keyes out."

And with that, the channel ended, the Starfleet emblem reappearing on the screen. Gritting his teeth, John thumped the panel in outrage, taking the system out of communication mode. He was outraged that he had already been given more duties when the ones he already had were taking up so much of his time. And for the fleet commanders to go behind his back and assign him extra duties before even considering his feelings was in his opinion, betrayal. There was quite literally nothing he could do.

Sighing, he rubbed his face with his hands, glad that at least he had been sent a student that he had actually spent some time with, and approved of, rather than some fresh first year cadet with a mouth too big for their boots. Slapping his combadge, John decided to get this over and done with sooner rather than later.

=\= Holliday to Im'er....report to my office Cadet, on the double =\= He was well aware of the naming system of the Tarkannans, and even after a brief stay on Bajor some years ago, he still had to remember to get the order correct.

Mor'an tapped her combadge. =\=Aye, sir. I am on my way.=\= She had just met with Captain Saalm mere hours before, and now she was headed to meet her former tutor from the Academy. His order to come to his office had been clipped and direct -- it sounded as though he had just learned of her presence. Arriving at the door of his office, Mor'an didn't press the door chime right away. How was he

going to receive her? He remembered her, but to what extent? Pushing the thoughts aside her pressed the chime.

From the comfort of his desk, John lifted his head and for the millionth time to day, put down the PADD he was working on to pay attention to the door that seemed to permanently be trying to make sure that he had no choice but to deflect himself away from the work he so desperately wanted completed.

"Come in" He called out, simultaneously tapping the door release panel built onto his desk, watching the gap grow between the two door sections as the outline of the cadet he had summoned appeared.

"Cadet, take a seat." He spoke in a tone that was reminiscent of his days as an Academy instructor, direct and to the point, it was something that he felt worked well with the younger members of Starfleet, with a sound of authority in the voice, it was harder for them to decide to do something other than what they were instructed to do.

Mor'an silently greeted the XO with a hand gesture before sitting in the seat opposite his desk.

"I just had Command on the line saying you've been assigned to my ship as part of some new Red Squad training system...you're lucky you did so well in my class otherwise I'd have having the transporter chief send you right back to the Academy...so...do you think you're ready for this?"

Not fazed by Holliday's abrupt manner, Mor'an simply smiled at him. "Would I be sitting in front of you if I thought otherwise?" she asked in return. "Remember, it was you who recommended me for Red Squad."

"Good answer Cadet" John said, a smile starting to take shape across his face, even with the stress of getting this ship off the ground, he had not forgotten some of the pluckier members of his class, the cadet in front of him certainly qualifying to be included in that group. She had certainly impressed him during his tenure at the Academy, and he did indeed remember having a word or two with the Red Squad intake panel to make sure she was on the list of

candidates.

"How has Red Squad treated you? I remember telling you when I applied for your place that it was going to be a challenge."

"It was nothing I could not handle," Mor'an said, "I grew up with challenges, and Red Squad is a welcome reminder of my childhood training. When I was told you were to oversee my training on board the *Gallileo*, I was very pleased that you even remembered me. It has been some time since I was your student."

"Indeed...I left the Academy rather sooner than I had originally planned...the Commandant and I didn't exactly eye to eye on a few matters, but that's all in the past now. Well, from what information I've gleaned from HQ, I need to get you up to speed in Starship command procedures, tactical operations, Bridge behaviour, things of that nature...do you have any questions before we proceed?"

"Not as of yet," Mor'an replied, settling down into her seat in preparation for the coming lecture.

"Very well, I'll give you the rundown of the situation, so at least you know what's going on. As you know, the *Galileo* is a Nova class starship, designed for short range scientific and survey missions only. This does not mean that we are not going to be entering into a combat situation - in fact it means that if we do, we are going to find it a much greater challenge, meaning that every single officer on board must work to their best ability"

John turned away from his desk to the large MSD behind his desk, and tapped a few controls, to which the image of the Nova-class vessel rotated to a top-down view, and began to display its defensive and offensive systems, highlighted in white against the standard Starfleet gold background.

"Although you might be here to learn command routines and procedures, I will still expect you to show the same flare and ability for tactical situations that you showed in my classes. I want you to make sure you are familiar with our tactical systems before we leave drydock, and i recommend

you take a look at the helm as well - we all have to be flexible in an emergency."

Turning back to the monitor, he entered a few more commands, and the image returned to its earlier, still version, without any major systems highlighted.

"We launch at midnight tomorrow - I would like to see you on the Bridge for the launch - that way I can introduce you to the rest of the senior staff before we get too far away from Earth - you won't be able to learn much if nobody knows who you are except me and the CO"

Mor'an nodded in agreement. "I would like to be present for the launch." She hesitated before asking the question that had presented itself to her when Holliday had mentioned the senior staff. "How will the other officers respond to my presence? What do they think of a tenderfoot cadet being part of the crew?"

"to be honest, I'm not entirely sure....I imagine for most of them, they'll be obliged to follow orders, especially with Commander Saalm and I keeping an eye on you...my advice is to watch everything and learn as much as you can. We have some excellent officers on board and you should pick up plenty from them. If anyone gives you trouble, report the, back to me and I'll step in. Now if there's nothing else Cadet, you have a lot of studying to do, and I have a lot of work to finish"

"Aye, sir," Mor'an said, gaining her feet, "Thank you for everything you have done for me."

"Just don't let me down Cadet. Dismissed."

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

CDT(SR) Im'er Mor'an
Red Squad Cadet
USS Galileo

CEO's Poor Stomach

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: *USS Galileo*, Counsellor's Quaters

Timeline: MD 04 – 1900 hrs

[ON]

As Dru let out the breath she'd been holding, she sighed in frustration. The counsellors office was still an absolute state. She hadn't a notion of where she was meant to see people or if this place would ever be in order before the ship left the dry dock.

Dru realised she really needed a break before she stressed out further. As she grabbed a PADD, Dru headed out the door to try find somewhere quiet to try continue her reading of the files for the crew members. She was half way through the files and had just started on one for a Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn.

Markum was walking to get a bite to eat while he could. It had been twelve hours since his last meal, and his stomach was letting him know. Even a Warp Core Specialist told him he was cranky, and should go eat before his meanness consumed his dark, heartless soul. It was a good thing that the specialist was a Chief Petty Officer, and not some cocky ensign, or crewman.

Walking while reading his PADD he all but ran into someone at a junction of two hallways, just in-front of the turbolift. "What the hel...." Markum noticed the young lady was an officer, and was also wearing teal. "Pardon me Lieutenant. I wasn't looking where I was walking. Too busy thinking of what I could devour in the mess hall."

Dru felt herself hit off of something hard and looked up slightly startled, unsure what had just happened. Dru shook her head to try clear it. As she listened to the man she smiled slightly, "It's ok Chief, it was partly my own fault, I was absorbed in a world of my own. I'm the ships' counsellor, Lieutenant Drusilla McCarthy." Dru frowned slightly as she realised she recognised the man's face, "Your Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

aren't you? Well there's a coincidence for you, I had just started to read your file."

Quinn smiled at the Counsellor. "Uh-oh. Talk about bad timing on my part. How about I buy you something to eat, and we can talk. I think better while I'm eating anyways."

Dru looked down at the PADDs in her hands and smiled. "I seem to be eating alot lately, at this rate I'll need to order a larger size uniform before we leave Earth." Dru laughed softly before indicating for Markum to lead the way." I assume this is official business, you sure your comfortable with talking in the mess hall? My office isn't ready yet but if you'd prefer I can testify to the act my replicator in my room makes some good food. The place is abit small but the sitting room would suffice for a more private area."

Dru stopped talking as she realised how this sounded, "Ok...I should emphasise, that offer is purely a professional offer...I know people can be uncomfortable discussing personal issues in public and my quarters is the only private place I can think of where you can also get fed."

"Deal. I'm so hungry I'd eat at a Klingon baby shower Counselor." smirked the engineer. "Please, lead the way."

Dru stared at he man infront of her, *Klingon baby shower?* "Um...right...this way so. It isn't far, I'm lucky my offices are here on deck2 and my quarters are on deck1. So tell me Chief, how are you settling in?" Dru headed for the nearest turbolift.

"Fine so far. I've spent most of my time down in Engineering, fixing, replacing, and training. She is a beautiful vessel. Just have to work out the kinks." replied Quinn.

As Dru walked into the turbolift, she smiled up at Markum, "How long have you been in engineering for in general?"

"Thirty-two years." replied Quinn. "Thirty-two years, and still love it. My parents, and the rest of my family were more than a little upset that I quit the family business to chase stars for a living."

Quinn entered the turbolift and continued. "My father told me I'd come crawling back in six months. Man, was he wrong."

As Dru listened to Markum speaking, she decided it would be best to leave the probing questions until she managed to get to her quarters which were just up the hall from the turbolift, "Have you got a big family Chief?"

"Yeah, I am the youngest of six children. I had one sister die a year back though." Quinn hadn't thought of Alurity for some time. They were inseparable.

As Dru stepped into her quarters she suddenly realised it was a good thing they were In a private area, "Ok Chief, what would you like to give me your order t and while I get the food you can tell me about your sister "

"Sure, plain double bacon cheeseburger, fries, and a sweet tea please." Quinn sat down at the table and sighed. "Alurity was great. She was a lot like me, but she had the patience of a saint. She was the only one in the entire family that did not disavow me for joining Starfleet. She even came to my graduating from boot camp." Quinn shifted a bit in his seat. "She died just after I returned from my six year deep space exploration mission. She was living in San Fran at the time, fortunately for me. I took a two month leave to be with her. After she died I was offered the Chief Engineering position on the Valiant. My son was the best medicine after she died."

As Dru set the food and tea, Markum asked for infront of him, she sat herself into the chair opposite him with a sandwich and soda for herself,. Nodding towards the food Dru spoke up, "Is that alright? It must have been such a relief for your sister to be able to have you there for her at the end."

"Thank-you, that's great." replied Quinn. He took a large bite out of the burger and moaned with joy. He then answered, "Yeah. Not that she could do much though. She went quick, and peacefully. Just the way she wanted it. Now if only my son's mother would do the same, all my worries would be over." Quinn took a sip of his tea and set it down. "I can't figure out why such a beautiful souls like Alurity had to die, while an evil, conniving witch gets to

live to a ripe old age with perfect health."

Dru noticed how Markum seemed to be jumping back and forward between different issues and tried to figure how she would approach this, "Why do you feel such hostility towards your son's mother?"

Quinn finished his burger and was starting on his fries, "Her. Yeah, talk about a sensitive subject, Counsellor." Quinn took a sip from his now empty glass of sweet, then sat back with a sigh. "Her name is Alexia von Grauss. She is the wife of Aaron von Grauss, Federation Special Envoy to Andoria. It was in sixty-seven, I was a Warp Systems Specialist Second-Class on the USS Galaxy. She was a civilian Scientist on board. We first met while docked at Starbase One-Two-One. It was purely coincidental, but we were attracted to one another instantly. It didn't take long before we were quite the couple. We spent almost every waking, and usually every..umm...non-waking moment together. Sometimes though, she would have to leave ship for a few weeks at a time to conduct research..or so she claimed. It went on for almost two years. Then we found out she was pregnant with my child."

Quinn stood up and walked to the transparent aluminium widow and looked out while continuing. "She suddenly became unavailable more than usual. It wasn't until she was almost four months pregnant that the Galaxy happen to make a stop at Andor to collect a new crew. I was granted a two day pass, so I went to the surface and visited a few old college friends, and went to the college to visit a professor. As I was walking across a large court with several cafes and fountains I saw her in his arms. I confronted both of them immediately. You could imagine my surprise to find out she was married, and had been for six years. Aaron was just as shocked at the discovery of her lover before him. I didn't see her again for four years. It was just before the outbreak of the Dominion War. She told me that Marcus didn't know about me, and it was best to let her and Aaron raise him on Andor."

Quinn had a crack in his voice, and a slight snuffle, "I was devastated. I wanted to see my son, and I still loved Alexia. That was like a Bat'leth to the back. So, I pulled a few strings and got put on a new Defiant-Class ship, knowing full well that it would

be in the thick of the battles with the Caradassian's and Dominion. I signed up for suicide detail. I was not afraid to die. I was fearless. Death, I welcomed it, hoped for it. Obviously that idea went bad. After the War I got transferred to Command Headquarters in San Fran to join a classified research division. I ran into Alexia while stationed there. We talked, and she agreed that Marcus should know the truth about me. He was almost ten. Her husband wasn't too thrilled with it, and I spent the night in the brig, while he had surgery done to correct his broken jaw."

Dru stood over and handed Markum a tissue before resting a hand against his arm, recognising a need for comfort. Markum obviously still had issues about his ex and anger but Dru felt that right now he needed to concentrate on the positive, they could deal with the negative another time, "Tell me about Marcus, he's..." Dru quickly did the math in her head, "...22?"

Markum graciously accepted the offered tissue. "Thanks. He's a good kid. In the Academy, studying medical sciences. I'm not sure if he'll go on to med school, but he's smart enough. He is waiting for the day when the 'ol man will have to salute him before before I can give him a hug." He chuckled some at the thought. "Imagine that, my boy an officer. He is a lot like his mother. Intelligent, driven. Knows what he wants and takes it, usually without asking...little brat."

"Even if he's not smart enough to go into medical school there is ways around that. I know many Doctors who went the route of residencies and internships and they are just as good as anyone who came out of Starfleet Medical School." Dru smiled at Markum.

"Yeah...I just want him to do whatever it is that he wants to do. As long as he isn't a criminal...or a bureaucrat." laughed Quinn.

"Maybe he should try engineering like his Dad?" Dru smiled over at Markum as she walked back over to the table to collect her own drink.

Quinn chuckled at the thought. "Nah, he's much to smart for that. I always imagined him as a scientist

like his mother, maybe figure out a way to travel through subspace instead of normal space, or even discover something entirely different."

Quinn looked over to Dru, "I haven't spoken of these things to anyone for a decade I bet. Thank-you. It feels good to talk to something besides a Warp core, or a bone headed engineer that only understands things spoken in binary and propulsion calculated algorithms."

"Chief...Markus if I may call you that. It's not a problem, I'm glad you feel easy enough to be able to speak with me, I'm here anytime you need a chat," Dru smiled easily at Markum as she realised she had enjoyed listening to him, "And I wouldn't downplay an engineer. You must be doing something right that you managed to get these replicators to produce some nice food."

"Yeah, the trick was getting the transporter to fit someone small enough inside the replicators." Markum smiled, "You can call me Mark, all my friends do."

"In which case I'm Dru." Dru smiled over at Markus before starting to clear the table, "Markum is such an unusual name, where did it come from?"

"Ha, funny story about that. My mother was incoherent when I was delivered. The nurse asked my father what my name was going to be, so he replied, 'Mark...umm...' They thought that was going to be my name, not realizing my father was naming me Mark, and trying to remember what the middle name was to be." Quinn always laughed at that story. "You had to know my father, and my mother. She was irate when she came to I was told. After a while the name grew on everyone, so they decided to keep it. In honor of my father's mistake, Alexia agreed to name our son Marcus."

"Well mistake or no mistake, it's nice to have such an unusual name and a story behind it." Dru loaded the replicator with the dishes and dusts off her hands. "And Markus I'm sure is proud to be named after his real father."

"Thanks Dru." smiled Quinn, "Ya know, you may very well be the first counsellor I ever liked. Your

certainly the first I've spoke to for more than two sentences. I must be getting nicer in my old age."

Dru blushed slightly and tucked a piece of loose hair behind her ear, "I'll take that as a compliment on my personality and ability to make a person feel relaxed. Of course it could be the fact your in my quarters and instead of a counselling suite. If that's the case, at least I know now where to bring you to in the future anytime you need a chat."

"Yeah...and you fed me don't forget. You're a tricky one. I'll have to remember to keep my eye on you." Quinn remarked while laughing.

"There's a famous saying, a way to a man's heart is through his stomach...maybe I should adapt that to a way to a man's head is through his stomach. Might help further counselling sessions." Dru laughed as she realised this conversation was becoming abit silly. "Well I'm happy to say I do want to see you for a few more sessions once we get under way so you'll have aplenty of opperunity to keep an eye on me."

Quinn nodded in agreement, "You bet Counsellor. Thank-you for your time, and for listening to the ramblings of a bitter old engineer. I need to get back to Main Engineering. I have to make sure the kids didn't wreck anything."

Dru genuinely smiled over at Markum, "And thank you for my first easy counselling session of my new post Markum. I'm always available for random ramblings. And make sure your people stay away from the replicators, no point fixing something that isn't broken."

[OFF]

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

Nothing Like a Good Match...

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: *USS Galileo*, Holodeck 1

Timeline: MD 04 - 2000 hrs

[ON]

There were many hazards in growing up as a socialite. She normally managed to restrain herself, but it did manifest itself in her choice of attire when she was off duty. She loved dresses. They felt as natural to her as her own skin. It wasn't that she hated her uniform it had grown on her over the years, but it didn't change the fact that it was the only "outfit" in her collection that wasn't softy and flowy.

This fashion trend held true as Tarishiana entered the holodeck. The white dress was simple in design. The bodice had a simple tie closure and the skirt was composed of multiple pieces of fabric which restricted none of her movement. Unlike her other dresses it was what was underneath that made this ensemble. Beneath she had a sleeveless bodice much like the one on her dress but with a far more complicated closure and what appeared to be black leggings. The material each was made out of distributed the impact of weapons that made contact and resisted puncture from the sharpest weapons. This attribute was especially necessary for the type of recreation she was about to engage in.

She had just finished engaging the program when the pneumatic hiss of the doors caught her attention. she turned to see the ships Executive Officer, a one Lieutenant Commander Holliday, standing on just the other side. She wouldn't have know who he was if not for her obsession of checking over the service records of those she was serving under. She didn't say anything, she simply smiled.

With all the hussle and bustle of the last few days, John decided that it was about time for him to blow off some steam. On a ship this small it was generally safer and more respectful to take it out on holographically generated opponents, rather than

the poor crewmember who had happened to catch John at the wrong time.

Holodeck 1 was free for most of the afternoon, but the evening, in his opinion at least, was the best time to get some exercise in, to hone the mind and centre the body before turning in for the evening.

Clad in the standard two piece exercise outfit of Starfleet design, made mostly of grey and black panels, and clutching his towel, John waited as the holodeck doors opened and revealed that he wasn't exactly alone in the room.

"Oh, sorry, I didnt realise this holodeck was in use, I can come back later" He apologised. Another new face was in this room, someone else for him to get to know, it seemed that even with a crew of less than 100, John had an almost endless supply of individuals that he as of yet knew nothing about.

Tarishiana shook her head slightly, "It's no trouble at all Commander." She motioned towards the large room behind her. She could almost sense his need to unwind and with a smile spoke again. "If you would like you are welcome to join me. I was just about to start one of my old sparring programs, but is if far more enjoyable with company."

A sparring program was something that John regretted never getting enough time to work with, it was all well and good grappling against holographic enemies that worked to a set sequence of rules and regulations within the confines of the program's parameters, but against a real person, there was always the possibility of deceit, or thinking outside the box that led to a much more enjoyable competition.

"Sounds good to me, I've been aching to stretch my legs in here for a while, I haven't seen you onboard before, new assignment?"

Tarishiana smiled at his acceptance of her offer. She had secretly hoped that someone would stumble across her in the holodeck and be willing to join. "Actually yes, I recently transferred from the *USS Genevieve*" she moved towards where he was standing and outstretched her hand in the typical human custom. "Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel, the new Chief Science Officer."

Returning her offer of a handshake, John flashed a slight smile towards her, enough to give away that he was happy she was here, without looking anything remotely resembling a lack of professionalism.

"Nice to meet you, John Holliday, First Officer, although I assume you probably already knew that from your transfer orders" He replied relatively plainly, it was a sentence that he had already had to say to the best part of 80 people recently, and it was starting to wear a bit thin, but was sadly a necessary evil.

"Science officer huh? Seems like a Nova-class is right up your street?"

"And from the fact that I am a Betazoid." Tarishiana replied simply with a smile. "I am a language specialist by both hobby and training...so I tend to fit pretty much anywhere." Her tone was jovial as she turned to move further into the holographic room. The room was simple with a sparring mat in the center of the floor. On either side of the square mat were tables containing melee weapons. Many of them were from Tarishiana's favored Terren era. While the safeties of the holodeck would prevent them from mortal injury the chance for bruises still existed. She strolled up to the table to the right placing her hand on a pair of blades, looking up at Holliday "Do you prefer melee weapons or are you more hand to hand in nature?"

"Betazoid huh? Does that mean you can hear what I'm thinking, even now? Apologies for all the questions, I haven't encountered many of your species before"

Walking around the room, John wasn't entirely sure if he should be trying to shield his thoughts, or if that was just going to make it worse for him, and easier for her.

"Either...I studied Judo and Kendo in my youth, I'll leave it up to you, just...make sure you leave the holodeck safeties on, I don't fancy a blade through the stomach any time soon, the CO might get annoyed that she can't launch because her XO has been turned into a kebab"

Tarish let out a light laugh, "I don't mind the questions...my career is built on asking questions." she watched him walk toward the table as she continued speaking. "You can try to shield your thoughts from me if you like..." she broke her rule slightly to answer his question. "But I pride myself on only prying if granted permission...So unless my life is in danger your thoughts are your own." She glanced down at the table deciding on a pair of blades that would have resembled sai if they had not been sharpened. "I have no intention of allowing either of us to be...*kebab-ed*?...as you put it. Feel free to choose whatever you like." she finished as she motioned towards the table and turned to stand on the mat.

"Sounds good to me" He replied, heading to the same weapons rack that Tarish had been eyeing up, before noting a familiar weapon, the katana, close enough in design to the standard armaments in Kendo. Picking it up, he felt the weight in his hand, before heading towards the centre of the sparring area.

"Weapons it is, lets see what you got shall we?"

With her weapons in each hand Tarish gave a slight bow to her opponent. While she had little formal training, the politeness from a duel all appealed her more proper nature. She stood for a moment watching Jonathan hold the sword. It was a weapon he was familiar with. A slight mischievous grin formed at the corner of her lips as she made her first move toward her XO.

The sound of metal against metal rang out as he blocked her first attack. With a flick of the wrist he had her pushed back slightly. As the way with most matches, it was his turn to be the aggressor.

Surprised at the raw strength that the Betazoid possessed, John decided that he was probably going to have to watch his game for the rest of this competition, lest he be caught off balance by a lucky shot. Stepping towards her he advanced first with a thrust to her midsection, which she deflected relatively easily with her offhand blade, before he brought the sword around to hear in a broad swing aiming for her shoulder, waiting to see if she would

offer any defense.

Tarishiana had barely been able to get her blades up in time to deflect the strike. She was able to avoid the sharp metal from making contact with her skin but her dress was a different story. She heard the smooth ripping sound as the blade cut through her billow in her sleeve leaving her upper arm exposed. She looked up at Holliday with a grin, "You owe me a dress."

Laughing as he saw the incredulous look on her face, John couldn't help but become a little bemused by the current state of his science officer. He hadn't intended to take a chunk out of her clothing, but somehow had managed to succeed.

"Sorry, I'll have to have a word with the replicator later on" He joked as he once again lunged with the weapon, this time heading for her thigh in an attempt to knock her off balance.

"If you're lucky I'll even replicate it myself instead of letting the boys in the supply rooms worry about it!"

Tarishiana parried the lunge with a sense of ease. "I see I might have to start cheating with you." Her tone was flirty which matched the smile on her lips as she used the guards on her blades to trap his. With a twist of her wrist and a little delving into his mind she was able to wrench the sword from his hand. In order to pull this off she had to sacrifice her off hand weapon.

With an agonising twinge of pain through his wrists, John was powerless to stop his Betazoid opponent from launching his weapon across the floor, an illegal move, but effective, and after all, in a real-world combat situation, your enemy was never going to let rules and regulations stop them from killing you.

"Fighting dirty are we? Ok, ok I can do that, I think"

Realising that he was destined to lose as long as she was armed and he was not, John decided that a rather different course of action was required, he had to get that blade from her hand. Taking a deep

breath, in two steps John covered the distance between them, dropping his shoulder and slamming it into her chest, hopefully enough to knock the wind out of her sails.

With his spare leg, he quickly locked in behind her knee, and pushed down, hoping that it would be enough to bring her to floor, and hopefully lose that weapon of hers on the way down!

Tarishiana knew she was going down, the only question was if she could take Holliday down with her. His shoulder collided with her chest and while for that moment her lungs burned for the air that had rushed out in the impact she was able to get her arm under his arm locking his shoulder to her. Where she went he was going too.

She let out a grunt of sorts as her back collided with the matting. Thanks to the holodeck other than more of the air being pushed from her lungs from his weight, the impact caused no pain. Using her legs Tarishiana rolled and flipped and managed to take the superior position only momentarily before she was once again thrown against the mat.

"Not bad, you're better trained than you let on!" John called out, almost out of breath and his brow now beaded with perspiration as he struggled to hold onto the writhing warrant officer. Luckily on the floor, with his experience of Judo, he was pretty certain he had the advantage. With all his strength he lifted his back upwards, simultaneously wrapping his arm around her taught midriff in order to flip her back onto the mat, rather than her current position on top of his back.

Going in for the kill, he wrapped his spare arm around her shoulders, pressing her into the mat, trying to see if she would accept his superior position and surrender.

"Had enough? Or do you wanna warp my mind again to get your own way?" He said laughing both through exhaustion, and enjoyment - it had been a while since he could vent his anger and frustration this way, and it was doing wonders for his stress levels!

Tarishiana couldn't help but appreciate her current position. With a coy smile on her lips. Her breath

was quick as she moved her hands to his hips starting in the back and moving more to the front as she pulled her left leg up moving her foot closer to her hip. Pushing as hard and as quickly as she could Tarish threw her hip up towards her right shoulder. Using her hands and the momentum created by this moment she was able to roll Holliday on to his back in a not so gently movement. She was basically along for the ride as she rolled with him.

Tarishiana knew he had a weight/strength advantage against her, but that didn't stop her from moving her hips over his and using her legs to keep him apart and flat on the ground. A knowing grin came to her lips as she held his wrist against the mat near his shoulders. "Your assumptions on my training was all you...Sir." She looked over the Executive Officer for a quick moment and drew a few quick breaths. She was finding this match exhilarating and the attractive opponent was an added bonus. "I don't always have to *warp* your mind to get my way." She finished with a knowing smile.

Before John could even react to her first retaliation, the wind was knocked from his sails as he found himself well and truly pinned. The Betazoid might have been smaller and lighter than him, but that wasn't stopping her from putting some considerable pressure on his increasingly delicate-feeling joints.

"Damn..." He panted as he tried to catch his breath, something easier said than done from the position he was currently in.

"You aren't half bad...ok...ok I give in, the match is yours....although I expect a rematch, heh and don't make me make it an order!" He chuckled as the air finally returned to his lungs.

"You can get off me whenever you like Ms Barel."

With a satisfied grin and a tip of her head Tarishiana rolled to the mat next to Holliday. Her breath was still coming quickly and her skin had a sheen of moisture from her exertion. She hadn't the energy to get very far but she was far enough they were no longer touching. She turned her head so that she was looking at her Executive Officer. "You can have your rematch as soon as I get my dress." She replied with a laugh as she lifted up the scrap of

fabric that used to make up her sleeve. Without hesitation the next sentence escaped her lips. "Want to have dinner with me?"

Laying on his back having finally managed to flip over, John felt that ever-so-familiar ache in his joints from the stresses of exertion during combat, it was a feeling that he relished, to him it meant that he had gotten in a good workout. Panting, John felt the air start to work its way back into his body, and the feeling of tiredness in his head slowly began to subside.

"That's a deal" He laughed to himself in reply to the state of his fellow combatant's clothing, it had been an accident, but it had at least broken the ice between the two officers before this mission began to become real as they left drydock for the first time.

An offer of dinner had taken John aback a little bit, his command training had taught him that acting in such a way with a junior officer was never a good idea, after all, he was the XO of the ship, and was supposed to maintain decorum and authority at all times. That said, he was planning to try and get to know the senior staff a little better, and he was nothing if not famished.

"Sounds good to me...I tell you what...how does a half hour respite sound to get better acquainted with our sonic showers and a fresh uniform, and I'll meet you in the mess hall?"

Tarishiana picked up on Holliday's hesitation. She has only realized how it has sounded after the words had left her mouth. She debated on attempting to clarify but decided that would only add more tension to the situation. She moved into a seated position stretching her arms above her head to loosen up the muscle that were already becoming tight. "If you have your heart set on the mess hall, I can work with that." She gave him a little grin, "Except for the uniform part...Are you sure you don't want to just do a simple casual and informal meal at my quarters? We can leave the door open if you are worried what your parents might think." She could help but give him a playful wink to follow her teasing.

His eyes opened wide at the suggestive manner of

her request, John was in reality, not expecting anything like this to have come up from a simple sparring match, much less that he end up being teased by one of his department heads over something as basic as standard Starfleet procedures as far as officers fraternising was concerned.

"I, err, I um.." He realised a few moments into his sentence that so far all he had managed to come out with was a sequence of non-sensical syllables that didn't really add up to much. Clearing his throat and stretching out his back, he made a concerted effort to finish the sentence.

"I would be honoured. Your quarters it is - see you there?"

"Computer end program." She called out as the sparring room faded quickly to reveal a room covered with holo-projectors. With a grin and a tip of her head Tarishiana moved into a standing position and headed for the door. She couldn't help but cast a glance back at the Commander where he sat on the floor. She had a shower calling her name and a dinner to replicate.

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
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MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
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Night on the Town

Posted on 25 Mar 2012 by Nesh Saalm & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: San Francisco, Nightclub

Timeline: MD 04 - 2030 hrs

[ON]

Nesh was so excited to remove the boring gray garb that her sister kept insisting was so flattering on her. Gray was not her color, at least not from Nesh's point of view. While Lirha hadn't told her what the night would entail that didn't stop the young Orion from being prepared. In her little bag of treats she had brought with her a slinky deep purple dress that was cut way to short on both ends for her mothers liking and a pair of matching heels. "I had a lot of fun today." she called to Lirha as she removed the clothing from her bag and laid it on the edge of the bed.

"You're not just saying that to make me happy, are you?" Lirha replied over her shoulder as she went into her closet and looked through her various dress garments.

"I am not saying I want to join or anything." Nesh said as she final vestiges of the boring Starfleet uniform hit the floor. She turned towards her sister, "Dru is really nice...and you XO John...such a hottie." She turned back to her task but couldn't help but keep an eye on her sister. The reaction had to potential for being quite entertaining.

Lirha stopped in her tracks and turned around, wondering if she just heard what she thought she just did. "What?" she asked, staring with a furrowed brow at her little sister. "Did you just say you have a crush on my XO?" she asked incredulously.

"Crush is a little harsh don't you think, sis?" Nesh asked as she tried to hide the large grin on her face. She slipped on her dress adjusting the various parts that needed adjusting before turning back towards her sister. "Physical admiration would be a better term." She finished her hand perched playfully on her hips.

Shaking her head in disapproval, Lirha walked closer to her while looking over her dress. "Nesh, he's more than twice your age!" she said in a loud and frustrated voice, making no attempt to hide her anger. John was a handsome man with an excellent build, she admitted to herself, but he was not the type of man with whom she wanted her sister involved. "And don't you think that dress is a bit...revealing?" she asked, noticing the large amounts of green skin revealed in Nesh's chest and leg region.

"ReeHee take a breath, ok." Nesh said as she moved to the mirror work on her hair. "I never said that I was going to screw him or want to date him..." She began running a brush through her short black hair. "Simply that he was more than fine to look at." she grinned. When the dress comment came around she did a little spin in place, "I know...don't you just love it?"

"Nesh!" she said firmly, but was unable to finish the sentence as her mind tried to work around her sister's raunchy and uninhibited comments. "Whatever." she finally said, giving up hope of arguing with her, "Just don't get mad at me when I tell Mom that you were abducted by a group of Human college kids who wanted to experiment with their first Orion." she said, then returned to her closet, finally pulling out a low-cut black and gold dress.

"Ooo..." Nesh started with a huge grin. "Is that what you have planned for me because after an afternoon of attempting to seduce John I could use the stress release." She turned back towards the mirror. Now that she knew how to push her sister's buttons she was going to exploit it to its full extent.

It took all of Lirha's will power to not respond to the taunt, though inside she was fuming. Instead, she stripped her clothes off and pulled herself into her tight-fitting dress, then adjusted it, finally turning around with her ink covered back exposed. "Can you tie up my straps?" she asked her sister in an attempt to change the subject.

"Sure..." Nesh said sweetly as she practically bounced over to where Lirha was standing. She gently pulled on the delicate straps and tied them

behind Lirha's neck. "This is a really pretty dress, ReeHee." She was always envious of Lirha. Part of it was from her desire to be grown up and the other part was hoping that someday she would be half the woman Lirha was.

"Thanks, I got it during my last visit to Risa from a rather annoying Ferengi shopkeeper." she replied with a grin, then turned around to face Nesh. She put her hand up and cupped her sister's chin to keep her head steady, then licked her thumb and ran it gently over Nesh's dark eyebrows to accentuate her eye lines. With a couple steps back, she looked her sister up and down with satisfaction. "Wow, Nesh...you're beautiful." she said with a nod of approval and a warm smile.

Nesh did a little spin. "Thanks..." She looked down at the dress smoothing her hands over the soft fabric. "Livana sent it to me from Rigel III last month." She smiled back up at her sister, "I have been *dying* to get a chance to wear it...but Mom won't let me." She knew why, the dress was way more revealing than any mom would want any of their children regardless of age to wear.

"Well, I'm not Mom, so as long as you behave for the night, we'll have a good time." she said with a warm smile, then sat down in front of the mirror and quickly brushed her dark hair. "Are you ready to go? Or do you need more time?" she asked of her high-maintenance younger sister.

Nesh pranced over to the mirror really quickly. She gave herself a once over...twice., before smiling over at Lirha. "Yep, I think I am ready." She looked back at the mirror adjusting her hair every so slightly. She pulled on her heels and walked out the door into the living room.

Lirha pulled on a pair of black heels similar to Nesh's and then looked herself over in the mirror. Satisfied that she looked presentable, she walked over to her desk and retrieved a small holocamera, then returned to where Nesh was standing. "Ready for a picture?" she asked as she adjusted the settings on the camera. She put it on a fifteen second delay then placed it on the tabletop facing the two of them. Lirha snaked her green arm around her sister's and pulled her close, with a happy smile on her

face.

Nesh smiled happily at the camera. Her eyes blinking as she tried to recover from the blinding flash. She pulled Lirha close to her hugging her sister tightly. "I am so glad you could make time for me today...I really missed this."

"Me too," Lirha replied, then turned her head and gave Nesh a kiss on the cheek. "Much more fun than sitting in class, right?" she asked with a chuckle as she separated from her sister and grabbed her bag off of the bed. She returned to her desk briefly and put her commbadge and PADD inside of it, just in case. "Let's go." she said, and hastily moved towards the door, happy to get out of the HQ for the night.

Nesh easily followed Lirha out the door and out of the Star Fleet compound. She was still amazed by everything she saw but at night it was so much different. She slipped her hand into her sisters and swung it playfully as they walked, "So where are we going tonight?"

"There's a small after-hours club on Market Street which I think you might like. They have a rather diverse crowd and pretty good taste in music...I thought you might be up for a dance or two at some point tonight?" she asked as she led her sister to a nearby civilian shuttlecar.

"That sounds like fun." Nesh replied with a twinkle in her eye as she boarded the shuttlecar. "The last time I went dancing was at the school dance with Markus...and that boy had no rhythm it was like trying to dance with one of those creepy clown toys that you hit but they won't fall down." She finished as she tried to think of the word for the old earth toy. "Anyways...it was awkward." She finished with a laugh.

Lirha chuckled as she got inside the car and closed the door, turning on the thruster ignition as they left the parking lot. It was a short ten minute ride to the main downtown strip and they were lucky enough to find a nearby parking space within walking distance. With her sister in tow, she walked down the crowded street and through the front door of the club. Immediately, a small smile grew on Lirha's

face and she grabbed Nesh's hand and squeezed it with excitement.

The two of them squeezed their way through a large crowd, populated with all types of humanoid species. The dim lighting on the bar and dance floor were highlighted with an array of bright multi-colored lights hanging from the ceiling in a scene similar to a late 21st century nightclub. Smoke machines near the DJ booth puffed out clouds of thick grey air, and the drum and bass music pumped loudly across the room.

Nesh closed her eyes with her smile never fading as she let the feeling of the moment wash over her. Holding her sisters hand she pulled her big sister onto the dance floor not wanting to waste a moment of the time they had together. She began to let the music take over and moved where ever her body felt like moving.

Lirha stood next to Nesh and began to dance, bouncing and swaying her hips in rhythm with the loud bass as she turned her head from side to side. She kept an eye on her sister as a small group of Risian males joined them on the stage and began to dance with the Orion women.

Nesh let out a laugh that could only be seen in the loud club. With a grin on her lips she started dancing with the young Risian that approached her. She cast a fun glance towards her sister. Her eyes twinkled. As the music kept them moving Nesh's skin began to glisten from sweat. Grabbing her sisters wrist she tugged her towards the bar for something to cool them off.

Keeping close to Nesh, Lirha arrived at the bar and squeezed her way to the front, discretely ordering a couple fruity martinis for her and her sister. Drinks in hand along with a couple glasses of water, the two of them moved to an empty corner seat and sat down for a breather. Lirha wiped the sweat from her forehead and pushed some of her damp hair from her face, passing Nesh a martini and staring at her with happy eyes. "So? Having a good time finally?" she asked her sister.

"I have been having a good time all day." Nesh said with a easy smile as she took a sip of the fruity

drink. The warming sensation of the liquid made her shake her head slightly. "But it is nice to get to spend some time with you." She set the glass gently on the table in front of her. "How about you?...Enjoying some time away from your ship?"

Lirha took a long swig of her drink and munched on her orange slice garnish. "Of course." she replied with a grin, then tilted her head to side a bit curiously. "So what did you think of Dru, the counselor?" she asked her sister.

"She's nice." Nesh said with a grin as she looked around the club. "She seems good for you." she added with a knowing grin as she reached for her drink. Taking a sip this time she pulled out the cherry and popped the entire thing into her mouth.

"Why do you say that?" she asked, wondering what exactly Nesh meant by it. It was true that Lirha liked Dru. And perhaps in more than a professional manner. But she was a starship captain, and protocols frowned heavily upon subordinate relationships, especially on the same ship.

"I think it is great that you have someone with her spunk on your crew." Nesh said simply as she pulled the cherry stem from her mouth. "She said she was the ships counselor? She also explained that it is her job to make sure everyone is mentally capable to perform their duties...and as your sister...that is a comfort."

"Ha!" she chuckled as she took another sip of her drink. "So now I need someone to constantly check on my mental health?" she said with a wry grin. "And what about John, my XO? I hope you didn't give him too hard of a time..."

"Hey.." Nesh started. "He is the one that threatened to feed me to a humanoid eating plant in the arboretum." she grinned. She had known that he was teasing but it was fun none the less. "And I was referring to the people that have your back...granted you may need more help that she can give you." She finished with a jibe.

Lirha smiled and pushed some more of her hair from her face. "You know, it's not easy for me." she began, changing the subject. "Staying away from

home for so long...and then I finally get to spend some time with you and I have to leave again." she said quietly as she looked at her sister. "I really wish mom would let you take a year off so you could come exploring with me."

"Well..." Nesh started, "She did agree to let me graduate early." She took another sip of her drink. "So maybe when I graduate in six months?" She posed the question. She wasn't to finish school and she was so close. While the idea of going straight to college was where her mind was she couldn't help but ponder the idea of spending some time in space with Lirha.

"I'd love that." she replied with a genuine smile. "Never thought I'd get my baby sister to agree to chase stars with me." she added with an even bigger smile, then took a long sip from her martini glass.

"Well...it would give me a chance to get to know John a little better." Nesh gave her sister a wink as she elbowed her older sister. "I'm kidding..." She responded to the disapproving look her comment elicited. "After seeing your ship today I can kind of understand why you like it...and I don't think I could pass up a chance to get to spend more time with you. It would be like when I was little...before Starfleet." She couldn't help the fact that her tone changed to one of longing. She so missed her sister when she was gone and would love the chance to spend more time getting to know her again.

"I'll talk to mom for you and see if I can...persuade her." Lirha replied with excitement in her voice and eyes. "Six months is a good period of time, since I will probably be finishing the *Galileo's* first deployment around then. Maybe we can stop by Rigel and visit Livana." she added, then finished her drink with a final sip.

"I'd like that," Nesh said as she drained the remainder of the small drink. She looked out over the dance floor before hopping up from her seat. Taking the glass from Lirha's hand she set it on the table before dragging her sister to the dance floor. She wanted to spend as much time having fun with her sister as she could. Even if her mom allowed her to go six months was a long time.

Back on the dance floor, the two sisters partied late into the night while enjoying each other's company. The day had been enjoyable for Lirha and she now felt closer to Nesh than she had in a long time. It was unfortunate that the *Galileo* had to depart in two days. She would have much preferred to have had another week of preparations, which also would have given her the opportunity to see more of Nesh and their mother. But she felt somewhat consoled by the hope that in half a year, her sister would be done with school and hopefully join her on one of her star treks.

As the lights came up for last call, they each finished a final drink and then made their way out onto the dark but still festive street. A short walk put them back at their shuttlecar where Lirha opened the door for her sister and climbed into the driver's seat. "Do you want to go home tonight, or come back to the HQ with me?" she asked. "I can let mom know you're staying with me, if you want, and then take you back early in the morning so you don't miss school?" she suggested, not wanting for Nesh to arrive home in front of their mother in a slightly-drunken state.

"You don't mind getting up that early?" Nesh said with a very relaxed smile. "I can stay with you tonight." She started as she looked down at herself for a moment. "I don't think mom would be very happy with us if I came up home dis way." She with a little slur on her s's.

"I don't think she would either." Lirha replied with a big grin, then reached over and patted Nesh's green leg. "Don't worry, I'll have you home in time for a nice shower and some hot breakfast before class tomorrow." she added.

Lirha piloted the shuttlecar back to the HQ, taking several short cuts and back roads to minimize time. Ten minutes later, they touched down at civilian parking lot and Lirha exited the craft, walking around to the passenger door and helping her sister out of the car. "You feeling okay?" she asked Nesh, hoping that she hadn't drunk too much.

Nesh let out a long yawn before answering. "Just sleepy." She finally replied with a lazy smile. She followed her sister into her house and was oh too

delighted to remove her shoes. She stopped for a second to rub the bottom of her feet. She didn't say anything as she walked into Lirha's bedroom and began rummaging through her bag. She pulled out an oversized t-shirt as she began to remove the dress. Casting a playful smile over her shoulder, "I plan for everything." She said very proud of herself as she crammed her dress and shoes back into her bag. The shirt dropped around her and hung off one shoulder.

Grinning at Nesh's comment, Lirha stripped her clothes off and removed her shoes, happy to feel the soft carpet underneath her bare feet. She went to a nearby closet and picked out a tight fitting tank top, pulling it over her head and chest. After removing the jewelry from her ears and placing them on her nightstand, she groaned in relief as she flopped down on her bed, ready to call it a night. Lirha wiggled her way under the sheets then scooted over to the side to make room for her sister in an inviting gesture.

Nesh basically fell next to her sister with a laugh as she snuggled into the pillow. With a grin on her face her eyes fluttered close as sleep over took her. She had had quite a busy day but it had been so much fun.

"Lights." Lirha called out, and the room went dark leaving just the twinkle of starlight illuminating the bedroom. She scooted closer to Nesh and wrapped a protective arm around her waist as she too fell asleep, pleasantly content with the long-overdue reunion she had just had with her sister.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Nesh Saalm
Captain's Sister
NPC'd by BareI

Dinner with a Betazoid

Posted on 15 Mar 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: *USS Galileo*, Tarishiana Barel's Quarters
Timeline: MD 04 – 2045 hrs

[ON]

Tarishiana had stepped out of the sonic shower with fifteen minutes to spare. Despite the fact that she was a socialite by birth she didn't require that much maintenance. This was especially true since her current dinner plans involved sharing a meal with her Executive Officer, whom earlier in the day she had attempted to run through with a dagger. She hadn't intended the invite as a date, but simple the prolonging of an interesting afternoon. She was excited to see where it would lead. The thought brought a smile to the Betazoid's lips as she removed the towel from her hair.

With a fresh duty uniform on, John felt much more comfortable after the sonic shower had worked his magic. Even though he was off duty, the Commander felt much more comfortable with his skin covered by the markings of his trade, the now-familiar red of the Starfleet command division reminding him of the rank and responsibilities to which he was still only just adapting. He had remembered to look up his Chief Science Officer's room location from the computer before he had left his quarters, after all, he hated being late for anything, and finding out that he was late for a meal because he spent an hour wandering around the wrong deck of this rather small starship would probably have him ridiculed for hours, if not longer.

Eventually he found himself at the correct door, confirming the number emblazoned in standard Starfleet text across the door with the one that he had stored in his head only a few moments ago. Looking down, he quickly thumbed the chime and waited for a response.

Tarishiana's simple green dress was no more elaborate than the one she had worn to the holodeck, but the skirt was a simple one piece with

a slit up the right side to her hip. It wasn't a seductive addition to the dress, simple allowing the dress to flow around her. Flipping her head forward she ran her fingers through her hair tousling the damp, dark chestnut locks. As she stood back up they fell around her uncovered shoulders. With one look in the mirror she headed towards the main living area of her quarters as the chime drew her attention. She tapped the panel on the wall, opening the door to reveal her company for this evening. "Come in." she said simply as she motioned towards her quarters.

As the doors slid open with their trademark sound, John took a moment to identify who it was standing in front of him; once again he had encountered Tarishiana out of her normal uniform, and for a second, John felt rather under dressed in just his standard garb, although nobody had mentioned it was a requirement to dress for dinner.

"You look very nice Warrant Officer" he said approvingly, he had always thought that he should invest more in his off-duty wardrobe, and perhaps this voyage would be the time for him to explore what treats the replicators on board were capable of producing for him.

"Although I wasn't aware there was going to be a 'best dressed' award after the meal?" He said, smirking as he accepted her invitation to enter the room

"That hazards of growing up at a socialite on Betazed." She began with a laugh; "Dresses are my equivalent to your uniform." she started as she motioned towards his attire. "They are my second skin...as comfy to me as sweat pants." She continued with a jovial tone. She moved through her small apartment like quarters towards the dining table. She turned once she reached one of the chairs and gave John a questioning grin. "So what would like to have for dinner? My handy replicator can make almost anything." She finished with a small laugh.

John was glad that so far his rather nervous sentences had been met without the usual trepidation and concern, he had to admit, the Betazoid in front of him seemed to exude a sense of

a calm and relaxation that he found most beneficial, he had never thought that the launch of a starship would take so long and be quite so stressful.

As the doors closed behind him, John felt symbolically locked in for the duration of the evening, although right now he wasn't complaining, he was starving, and the offer of a good meal after a good workout had been too good to refuse.

"Surprise me, I haven't encountered a food I don't like yet" He replied, eager to see what the imagination of his science officer could come up with.

Tarishiana smiled as she turned towards the replicator and soon returned with two plates each containing the Betazoid equivalent to a mashed potato of sorts, a piece of roasted chicken with a gravy, and roasted zucchini. She set the plates down, "Please have a seat...if you are half as hungry as me you are probably starving." She turned and quickly returned with two glasses of water. Taking her seat she looked back at John with a grin. "I hope you like it...it is kind of a hodgepodge of my favourite foods." Lifting her fork she took a bite of the creamy white scoop of potato on her plate.

Gratefully picking up the water, John took a small sip, feeling how dry his mouth had been up until that moment, something that he wasn't aware of until the cool liquid washed across his parched tongue.

The meal served up to him was certainly interesting, but like he had always said, he was never against trying something new, and the cuisines of alien worlds was definitely one of the benefits to being in the service of Starfleet.

Taking a small piece of the chicken, he savoured the meaty texture and the slight tang of salt from the gravy, it was something that he needed right about now, and reminded him of home, something his mother used to make frequently when he was a child and somewhat of a fussy eater.

"Not bad Ms Barel, not bad at all, definitely the kind of thing I could get used to after a decent sparring match, don't forget you still owe me that rematch."

The meal was certainly filling an increasingly shrinking hole in his stomach, becoming more and more sated as he worked his way through the plate, interspersed with small sips of water to cleanse his palette. More and more he found himself thinking of home, part of him wanting to return to show his parents, mainly his father, what he had achieved since leaving the colonies of Mars, but other parts knew that his father would simply mock him for choosing the military over the sciences...he wasn't ready for yet another round of that particular fight right now.

"If meals like this follow it up, I can see it becoming a regular occurrence!"

Tarishiana let out a slight chuckle as she forked a piece of chicken ensuring she got a little of everything in that bite. Her eyes closed slightly as the marriage of flavours flooded her taste buds. "Well in that case..." she started before taking a sip of her cool water, "I say we add some stakes to our match. How about winner picks dinner and the loser hosts?" a smirk crossed her lips as she raised the glass for one more sip before returning to her meal.

Nodding in agreement as he finished off the mouthful he was currently working his way through, John lifted his glass in salutation of her decision.

"Sounds like a plan to me...I'll just have to make sure that I win next time! I can't have it getting round the ship that the military man was defeated by the scientist now can I?"

"Oh my..." Tarishiana began in most surprise, "Now we can't have that." The hand that had risen to her throat dropped back down to her glass. She didn't lift it to her lips, instead voted for another bite of her dinner. When she was finished chewing she looked over with quickly before pointing out something she had missed before, "By the way, it is Tarishiana...or Tarish." She gave him a crooked grin. "At the very least in my quarters and when I have you pinned to a mat." She gave him a wink, more playful than flirty.

Nodding at her offering of her name, John returned her wink with a short smile.

"Understood, Tarish, and I'm sure I can put up with John rather than Commander, at least when we're off the Bridge anyway. Just think another day or so and our next meal could be out in space...you feeling ready?"

"Actually yes." Tarishiana said as her mind drifted to the impending launch. "I much more prefer to be moving than being planet side." She took a sip of her drink before continuing. "I have this secret...well not so much a secret desire to be part of a first contact mission...which I can't do on Earth." she smiled happily as she finished the last bite of her dinner. Picking up her glass she leaned back against the chair, "How about you?...John...Looking forward to see what your ship can do?"

Rubbing the back of his head as he thought, John quickly let yet another smirk spread across his face, it was no secret amongst his superiors that he was not overly happy being posted to a science vessel, but over the past couple of days, his objections had slowly been dissolving with the skill and diversity of his crew starting to rub off on him.

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't....plus if we get to test out the weapons systems on this journey, so much the better. First contact is all well and good, but sometimes it's just good to know that you can protect your borders against any aggressor...Heh, my father used to tell me it was foolish to assume the military were the most important part of Starfleet....the Dominion Wars changed his mind on that I hope"

Tarishiana took a sip of her water while she listened to John speak. She nodded slightly as she listened. She leaned forward placing her glass back on that table. "Well being a linguistic...first contact is the biggest encounter I will ever come by." She said with a smile. "But I have to agree, being able to defend yourself is very important...even for a science vessel." She hoped that the fact that she was uncomfortable with the subject wasn't as apparent to John as it was to her. She gave him a half enthusiastic grin as she finished speaking.

"I guess it tends to be a case of what you know is what you expect....linguists like first contact, new languages, new cultures, whereas the old relics like

me prefer the end of a phaser and a full round of quantum torpedoes...." He quickly took down a few more bites of his meal.

"What do you think of our little ship then? Good enough to encounter a few new lifeforms and new civilizations?"

"Yes, you have been in Starfleet a whole five years long then me." Tarishiana started with a laugh. "I will have to keep that in mind the next time I spar with an *old relic*...Go a little easier on you." she gave him a wink. "And yes, I love this ship. The labs are huge...and I have a good department of people...Even if I never get to meet and new civilization, I like it here."

"Haha old relic huh? That's it, next time I'm not going easy on you...I just didn't want you bursting into tears because you got beaten by your XO on your first fight" He laughed from deep within his chest, genuinely amused by her comment, it was nice to see such a relaxed attitude that would hopefully make this whole mission a lot easier.

"Unless you decide to go all telepath on me again, or did you think I didn't notice last time?" He winked.

Tarishiana bit her lower lip slightly as she shrugged her right shoulder. "One of the first rules of combat I learned was to use what you have to defend yourself." She said easily. "Besides you still have about six inches and about fifty pounds on me...so girls gotta use what she's got." She gave him a knowing smile and a little laugh.

"Fifty pounds you say? Damn I'm gonna have to lay off the snacks when I'm on the Bridge! You know just where to hit a guy when he's down huh Tarish? I'll have to remember that next time!"

John was more than happy he had met someone who shared his thoughts on personal combat, in a real fight, its kill or be killed, and he knew which option he would rather take!

Clearing away the last few bites of his meal, John dabbed at his mouth with the replicated napkin, and settled back in his chair, taking another sip from his glass as he savoured the remnants of flavour making

their way around his mouth.

"I must say, that's a damn fine replicator you have there"

"So not what I meant. "Tarishiana had barely recovered from her laughter when John's comment had come out about her replicator. She nodded as she began to speak, "I programmed it myself. One of the joys of enlisting, you get training in how to do pretty much everything until you find what you are good at." She was rocked with an aftershock of laughter before she continued, "I spent the first two years of my enlistment in Starfleet training in operations and engineering...another fifteen months in tactical and security training until I stumbled upon a linguistic willing to train me." He hadn't really asked about her past, but the words just came rambling out. "Sorry, apparently I needed to talk about me for a second." she finished a somewhat embarrassed laugh.

"No problem, I hadn't realised you had had such a varied trip around our ranks! I'm not as great an engineer as I'd like to be, I seem to spend most of my free time trying to learn new tricks, I might have to make sure I spend some more time around the Chief down in engineering for a few weeks, see if I can't pick up on a bit of extra experience down there!"

It was true that although John's knowledge of engineering was on par with most officers of his rank and tenure, but he wanted to be more than that, something that he had aspired to for a while now ever since witnessing the somewhat impossible work that the "miracle workers" of the engineering corps always seemed to make happen, even when all conventional methods said it couldn't.

"Sounds like a good idea." Tarishiana replied with an easy grin. "I always believe it is good to have something intriguing to work on." Finishing the rest of her water she rose from her seat and gathered up the empty plates.. "Would you like some dessert?" she asked as she walked to the replicator, placing the dishes in the disposal bin.

"Why not? I've come this far, I may as well finish off, although I'll have to insist on pecan pie...I

haven't gotten my hands on that stuff since I was last on Mars, the replicated stuff is never as good as hand made, but it'll do the job just as well."

He leant back in his chair, and took a sip from his glass, before returning his eyes to the replicator.

"Strange place Mars - likes to think of itself as different to Earth, but when you're there, the culture isn't all that different"

"I have never been there." Tarishiana started as she returned with two pieces of pecan pie each with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Setting the plate in front of John she took her seat and toyed with the ice cream with her fork. She looked at the pie before looking back up at him. "I have also never had pecan pie." She took a bite with a grin.

"Then you are very much in for a treat, I doubt anyone, human or Betazoid, could ever say they didn't enjoy this little beauty."

Picking up a small portion on the end of his fork, John savoured the first bite, the wave of sweetness passing through his entire body. It was true that the replicated stuff didn't quite match up to his own recipe, but in space, the luxury of a full kitchen and the time to prepare the dish was somewhat lacking.

"Man that is good...I can tell you that without you having to probe my thoughts! Not a bad way to end a meal huh? Now the other thing that's worth a try, is the polar caps on Mars, the skiing there is pretty amazing, worth a visit next time you get some shore leave."

Tarishiana smiled as she took another bite of the sweet pie. "Like I said...unless my life is in danger or I am going to lose." She gave him a playful wink. "Your thoughts are your own." She scooped at the ice cream and piled it on the pie taking a bit of both at the same time. She did a happy little bounce in her seat. "I will keep that in mind the next time I have shore leave." She had thought about adding that she would like for him to join her, but after his reaction to her friendly dinner request she decided it was better to wait for another day.

"Good choice, who knows, I might even tag along,

after all, if I can't beat you in the sparring ring, at least I might stand a chance when there's a mountain to ski down! I have to win something eventually. What about Betazed? Do you miss it there?"

"No." Tarishiana said simply with a shake of her head. She took another bite of her pie before setting her fork onto her plate. She looked back up at John. "I mean...not really...my mother is there." She continued with a laugh. "I am reaching the point in my life where I have spent more time away from home than I remember living there."

"Sounds like you've got a few skeletons in that closet of yours? I haven't been back to Mars for the same reason...my old man...there's an argument not worth having. You and your mother have a similar relationship?"

John was rather curious as to her back story, it was intriguing that there might be someone else in the senior staff that was of the same situation as he was, trapped in space because of a family member who refused to see reason.

"You could say that." Tarishiana said frankly with an almost forced smile. She let out a sigh, she would have to explain the situation sooner or later and in her mind at that moment--sooner was a far better option. "I am assuming you know about the genetic bonding practiced on Betazed?"

John kept silent, his eyes glazed over with a vacant look as she mentioned a topic of which he had no knowledge, instead deciding to go for the safer option of a mouthful of pie.

"Well the practice is used to bring families together." She continued. "Most parents don't require their children to go through with it...my mother is not one of those parents." She retrieved her fork but didn't take a bite. "I am an only child and my marriage into the Tomick family would boost my parent's social status...but I don't want to marry Lestian." She used her fork to draw lines in the melting ice cream.

"So it's kind of like an arranged marriage on Earth, or how the Vulcans do business? Damn...that's a sticky situation....is there a way out or is a one way

ticket up the aisle?"

John knew that arranged marriages still existed within some cultures, even on earth in the 24th century, it was still done for religious reasons, albeit much less commonly than it once was. Some other species, such as the Vulcans did it out of necessity, after all, with something as aggressive as pon farr to compete with, it was always useful to have a mate on hand when it came around.

"Yes...arranged marriage would be an accurate comparison" Tarishiana said with a smile. "If my mother or Lestian's mother had had anything to do with it, I would already be married." She continued with a grin. "I...uh...ran away, I guess is the best term, the night before my wedding." That little fact still made her laugh. "Lestian is willing to let me out of it...but there are provisions." Deciding she had toyed with her ice cream enough she took another bite of pie.

"Provisions? Sounds like a hostage negotiation to me Tarish..." John frowned as he considered the position of his science officer. He had always thought that the children of any individual should be free to make their own decisions in life without being controlled by their parents.

"I can't imagine it would be easy to find a Starfleet posting that allows civilian families aboard either" he mentioned in passing, unaware of the finer points of Betazoid marriage requirements.

"Lestian is the Executive Officer of the USS Colton." Tarishiana said matter of fact. She returned to playing with her pie. She looked back up at John with a grin. "If we get married I am expected to give up my life in Starfleet, return to Betazed, have babies and return to the social circles...If I remained on a Starfleet vessel, it would be as a civilian." She shook her head, "The provisions are actually fair, at least I think so..." she took another bite of pie. "If I fall in love with someone else and plan on getting married, I am released from the bonding." She took a sip of water. She hated admitting that part. She always felt like she was throwing herself at any male she could find.

"A fellow XO huh? Well there's hope for him yet" John said jovially, taking another mouthful of his

ever diminishing supply of pie.

"And how do you feel about that? I can't imagine being stuck at home pregnant would be as fun as learning a new language or meeting a new species? Something says you aren't overly happy with the notion?"

Tarishiana took another bite, "My my John...you dabble as a counsellor on your nights off?" She asked sweetly before actually answering his question. "Well...I ran off and enlisted in Starfleet despite the fact that I was accepted into the Academy." She took a sip of her water before she continued, "It isn't that I don't want children...I just don't want to become my mother. She married for social status, had a child for social status, and now has arranged my marriage for social status..." She tailed off for a moment before letting out a laugh though her large smile, "Is it so wrong to want to replace social status with love and affection?"

It took the comment from his science officer to remind John that it was not his job to sit here and work his way through her entire psyche before dessert was over. Blushing slightly, he cleared his throat and took a large gulp from his glass of water, pausing for a moment, allowing the fork in his hand to bounce between his thumb and forefinger as he considered his reply.

"Sorry, I just get a bit too wrapped up in things sometimes, never satisfied until I know the whole story you know? And err, no, no there's nothing wrong with that at all, I could never see myself happily leaving Starfleet, my life is here, in space, not on a planet."

For a moment he considered her almost impossible situation, and after comparing it to his own in his head, began to laugh alongside her, it seemed that no matter what planet a person was born on, or what society they developed in, parents were always there to make a mess of everything.

"A toast - to the wishes of our parents, and the efforts we go to in order to avoid fulfilling them"

"I can toast to that." Tarishiana said as she raised her almost empty water glass. "As you might have noticed, I am not a reserved person...I don't mind

sharing the entire story." She gave him a little wink as she took a sip of her water. "Maybe next time, you can share your awkward family history so I won't feel like such a mental case." She added with a laugh.

"If that's the case Chief" he said with a devious look on his face "I'll have to bring something a little stronger than just water...it's a long story I promise...but that's for another night, with more pie, and no impending starship launches on the way!"

He had to admit, that as the meal began to draw to a close, he had definitely enjoyed himself, which was unusual, John didn't generally accept the input of others, or their prying into his own affairs, but this Betazoid seemed a little different. Either it was some kind of telepathy that she just hadn't admitted to, or he really was having a good time.

"And speaking of launches, I think I should be heading off to meet my next date - my bed" He said, finishing off the last few crumbs on his plate, and finishing off the end of his water.

"Your company has been most enjoyable Ms Barel, thank you for a lovely evening"

"I look forward to it." Tarishiana replied with a grin as she rose from the chair. She picked up the plates and glasses and took them to the disposal tray of the replicator. "I am glad you enjoyed yourself." She returned to the table and rested her hands on the back of her chair. "I had a lot of fun to night, I look forward to beating you next time and getting to see your quarters." She gave him a little wink.

"We'll see, don't get your hopes up, you might trip yourself over with it in our next match. Goodnight Tarish, I'll see you bright and early for the big launch!"

And with a grin, John headed for the exit, heading out into the corridor, destined for as close to a full night's sleep as he could manage before the big day.

[OFF]

A Bird's-Eye View (Part 1)

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Posted on 21 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, Support Craft Landing Pad

Timeline: MD 05 - 0900 hrs

[ON]

The breeze was cool and swift, a rather brisk February morning for the San Francisco bay area. The sun was halfway up from the East but partially shielded by the dark clouds in the sky. *Rain*, she thought as she mentally predicted the day's forecast. Having spent four years in the city, Lirha knew all too well the signs of a cold and wet day ahead. She took a deep breath and leaned back against the side of her shuttlecraft, closing her eyes for a moment and smelling the sea-scented air. She waited patiently for her senior staff to arrive, as the message she had sent out the previous day had instructed them to meet her on the support craft landing pad.

Having roused himself from a deep slumber at the beckoning of the ship's computer, John had dutifully reminded himself of today's objective, to meet the CO and get this bird in the air. He had already taken to staying aboard the ship rather than in quarters nearer to HQ, he preferred the solitude he could get this way, unfortunately, Command was much more of a 24 hour operation, after all, just because it was night on Earth, didn't mean it was the same on Vulcan, or Andoria, or Tellar.....

It wasn't a particularly long walk from his quarters on Deck 2 to the transporter room, and after a short conversation with the operator, he quickly found himself near the landing pad as ordered. It took a moment for him to adjust to the much colder environment outside of the conditioned climate of the ship, and he shuddered as a cold wind blew down the collar of his uniform.

"Should have worn a jacket..." He thought to

himself, the beauty of hindsight having 20/20 vision. A few hundred yards away, he could see the now-familiar olive green silhouette of Lirha, and he headed towards her.

"Good morning ma'am, did you sleep well?" He enquired

The young Orion looked at her XO with sleepy eyes and gave him a small smile. "Morning, Commander." she said softly then shook her head from side to side. "Not as well as I would have liked. I haven't been sleeping great the last few nights and this launch is stressing me out." she admitted to him with a sigh, and ran her fingers through her dark hair while pushing some of it behind her ear.

"How about you?" she asked.

He smirked for a moment as his commander let down her guard for a moment, in terms of the command chain at least, and let slip that she might not have been as awake as she would like

"As much as I hate to say it, pretty well ma'am, the one thing I know works well on the ship are the beds, no complaints from me. Can I recommend a coffee or two once we get on board? The replicator in your ready room makes a pretty good Raktajino"

Again a wry smile made its way onto his face as he let slip exactly where he had been spending a good proportion of his working hours recently.

"I assume the rest of our senior staff are on the way?"

Lirha glanced down at the PADD clipped to her belt and checked the time. It was 0855 and they technically had five minutes before they were officially late. "They should be here momentarily." she said, then narrowed her eyes suspiciously at him. "You've been snooping around in my ready room already, Commander?" she asked in jest.

Catching a hint of joviality in her voice, the Commander decided that he was going to take up the opportunity to play along, if the stress of a new ship launch was affecting his CO to the degree

where she wasn't sleeping, then it was his job as XO to try and help things go as smoothly as possible

"Yes ma'am, I wouldn't be much of an XO if I didn't know our ship as well as the men and women who built her after all, plus if you'd seen my office up until yesterday afternoon, you'd understand, my desk was a stack of plasma injectors left over from when the original shipment came aboard, apparently Engineering had run out of places to stow them! The upside to being the boss I assume, your ready room was well, ready!"

"Yes, I suppose there are a few perks to being the captain." she replied smugly. Lirha turned her eyes down one of the outdoor walkways leading to the landing pad and noticed a familiar-looking man walking their way. "I believe this is our Chief Medical Officer, if I'm not mistaken." she said quietly to the lieutenant commander.

Robin walked casually across a path flanked by native flowers and the brightest green grass he ever saw. The looming clouds in the distance and the wind didn't bother him. Rain in the south east of the American continent wasn't uncommon. A group of people stood near the aft entrance of a bulky shuttle craft and he could see Lieutenant Commander Saalm talking with a man in a red uniform.

Once he made it to her, he realized that he was later than expected. "I apologize Ma'am my mother felt it was necessary to pack for me. After all these years you'd think I could do it for myself."

"Good mothers always look out for their sons, Lieutenant," she said with a small smile, "I'm glad you could make it, we've got a lot of work to do this morning and I think you'll be happy to finally get a look at your new medical facilities."

Markum greeted the morning with a deep breath and sigh. He had already been up four hours, been to the ship to run a level three diagnostics on the Main Engineering MSD, then back to take a mile run, then followed up with chow. Now he was walking to the support craft landing pad. It was getting colder, though he never did mind the cold, and he thought he felt some drizzles of rain. He approached the group standing about with a smile

and a swig of hot coffee from his travel mug that read: *Engineers do it at WARP SPEED*

"Sorry for the delay. I spent half the night and most of the morning looking for some lost plasma injectors. Those bozos in the shipyard supply were suppose to deliver them to my office and leave them on my desk. You'd think it was a pretty simple request."

"Good morning, Chief, glad you could join us." Lirha said in greeting. She glanced over at her Chief Medical Officer and realized he had not been properly introduced to the two other senior officers standing near him. "Doctor Hilyer, this is Mister Quinn and Mister Holliday," she said, then turned to the two other men, "Gentlemen, this is Doctor Hilyer, our new Chief Medical Officer." she said, then stepped back to let them get acquainted.

Extending a hand towards the recently arrived officer, John looked up to catch the man in the eyes, first impressions in his opinion, were crucial

"Doctor, good to meet you at last, John Holliday, XO, how was your trip?"

"Well it was just hop, skip and jump from Georgia," Robin said with his distinctive Southern drawl. "Not as eventful as some may think. Slight turbulence over the Grand Canyon but I had a good pilot."

Markum offered a hand to the Chief Medical Officer, "Nice to see you again Doctor Hilyer, this time under calmer conditions. Ready to take a look at our girl?"

"I am ready when you are Chief," Robin smiled as he entered the shuttlecraft. He swiped his hands along the smooth surface of the console before his took his seat in cockpit.

"Excellent. Now that we're all familiar with each other, let's get to work." Lirha said, then pulled her PADD from her belt and queued several bits of information. "We'll start with a quick inspection of the outer hull. I've secured us the use of two shuttlepods for the next hour." she motioned with her hand to the row of workbees and support craft on the far side of the landing pad. "We'll split up

into two groups. Mister Quinn, you're with me in Pod Seven, we'll inspect the ventral hull. Doctor Hilyer and Mister Holliday, you are in Pod Eight and will inspect the dorsal hull. After that, we'll board the ship and fire up some of her systems. Any questions?"

"No ma'am, sounds like a plan to me" John chirped up, ready to begin the inspection, getting a look at the ship from the outside now was probably going to be one of the last chances they would get to ensure that everything looked about right from the exterior, doing it whilst underway would have been a major operation and would have surely slowed down their mission.

"Aye-aye." remarked the Chief Engineer. Markum walked over to Pod-7 and opened entryway. He stepped in and activated the flight control and navigational systems, while waiting for the CO to join him. "I once got trapped in one of these for sixteen hours. Once a rescue ship was within transporter range I had them beam me directly to the head. Man, if you ever wanna interrogate someone, you'd get answers."

Lirha smirked at the Chief's previous plight. "I'll have to pass that along to my friends at Intel." she replied light-heartedly, then addressed her group of senior officers. "Let's get underway." she said, and walked towards her shuttlepod.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer, MD
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

A Bird's-Eye View (Part 2)

Posted on 21 Feb 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, Shuttlepod 7
Timeline: MD 05 - 0915 hrs

[ON]

Inside Shuttlepod 7...

Sitting at the forwards controls inside the small and cramped pod, Lirha looked back to make sure the Chief was with her and ready to depart. She began the craft's startup sequence and noticed the back hatch was still open. "Can you close that for me?" she asked him, then brought the main thrusters online. A small cloud of moisture began to materialize underneath the pod as the jetstreams of hot gas poured downward onto the tarmac.

Markum reached behind and closed the hatch then made sure it was sealed. "Aye, sealed and ready to go sightseeing." He watched the grey dreary sky as the pod lifted off the tarmac. "Is this your first non-orbital inspection ma'am? These are easier, but the best way to find out if your hull has imperfections in it is to let the vacuum of space discover them."

Lirha glanced over at her Chief Engineer and gave him a wry smile. "That's rather 'old-school', don't you think?" she said, then delicately piloted their craft towards the drydock. They reached their destination in about thirty seconds and she parked their shuttlepod into a low hover underneath the saucer section and in front of the main deflector. She pulled her PADD out and began to take notes as they inspected the underside of the primary hull.

Markum smiled. The new skipper and he were going to get along just fine. "There is a discoloration at the primary, port joint of the Waveriders outer holding doors. It could be nothing more than a bad paint job, but I'll be sure to add it to my list."

The comm channel inside the pod activated and Lirha heard Commander Holliday's voice echo crisp through the cabin. "'Pod 8 to Pod 7, hows it looking over there Ma'am? Everything looking good here so far."

She tapped a button on the communications console and responded, "We're finishing up with the ventral saucer section, about to move on to the secondary hull. There's a piece of hull plating which looks loose around the forward torpedo launcher, but everything else appears to be in excellent condition."

Markum nodded and made a note of the location on his PADD, "Aye, I see it now. Probably got bumped when they were installing the torpedo tubes outer frame section and were in a rush. Good eye there Skipper. You should of been an engineer with your attention to detail."

At the mention of becoming an engineer, she gave him a sideways glance. "I've had my share of repair duties when I was working in Operations and you're not the first one to try and recruit me. The chief engineer aboard the *Mackenzie* took quite a liking to me after I helped him repair the entire communications grid after a plasma storm shorted out every relay." she said, recalling the two days of hell she had spent working with the man.

Lirha maneuvered the shuttlepod closer to the ground and began a slow inspection of the underbelly of the secondary hull, starting with the main deflector array and working back towards the nacelles. "See anything, Chief?" she asked him, curious if he had spotted any imperfections or missing components.

"Yeah..I mean..yes ma'am, I do. Port Nacelle strut has three micro fractures proximal to the running light. It's not bad, but I'd hate to be cruising along at Warp eight and lose a strut." Markum had been through his share of new ship walk throughs, so far, it wasn't as bad as compared to some. "That's a pretty simple fix. Funny how the geniuses that put these together, never seem to have to fly them."

"I can't imagine how the first Earth astronauts felt being stuck inside a small and cramped pod, not

knowing whether it would take them into space or break apart in the atmosphere." she replied quietly, then entered in some more data to her PADD.

After a few minutes of careful inspection, she brought their shuttlepod to the very rear of the ship to examine the aft torpedo launcher and shuttlebay. She noticed a few dockworkers putting a final coat of paint on the bay's landing strip.

"Shuttlebay looks excellent, how about the aft launcher?" she asked.

"Looks good so..." Markum stopped and looked closer, squinting his eyes. "Could you bring us in a little closer ma'am to the aft launcher? I think I' may be crazy, but it looks like a bird, a rather large bird, has made a nest inside."

Lirha piloted the pod as close as she could get to the rear torpedo tube and stopped several meters from it. She focused the craft's exterior spotlight inside the opening and peered inside. Sure enough, as the chief had suspected, there was a large circular nest made of tree branches, mud, and twigs. Two baby golden eagles poked their heads up and looked curiously at the shuttlepod, and a larger adult bird walked from behind the nest towards their craft to investigate.

The Orion captain stared at the avian for several moments. She had seen Earth birds in the skies and from a distance, but never so close before. "What a beautiful creature." she remarked as she looked at its yellow eyes, brown feathers, and gold-trimmed beak.

"The day is done, and the darkness, Falls from the wings of Night, As a feather is wafted downward, From an eagle in his flight". The Engineer smiled at the site of the two birds. My favorite poet, ancient Earth, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The came to see us off, or ask if they can come too."

She briefly considered putting in a request to have them relocated to the *Galileo's* arboretum. Though the family of birds would have been a nice addition, she knew all-to-well that a starship would be a cruel place for a bird of prey to live. They were wild animals and as such, needed to be free to roam the world as they pleased. "I think they're supervising

and looking after our new home." she said softly, then recorded a brief holovid of the family from the shuttlepod's forward sensors. She tapped a few buttons on her LCARS display and transmitted the graphics to both hers and the Chief's PADD. "Do me a favor...send this image to one of the dock workers and see to it that it is painted on our hull. Rear quadrant, starboard nacelle." she said to her chief engineer. "They will be our guiding light in our journeys to come."

"Aye-Aye Skipper." Markum smiled broadly at the holographic on his PADD. "The Dockmaster still owes me twenty gold-pressed latinum coins from our last poker game. I don't think it'll be a problem ma'am. You'd think gambling would be outlawed by the Federation." Markum chuckled as he entered the request into his PADD, and then sent it directly to the Dockmaster. "So, from what I can tell, the rest of the area is clean, and flaw free."

"Excellent, Chief, I think we're about finished here then. I've got notes on all of our observations and I'll send them to the dockmaster when we land."

The comm system in the shuttlepod activated again and Lirha heard the Commanders voice as he addressed them. "Pod 7, we're about done here, ready to head for home?"

The captain tapped a button on the side console. "We're finishing up as well, about to head back. See you on the tarmac." she replied, then brought the shuttlepod about and headed back for the landing pad.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer MD
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, Shuttlepod 8

Timeline: MD 05 - 0915 hrs

[ON]

Inside Shuttlepod 8...

Clambering into the shuttlecraft, John listened as he heard the thrusters of the opposite vessel begin to power up, and watched as his CO and Chief Engineer headed skywards. Settling into the right hand chair, John began to run the start up sequence, watching as each system in turn delivered a green symbol to confirm that it was operational. As the doctor joined him onboard, he thumbed a control, and the shuttle door slowly levered itself up and locked into position.

"Well doc, lets take a look at this shall we? Those sharp surgeon's eyes of yours should come in handy." He smirked to his companion, and then slowly powered up the thrusters. After a slight jolt from the initial liftoff, the inertial dampeners kicked in and the shuttle returned to its usual serene feeling as it floated towards the sky.

"Heading for the dorsal side, Mr Hilyer, would you mind passing the sensors over this section of the hull, we don't want to be lifting off with microfractures!"

Turning back to the control panel, he tapped onto the communications array.

"Pod 8 to Pod 7, hows it looking over there Ma'am? Everything looking good here so far"

Lirha's voice came through the comm channel in reply. "We're finishing up with the ventral saucer section, about to move on to the secondary hull. There's a piece of hull plating which looks loose around the forward torpedo launcher, but everything else appears to be in excellent condition."

"We're rounding towards starboard. Several microfractures," The doctor replied hurriedly. "I am sending the log to you now 'Cap'. It doesn't look

like it will take the repair crews too long to fix."

"That was a good call Chief," Robin turned quickly towards the Engineer. "My surgeon's eye was a little off."

Inside Pod Seven, Lirha looked down at her PADD and scanned the data the doctor had just sent her, making note to inform the dock crew as soon as they finished the systems check.

"Looks like the engineers did a pretty good job back here...I can't see too much else out of place back here" The commander commented as he slowly brought the shuttle around for another pass. Slowly, the pod, tiny in comparison to the Nova-class starship began to head back towards the area they had just passed over, just to make sure nothing had been missed.

"Ready to call this a day Dr. Hilyer?" he commented, whilst still keeping his eyes locked on the panel in front of him, afterall, it wouldn't have been the best of omens to graze the hull of a brand new starship before it had even left port!

"I think so," Robin said as he shut off his console. "I don't think there's anything else we can do from here."

"Pod 7, we're about done here, ready to head for home?" He called out to the comm once again.

The captain's voice came through the comm channel again. "We're finishing up as well, Commander, about to head back. See you on the tarmac."

"Confirmed, setting landing vector, see you on the ground" Entering a short sequence of commands, he began bringing the shuttle back down to its earlier starting position, after a slight jolt which confirmed contact with the surface, he quickly disengaged the thruster systems, and began the power down routine.

That was enough of the ship from outside, time to get this bird into the sky....

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer MD
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

Systems Check (Part 1)

Posted on 19 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, Support Craft Landing Pad

Timeline: MD 05 - 0930 hrs

Previously on A Bird's-Eye View (Part 3)...

"Looks like the engineers did a pretty good job back here...I can't see too much else out of place back here" The commander commented as he slowly brought the shuttle around for another pass.

Slowly, the pod, tiny in comparison to the Nova-class starship began to head back towards the area they had just passed over, just to make sure nothing had been missed.

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power down routine.

That was enough of the ship from outside, time to get this bird into the sky....

And Now, the Continuation...

[ON]

After the two shuttlepods had returned to the landing pad, Lirha waited patiently on the tarmac for the rest of her senior staff to arrive. Despite a few microfractures and loose hull panels, the external inspection had gone quite well. The dock workers and engineers had done a fantastic job with their work and she was quite impressed with the current status of her starship. Now, all that needed to be completed was an thorough internal check of the *Galileo* and her operating systems.

Markum stood next to his CO after he managed to pry himself out of the small craft. He looked to his PADD, then to Lirha, "The Dockmaster just sent me a message Skipper. The emblem will be on the vessel by tomorrow morning."

The captain nodded in reply, "Excellent work, Chief. I wouldn't want to leave home without a proper blessing." she said and flashed him a smile.

Tarishiana was one for punctuality. She didn't much like the idea of having anyone waiting on her arrival. She strolled up to where the Orion was standing, "Morning Commander." she started "Mister Quinn." she said in acknowledgement of the other officer standing with the Captain.

"Good morning, Miss Barel." Lirha said politely to the dark haired Betazoid woman, "Glad you could join us."

Amber Rose took a deep breath and was next out of the shuttle. She stood at attention, "Lieutenant JG Scuito reporting for duty, Commander. I am your new Chief Security/Tactical Officer." She held out her orders.

The Orion captain walked forward as she saw a new yellow-collared woman arrive, and stopped in front of her. "At ease, Lieutenant," she said with a

friendly smile, then took the PADD from the woman's hand to quickly review her transfer orders. Satisfied with what she saw, she held out her green hand and gave the Lieutenant a firm handshake. "Welcome aboard the *Galileo*, you're just in time to give our tactical systems a proper look-over."

As Dru walked up to the small group gathered on the tarmac she took around herself before moving to push her glasses to the top of her head. The early morning sunshine was bright this morning. Dru nodded her head at the group in general, before she smiled softly at Commander Saalm.

With the completion of the inspection, Holliday finished the last few elements of signing the shuttle back over to Orbital Command, informing the computer of the completion of the power down procedure, and letting the power systems reduce down to the bare minimum. As he entered the final set of commands to lock out the controls until another authorized flight took place, he clambered out of the craft, thumbing the control to seal the door as he left, before taking his place alongside his CO, a show of strength as it were, for the new command team.

William strode up the the gathering group and braced up when he was within speaking distance of the captain. "Lieutenant Commander Remington, reporting for duty, ma'am," he said in a clear but soft-spoken tone.

Lirha nodded at the new operations chief, happy that he had finally arrived. Along with her chief engineer, Mister Quinn, the two of them had a busy few hours ahead of them. "Good morning, Commander, it's good to see you." she replied.

Evelyn Coleman stood up and walked up to the Captain, "Lieutenant (JG) Evelyn Coleman, Chief Intelligence Officer, reporting for duty, Ma'am." She said calmly. "I feel like we're doing this meet and greet several times over."

The captain nodded with a smirk on her face. "We have been seeing a lot of each other lately, haven't we?" she commented. "Today will be a bit more technical for us. Systems checks are always...interesting." she added.

Robin entered the room carrying a PaDD and a leather bag. He nodded to the others in the and made his introductions to the new crew he hadn't met previously. It was a subdued yet exciting feeling to be in this space with these new crew members. Soon, the Captain was going to send the orders for internal inspection. Robin would get to see Sickbay for the first time.

With all of her senior officers now assembled in front of her, the captain pulled her PADD from her belt and quickly looked over it for a brief moment. After she had finished reviewing her planned checks and assignments, she handed the PADD over to her XO for him to look over while she spoke.

"We've got a lot of work to do over the next few hours so let's get started." she said in a firm voice as she addressed everyone in front of her. "A few of us have just completed an external inspection of the hull, and we're in pretty good shape. A few micro fractures here and there, and a couple of loose panels on the hull plating, but everything else seems to be in perfect condition. Hopefully, the *Galileo's* internal systems are as equally complete, but that's what we're here today to find out. I've gotten permission from the dockmaster to power up our primary systems, as well as the warp core. Power levels need to stay below the fifty percent mark, but that should be more than enough to run our diagnostics and simulations." she said, then paused for a moment.

"We're going to split into three teams to make this more efficient." she continued, "I want Lieutenant's Coleman and Scuito with me on the bridge to test our command systems. Commanders Holliday and Remington, you will be with Mister Quinn down in main engineering to give him a hand with our power and ops systems. And Lieutenants Hilyer, McCarthy, and Warrant Officer Barel will be down on deck four looking over the science and medical systems." she finished, then stopped to let the crew digest her orders. "Any questions?"

Amber Rose shook her head. She felt the excitement course through her body as she was about to start her new assignment. She took a deep breath and prepared herself to head to the bridge

with Commander Saalm and Lieutenant Coleman.

Dru smiled softly to herself, this was her first opportunity to see everything work the way it should. After her encounter with a pile of mud, when she tried to replicate water in her counselling room, she was hoping that this would actually be fixed. Upon hearing the Captain's words she silently nodded her head.

Quinn looked to Commanders Holliday and Remington, then to the CO. He nodded his improvement for his inspection unit. He had wanted to have an opportunity to speak with the Ops Chief, as it was his experience that a successful relationship between ops and engineering, promoted a successful ship. He simply replied with, "Aye"

Reading through the PADD that had been handed to him, John saw the extensive list of testing required before this ship was going to leave the surface, pages of diagnostics, systems checks and powerups would be needed to ensure that their new mission would be carried off successfully.

"Looks good to me ma'am, we got a lot of work to do here people, lets make it happen"

Tarishiana made a mental note of the people she would be working with. She was excited to get to explore her new labs and as always to meet more members of the crew. She didn't have any questions and was just waiting for the go ahead.

Will gave a slight nod and nothing more. He seemed not to get excited over the idea of launching a ship, probably because he'd seen so many launched in his time with Starfleet. He was a bit jaded though he enjoyed the ceremonies that came with a christening.

Evelyn shook her head signalling she had no questions. She turned to face Amber Rose noticing her inhaling a deep breath, she gave her a reassuring smile.

"I've got nothing here Ma'am," Robin replied. "I am just anxious to get under way."

The crew of the *Galileo* walked together along the

narrow sidewalk, making their way from the landing pad to the dry dock. They quickly entered the large and busy facility, and walked up several flights of steel ramps before finally arriving at the main docking port's walkway. The captain tapped her communicator and made a quick call to the dockmaster, notifying him of their arrival and intent to power up the ship's systems. After receiving a green light, Lirha led the way up the final ramp and stepped through her ship's airlock and into the interior.

She looked back at her crew and gave them a final set of instructions before they began their systems checks. "Engineering, you're down on deck seven. Medical and science labs are on deck four, and the rest of you come with me to deck one." she said. The ship was small enough that it was hard to get lost, but she wanted to make sure everyone knew the location of their designated areas.

The crew split up into their assigned teams and went their separate ways, leaving Lirha with her tactical and intelligence officers. They took a quick walk to the now-functioning turbolift and ascended to the top of the ship where they exited and stepped out onto the bridge.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Amber Rose Scuito
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LTJG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Systems Check (Part 2)

Posted on 19 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: *USS Galileo*, Bridge

Timeline: MD 05 - 0945 hrs

On Deck 1...

[ON]

The bridge looked completely different from its previous state a couple days earlier. The overhead bulkheads were sealed and complete, all of the LCARS consoles were in functional standby mode, and the mess of wiring and gel packs which had littered the floor were all gone. Satisfied with the state of her command center, Lirha walked to the middle of the circular room and took a quick look around before issuing orders to her two lieutenants.

"Lieutenant Coleman, will you take the conn and run a diagnostic of our flight control systems?" she asked as she looked at the tall blonde El-Aurian woman.

"And Lieutenant Scuito, I need a tactical report on the status of our weapons and shield systems." she said to the shorter green eyed woman.

Evelyn took the single chair and manned the forward station. Her hands ran along the console getting a feel for it. Her fingers then darted along the console, "Propulsion system diagnostic complete. Thruster assembly and emitters are online, operating at peak efficiency. Impulse Engines too checks out. Inertial Dampeners are functioning properly and Warp Engines are online. We're good to go for flight. Everything is operating according to specifications."

Amber Rose pushed a few buttons on her console and said, "Weapons and shields systems are at full capacity. Security/Tactical station is ready to go."

Sitting in her captain's chair, Lirha turned her attention to the two small consoles attached to the armrests. Tapping her fingers on the left one, she queued up the ship's condensed tactical readiness display and quickly verified the lieutenant's findings. "Excellent," she said with a nod, "Move over to the operations console and run a diagnostic on our damage control systems." she said while motioning to one of the terminals along the port wall.

The captain then ran a quick verification of the flight control systems, linking the helm controls to the small right armrest display. Her green fingers gently played with several of the controls as she tested the manual input controls. After several moments, she smiled to herself with approval and looked up at the blond lieutenant. "Very good. Will you give me a hand with our communications array?" she asked, "I was having a few problems yesterday with the subspace transceiver array...can you run a full diagnostic for me?"

Amber Rose moved to the other console and pressed some buttons there. Something caught her eye and she looked closer, "Commander? The computer bypass system is not working at full capacity. There may be a problem with it."

Coleman moved to the Operations stations. She ran a full diagnostic on the transceiver array and the communications system. After a few minutes the diagnostic was complete, "The receiver in the array is out of alignment the computer was able to fix the error, communication system now operating normally."

Lirha nodded in approval at the status of the communications array. "That's good news, I'd hate to have to signal the old-fashioned way." she commented, referring to the visual Morse code protocols. "Run a diagnostic on the main computer core while you're still at Ops. It might help explain the problem with bypass system." she added, then stood up and walked next to her tactical officer to help investigate the problem with the damage control system.

With a quick dance around the console Coleman accessed the computer core and activated several

check. "Everything is appears to be fuctional on this end Captain."

"Hmm..." Lirha commented from her position next to Amber Rose. She was pretty sure the computer diagnostic would have identified the problem with the damage control system, and she now had to pause as she considered a possible work-around. For now, she would have to move on with the other systems, but she made a note on her PADD to have the shipyard engineers check the problem before launch.

"Thank you, Lieutenant." the captain said to the intelligence chief, then turned back to the yellow-collared lieutenant next to her. "I'll have an engineering crew look over the problem at the next opportunity." she said, then gave her a pat on the shoulder before returning to her captain's chair to monitor the status of the other ship systems. Several moments passed and Lirha nodded to herself in approval as status reports began to stream in to her console. With most of the bridge systems already functional, she turned her attention to the large port alcove which housed the *Galileo's* multiple science stations.

Lirha moved to the closest science terminal and stopped in front of it to allow her green fingers to delicately tap the LCARS screen. It took a few moments of experimentation, but she finally accessed the ship's main science readouts, including the integrated laboratory system. Everything appeared to be in working order and all stations were responsive to her commands, yet she ran a quick diagnostic regardless. Her previous experience as an operations officer had taught her that it was always best to err on the side of caution, especially with a brand-new and untested ship in her hands.

Several minutes passed and Lirha occupied her time by casually stretching her back and neck. The last few days of administration work had forced her to be confined to the chair in her office, and she had developed a few cramps in some of the more tender areas of her muscles. A confirmation chirp finally sounded, signaling the end of the diagnostic, and Lirha let out a sigh of relief when she saw that all systems were confirmed functional. Moving back to

the center of the bridge, she glanced over at the two other officers near her.

"Good work up here today, I think we can call it a morning." she said to the intelligence chief and the tactical officer. "I'll be on board the ship for the next few hours if you need me, then I have to report to the HQ for the rest of the day." she added.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
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LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Systems Check (Part 3)

Posted on 19 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: *USS Galileo*, Various

Timeline: MD 05 - 0945 hrs

On Deck 7...

[ON]

Quinn looked to Remington and Holliday, then with an extended hand towards the nearest turbolift.

"Commanders, would you care to join me for a trip down to the bowels of this lovely lady?" Quinn lead them towards the turbolift, hoping the systems check would go over with few glitches.

"Heh," Will replied to the other man's comment about their lovely lady, only managing half a laugh. He gave a nod and stepped into the turbolift.

"Sounds good to me...you're sure the containment field works though right?" he said jokingly as the turbolift began its descent to deck 7...

Quinn smiled as the turbolift took them to their destination. The doors quickly opened and before them was Main Engineering. "She's beautiful, isn't she?" The Warp Core let off a blue illumination through the facility.

"Not bad Chief...not bad...lets just make sure we get her off the ground" John continued with his jovial attitude all the way to the deck...

Quinn walked to the Master Systems Display console, and tapped in a few command sequences, putting all ship power to 50%, and then made an audible proclamation of what he was about to do next. "I am bringing the Warp Core online. Matter-Antimatter mixture is holding at one-to-one. So far so good."

"Feed some power to all main systems," Will instructed, standing to one side of Quinn. His hands passed expertly over the console and pulled up a power distribution readout. His intention was the test the power flow throughout the ship and make sure all of it was working properly.

"Aye Commander, feeding power. Six percent, thirteen percent, twenty-two percent..." Quinn kept an eye on the power flux meter. "So far so good."

"Diagnostics look beautiful," Will decided, giving the console an almost affectionate tap.

From his own console, John started to run his own diagnostics on the power transfer systems, watching as more and more joules of energy coarsed their way through the new and unused power coils throughout the ship. A small orange light began to flash on his panel to the side of the Chief.

"I'm reading an imbalance in the EPS manifold distribution systems, looks like we might have some feedback from one of the primary taps, Chief, do you think you can compensate from there?"

Quinn looked at the EPS display on the screen, then sprinted over to the Main Transfer Station. "Yup, I see it." replied Quinn as he entered in a set of commands into the console. "I'll reroute the electro-plasma through the impulse manifolds for a brief time Commander. Perhaps the phase compensator is not responding properly."

Quinn entered a few more commands and then reported, "impulse manifolds have been effectively compensates to handle a brief EPS surge. We'll get two, maybe three minutes worth of time until we risk overloading the relay Commander."

"That should do for now...I'll start a level 2 diagnostic on the EPS subsystems, see if the computer can't track down the fault...its going to take a few hours though, we'll probably have to resolve it in space...I can't see HQ letting us delay our launch to track down a minor bug."

His hands flew across the consoles as he began the diagnostic, level two was a little extreme, but he would rather be safe than sorry. It would take a few

hours to complete, meaning the Engineering crews would have to work their magic mid-flight, but it was an acceptable compromise. Afterall, if a fault developed, they would at least have a few minutes to shunt power to a different system to avoid any kind of serious overload.

"Chief I'm going to start bringing the main deflector up to standard flight mode, would you prefer to handle it yourself or do you wanna tackle those shiny new transporters instead?"

Quinn smiled at the remark..."I will tackle the transporters, who knows, I may find a way to beam to Suraya Bay on Risa from here. I'll have a Pina Colada, or six for you Commander." Quinn turned and began to walk out of Main Engineering, "I'll start on the Cargo Transporters since we're already on Deck-Seven. Call me if you two young'ins break something...sirs." said the old Chief Engineer with a chuckle and a wave.

"Have fun Chief, I'll try not to scratch the paintwork" He chuckled to himself before continuing to power up the deflector array. Tapping his combadge, he decided to report in to the bridge

"Mr Remington, would you mind taking a look at the console interfaces whilst I report in?" Tapping his combadge, he decided to report in to the bridge

"Aye, sir," Remington replied, turning to a station to one side of the room. He pulled up a level four diagnostic protocol for the LCARS interfaces and activated it. While the computer worked, he took a look at the computer core's operating efficiency.

"Engineering to Bridge, so far so good Commander, the warp core seems to be fully operational, there's a slight glitch in the EPS relays feeding from the core though, the Chief has rigged up a bypass that should let us launch, I've got a diagnostic running, hopefully we'll have it sorted before we reach the Starbase, how are things up there m'am?"

A few seconds passed before Lirha's voice sounded through his communicator. "No problems have been reported at the moment. Flight control and tactical systems are functioning properly and we're in the process of checking the damage control and

communications systems. I'll keep you updated."

"Commander," Remington said, turning around, "I'd like to perform a bio-safety test and run operational diagnostics on personal transporters. It wouldn't do to find out during an emergency that we'll arrive back on the ship as scrambled eggs." Will didn't trust transporters and he certainly didn't trust anyone but himself to test them 'just to be on the safe side.'

"Sounds good to me Mr. Remington, make it happen. Once that's over and done with I think we'll be pretty much ready to launch. Let me know the results as soon as they come in."

"Aye, sir," Will replied, turning towards the door. He made his way out of engineering leaving Holliday to himself. He headed down the hall towards engineering.

Quinn entered the cargo transporter room and did a beeline to the transporter console. It was pretty standard...and new. Quinn keyed up the power to it, and waited for the console to reboot. After a check of the cargo transporters, and a successful beaming of a crate full of vintage Bajorian champagne, Quinn moved on to the personnel transporter. Once in place he tapped his badge.
=^=Quinn to engineering. I am now at Transporter Room-One. =^=

William was just in time to tap his com badge moments later as he moved to the transporter controls, in time to hear Quinn reporting back.
=^=Remington reporting in. Transporter room two standing by as well.=^=

Hearing the now-familiar voices of his colleagues, John tapped his combadge =^= Understood gentlemen, I'm unlocking the pattern buffers...now...start your diagnostics and I'll monitor the signal feed from here =^=

Entering a short sequence of commands into the console, John watched as power was restored to both transporter systems, and the pre-programmed diagnostic program began to run, hopefully a simple procedure that wouldn't take a vastly long amount of time to complete.

Will watched as the transporter controls came online and the diagnostic started up. He frowned thoughtfully as he carefully examined the readouts being displayed on the diagnostic panel. Everything looked normal, but you never knew with transporters...

Quinn watched intently at the console as the diagnostic was running. Something caught his eye that seemed out of place. =^= I have a problem here, sir. The transporters are feeding their primary power during re-materialization from the primary impulse generator."

Sighing to himself, John swapped his diagnostic panel to observe the data coming into Quinn's transporter room. There was no mistake about it, transporter power had been tied directly into the impulse engines.

=^= This....could be a problem....Chief unless I'm mistaken, that means we won't be able to use transporters whilst we're at full impulse without losing one of the two...suggestions? =^=

Will frowned. Always the transporters. He spoke up over the commlink, =^=We should set them to run according to Starfleet specifications.=^= He sounded annoyed.

John tapped his fingers nonchalantly against the panel as he continued to think his way through the problem
=^= Agreed, but do we have to reconfigure them before we launch? I can't imagine that its going to be an easy job to do in time =^=

Quinn ran a quick simulation. =^= It can be done, sir. It will take approximately ten hours, plus or minus a few. =^=

=^= Best get started then - I'll head to the Bridge and bring the Captain up to speed, carry on gentlemen =^=

And with that, he closed the comm line, and headed out of engineering, destined for the nearest turbolift. He could not believe that such a simple error would have slipped past so many audits and inspections, although with the heat of getting this ship ready in

time, there were bound to be a few kinks that still had to be ironed out. A short trip quickly brought him up to the Bridge.

"Engineering is about as good to go as its going to get ma'am....our transporter systems are a mess however...the Chief needs about 10 hours to get them the way they should be..if we're lucky they might be ready for launch" he sighed and rubbed his temple as he reported back to his CO.

Lirha glanced over her shoulder, having been previously occupied with a status report on her chair's console. "Well, I glad we discovered the problem before we left dry dock." she said simply, then reached up with her hand to push a stray lock of hair out of the way. "Ten hours is manageable. And I'm glad we conducted this system check in the morning." she added, then stood up to face the commander. "Everything else in Engineering is in working order, I assume?" she asked

"Apparently so ma'am, a few little issues cropped up but I think it'd be a safe bet to assume that the chief and his team can have everything under control before we launch. How's everything looking up here?"

"There's a problem with the computer bypass system and it's affecting our damage control systems. We ran a diagnostic on the computer core, which I thought would turn up the problem, but everything checks out fine. I was about to call for an engineering team to take a look at it. Since Mister Quinn will be busy for the day working on the transporters, I'm going to have some of the shipyard engineers take a look at it." she replied. "Other than that, all systems appear to be in good working order."

"Good to know. I'll pass on our snagging list to the dock teams and get the relevant materials sent aboard for repairs. I think we're about done here ma'am, time to close up shop?"

"Indeed," the captain replied with a nod as she began to power down the bridge systems, returning the consoles and terminals to standby status. "Your team did a good job today, send them my thanks." she said to him, then moved towards her ready

room. "You have the bridge, Commander." she called out over her shoulder as she disappeared into her office to review the status reports from the systems check.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

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LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Systems Check (Part 4)

Posted on 19 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: *USS Galileo*, Various

Timeline: MD 05 - 0945 hrs

On Deck 4...

[ON]

Hilyer entered Sickbay. It was small compared to his last assignment but size didn't matter to him as long as he had the chance to practice medicine. Robin walked the length of the room towards the main biobed making sure to look out for any imperfections. On a PaDD he made notes on where to place certain instruments once they arrived from head quarters. Once he was finished his left sickbay proud of his office.

As Dru watched Hilyer head off for sickbay she turned to Barel and smiled, "Would you like a hand with your department? Apart from checking the comfort of the seat and couch in the counseling room, there really isn't much else for me to do."

"I would be glad to have your help Lieutenant." Tarishiana with a smile and a respectful nod. "Shall we start with the main labs?" She motioned in the direction of the labs and followed closely behind the counselor. "If we split up the work we should be able to get the initial diagnostics done quite quickly."

"Lead the way and just tell me what to do and point me in the right direction." As Dru fell into step with Tarishiana she looked around her, trying to take in the new areas she was seeing. Outside of her own quarters, the counseling office, numerous corridors, and the Captain's quarters, the counselor hadn't had much opportunity so see inside of the other departments. "How big is the area you have to work with? Being a vessel for science, your department

must have the biggest area space?"

Tarishiana smiled as she could feel the Lieutenant's enthusiasm and curiosity. " There are quite a few labs including the Arboretum, Botany lab, a planetary and astronomical geology labs, a planetary development lab, a few offices and a general work space." She looked around the area for a moment, "It is by far the largest space I have been provided in my time in Starfleet."

As Dru looks around her she bites her lip, even though she knows the basis of the equipment she hasn't a clue where she should start. "Hum...can you point me at something and tell me what you need done to it?"

With a nod and little laugh, Tarishiana guided the women over to the main science display not far from where she had been standing, "Set the computer to run a level 4 diagnostic and repair any re-sequencing problems it finds...and you can do the same for the other three terminals while I work on the specimen containment fields."

Dru looks down at the displays in front of wrecking through her memory of basis diagnostic repair. Being a counselor, all she usually needed to worry about was her single terminal used for inputting notes, surely this couldn't be much more different? As Dru's fingers typed sequences into the terminal she turned slightly towards Tarishiana, "I don't think we were ever formally introduced actually? I'm Lieutenant Drusilla McCarthy, Chief Counsellor."

Tarishiana smiled over her shoulder, "Tarishiana Barel, Chief Science Officer." She gave a nod, "Oh...I am a Master warrant Officer by rank...In case you prefer that, ma'am." She may have spend more years in Starfleet then the young counselor, but she that didn't change the fact that she out ranked Tarishiana.

Turning back to the console she set the computer to run a diagnostic before repeating the same sequences on the next one. "Need any help, Ma'am?" she asked politely as she sensed the women's hesitation.

Dru bit her lip as she imputed more sequences into

the computer when suddenly a loud beeping started, "Oh crap...What have I done?!?"

Tarishiana let out a breathy chuckle as she moved next to the young Lieutenant. She tapped a few control on the console. Her forehead showed her confusion for a moment before she input a few programming sequences and the console shut down. Once it has rebooted she simple smiled at McCarthy, "When all else fails...reboot."

Dru blushed deeply as she looked over at Barel, "I guess now you can see why starfleet though it best to stick me in a room with people rather than a room full of equipment. So...the inevitable question, what else do you want me to break?"

"You are doing fine." Tarishiana said with a laugh. "I have the diagnostic running on all the other consoles...so at this point we just need to wait." She looked back at the consoles, so far the computers had found nothing of interest. "So Lieutenant...how are you liking your new home?"

"Hum...well it's taking awhile to settle in in all honestly but I'm sure once we get under way I'll find things more comfortable them. The first few days of being on a ship can be so intense with all the paperwork and crew files which need to be read up on. How about yourself Miss. Barel?" Dru smiled at the woman standing beside her as she leans against a table, making sure not to get any of the computer terminals.

"It isn't bad." Tarishiana started, "The crew I have met so far is really nice and seem to be good at their job." She tapped a few of the controls on the console as the diagnostic. "So Lieutenant, you want to get a drink some time?" She liked the genuine nature of the counselor; she was someone she intended to get to know better.\

Dru smiled over at Tarishiana, "As long as you don't mind if I keep to the soft drinks I'd enjoy that. The joys of being a counselor, I'm on call 24/7 and always need a clear head to try counsel people." As the panel in front of Dru beeped again, Dru looked down, delighted to see a message flashing as finished, indicated no more problems.

"How about we meet for dessert?" Tarishiana said with a laugh. "It is safer then standing in a bar drinking soda." She confirmed the testing results on all the consoles. "Everything here...is checking out." She grinned over at Dru, "Just let me know when you have time."

"Dessert?!?" Dru's eyes light up at the mention of it. "Oooooo....that sounds like such a fantastic plan. I'll give you a shout once the ship launches and we'll organise something." Dru smiled over at Tarishiana. "I'll let you report in the all clear so, and then we are see where the Captain wants us next."

"Good plan,..." Tarishiana started with a grin. She reached up and tapped her commbadge. "Master Chief Barel to Commander Saalm...Science department reports all system green and ready for launch."

The captains voice promptly replied over the comm, "Understood, good work, Chief. Power down your systems and send your status reports to the dockmaster when you've finished."

Tarishiana nodded, even though she knew the Commander couldn't see her. "Yes, ss..Ma'am...consider it done." The desire to call everyone "sir" was one of the drawback from being enlisted most of your life, it was something Tarishiana was working on. She had already been down that road with a female CO and wasn't about to travel it again with Commander Saalm.

[OFF]

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USS Galileo

Those Transporters Will Be the Death of Me

Posted on 20 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Commander Lirha Saalm

Location: *USS Galileo*, Transporter Room 1

Timeline: MD 05 - 1145 hrs

[ON]

Will ran his fingers over the transporter controls and a metal cylinder marked with a biohazard label appeared on the transporter pad. Hurrying over to it, Will knelt down on the pad and pulled a tricorder out of his tool kit. The tricorder hummed as it scanned the cylinder and when he read the results, the operations officer frowned and gave the tricorder an annoyed tap.

The day had been rather busy for Lirha, as she had been preoccupied with conducting her own inspection of the *Galileo's* primary systems. Starting with the bridge, she had worked her way around the various rooms on Deck 1, and now found herself on Deck 2 near the primary transporters. The captain entered Transporter Room 1 and casually looked around, her eyes finally settling on the operations chief who was knelt down around some type of metal canister. He seemed to be deep in thought as he stared at his tricorder. "Everything okay, Commander?" she asked him in a soft voice so as not to startle him.

Will looked up and held his tricorder up for her to see the readout. "No," he said, "Look. This canister's inner containment field is showing a temperature increase of point .5 degrees. It could indicate a malfunction in the Heisenberg compensator if the matter stream fluctuated." Despite the relatively benign problem, Will was clearly concerned but perfectly cool about it, "I want to send this canister to an engineering lab for a full submicron scan. I haven't even looked at the biomimetic gel yet."

Even as he spoke, he reached for a medical tricorder

that was sitting at his waist to scan the gel. His workplace was disorderly, with tools strewn about the transporter room floor and even a wall panel open above the transporter controls. Several rather delicate objects were lined along the rim of the transporter pad along with a large data PADD. Among the 'test subjects' was a bioneural gel pack, a hyperspanner, and a small dilithium crystal.

"Wow..." Lirha whispered as she glanced around the transporter room, in slight disbelief at the number of tools and equipment scattered about. Of particular interest were a set of three items, a gel pack, hyperspanner, and what appeared to be a dilithium crystal. "You know, Commander," she began in a reassuring voice, "The whole purpose of a containment field is to handle such fluctuations." she said and knelt down next to him, picking up the gel pack and inspecting it. "What exactly are you doing?" she asked, motioning to the various items scattered about.

Will stopped with the medical probe from the tricorder hovering over the canister, inactivated. "Not if the energy field matrix of the inner lining has microfractures that might disrupt containment." He briefly scanned the canister, then placed the tricorder down carefully beside him and began to open the lid. "I'm testing the transporters, ma'am. When I was chief of operations aboard Starbase 235 I trained my people better than any of these technicians who worked on the Galileo. Every ship that docked for maintenance left with transporters that worked better than they ever had. You could send a pearl string of tachyon particles through there and they'd come out the other end with not a particle out of place."

"Well, you seem to be doing a very thorough job." she commented, "Are you always this meticulous with your checks?" she asked with a grin and a raised eyebrow. Being a former operations officer herself, she was knowledgeable of the workings of the transporter system but had never seen anyone perform such a detailed diagnostic unless a malfunction had been detected.

"Of course I am," he said with a frown, "you can never be too careful with this thing. One component goes wrong and you'll end up dead, or worse.

Haven't you heard the story of Quinn Erickson? Or Thomas Riker? Things like that happen. These transporters break you down into little subatomic particles and send you flying through space as energy and then *hopefully* reassemble you the way you went in." He removed the contents of the canister, a small vial of biomimetic gel, and began to scan it with the medical tricorder. "The molecules seem stable," he declared skeptically.

"I suppose you're right, and I can't argue with the fact that it's always better to err on the side of caution." she admitted. She had never personally witnessed a transporter malfunction but she, along with all Starfleet personnel, were aware of the occasional tragedy. "I will say, however, that the incident rate among transporter usage is far lower than that of a shuttlecraft." she added to try and ease his worries.

"I'll take a shuttle crash over quantum limbo any day," he replied decidedly. Having finished his analysis of the biomimetic gel, he set it back into the canister and moved to transporter controls. "Are you ready for launch, captain?" he asked, more than ready for a change of subject, transitioning with a conversational tone.

"More or less," she replied with a shrug, then returned to her feet. "Probably about as ready as I will ever be. Most of the status reports have been taken care of and Commander Holliday is helping taking care of the last-minute updates." she said. "And yourself?"

"Oh, of course," He replied with a smile, walking back around the console after beginning a diagnostic. "I've launched many ships, most far from new. Starbase 235." He gave her a searching look, "Though I've noticed captains are always more anxious about their own commands. They try to hide it, with varying degrees of success." He placed the bioneural gel pack on the transporter pad and then headed back towards the controls.

"Anxiety is a natural feeling...unless you're a Vulcan." she said with a wry smile. "And how well do you think I am hiding mine?" she asked with a raised eyebrow and an expression of amusement on her face. Part of her was joking with the

Commander, but she was also curious as to his opinion.

"I'm not quite sure, yet, captain," he replied with a secretive smile, "but Vulcans feel it to, they're just best at hiding it. Don't be fooled by any vulcan that tells you 'suchandsuch is a human emotion' because it's a Vulcan one too. Energizing." He ran his fingers along the controls and the bioneural gel pack shimmered away. The commander checked the LCARS display, entered a few commands, and then re-energized, restoring a complete gel pack a few feet from where it had vanished. He made for it straightaway.

Lirha watched as the commander moved to inspect the gel pack. "Yes, I find Vulcans are quite an interesting species. In many ways, they are similar to your own, however they often deny the involvement of emotions in their decision-making, which I find hard to believe." she said with a shrug. "Have you become familiar with the personnel under your command yet?" she asked, changing the subject as she wondered if he was satisfied with the crew in his department.

"Some of them," he admitted with a slight nod as he reached for the medical tricorder. "I keep expecting to see operations officers scattered all over the place with a few months worth of names to remember. This is different from a starbase or even an Akira-class." He studied the tricorder readings, adjusted the settings, and then scanned it again. "Do these readings look stable to you?" he asked, "I'm an operations officer, not a doctor, but I wouldn't want *my* brain to have such weak neural cohesion. How does the ship function on these things?"

Lirha stepped forward and stopped next to Will, looking at his tricorder readings with him. "They look pretty standard to me." she replied. "The organic circuitry isn't as developed as a humanoid's brain, but the neural fibers are complex and sophisticated nonetheless." she said.

"Perhaps," Will conceded, closing the cover of the tricorder and returning the medical probe to its slot. "I want to do a level 3 diagnostic on each of the transporters once we are underway and before we reach our first mission objective. They should all be

finished in a day or two, depending on when we can spare the time."

"We should have plenty of time for that during our first leg to Starbase 234." she said with approval. "If you find any problems or need any components that we don't have on board, feel free to make a requisition list and leave it with myself or Commander Holliday."

"Yes, captain," the human replied with a nod of his head. Once more he returned to the transporter station and started to work at the controls. "Level four diagnostic check out," he told her absently. "Oh, captain, I am also working on programming the ship's power distribution to give our sensors a boost and extend their range by up to 4.7 percent. I'll have it on your desk in twenty-four hours. Quinn and I figured you might appreciate an edge, considering our scientific focus."

The Orion smiled and gave the commander a friendly squeeze on the shoulder. "That would be great, I'm sure we could find some good uses for such an enhancement." she said, "Send my thanks to Mister Quinn, and I look forward to reading your modifications."

"If there's anything else I can do for you, ma'am..." he watched the Orion woman expectantly.

Lirha shook her head, her dark hair bobbing across her shoulders. "Nothing specific at the moment, but be sure to notify me if you come across any problems with the primary or secondary systems." she said. "I'm sure you have a lot of work to finish so I'll leave you to it. I just came to check on our transporter system but you seem to have that under control." she politely added.

Will nodded. "Of course, ma'am."

The captain gave him a final smile before walking to the doors and stepping out into the hallway to continue her inspection.

[OFF]

Prelaunch Sequences

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lt. Cmdr. Chauncey William Remington III
Chief operations Officer
USS Galileo

Posted on 18 Mar 2012 by Crewman Nazhzhah & Cadet
Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an

Location: *USS Galileo*, Corridors

Timeline: MD 05 – 1210 hrs

[ON]

The orders on Ziyal's PADD had suggested *he* was to be attending the bridge manning the laboratories station, something usually reserved for a more senior officer. Ever since he'd received the news, the six foot pile of tentacles, claws, antennae and squeaks had been nothing but hyperactive and excited as he bounced around eager to finish his work so he could go hang out with all of the other cooler people on the bridge.

One of the crewmen assigned to his section eased out of his way as he finished putting away about ten different things simultaneously, balancing a few others on his legs as he hurriedly stocked shelves. About twenty minutes before launch was scheduled he decided he was finished, and left Crewman Nivar in charge of standing there Looking Interesting, as honestly, by the time Ziyal was finished, there really wasn't much else to do but stand there.

The biotechnologist made his way through the corridors and turbolifts of the *Nova*-class vessel intent on examining the bridge a little before everybody crowded on it. It couldn't hurt to be early, right? He likely would never get another opportunity like this again. Ziyal was contemplating his unfortunate lack of bridge assignment so intently that he failed to notice a young cadet wearing a red demarcated uniform heading his way. He just barely managed to avoid tripping all over himself and tumbling into her, but he did manage to crash into the opposite wall. Ziyal let out a mildly affronted yelp as he slid to the floor sheepishly.

When he gathered himself up into a standing position, he waved a few arms at the cadet. "Hello! Sorry about that..." He made a coughing-squeaking sort of sound, the trills and whistles of his normal dialect lagging a little behind its translation as he quickly spoke. "I was... a little distracted." Two of

his antennae swiveled in her direction, almost pointing at her. "What are you?" he asked bluntly, blinking his owlish eyes at her unabashedly. He'd never seen another species like hers before. As, no doubt, she'd likely never met a *W'qa'arr* before, either.

Mor'an was calmly walking down the corridor to her quarters before convening with everyone else on the bridge. She wanted to meditate for a moment or two to clear her mind. However, she was unexpectedly assaulted en route by the most peculiar creature she had ever laid eyes on. When he -- she? It? -- finally stopped flailing about, he asked asked who she was. Instead of responding with words, Mor'an calmly touched her first two fingers on her right hand to her forehead and twisted them down and around so her palm was facing the odd being in front to her.

"I know you," she said, the traditional Ta'rkan greeting to one who is not their own. "My name is Im'er Mor'an. You may call me Mor'an." She eyed the humanoid before her. "You are?"

"Crewman Nazhzhah. Most call me Ziyal!" he responded in animated delight, staring at her bug-eyed as if mentally cataloging every movement and interaction they were having. He seemed little phased by the greeting or the words, though whether or not he comprehended them was up for debate. Most of the time it seemed like people did and said strange things, he was growing used to it as the wide variety of species within Starfleet became apparent to him. He lifted up one of his four arms and placed two of his tentacle claw-tipped fingers against his forehead and repeated the motion. "That means hello?" he inquired guilelessly.

Mor'an raised an eyebrow and smiled at Ziyal's imitation of her. "For women," she said, "Men have a different gesture." She raised her fingers again to her forehead and then turned her palm outward without the twisting motion. "It is not a 'hello,' but rather it means more along the lines of...knowing the other on the same mental frequency." She furrowed her brow, knowing she didn't explain the concept as fully as she probably should have.

"Oooh!" Ziyal whistled brightly, placing his hands

in front of one another clasped. "*W'qa'arr* do not have gender. Most identify me as male... I am not certain why," he mused a little. He really didn't understand what made up *male* and *female* beyond sexual organs, so he had a hard time understanding why he was referred to as such. "It does not bother me," he said with a shrug. "You are a female?" he asked, curiously.

"Well, yes," Mor'an said, answering a question she never thought she would have to answer. "My race, the Ta'rkan, rely heavily on gender. My sisters and I belong to a different order than our brother because we are female and he is male." She had the slightest inkling that Ziyal didn't really understand the concept of orders of males versus females, but she hoped he try to work it out.

"*Different order?*" The crewman seemed fascinated, leaning against the wall and pressing a few fingers against his jaw. He didn't seem confused (though he was), but then again he didn't seem much of anything except excited and hyperactive. Since being in the Alpha Quadrant he had heard of some species such as the Ferengi who seemed to devalue specific genders, but he truly didn't comprehend any of it. It was like a fuzzy spot in his mind that just didn't come into any real focus. "Are you not equal?" he asked curiously.

Mor'an sighed, trying to think of the best why to explain a gender-oriented race to a creature with no concept of gender. "We are very much equal," she said finally, "But our planet remains peaceful when do not mix. If there are too many members in the same order, it becomes chaos, something that my people cannot abide. It is the tradition of the Ta'rkan to keep each order separate. Of course, our family life is nothing like that. While my mother, sisters and I are members of a different order than my father and brother, we still live in peace at home. It is simply a way to pass on the legacy of tranquility and serenity to those that come after us." Mor'an didn't know if that made any sense at all, let alone any sense to Ziyal.

"Why is there chaos when different genders mix?" Ziyal lobbed yet another question her way. Really, it was not a good idea to give the poor alien information, as he had a tendency to bombard it

with questions until it rolled over and died. During the Academy and his time on Earth he'd noticed a few people discussing the different genders, but he could never really understand why people separated them in such a way. "Is your neurophysiology different between each gender?" He seemed genuinely interested, though his expressions did not change much between the chirps and clucks and blinks of enthusiasm as he processed the information.

"It is not that the mixing of genders causes chaos," Mor'an said, becoming increasingly weary of the subject at hand. How was she supposed to explain in a way to make him understand? Other species with genders could barely understand. "It is just how we do things," she said with a delicate roll of her shoulders.

It took Ziyal a little but eventually he figured out that he was becoming monotonous, and he gestured toward her slightly, his antennae pointing at her while blinking. "Yes... interesting!" he simply let it go. He looked up slightly and realized a few people were walking toward the bridge and pointed a few of his arms in that direction. "Are you going to the bridge?" he asked, pushing away from the wall a little.

"I was going to meditate for a moment in my quarters," Mor'an replied, "Empty my head so as to have a clear mind for the launch." She eyed Ziyal, hoping he was not helplessly confused by her seemingly disjointed explanation of her culture.

"Oooh!" Ziyal whistled again amidst complicated gestures. Meditation was something many species seemed to find an inherent part of their social structure. It was not so for *W'qa'arr*, and he found it, well, *interesting*. Fortunately he had the good grace not to ask, *why do you meditate*, but it was tempting. He gave a large, though somewhat more graceful flail than before tacking on, amidst clicks, "That is important!" After which, he just stood there a bit awkwardly. When it came to protocol, Ziyal knew most of it off hand. But when it came to social interaction...he came up short.

Mor'an couldn't hold back the smile that crept across her lips. Despite the obvious differences

between Ziyal and herself, she couldn't help but develop a fondness for his childlike and innocent mannerisms. He didn't seem to know what to do with himself or his extra appendages, so Mor'an decided to save him from further discomfort. "I shall leave you, then," she said gently, "You will be on the bridge, I assume? I will see you there." Ziyal merely chirped happily after her, before they parted ways.

CN Nazhzhah
Biotechnologist, *U.S.S Galileo NCC-80010*

Cadet Senior Grade im'er Mor'an.
Red Squad Intern
USS Galileo

Efficiency is Key

Posted on 18 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: *USS Galileo*, Main Engineering

Timeline: MD 05 - 1300 hrs

[ON]

Will walked over to the master systems display and pulled up the power distribution display. "Alright then, Mr. Quinn," he said, "let's see if we can't get a little more out of this ship than Starfleet Corps of Engineer envisioned, hm? It's been my experience that ships work a little differently outside the holodeck. Every ship has its own sweet spots."

Quinn walked next to his Ops counterpart and smiled broadly, "Now you're talking my kind of language Commander, what do you have in mind?" Quinn looked over the MSD to see where the extra power could transfer from.

"Well," he said, "I've worked on the Nova class before in Stardock. With only one impulse drive it makes it easier to divert extra power from the impulse engines to boost long-range sensors when we are at warp. The problem with that is that if we drop to impulse we might experience a hiccup for sensors and impulse. If we don't solve that problem, we risk disrupting scans that might be vital to the science department's missions." He figured that had best focus on science first, seeing as they were aboard a science vessel.

"Hmm, I think I get your point. Could we reroute the needed power for sensors by tapping the dilithium Crystal matrix, and rerouting it to the sensors?" asked Quinn.

"We could," Will mused aloud, pulling up a schematic of the component in question, "but can we do that while maintaining warp or would we have to transition from diverting power between the two systems? We'd need a tertiary power supply to overlap the two or else we'd still have a hiccup."

Quinn looked again at the display, "Good point. Well, Electro-plasmic conduits have several

secondary bypass conduits in case the primary conduits are ruptured. We could possibly replicate a small static Warp field and possibly use it as a back-up battery so to say for when we transition out of Warp to subspace and use the secondary EMP conduits to transfer the power. I'm not sure how we would get a small, stable static warp field in there."

"Too complicated," Will decided, "especially if we need to jump to warp quickly. Creating the secondary warp field would cause a delay, small but enough to possibly cause miscalculations. I'd rather avoid messing with warp theory. What about auxiliary power? Would using that be too much of a drain on other systems?"

Quinn scratched his beard for a brief moment. "No, not dreadfully anyway. What about the auxiliary impulse reactor? It is only used when the main drive is down, and it is always active anyway. Might as well put it to good use."

"Good, good," Will said with a nod, reaching for a PADD and placing it on the upload terminal, "The only time we would need it would be in emergencies and then secondary science objectives would be canceled either way. We just need to make sure high priority sensor scans are not relying on the power boost, I'll write the program so that they require manual activation."

Quinn nodded in agreement, then smirked. "This vessel is a big change for me from the two Defiant-Classes I've been on. It'll be nice to do some exploring and research, instead of always on the front line. At my age, a fussy impulse power generator is all the excitement I need in a day."

Will smiled to himself and started to examine some other systems on the ship. "Help me re-calibrate the primary sensor cluster, the stardock technicians haven't fine-tuned them past regulation but they'll need to be if they are to operate with the power boost."

Quinn looked over the console display and began to work. "Yeah, most of these guys have never set foot off of terra firma."

He transferred some of the sensor controls to

Quinn's station and then started to work, speaking conversing as his hands darted across the LCARS. "This is a big change for me too, but in the opposite direction sort of. I started out on the USS Galaxy, then I was at Starbase 235, then an Akira class. This ship is small for me. Make sure you get those subspace phase sensors to within .03 variance otherwise you'll miss tachyon surges out past twelve kilometers."

Quinn was processing the subspace sensors while listening to the Ops Chief. "Ahh, the Galaxy. I served on her back in Sixty-one through Seventy. She was beautiful back then. New, and top of the line technology to work on, and break." Quinn finished his calibration. "At zero-point-zero-three variance. Let's run a phase primer on it, and see how she handles it."

"Really?" Will raised an eyebrow and glanced over at the older man, "Doing what? When I graduated from the Academy the Galaxy was my first assignment, but that was in seventy-four. Phase primer running. I was an operations officer and worked my way top to assistant chief of operations, a lieutenant."

"I transferred there from the old Constellation as a crewman first-class Structural / Environmental Systems Specialist. By the time I left I was a P.O. 2nd Class-Warp Systems Specialist." Quinn looked at a readout, "Slight inefficiency in the Warp Coil transfer station. Compensating. Yeah, she was a beautiful ship. Took a pounding, but keep on going."

"Where did you go after that?" He turned away from his console, "Running diagnostics and calibration protocols, should be almost done." He peered over at Quinn's station to get a look at the issue he noticed in the warp coil transfer.

Quinn smiled at how fast his commands were performed once entered into the system, "Ahh, I transferred off and joined the Starfleet Corps of Engineers. I was only with them for about three years, I think. We were flying around the demilitarized zone between the Cardassian Union, and the UFP. We would rebuild one colony that was razed by Cardassians, then have to fly off to another

planet to do the same thing, or maybe a ship carrying medical supplies. I received my First-Class, then less than a year later, I transferred to a brand new Defiant-Class, the USS Thor."

Quinn laughed at his new discovery, "These morons never activated the neural gelpack replay in the Warp coil transfer station. Anyway, we ran the gambit in that ship during the Dominion War. I was a Cloaking Systems Specialist. I got my Chief, then after I finished my Masters Degree in Propulsion Dynamics I received my Warrant Commission. She was a good ship, the most fun you could have with your pants on Commander. I later moved on the Starfleet's Xenotechnology research Division. Then eventually to a Vesta-Class. Did six years deep space exploration. then back to a Defiant-Class, then to this little lady."

Quinn realized he probably sounded like an old man rambling. "So what's your story Commander?" then returning the Warp Coil back to operational status, but with a few tweaks.

"Not as interesting as yours," he replied with a wry expression but also a look of interest. "I certainly haven't been able to work with anything as... delicate politically as a cloaking device. I fought aboard the Galaxy during the Dominion war though. Battle of Cardassia, First Battle of Chin'toka, among the more well-known fleet actions."

"Yeah, the cloaking device was relatively new to Starfleet at that point. Talk about shooting from the hip." A chirp silenced Quinn as he looked over the console. "Looks like the auxiliary impulse reactor is powered up, and ready to run."

"I'll have to work out the program for the power boost and implement it on the fly. I'll include it in my regular operations report to the captain."

"Great." Quinn was impressed with the young man's efficiency. "You do pretty good work, for an officer that is...sir." said Quinn with a chuckle.

"Oh?" Will asked, raising an eyebrow and smiling, "And you're pretty well-trained yourself, for a non-com that is."

"It comes with age Commander." Quinn looked at the MSD smiling. "The new Neural Gel-packs are working with incredible efficiency. It's almost as if they can predict the information that will be needed, and sends it before we enter it. I've never seen anything like it in accepted Federation starships."

"Comes in handy," Will agreed. He quickly looked over what they had done, then back at Quinn. "I think we've got enough to do for today. I want to get started on this program so we're ready for launch."

Quinn nodded, "Indeed. Plasma conduit power levels are all operating within normal limits. How do the plasma conversion sensors look from your end Commander?"

"Oh, just fine," Will replied, giving them a cursory glance. "Commander Holliday mentioned something about EPS manifolds? Do you need help fixing them?"

"Well," Quinn eyed over the gauges a couple more times. "I think they are doing okay, but I'd like to put a little stress on them to see how they'll hold up when it really counts."

"We could test that now," Will said, turning and seeking out the necessary interface.

Quinn smiled, "Sounds good to me Commander. I believe that the interface for that is behind you, and to your right. Just don't press that big red button."

Will laughed at that. "I'll be careful," he assured Quinn, turning towards the console.

[OFF]

Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn
Chief Engineer
USS Galileo

Lt. Cmdr. Chauncey William Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

Afternoon Checkup

Posted on 14 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Main Infirmary

Timeline: MD 05 - 1330 hrs

[ON]

Lirha stopped outside of the large doors which housed Starfleet HQ's main infirmary. Unlike the sickbays found on starships, this facility was massive and contained close to twenty different rooms and medical laboratories. At least ten different doctors and medical personnel were on duty at all times, and it was quite an intimidating experience for the average cadet or crewman to step foot inside of the room. Lirha was used to visiting sickbay. Being a full-blooded Orion woman, her body's natural pheromones posed a potential danger to her fellow crew, and Starfleet required all females of her species to undergo weekly treatment to help suppress her skin's production of the chemical.

In addition to receiving her required injection, she also wanted to complete her overdue physical examination and get it out of the way before they deployed into space. Once the *Galileo* left Earth, she knew that she would be extremely busy taking care of her ship and any problems that might pop up on their first voyage. Lirha pressed her uniform down and walked through the doors and into the large medical facility. Several steps into the room, she stopped and looked around at the long row of biobeds lining the far wall. The lights were bright and a strong sterile smell seeped into her nostrils. *Sickbay*, she thought to herself.

Robin walked along the rows of beds talking to a member of the Staff. Privately he was trying to procure a few more instruments that were not part of the Standard Sickbay of the Nova Class. He saw Commander Saalm in the distance. A nurse was guiding her to a empty bed. "I'll take over from here Nurse thank you," He said once he made it to the Commander's side. "Hello Commander."

Lirha smiled when she saw her Chief Medical

Officer. "Hello Doctor Hilyer, I was hoping I might find you here." she said with bright green eyes to the handsome man, "I'm here for my weekly checkup and I'd like to complete my six-month physical before we get under way."

"No problem, 'Cap'." Robin reached for the medical tricorder placed on the small instrument table. He opened the scanning device and pulled out the fob from the top of the tricorder and began to scan Lirha's head. "I was quite pleased at the condition the Galileo is in. The repair crew did a phenomenal job don't you think?"

"All things considered, I would have to agree." she replied. The initial inspection and systems check earlier that day had indeed gone much more smoothly than she had anticipated. The few microfractures and blemishes they had discovered on the outer hull wouldn't take long to fix, and internally, the ship's systems were nearly complete.

Lirha focused her eyes on the doctor's tricorder device which was currently scanning her body. "So, how do I look?" she asked him, wanting to get the examination finished as quickly as possible so she could return to her duties.

"So far so good, you don't have any conditions that warrant a closer look. But there's no sin in being thorough." Robin continued his scan this time near her chest. "I hear we have a new Counselor now. Have you met her?"

She nodded in response, "Yes, a couple days ago. She appears to be a competent officer and has a strong service record. I'm glad to have her on board. She'll no doubt be an asset to the crew, I think."

Having finished up trying to put some order to her new office, Dru realised that in order for her to be able to counsel people once they left spacedock, she would need to get her medical done sooner rather than later. The sooner she could be declared fit for duty, the quicker she could start on the crew's psych evaluations.

Having heard that the sickbay was still in disarray, Dru took a chance and decided to head down to the main infirmary in Starleet Head Office, hoping

someone might be available to do her medical within the next few hours. Dru understood the importance of appointments so understood that she may have to wait to be seen, Dru had a PADD under her arm so as she would have some reading material to occupy her time.

Dru homed in on the nurse who was walking by, "Excuse me, I'm Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy. Would there be a Doctor available to see me? I need to have a medical done in order to be given clearance for my new position."

"I am available Lieutenant," Robin began. "Just have a seat in the next Biobed and I'll be check on you once I am finished with the Commander here." He turned to Saalm. "Do you have any questions Ma'am before I send you away?"

Lirha shook her head lightly from side to side, her dark hair bouncing gently across her shoulders. She took notice of her ship's counselor who had just arrived and gave her a friendly smile before turning back to the doctor.

"I take it everything looks okay inside of me?" she asked him, "I think I also need my weekly pheromone suppressant...unless you've devised a more long-term solution?" she asked, somewhat hopeful that she wouldn't have to keep visiting sickbay every week for her medication.

"There's no known 'cure-all' Commander but I think the standard will suffice." Robin stepped away for a moment only to return with a hypospray in his hand. He pressed the end to Lirha's neck and pressed the activator. "If anything I will start looking into a monthly suppressant. There might be something overlooked in the medical database. In the meantime I will see you in a week."

"Thank you, that would be much appreciated, Doctor." she said politely as she tugged on her uniform to straighten it. Now finished with her physical exam, she walked past Dru and gave her a friendly smile before making her way through the large infirmary and back out into the corridor.

Dru looked up from the PADD she was reading as Lirha walked by and she smiled back giving her a

little wave. Putting the PADD to the side, Dru looked around to see where the Doctor had vanished to.

Robin returned to examination area, "I am sorry to keep you waiting but I wanted to make sure my report was sent and saved to the Galileo Database."

"No need to apologise Doctor. I'm up there with you in understanding the important of paperwork. It's a real pain sometimes but makes our job easier in the long run." Dru smiled up at Robin.

"Have to felt any strange symptoms," Robin asked as he passed the scanning fob over her head and then her chest.

"Strange symptoms? I can't say I have experienced anything outside of the usual symptoms of stress from settling into a new ship." Dru watched the Doctor carry out his scans,

"Well you seem to be in the best of health," Robin said as he closed his tricorder. "No anomalous readings. But if your stress levels persist I know a good counselor you might want to talk to. She's new to a Star Ship, but I hear she's good with people." He smiled, hoping she would pick up the bit of flirting he was throwing her way.

Dru smiled up at Robin, delighted about the news about her health. She always dreaded these medicals incase Doctor's did fine something wrong, "Hum..do you think she'd be available call outs? Im sure you'd be able to persuade her Doctor. You seem like the kind of guy who can easily persuade people" Dru blushed slightly as she realised she was acting a little bit out of character. She put it down to Robin himself and the ease at which he's treated her.

Robin put a hand on her shoulder, "I know it's premature but welcome to the Galileo."

Dru smiled up at Robin, "Given how closely we'll be working together Doctor, It's not premature at all. I am looking forward to the relationship we will develop onboard. Something tells me it will be an exciting time for us all."

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer MD
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

A Try at Diplomacy

Posted on 19 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Crewman Nazhzhahh

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 05 - 1445 hrs

[ON]

As Lirha sat at her desk, she casually looked through a large pile of PADDs before tossing one to the side and leaning back with a loud sigh. She ran her hand through her dark hair and stood up, walking slowly to the replicator to retrieve a glass of water. Conducting personnel reviews was a tedious task and one which was beginning to give Lirha a headache. After several moments, she sat back down and began to tackle the remaining crew files. She blinked several times as she stared at one member of particular interest, a Crewman Nazhzhahh. Apparently belonging to a species of which Lirha was unfamiliar, the young man appeared to be quite unique, both in his physical and mental abilities. His position of biotechnologist was of similar interest to the captain, and she quickly typed up a message on her console requesting his presence. She tapped the flashing green button in the upper left corner of the screen and transmitted the communique to his PADD, hopeful that he would receive it and report to her office in a prompt fashion.

Having been on board the ship for a while now, fascinatedly examining its every nook and cranny, Ziyal didn't look down at his flashing PADD until at least ten minutes had gone by. He startled, and bumped his head against the conduit he'd been trawling through. "*Ehgyehsh!*" he clicked in annoyance, rubbing a few fingers over his head. He climbed out of the jefferies tube and looked up at the PADD in the light.

The *commanding officer* wanted to see him? He raised an antennae curiously before making his way off of the ship and down through the Starfleet shipyards, through engineering, up into admin, down, turbolift, main floor... A ha, administrative offices. Fortunately for him, *W'qa'arr* had a useful ability known as psychic magnetism. He just let

himself walk and he would be drawn to the one he was thinking of.

It made finding people much easier and helped with his abysmal sense of direction. After about fifteen minutes, he chimed the door and tumbled on inside when it opened for him. He stood up straighter and gave her a salute. "Captain," he chirped out with a blink. "Crewman Nazhzhahh, reporting as ordered!" The translator lagged behind a little, despite being as accurate as it could, and so you could hear the little clicks and sounds of his native language beyond it. It was a bit surreal, but it seemed to suit him.

The Orion captain stood up as she heard a soft chirp echo throughout her office, signaling the presence of someone outside. With a quick tug on her shirt sleeves to make herself look presentable, she turned her attention towards the door and stood almost wide-eyed as a strange and very...alien figure moved into her office. The assortment of antennae and tentacles on the crewman's face was complimented by an array of appendages, and it took several moments before Lirha realized she had been staring at him. With a polite nod and a smile, she finally replied. "Thank you for coming, Crewman. At ease, please." she said, and motioned for him to take a seat in a nearby chair. "I trust you found my office with no problems?" she asked.

If he (or it, rather) was bothered by her staring, it didn't seem to show at all. In fact, he seemed totally oblivious to any offense one might've taken at such a thing. *At ease* didn't really look much different than *awkwardly standing there*, but Ziyal did relax for his own credit. He moved to sit down and folded himself very primly, looking almost comically well postured. He flipped over a few of his arms in vague gestures as he spoke animatedly to the commander. "Yes! *W'qa'arr*-" he started, clicking out the sounds that indicated his species, which couldn't truly be translated as anything other than what it was, "Have psychokinetic abilities which I use to help me with my poor sense of direction." He blinked largely at her, which in any other species might've been a smile. "I just found you!"

A smile spread on the captain's face as she looked over her new crew member, taking note of his

interesting language and enthusiasm. "Excellent," she replied, then sat down across the desk from him. "If you don't mind me asking, where are you from?" she asked curiously, if somewhat bluntly. "I've never seen one of your species before, and I've traveled to most places in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants." she added. The information could have been found in the PADD containing his personnel file, but Lirha had skimmed over it non-chalantly and had apparently missed a few things.

"The *W'qa'arr* are from a planet called *K'q'kwez'xi I-123'new'Qey*," the alien fellow explained, the syllables escaping him in a long stream of unintelligible nonsense. "The planet only has one habitable colony, where I was born. It is in the Andromeda galaxy, the galaxy neighboring your Milky Way." The only other race to emerge from that galaxy had been the Kelvans, who were eventually placed on a Federation colony and remained peaceful with the Federation Diplomatic Corps. Though, understandably, the Federation had been wary of meeting yet another race from that galaxy, as the Kelvans were notoriously malicious the first time around. "I traveled here on a bioship capable of faster than light teleportation. It took me a year to travel here!" he exclaimed excitedly.

"The Andromeda galaxy?" she replied, her eyes large and mouth slightly agape. "Oh my..." she whispered, then hastily picked up her PADD to re-read some rather pertinent information which she had previously neglected. "A year's travel is quite a long journey. What made you decide to travel to our lowly corner of the universe?" she asked with a smile as she looked up briefly from her PADD.

Ziyal blinked, and one of his facial tentacles pointed outward as he clicked and hooted his answer out. "I was considered unsuitable for *W'qa'arr* society," he told her. "None of our species ever leaves the system we inhabit. I wanted to explore and I had no place within my planet. So I left to find a new home that might accept me."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Lirha said softly, still reading the PADD. "But from what I can see in your Starfleet file, you seem to anything but unsuitable. Your Academy instructors all had very positive things to say about you, and apparently

your 'skill with biotechnology is unsurpassed'." she added as she quoted one of his instructor's remarks.

A few of the arm-tentacles clapped against one another in an unusual display of excited emotion, though most of them just appeared strange. "That is what they say!" he said chirpily. "Starfleet has given me a home and accepted me beyond what I could imagine," he added, sounding a little bit more humble than he was normally prone to. "You value life, no matter what it may be, on its own terms. That is a gift." It was an odd moment of contemplation, before Ziyal simply shrugged his arms again and tacked on happily, "I am very glad to be here!"

"And I'm happy to have you aboard." she replied, then set the PADD down and folded her hands in her lap. "Tell me, Mister Naz...Nhz...Nazhzhahh," she paused as she attempted to get his name right, "What brings you to the *Galileo*? Did you request this position, or were you transferred?" she asked, curious as to the reason for his assignment.

Another clap came from the alien, this time it seemed more or less obvious he was amused. "You can call me Ziyal if it is easier, Captain Saalm," he told her, realizing he had neglected to mention the more simple form of his name in his greeting. "I got to choose between the *Galileo* and the Daystrom Institute research facility. I wanted to serve aboard a starship. It sounded much more exciting than at a research facility," he clicked out at a fast rate. "My purpose for coming to the Alpha Quadrant was to explore. It is easier to do that when you are exploring, not only interpreting data."

Lirha nodded, satisfied with Ziyal's logical thought process. "I completely agree with you." she replied. "And how do you feel about serving aboard a Nova Class starship?" she asked. "Unlike the larger and more versatile ships in the fleet, ours is much smaller and extremely specialized." It was a question she asked of all her new crew, and she found it important to point out to them the rather unique and special nature of the *Galileo*.

"Yes, that was another reason why I wanted to come on board," Ziyal answered. He was examining the captain as she spoke. Green-skinned, dark-

haired. A Vulcan? No, *Orion*, the intelligent part of his brain supplied. Ziyal snapped out of his internal reverie and elaborated. "It is a scientifically oriented vessel with both experimental and specialized technology, it seemed like a good place for me!"

"Indeed." she replied with a grin, "I think you will fit in nicely on board the ship. Have you had a chance to visit the Fleet Yards and see her up close?" she asked. It was truly a rare privilege to see a starship first-hand at a planetary drydock, let alone one which was a day away from launch.

"Yes, Captain," Ziyal confirmed as he gestured a bit with two of his arms. "I was on board to meet the chief of science and set up my quarters. I have just been working on unpacking my laboratory and some of my work," he told her easily.

"I trust Miss Barel was kind enough in welcoming you aboard?" she replied in reference to the Chief Science Officer. Lirha wasn't too familiar with the warrant officer, but she had seemed friendly enough during their beach encounter a couple days previously.

"Oh yes!" the *W'qa'arr* told her. "Very nice! She is Betazoid so it is easier to communicate with her than non-telepathic species," he said. "I hope that I will be able to serve your crew admirably, Captain," he added, once again for a brief moment slipping into a bit less hyperactive gerbil and more meaningful scientist.

"I think you'll do just fine, Mister Ziyal." she said, then adjusted herself in her chair to a more comfortable position. "Do you have any questions for me?" she asked, offering the crewman a chance to ask about any matters pertaining to the ship or her mission.

Thinking for a moment, Ziyal shrugged and then shook his head in the custom he'd become accustomed to noticing other species. "No, Captain! Not so far." He blinked at her, clicking away as he spoke. "Should I return to my duties?" he asked simply.

The captain nodded, "If you have no further questions, then you are dismissed." she said,

standing up with a smile on her gold lips. "Welcome aboard, Crewman."

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

CN Nazhzhah
Biotechnologist, *U.S.S Galileo 800100*

Reporting For Duty

Posted on 20 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers

Location: Starfleet HQ, Office

Timeline: MD 05 - 1515 hrs

[ON]

The Orion captain chuckled to herself, having just conducted one of the most interesting and entertaining crew interviews in recent memory. She was very pleased with her enthusiastic and...enigmatic new biotechnologist, and was anxious to see how well he adapted to ship life. Leaning back in her chair, Lirha picked up the next PADD which contained several final personnel files for the day. She smiled to herself with satisfaction as she read over the service record of a new engineering officer, Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers. Her work history in Starfleet appeared quite impressive, and she was a true warrant officer with her level of technical expertise. Anxious to meet the new lady, Lirha quickly composed a message on her console requesting the woman's presence, and transmitted it to her PADD. Hopefully, the new engineer would receive the transmission and report to the captain's office in a timely manner.

Lilou had only just retrieved her solitary crate of belongings from the cargo transport pad when her PADD chirped. Awkwardly, she balanced on one foot, holding the crate between her knee and elbow as she fumbled to the message screen. It hadn't occurred to her to wait, to put the crate down, to finish the task of stowing her meager belongings into what would be her new home for the foreseeable future. The chirp meant someone needed her and someone needing her was never something to put aside for later. Message received, she cradled the crate beneath her arm once more and followed her mental map of the ship, carefully squeezing herself into the turbolift and trying to avoid bumping the other inhabitants on the ride down to crew quarters. She received no less than three strained looks and gained yet another when a Science Officer stepped into the already crowded lift and she lifted her crate above her head to compensate.

Not here one day and she was already sticking out like a demeanor-less thumb. She kept her head down as she passed down the corridor to her destination, her cheeks warm. Quickly, she registered her ID code, threw her crate into the tiny spartan sleeping bay, and hurried back to the turbo lifts. She was bouncing slightly on the balls of her feet as she waited to be released back to Deck 2 and the transporter room. When she reappeared in there, asking to be set down planet-side, she received another quizzical look. She'd only just hit the decks of the Galileo and she was already scurrying off? Still, they sent her on and the next thing she knew, she was standing in a familiar Starfleet transporter room. A few minutes later, she stepped out into far too much open space.

It had been six years since she'd been planet-side; Lilou was struck that she felt so awkward here. Earth, while it wasn't her home, had been a home to her - at least for a few years. Still, standing on the dry docks looking up at the brand new, shining silver exterior of the Nova Class starship USS Galileo, she felt oddly disconnected. She needed to be part of the ship, a cog turning in the giant wheel. The only reason for being outside a starship or starbase, in her opinion, was to be repairing the hull.

As she shouldered her way into Starfleet HQ, she was grateful for the ceilings. She felt far less exposed and, not for the first time, wondered just how people could stand being born and living on a planet, of all things. It seemed so... uncivilized. Alien. She found her way to the captain's office without too much trouble and stopped outside the door, signaling her arrival on the door's panel, folding her hands behind her back to wait. On the outside... well, she didn't know what she looked like. She tried, as always, to project a sense of calm readiness, but experience told her she probably only looked like one or the other. She'd never quite managed both at the same time. As the door wheezed open, she checked herself mentally, lifted her chin and smiled, fighting the urge to press her hands to her cheeks to check if they were still blazing. "Captain, you asked to see me," she said by way of introduction. "I'm Lilou Peers, Warrant Officer Engineering, assigned to your ship, the Galileo, sir." The words sounded stilted as they

reached her ears, but they were the ones she knew were expected. No Captain wanted to hear some data-brained engine geek prattle on about how nice and shiny their ship was. Face to a name and get out of the way. A half second later, remembering belatedly, she snapped her hand to her head in a salute.

Lirha stood up from her chair as the young engineer entered her office. "Ah, Miss Peers," she began with a warm smile, "Thank you for coming on such short notice. At ease, please. I trust you found my office without any problems?" she asked, then motioned with her hand towards a nearby vacant chair, indicating for the woman to have a seat.

Lilou dropped her saluting arm gratefully and followed the captain's gesture to the vacant chair, perching at the edge of the seat. She couldn't relax, not yet. She knew she probably wouldn't until she were back on the ship and far enough from the planet and the Alpha Centauri system that they couldn't change their minds and ship her back again. Why else would the captain wait until just before departure date to ask to see her? She'd known getting this position without an interview had been far too easy. "Yes, sir," she replied, watching the captain's face attentively. 'People before ships,' she reminded herself. 'People before ships.' Actively, she tried to steer her thoughts away from wondering why she bothered trying to read facial cues when the subtlety of them was so often lost on her. "I've never had any problems adjusting my personal sense of navigation to any Starfleet architecture: land, ship, or base. The protocols and geographical configurations follow very basic laws of symmetry and numerical progression. It's a design flaw, actually, considering how many of our Federation ships enter into combat situations. One might think a less easy-to-navigate design would promote a more secure facility..." She was babbling. She could hear it. Stop, stop, stop. "Not that the Federation has anything to worry about. Or the *Galileo*. I'm sure it's extremely well suited to the task at hand, and well-led, and all the security protocols will undoubtedly serve just as they're meant to. And, of course, it's an a-plus craft, the *Galileo*, absolutely stunning down to its blueprints, designed and built by some of the greatest Federation minds, you can tell just by looking at her, so..." She bit the back of her tongue

with her back teeth to stop it flapping. "No, sir, I had no trouble finding your office." She bit the back of her tongue again and imagined her breath flowing into her nostrils, down to her lungs, oxygen accumulating and matriculating through her blood stream out to the farthest reaches, muscles relaxing. Calm. Calm. She couldn't get reassigned yet. She hadn't had a chance to do anything to annoy anyone... except maybe just then, opening her ridiculous hypothetical-disaster mouth. Carefully, she folded her hands in her lap and clamped her jaw shut with a small, awkward smile.

The captain raised an eyebrow with a hint of amusement in her green eyes as she stared at the young Trill woman. "Please, call me 'Captain'." she said, noticing that the crewman in front of her seemed a bit...nervous. "And try to relax, Miss Peers, this is simply an informal interview." she said with a reassuring smile.

"Yes, Captain." Try to relax, indeed. She was trying. That was part of the problem. As far as she could tell, the only time anyone was actually relaxed was when they weren't trying to be. The very attempt made the act impossible. Her lips twisted into a self-deprecating smirk as she rallied her defenses for another round. Once more into the breach of interpersonal skills. She began to talk herself through system summaries and comparisons of starships, picturing the information streaming past her, and the flow of information calmed her more than anything else could have.

"So," Lirha began with friendly eyes, folding her green hands casually in her lap, "What brings you to the *Galileo*? Was this an assignment you requested, or were you transferred?" she asked, curious as to the reason behind the woman's arrival.

"I requested the transfer, Captain. It's not too often a brand new ship like the *Galileo* has positions available for someone like me, so when I saw there was a chance I could serve her - serve the Federation," Lilou corrected herself. 'People before ships,' she reminded herself yet again. That's it; she was making it a mantra. "-I couldn't pass it up. The *Algonquin* was a solid boat, sleek and lightening fast, but she was underused. To keep busy, I shipped myself over to the *Tekne* miner regularly,

which was falling apart more often than not and the crewmen there didn't seem to care much. Poor old girl was doing her best, but it's hard getting slammed in the face with asteroid debris constantly and that happens to every miner, especially since it's not worth it to the corporations to keep the energy running to keep their shield stabilizers operational during the drilling for the most part. It's more cost effective," she said the word with a frown, and it was clear from her tone and expression that the whole discussion was as frustrating to her as it might have been for some others to talk about the plight of an epidemic, "to build cheap ships, use them until they're scrap, and then take that scrap and the minerals it's acquired back to base to rebuild from the wreckage. Which is fine," she said thoughtfully, losing herself to the topic, "but a little care and tenderness goes a long way... Those ships are severely undervalued." She glanced up from her hands, another small smile flickering across her lips. "That won't happen to the *Galileo*; she's primed and respectable, and it sounds like you're planning to put her through her paces; I wanted to be there to see her do it. Help her go further." Surely all this had been in her application. Had the captain not had a say in taking Lilou into her crew? What did that mean? Who had allowed her to be reassigned? She'd been sure the captain of the Tekne and his corporate puppet-masters would have done his level best to keep her from ever getting another assignment. And her parents didn't have enough pull to land her on a boat like the *Galileo*, not unless they knew the Captain. Which she was almost sure they did not. She hoped not. She'd liked believing she'd earned her right to this starship. "Does that answer your question, Captain?" she asked, curious.

"Yes, very much so." she answered with a chuckle. "I looked over your transfer file in your service record, but I wanted to hear it from you, as well." she finished with a wink. The young warrant officer seemed to have a knack for detail, which would serve her well at her position, Lirha thought. "I assume you are familiar with Nova Class starships? How do you feel about serving aboard such a small and specialized vessel?" she asked. Unlike the some of the larger and more multi-role starships in the fleet, the *Galileo* was geared for short-range scientific and reconnaissance missions, and Lirha

made a habit of reminding all of her crew of that fact, even the most seasoned and experienced ones.

Lilou tapped her fingers against her knee, leaning in to the conversation. Talking about the ship kept her mind off her nerves; the tension in her shoulders eased as her expression softened. "I've studied the Nova Class extensively, Captain. She's small, yes, but she's got grit to her and she can pack a punch if need be." She'd only been on the boat for fifteen minutes, but she'd fallen half in love with her the first time she'd seen a Nova blueprint. "I prefer the smaller classes in general. More attention goes into the detail of their design and..." Her gaze flicked to her hand and the tapping stilled. "In all honesty, Captain, I like knowing that we're all working for the same goals here. Nothing's wasted. Every piece of the puzzle has a greater purpose. Small is good."

"I feel the same way, to be honest." the captain began as she adjusted herself in her chair, "My background is in Intelligence and I've served aboard a variety of starships during my career...so far, none have quite had the look and feel of the *Galileo*." she added, then picked up a PADD and began to read through the warrant officer's service record. "Tell me a little about your last assignment, the *Algonquin*."

"Cheyenne-class, light cruiser, outdated tech that was tragically underused. She had twenty decks, housing a crew of four hundred and thirty two, including a large company of marines." Her jaw twitched a little as she said that, but she moved on. She'd been asked for a report on her assignment, not what had happened off the record. "Four nacelles; she was capable of Warp 9.2 easy, but we never took her that fast. Ostensibly, our duties were to protect the asteroids that Tekne Corp had laid claim to and we hit trouble more than a few times, but for the most part we were reserve power for the Star - which was a scrap and tape junker miner-class the corporation had decided to use in that system instead of spending anything on R&D. She'd been scrapped and rebuilt four times in the previous ten years; not once while I was there, thank the stars, don't know what I'd have done." She pressed her fingers to her eyelids for a split second, restoring her center. "Six fighters, one runabout, six shuttles, and three transports. When I wasn't repairing the

miner, I was back on the *Algonquin* working on the auxiliary crafts. We did a lot of mineral hauls to the nearby space stations and starbases in them and between the Star, the transports, and the fighters, there was always maintenance to be done." She paused, looking down at her hands. *At least there was for me*, she added silently. "Did you have a specific question you wanted to ask, Captain?" She'd said she had a background in Intelligence - had that simply been sharing information or a warning? There wasn't anything in her service record that was suspect - she didn't think so, anyway.

Lirha shrugged and paused for a moment, impressed at the thorough details her new engineer had just provided. "Well, I suppose I was more curious as to whether or not you enjoyed the assignment." she said. "Being a starship engineer is always a busy job, but some take to it better than others." she added. "But your answer gave me some good insight, and will suffice." she finished with a grin. "Do you have any questions for me?" she asked, offering the young warrant officer a chance to inquire about anything on her mind.

Why did you take me? The question was immediate in Lilou's mind, but she stopped it before it reached her tongue. Asking her commanding officer such a thing would only make her either look incompetent or narcissistic. She deserved her post and she'd work hard to prove it. That was enough. The second question, *How did you get command of a brand new boat when you're so young?* was also completely inappropriate. She bit her tongue, hard, and shook her head. "No, Captain. There's not much I have a right to ask. Well- not a question-" She paused, brows drawing together as she searched for the right way to say what was on her mind. "I love my work, Captain. And I can promise you, there's not many will love that ship of yours more deeply and try to protect her more fiercely. I wanted to say -" *There's a hole in me, a part that's always missing and probably always will be, but this work fills it. These ships fill it. Make me whole. Better. Real. Alive.* "I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you," she finished awkwardly, already wishing she'd just kept her mouth shut.

"Don't thank me just yet." the Orion captain replied

with a mischievous grin as she thought of all the potential problems and kinks that needed to be worked out on a new starship. "Well, I'm looking forward to having you with us. Welcome aboard, Miss Peers." Lirha said with an approving nod. "If there's nothing else, you're dismissed."

Lilou lifted her hand in a salute and stood, slipping out the door. As the door shut behind her, she took a deep breath and headed back to the ship.

[OFF]

Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers
Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Counselling or Walking?

Posted on 22 Mar 2012 by Crewman Nazhzhah & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: *USS Galileo*, LTJG McCarthy's Office
Timeline: MD 05 – 1600 hrs

[ON]

Mandatory psychological evaluation.

The words blinked on Ziyal's PADD as he placed the last of a few duotronic relay casings on top of the shelf he'd been stocking in his part of Lab 3. The alien slumped at those words. They usually involved grueling sessions with counselors who interrogated him relentlessly about his readiness for duty before finally conceding that he was capable enough to do so. Ziyal picked up the PADD and read off the instructions to himself, blinking a little as he made his way out of the lab and down to one Drusilla McCarthy's office on the medical deck.

After a long journey through corridors and turbolifts, Ziyal ducked through the archway to McCarthy's office and raised a few tentacle-arms in her direction by way of greeting. If he seemed unhappy to be there, it didn't show as he resolutely sat down, piles of limbs shrinking a little closer to his body as he tried to fit in the small leather chair by her desk. He tilted his head at the counselor behind the desk, and the clicks of his native language could be heard under the translated Standard, lending him an excited, fascinated air. "Reporting as requested, Counselor!"

Dru had been distracted by the report she had been reading on her PADD and hadn't hear anyone enter the room. As she looked up smiling to greet the person in front of her, she suddenly found herself lost for words. The person she was confronted with wore a starfleet uniform but she'd never met anyone of their species before. Dru wasn't even sure who stood in front of her as she'd request a lot of people to report to her. Trying to recompose herself, Dru held out her hand.

"Counselor McCarthy at your service, and you

would be?"

Ziyal leaned forward and shook her hand lightly, as if he were afraid he might break it somehow. His skin was warm and surprisingly dry, but leathery. He dropped her hand and gestured a little as he spoke, whistling long and loud in an enigmatic manner. "Crewman Nazhzhah, or Ziyal if you like," he elucidated cheerfully. He leaned forward to examine her face a little more, blinking largely at her.

Dru laughed at the eagerness the crewman seemed to be showing, "Well I can't see myself being able to pronounce Naz...Nas...nazk....Ok best to give up there. I'll stick with Ziyal." Dru smiled up at Ziyal and indicated for him to take a seat in the padded seat across the room. As Dru looked up she suddenly realised Ziyal's height and build, "Will you be comfortable sitting in the seat I have here? If not this is just a general get to know each other. We could go for a walk of the ship if you'd prefer."

Almost immediately, Ziyal seemed much more fond of that idea and stood up again, clapping in some bizarre expression of emotion. "I like this vessel," he told her, his antennae waving slightly in her direction. "I just met the commander and set up my laboratory space," he babbled on as they walked out. As they walked down the hall he suddenly gave another whistle and slumped a bit. "I apologize, Counselor McCarthy... sometimes I have an unfortunate tendency to ramble," he said, almost sheepishly.

Dru smiled softly, finding it difficult to keep her professional composure as she was enjoying Ziyal's openness, it wasn't often she met people willing to be so open, "Well first of all it is Dru. When I'm in counselling or friend mood I hate formality. I like that people feel relaxed. Second of all, ramble away! If you weren't I'd just be asking questions to get you to talk anyway." Dru briefly touched her hand against Ziyal's side in order to try reassure him before pulling her hand away and placing both of them behind her back while keeping pace with Ziyal.

Ziyal blinked down at her in confusion, touching his hand to his own questioningly. He wasn't used to

people touching him, though the *W'qa'arr* were a pretty physical species. It was something he missed, but humanoids seemed not to be able to engage in casual contact without adding layers of subtext, so he'd learned to avoid touch. His confusion was short-lived as she kept talking and he was distracted again. "I have had to speak with a lot of Starfleet counselors," he told her, bobbing his head. "I am used to it," he said simply, shrugging all four of his arms as they walked.

Dru frowned slightly as Ziyal went quite, "I tell you what. Why don't you tell me what you want me to know? Who are you? And you seem to be enjoying your new position here on the *USS Galileo*, how did you end up here?"

"I am Ziyal," the alien answered with a blink. "Yes, I am enjoying it very much!" he tacked on more enthusiastically. "I came here from Starfleet Academy," he interpreted literally once more, before getting it a bit more correct as he added, "I came *there* from my home planet in the Andromeda galaxy. It is very far away."

Dru folded her hands together, looking at the floor as she concentrated on listening to Ziyal, "How are you managing being so far from home?"

Ziyal just gave her another one of those bizarre blinks. "I like it better in the Alpha Quadrant," he responded, a simple answer for a very complicated question. "My species does not tolerate deficiency well."

Dru was becoming concerned at the short answers from Ziyal, "Is there something in our mind you wish to discuss with me Ziyal? I get the impression either myself or my questions are making you uncomfortable. The purpose of this meeting is so as we get to know each other so your comfortable with me."

Stilling a little, Ziyal swiveled his head to look at Dru and he gestured a little with his arms. "Not uncomfortable, Counselor Dru," he confirmed with a light tap of his hand against his head. He looked like he was trying to figure out how to word his next statement. "Sometimes I do not know what to do, or say," he came up with a little lamely. It

seemed like he had a few good pre-scripted responses ready for dealing with the majority of people he came into contact with, and most conversation after this delved into *unknown social parameters*, by which he just mostly looked confused and uncertain.

"I am given to understand that it is more complicated to judge someone as mentally competent without interacting with them..." He trailed off, his arms and claws and hands gesturing as if trying to convey some enigmatic intent. "Sometimes I do not know where to go next when it is my turn to talk." He shrugged a little and blink-smiled at her.

"Well lets look at it this way. At the beginning of this conversation you were rambling. Then that changed to you finding it difficult to talk about any subject. What caused the change?" Dru looked over at Ziyal briefly before looking back in front as they continued walking.

"I am not sure what subject to talk about," Ziyal elaborated simply with a few clicks and shrugs. He found it hard to talk with counselors most of the time, and they usually tended to misinterpret him. "I do not mind talking!" he assured her. It was usually that people found he had a tendency to talk *too* much. "Do you like birds?" he asked suddenly, clicking excitedly. "They are my favorite Earth animal... Their seat of intelligence lies in a separate part of their brain than in most humanoids... so some actually possess the intelligence of a humanoid child," he exclaimed rather at random, gesturing randomly. Without waiting for an answer, he asked, "Is there anything in specific you want to talk about?"

Dru pinched the bridge of her nose before placing her hand behind her back again. She honestly didn't have a clue where to go with this. Ziyal liked to talk but when she choose the subject he seemed to claim up. Dru had one last idea, "You obviously love your job, why don't you tell me back what it is you do?"

"Ooh!" Ziyal whistled, oblivious to her assessments. "I am a biotechnologist! I work with biological and technological components and work to fuse them into a mechanical gestalt." he shrugged. "The main

part of my job is analyzing biological, living tissue, to examine how it affects technology. Most biotechnological devices work faster...they work off of the nucleic and neurological structures..." he said, launching into scientific babble. "My species is advanced in biotechnology, so I use our applications to help." He blink-smiled, gesturing a little as he spoke.

Dru nodded her head. The science technobabble went over her head, she instead tried to focus on the information which would tell her more about Ziyal, "I must say, I've heard very little about your species before. Such advancement in biotechnology must mean you are a very caring race, focusing on medicine and science?"

Ziyal shrugged again. "My race is not known for its kindness. Most of our technology evolved as a method of survival. Our homeworld is very harsh!" Ziyal explained chipperly. "I was diagnosed with a genetic defect when I was very small. They managed to fix enough of my linguistic cortex so that I may be functional, but I was not treated very well." Those clicks and whistles were a little sharper, more defined. "The Federation is very different. *W'qa'arr* value peace and harmony, but that does not make us kind. We value intelligence and cohesiveness," Ziyal explained. To go against the mold was chaotic, to the *W'qa'arr*. "When someone is less intelligent... less harmonious... they are essentially not part of our society. Their lives do not mean as much." Ziyal gave a few blinks at that, but shrugged. "I am fortunate that I was allowed to travel here!"

"And do you still feel out of place here in Starfleet or have you managed to find yourself a new family of sorts?"

"I felt more out of place on my homeworld," Ziyal answered honestly. "It is still alien to me, living here, but the experience is much more than what it was back home!" he told her, pausing slightly to consider his next words. "If I could find a family, I hope it would be here," he clicked out truthfully. "I hope that I will be able to integrate fully. I still do not understand many things! I have only been here a short time. I am confident that I will learn eventually," he said, accompanied by gestures

enigmatic in origin.

Dru nodded her head with a slight smile on her face. There seemed to be a few things in Ziyal's past which he had dealt with in his own way and came out well on the other side. "You seem to be settling well. How have you got on with the people you have met so far?"

Ziyal gave her an enthusiastic nod. "It is still a little difficult to understand some social constructs but everyone I have met on board has been very nice!" he told her clicking rapidly in excitement.

As the reached back to Dru's office, the counsellor turned to smile up at Ziyal, "Well there's stuff I hope you'll allow me to help you work trough but at the moment you seem to be doing well by yourself. I'd like to see you again in a week to check up on how your settling in once the mission is under way but otherwise, my door is open 24/7 I hope you'll contact me if you need someone to talk to."

"Thank you, Counselor!" Ziyal replied as they stopped off at her office. He gave her a quick wave of goodbye with two arms, and a cheerful sort of high-pitched noise, before he blinked and was off once again exploring.

[OFF]

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo NCC-80010

CN Nazhzhah
Biotechnologist, *U.S.S Galileo NCC-80010*

Reporting In

Posted on 20 Mar 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: *USS Galileo*, Chief Engineer's Office

Timeline: MD 05 - 1615 hrs

[ON]

Lilou Peers did not consider herself someone who was easily impressed. Not by people anyway. Starships, of course, were an entirely different matter. They maintained life and labs and the promise of possibility in spite of the relative apathy of space. That was impressive by any standard. But people. People just were. Often, they did very little with their time and those that did do things often chose to pursue activities and interests the point of which evaded her. She genuinely liked people... she simply wished she understood them more; she tried. Still, Lilou found she was not often impressed.

And here she was, palms damp and heart curiously aquiver, outside the Chief Engineer's office. Markum Quinn. She'd researched him, just like she researched every other superior officer she'd ever had. In order to be useful, it helped to know what skills you needed to develop to balance the needs of those who gave you work. The less she specialized in common with them, the safer they felt and the more freedom she had to get her work done in peace. But the more she'd read on Quinn, the more curious she'd become. There was a whole section of his record hidden behind the tantalizing word 'classified' that buzzed her brain. And what wasn't hidden was... spectacular. For the first time, she found herself wanting to learn from him rather than away from him. He'd worked on such a wide variety of ships, studied and specialized in such diverse fields... Useful ones. Ones that people appreciated in the long run far more than some smart-ass starbase brat who got by with string and spit and wits. She took pride in the fact that her patch jobs were better than the repair attempts others on the *Algonquin* had managed over weeks of work, but Quinn... Quinn, if she could glean even a fraction of his knowledge and expertise, he could lead her on the path to building starships. Great ones. Just by the diversity and depth of his experience. Which

meant, for the first time, she actually had to care what he thought of her. Which made her very, very nervous.

She scrubbed her fingers through her cropped brown hair, bound it into a pair of twin buns that she hoped weren't too askew, and tapped the door panel before she could put it off any longer.

Markum was sitting in his chair with a PADD in one hand, and a large mug of sweetened iced tea with two lemon wedges floating among the liquid and crushed ice in the other. He was going over the current Warp Dynamics and Efficiency Report for the previous shift when he heard a rapping at his door. "C'mon in, it's open." He barked in his trademark raspy voice.

Lilou stepped inside when she was admitted, clasping her hands behind her back to keep from fidgeting. "Warrant Officer Peers, reporting for duty, Chief."

As the Trill female walked in, Quinn stood up and offered a hand after he wiped the dew from his beverage off of it onto his pants. "Please, have a seat." Quinn sat back down and asked. "So tell me about yourself Peers. I read your Starfleet Record a day or two ago, but to be honest, a PADD does not let me know you, and I want to know each one of my engineers, their weaknesses...not so much, those can be worked on, I want to know your strengths and your goals."

She accepted his hand and shook it once, firmly, before following his instructions. Sit, stand, come, go; sometimes she felt like she should be wearing a collar. Then again, the uniform felt tight enough around the neckline to count. She sat, resting her hands on her knees. It was almost too simple and straightforward, to just sit down and tell him what she wanted and what she could offer... but he'd asked, hadn't he? "I..." She blinked, unsure where to start now the the opportunity presented itself so readily. "I'm small, I'm fast, I can fit into small spaces, and I can think on my feet. I spent the last four years shuttling between an overstaffed, underused Cheyenne class and an understaffed, overused Tekne miner. I got a reputation over there as a problem solver, but that's largely because no

one else seemed to care about the state of that miner. They were just waiting to tow it to a scrap heap once it had outlived its usefulness. I have a lot to learn, but I learn quick, and I plan to do my level best to keep the *Galileo* running smooth and easy as long as I'm with her. Sir."

Quinn listened to the young lady sitting across from him as he took another sip from his over-sized cup with full attention. When she finished he sat his cup back down. "Good to know you've had the joy of working on a junker. Now you get the pleasure of working on a rookie ship. Brand new ships are nice and shinny, and look good on service records....but they can be persnickety, and obtuse. They never run right because the morons that design them haven't been on a ship since the last Constitution-Class was sent to the scrap heap."

Quinn swiveled his chair around to his left and stood up and walked to his backwall. Next to the large Master Systems Display was a small white board with a marker on it's small ledge, along with an eraser. "This is the current *Fix-It* board, Peers. Next to the item/system is a name, or three or four. These are the teams that are assigned to repairs for that system. You will not be assigned a repair. You have more experience than most of those kids out there, so that automatically gives you some seniority. I want you to find where you feel you can be most helpful, and assist anyway you can in expediting the completion of your chosen repair. Once things are at an acceptable level, you can go on to the next assignment."

She nodded, biting the inside of her cheek to keep from grinning outright. He was right, of course. She'd been expecting a challenge when she'd signed up for this ship and she knew from stories, if not from personal experience, that new starships always came with a host of beta issues. Someday, if she did everything right, she'd change the way new ships were designed; ship and starbase hopping on the lookout for the next breakthrough technology to keep the Federation on the cutting edge. But that was then and this was now. Daydreaming about could-be's was useless. She focused on the board and inclined her head, considering the already substantial list he'd compiled. Meticulous. She could have cheered. "Yes, Chief." She paused,

unsure if she'd been dismissed or not. She wondered if she should have started with her structural systems background, but... well. He'd asked for her strengths and she'd given him her best one. She'd just have to look for an opportunity to prove to him she wasn't just a laser-torch repair bot. There was time. "Thank you, Chief."

With a smile, he eyed the eager engineer. He knew the look in her eye, it was the same one he still gets when a true challenge came about, and he was expected to solve. "Now get out of here Peers. You're interrupting my crossword puzzle time."

A short half-snort/half-laugh erupted from her unexpectedly; she caught her tongue between her teeth to silence it, standing quickly and saluting. As she headed for the door, her mind was already buzzing with the information on the board, organizing it and reorganizing it, considering the tasks by priority versus interest level...

"Oh, Peers." Shouted Quinn from behind his PADD, "You're my new Assistant for the day. Don't screw up."

She paused, glanced back at him over her shoulder, and tried and failed to mask her contentedness. "Yes, Chief," she said and slipped out the door. Assistant. She nearly capered, but cooler heads prevailed. She'd congratulate herself for not completely mucking up, maybe, once the work was done.

[OFF]

Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers
Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quin
Chief Engineer

Meeting At the Mess Hall

Posted on 23 Mar 2012 by Crewman Nazhzhah & Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers

Location: *USS Galileo*, Mess Hall

Timeline: MD 05 – 1800 hrs

[ON]

Tomorrow was launch day, and so far Ziyal had not done anything except crawl out of bed and meticulously groom himself and clean his quarters (because everything must be clean - and there were a lot of *things* as he had a habit of collecting them up) as well as contact the operations officer in regards to some requisitions he had been hopeful to receive. The day had been mostly calm. Ziyal was recalibrating the translator *h'maik* crystals embedded in his outer extensor arm. When he finished that he tapped off the holographic projection matrix and got dressed. The uniforms they supplied at Starfleet were always too constricting and uncomfortable, but at least it wasn't suffocating him.

When all of this was accomplished, he exited his quarters and made his way to the mess hall. Most people weren't aboard the ship on a permanent basis yet, but Ziyal had found it fascinating and much more comforting than the busy intersections at Starfleet HQ. Fortunately he wasn't the only one in the mess this evening as he entered. A few people turned to stare at him, as he was remarkably different than most of the people gathered. He just waved and they went back to their own business, professionals after all.

The replicator had yet to store a fully integrated *W'qa'arr* meal, but Ziyal had been working on those patterns. He tapped in a code with a few of his claws and a glowing purple sparkling-shiny globule type thing appeared in the dispenser. He grabbed the tray and headed toward a table, sitting down and beginning to carefully open the pink-purple translucent ball in front of him with a few of the claws attached to his primary interior arm. He seemed so enthralled by this that he didn't notice the approach of someone else.

She'd never seen anything like it. Lilou wasn't so much distracted by the crewman - she'd seen all kinds growing up on a research station, though, she had to admit, nothing like him? Her? So maybe she was distracted, but the multi-pronged green giant with the tentacles wasn't what had initially caught her eye. She stepped a little closer, peering down at the glowing thing in his...hands. "What is that?" The question was out of her mouth before she could stop herself. She'd been planning on a nice, quiet - albeit lonely - meal on her own to sort through her thoughts before she stuffed them in a mental drawer to focus on her duties before deployment. She'd had no intention of striking up a conversation with anyone, let alone a... she didn't even know what he was. And that made her uncomfortable. She hated lacking information. Worse, she hated admitting it, but she'd already done so by asking the question aloud. In for a penny, in for a pound. The phrase buckled her for a minute, something her mother often said, though Lilou wasn't entirely clear on the origins. She set down her tray with its simple, yellow-leafed salad and peered at the glowing blob. Context told her it had to be some kind of food, but it wasn't one she'd seen before and she couldn't for the life of her begin to figure out what was appealing about it as something you'd want to ingest. She lifted her gaze to the alien's protruding eyes, waiting for the answer, when she realized she was just looking for trouble. She could be treading on the crewman's religious practice for all she knew and there she was, just shoving her nose in where it didn't belong. "I didn't mean to interrupt, I just... haven't seen that before."

Contrary to appearing offended, the alien seemed positively excited to have someone approach him. This was expressed amidst some whistles and clicking noises, which were eventually translated into a more understandable Standard. "It is *pe'llr'en*," he explained, holding up a piece of the shiny glowing ball he had been carefully extracting. "My species consumes it for nourishment... eh... like that!" A few tentacles rose up and pointed at her tray, accompanied by a blink of his large protruding eyes.

Lilou's brows lifted slightly as the stranger seemed to explode with energy, gesturing and emitting

whistles and clicks that were quickly overlapped by a voice in Federation Standard. Her lips peeled into a wide smile despite herself. "Pel-rin," she attempted to pronounce the alien term as she considered the glowing orb once more. "What's its elemental identity, I wonder...do you know? Gelatinous and refulgent... Brilliant." She was talking to herself and she knew it; new things had that effect on her. If she were being polite, she'd have apologized, excused herself, and gotten out of his way so he could eat.... absorb... did he even have teeth... his pel-rin in peace. She glanced over her shoulder and saw the tables beginning to fill with a mix of humans and humanoids. With a little hitch, she turned back to the stranger she'd already accosted with questions. She gestured with her tray, "Do you mind if I join you?"

"Elemental identity?" Ziyal questioned, seemingly oblivious to any apparent social slight on her part. "I have never taken the time to examine it!" Ziyal realized abruptly, and for an instant a somewhat recognizable expression of dismay, mostly communicated by a sad little blink. "I shall have to do so," he resolved simply as two of his unoccupied hands gestured to the seat across from him. "Join away!" he confirmed vocally, in the background of a wide variety of whistles and chirps. "I do not think it is palatable by human standards...ehhh... but you appear not to be human!" he added, noting the spots, "But...likely not very palatable. But you can try if you like," he offered happily as she sat down. "What is that?" he then asked, gazing at her own meal curiously.

She dropped into a chair and nudged her plate towards him. "It's grakizh salad; you're welcome to some." She smirked, eyeing the offered glowing purple goop. "Cultural exchange, rockbed of the Federation experience, right?" she said wryly and accepted a dribble onto her fork, twirling the utensil to keep it from escaping and dabbing her tongue at it. The flavor of the pell-rin was sour, with an underlying spiciness - a blend of cinnamon and cardamom and white pepper. It glowed slightly where her tongue had touched it. With a considering hum, she tucked the remainder of the alien substance in her mouth and swirled it around her tongue. For a moment, the same flavor persisted. Then, with a burst akin to an electric shock, the

flavor tripled, then tripled again, and again, until that mildly pleasant spiciness had exploded inside her mouth. She opened her mouth and hissed as the air hit her lips and tongue, already ablaze with sensation. There was a slight glow that she could see peripherally and she had a mental image of herself, mouth agape and glowing bright purple like the pell-rin had been. Sweat built on her brow and she shut her mouth, exhaling hot air into her mouth and trying to fill it, to dampen the overwhelming heat of the substance. Her hands were shaking as the flavor changed again, adding a fizzing sensation to her mouth in addition to a sharp vinegar taste that puckered her lips and squinted her eyes.

She pressed her hands to her blazing cheeks and swallowed hard, draining her water glass and then, blinking the water from her eyes, studiously carried the empty container to refill it. Two glasses of prune juice and seven glasses of water later, she returned to the table, rubbing her oddly sore tongue against her teeth. She opened her mouth, croaked, drank half her refilled water glass and scrubbed her tongue against her teeth. "Your assessment was correct. You can't taste that? Or do you have some kind of chemical you excrete to change the composition?" She took a bite of her salad to try to clear the taste, but the usually pleasantly tangy flavor and slightly rough texture of the grakizh were like nails on the chalkboard of her mouth. She'd give it a minute. Or never eat again. "I'm half-human," she said, by way of explanation. "Although Trill do share many of the same characteristics as humans." She leaned back in her chair, at ease. There was something inordinately comforting about not being able to read his. Her. Its expression. Enough of that. "Thank you for the experience, though. It was...illuminating. And the company. I'm Lilou, by the way," she crossed her legs at the ankles.

As she tried a bit of the *pe'llr'en*, Ziyal carefully manipulated his utensil and snatched up a leaf from her plate, watching as she downed glass after glass of water and trying not to appear amused. He seemed humanoid enough when eating, pushing it somewhere in the vicinity of his mouth, chewing and swallowing. He blinked a few times at the taste. "Most humanoid dishes taste exceptionally strong to me" he said, which didn't at all explain the *exceptionally strong* taste of his own meal. "I'm

Nazhzhahh, but most call me Ziyal," he told her chirpily. He searched for the correct terms to describe the qualia of experience, but only lamely came up with, "It tastes good to *W'qa'arr*! We have advanced sensation in taste. I think what must seem unappealing to you, is the surface texture." He gestured a little with his hands as he spoke, his posture mostly relaxed if excitable. Even though his facial expression was largely enigmatic, he appeared to be enjoying himself.

She choked out a laugh when he called the mild and tangy *grakizh* leaves "exceptionally strong". Their experiences of the sensation of taste must have been polar opposites. She wasn't sure if that was an advancement or simply a different genetic construct made up of different chemical compounds. Either way... "Weh-gah-arr... That's the name of your people? Where are you from? I grew up on a research base with many species coming through, but I've never met anyone like you before."

Bouncing happily as he took yet another several bites of his meal, Ziyal clicked away. "The *W'qa'arr* are from the Andromeda galaxy," he explained, which certainly elucidated upon why his race was not known to most in this quadrant. "It is very far away. It took me a year to travel with use of a bioship capable of traveling great distance!" Ziyal gestured widely. "I had never seen species in this quadrant before... it has been a learning experience. What is it like on a research station?" Ziyal asked in wonder. "I grew up in a laboratory. We did not see many species, however. The *W'qa'arr* are more isolated than most species I have encountered here."

Lilou blinked once at the statement that Ziyal had traveled from Andromeda to here in a year; maybe through a wormhole, but... in a ship? Just a ship - traveling that fast? She'd have given her left foot to stick her head into the Engineering Department of such a thing. Either way, she had the next best thing. Maybe he knew something about how the systems worked, enough to extrapolate from in any case... "Hmm? Oh, well... mostly sedentary. Ships like this one bring organisms and minerals and foreign compounds back to stations like the one I grew up on and the Great Minds there unfold the information endlessly until they've discovered everything about it or give up and move on to

something else. My father is a physicist, dealing mostly with photonics and particle activity. Lots of really interesting equipment to be taken apart. And there was a pretty steady flow of research vessels docking and bringing materials and data from the far reaches of space, so we had an opportunity to meet a variety of species and cultures. And ships." She sighed a little, smiling. "Some gorgeous ships came through those docks." She wondered briefly if growing up in a laboratory meant being a product of one, but dismissed the question as temporarily irrelevant. "What was your lab like? Where did your ship go?"

"I destroyed most of it!" Ziyal said, probably not the expected answer. "My species operates by a similar edict to Starfleet's Prime Directive. The technology within our ships could have altered the balance of power in this quadrant," he said, seriously. "While I can provide some highly advanced technology to the Federation in moderation, it would not have been in good faith to provide the schematics of the bioship. Your time at the research station sounds fascinating!" he told her unceremoniously, genuinely intrigued. It sounded somewhat similar to how he grew up, only for the most part, *he* was the scientific data. "It was... colorful," the translator described somewhat inaccurately. "Sterile," he tried again. "Many scientists come and go, but few connected. It was a good way to learn," he conceded in his usual chirpy fashion. "Many things to discover," he said with a gesture.

"Indeed," she said, gently letting go of her sadness over the destruction of a ship capable of such feats. The Prime Directive always sounded like such a good idea when you were the ones with the greater technology, but it always stung when you weren't. Probably a good thing to be reminded of from time to time, she supposed. "Do you mean the lab was colorful in a physical sense, or an experiential one?" She ducked her head slightly. "Sorry, it's just, yeah. Wide variety of people, never quite connecting, lots of fascinating information being stuck in trays and tubes and boxes and 'protected'. Sounds like we came from similar places, you and I. In a non-spatial sense." Her smile slipped sideways, "I don't suppose *you* ever get into trouble disabling a particle accelerator and some phasers in order to build a subspace traveling beacon with the parts?"

Maybe I'm not the only one."

"I tended to get into trouble for wandering about," Ziyal said with a few gestures sideways as he ate. "Colorful..." the translator repeated, obviously missing the mark. "White," he tried again more specifically. "It appears to be a laboratory universal constant," he observed with an excited click. "Most of the information in the laboratory I grew up in pertained to me. It was an interesting experience in egotism," he said with an amused clap. "You got into trouble for that?" he asked suddenly, indicating he had heard every word. "That is bizarre to me. On my home planet, it would have been celebrated."

Lilou laughed. "I think my father appreciated the intention, but was rather annoyed at having to rebuild the accelerator. In hindsight, I can blame him." She gingerly bit off a small bit of yellow leaf and. Hewed with her back teeth. It wasn't comfortable-not at all-but she needed the nourishment. "It is odd how so many labs are white; one might hypothesize that as one of a very few universal constants." She laughed again at her own little joke and took another nibble from her salad. "So were you... created in the lab? Or simply raised and tested there? What was that like?"

"*W'qa'arr* are almost entirely genetically engineered. In our natural state we would die in days on the harshness of our world. As we evolved, our technological process evolved out of necessity," Ziyal explained chipperly as he shoveled more of the pink globule in front of him into his mouth. "We reproduce naturally, and the fetus is then taken out of the egg and genetically enhanced for resistance. I was kept in the laboratory due to unforeseen consequences of the genetic manipulation. *W'qa'arr* have a high rate of genetic disorder," Ziyal said as if it were a purely natural everyday occurrence. "I spent my time either with my parents or in the laboratory," he told her, seemingly unaware of the social impolitic of talking too much about one's self.

Lilou listened, fascinated. Her unease dissipated the less she had to talk about herself and, anyway, Ziyal was endlessly interesting. His species laid eggs and then replaced their natural eggs with technological ones? And what kind of world was it that they could build the technology to do that, but not the

technology to protect the fetus inside it's original container? Where they could build a ship that could fly faster than anything she'd ever heard of in the matter of a single year, but couldn't cure the genetic disorders inherent in their species? She leaned forward, one elbow resting on the table, her salad ignored. "Tell me about them - your parents. And about your world. Is the atmosphere there toxic? What sort of genetic disorder?" She knew quite a bit about genetic disorders herself - breeding between species brought up a number of genetic variables and she'd been tested for most of them intermittently throughout her life.

Ziyal clicked a bit to himself, things that weren't translated in any legitimate way, seemingly just thinking to himself as he ate quietly before launching into a rather rambling, and lengthy explanation. "Our atmosphere is toxic, to some degree. Unfortunately the only species on our planet to gain sentience was the *W'qa'arr*, but the *W'qa'arr* are naturally very weak invertebrates. We can live on land or in water. Over the years we developed a loosely based society which migrated to land. We discovered how to manipulate the genome sequence in order to produce stronger, more viable children to pass on our line," he explained.

"It was the most pressing point of our existence, as most of our ancestors died out within a matter of a few years. Each genetically enhanced fetus matures within three years to adulthood and by the age of twenty they are fully developed! We became smarter, faster," Ziyal said as he ate, gesturing with his different appendages as he spoke excitedly.

"We can reproduce on our own or with another parent," the *W'qa'arr* told her animatedly. "Most choose to reproduce with another as it forms stronger family ties. I have two parents and eleven siblings. They were born normally but I was defective. We have a high incidence of genetic disorder. Unfortunately it is more complicated to fix a problem than it is to create one. They did manage to implement a cure, of sorts," Ziyal told her, as he seemed perfectly fine (well insofar as an alien could seem). "But our society does not enjoy dwelling on its mistakes," he simply ended albeit enigmatically.

"We do not possess what humanoids might call gender. Many people refer to me as male, which is

acceptable. I do not know the difference beyond the physiological, but to many, I am seen as particularly "male" in personality." Ziyal shrugged a few arms. "You are female, right?" he asked, gazing at her curiously. Sometimes he got it right, sometimes he didn't. "Trills and Humans both possess male and female as I recall, and produce live young," he recited in his arbitrary way. "Trills..." he paused for a moment. "You are a symbiotic race, are you not?" he asked again, curiously. "It is a little like being a symbiotic race. We depend on the genetic tampering as a sort of symbiote. Without it, we die far faster and grow at a much slower rate. Our atmosphere and natural predators would kill us before we reached adulthood!"

Lilou cocked her head to the side, considering the implications of what he said. Apparently, even with root mutations forced upon their genetic code, their offspring still developed according to the uncorrected DNA. That was odd; reversible genetic transformations? What did that preclude? Single generation anomalies? She shuddered to think what some people might do with the ability to affect a change like that. An entire generation of warriors who could then be eliminated simply by effect of not re-instating the false genetic code. Or a generation of humanoid lab-rats... No harm, no foul, no ongoing struggle to integrate them into society once their use was over... It was terrifying. And what he'd said about his own society... not dwelling on their mistakes... did they already do such a thing among themselves? Was that why he was here? She hadn't asked, after all, why he'd spent a year on a ludicrously fast ship traveling to a quadrant that - as far as she knew - none of his people had visited previously. What had brought him here? Had he come alone? Before she could ask, she stopped herself. He'd been very agreeable about answering her questions, sharing his culture, but she had to believe that asking whether he'd been exiled from his people because of his genetic anomalies would qualify as rude regardless of where he'd come from. She'd only just met him after all. Her. It. "What do you prefer to be referred to as?" she asked, curiously. "It seems to me it'd be a little annoying to be called something inaccurate for no reason."

Ziyal shook his head. "There serves a reason. The *W'qa'arr* use a complicated system of pronouns that is simply too obscure for most to adapt off-hand.

Male and *Female* appear to be very common in the Alpha Quadrant," he explained. "It is not that our naming system is too advanced to learn, but in order to be accurate 100% of the time, you would have to understand our language, our hierarchal structure, our family units, our social climate, et al within the first few moments of meeting me. Whereas, *male* and *female* are much more universally understood and binary. It is... *convenient!*" he yammered on, honestly not bothered by the comparison.

"That doesn't answer the question, though," Lilou argued, perfectly happy to debate semantics until the cows came home - another quaint colloquialism she'd acquired from her mother. Never having seen a cow, Lilou wasn't entirely sure why their arrival would signify anything like the ending of a conversation, but she supposed there was a logic to it somewhere. "Do you prefer to be called male, or female, or something else?"

"It is written on my Starfleet file that male is an acceptable reference, which it is." He paused a minute, the appendages lining his face twitching as he thought. "I suppose I cannot adequately answer that question," he finally settled upon. "I would prefer to be referred to by the *d'ghor~hn*, but that would require a lifetime of linguistic comprehension of *W'qa'arr* origin to be possible. Obviously, I am not physically a male, but asexual pronouns in the Alpha quadrant are inaccurate as well. They do not define the nuances of reference inherent in *W'qa'arr* language. Whatever you call me, using your vernacular, chances are it will not be accurate." He spread out two of his arms, hoping that explanation made some limited amount of sense.

While Ziyal couldn't necessarily be read, his obvious excitement at finding someone to talk to was plain as he chirped and clicked away in response. Clearly he was not bothered at being questioned, or having someone debate his semantics. Though, debating semantics with him might've been an exercise in futility as it seemed like he only grasped the barest of Standard linguistic concepts.

"Male fits as good as anything. For a *W'qa'arr* it has no meaning. It would be like if you entered an alien

world and they deemed it necessary to call you a word that was required in their vernacular, but had no basis of meaning in your own. For instance, right now I am *d! rhl'y~nh-halh-khreo*," he said, a long string of syllables that wasn't translated in the slightest. It was a difficult thing for him to verbalize, as evidenced by the abrupt pauses and starts the translator took.

"It is a diminutive, structured from my telepathic presence as it relates to your telepathic presence. If I were to construct a sentence regarding both of us, it might say *di! rhl'm~lilou'zkhe-reo se'k nh-halh-d!*," he said, the words abruptly bizarre and foreign. "Telepathic-presence Lilou is with Telepathic-presence Nazhzhahh," he translated. "As you can see, the universal translator does not distinguish the linguistic nuances. There is also the fact that those pronouns change with different experiences." Ziyal gave her a large blink-smile, and listened as she spoke of her own race.

"Yes, we're a symbiotic species - my father is." She considered her plate for a while. "I thought of myself as wholly Trill for much of my life, but... I've been deemed ineligible for a symbiont. Apparently a human can be given one under the right circumstances, but a mixed breed... the genetic structure is too unstable, they say." She flexed her tongue against her teeth, forcing herself to shrug off the deep-seated frustration this consistently caused her. If she weren't a valid host, why did she feel this gnawing ache all the time to join and be Joined? If she felt that, wasn't that enough reason for her to be tested, at the very least? She rolled her shoulders, uncomfortable to be thinking about it at all, let alone in public. She'd been about to argue that Trill didn't *need* a symbiont to live, but she couldn't quite say that. Maybe not to survive, but to live fully - maybe they did. Maybe she never would. There was a nice depressing thought. "And Earth's atmosphere... it's agreeable to you? The habitat maintained on this starship doesn't cause you any problems?"

Ziyal looked up, concentrating on her as she spoke, blinking periodically in that alien way of his. "You want to be joined," he guessed, his antennae moving a little in her direction and drooping slightly. It seemed like she wasn't that comfortable discussing

it, so he simply answered her question amidst finishing off his food. "The *W'qa'arr* evolved in an *L*-class planet, with lower oxygen levels and higher pressurization. I take several medications which help adapt my respiratory system to that of a more gestalt atmosphere, such as on board the *Galileo*," he told her.

She wrinkled her nose thoughtfully. "Yes," she admitted quietly. "But I won't be. No use crying over spilt milk, as my mother likes to say." She sniffed, suddenly uncomfortable with how open she was being with this stranger. Perhaps it was the lack of intonation and facial expression. She couldn't begin to guess what he was thinking unless he said it, so she didn't feel the need to hypothesize about it. But just because she couldn't tell what his opinions were, or come up with any reasonable assumption on the subject, didn't mean he didn't have them. "Did your starship - the one you destroyed - maintain the atmospheric elements that benefitted your anatomical and genetic structure?" she asked, wondering if maybe there was some way to create at least a small space that replicated the environment his body was suited to. It seemed unfair to her that anyone should be reliant on medication that could potentially run out for their comfort.

"It did!" Ziyal confirmed with a bob of his head. "My quarters maintain a similar standard. It is a small price to pay," he said, sincerely.

Lilou smiled. "That's something, at least." She looked down at her plate. There was no way she was going to finish this when her mouth still felt like it had been sanded with asteroid rock. Pity. She'd been hungry. "Speaking of which, what is it you're doing aboard the *Galileo*..." she glanced at his uniform color and insignia, "Crewman? Carefully doling out selected bits of your culture's technology for the labs on board? You're not in Engineering; I'd have seen your name on the roster."

Ziyal noted her lack of interest in her food as a result of trying his, and clucked a little to himself. *Better not offer anymore...* He looked up, realizing she was addressing him again. "Oooh! Yes, I am a biotechnologist. I was given a commission in Starfleet in exchange for adapting some of my

species' technology to Federation compatible systems. I was assigned on board the *Galileo* because it is experimenting in novel technology," Ziyal explained. "I was regarded with suspicion for a while, but my only purpose here is to assist where I can and to find a more suitable home," he assured her plainly. "Are you an engineer?" he asked, and then gestured a bit. That might have been a stupid question. "Ehh, I mean, do you specialize in anything particular?" he amended, with a chirpy air.

Biotechnology. Not surprising, given all he'd revealed in the short time they'd been talking. Her brows lifted as she leaned forward slightly. "Are you using the *Galileo* as a base to do your own research integrating the two systems, or are you out here with us looking for new data to tamper with?" She smirked a little, looking down. "Sorry, it's the physicist's daughter in me, I can't help being interested in what's happening in the labs. Another reason I wanted this assignment."

"Both!" Ziyal unhesitatingly told her. "The Alpha quadrant is a mystery to me almost entirely. There are alien mathematics, alien systems, alien technology... at the Academy people would become offended at me if I insinuated my species' advancements in biotechnology were greater than theirs, but that is not it!" Ziyal chirped with an abrupt shake of his head. "It is all new. New applications. New designs. *Replicators*! My species never had a need, the bioships we produce had hydroponics bays. I grew my own food for years! We created self-sustainable habitats... We had replicator technology, but nothing compared to this." He gestured an arm at the replicator in the back of the mess hall. "All of the data is new and fascinating! You appear to have a similar fascination," he observed knowingly.

"Yes, I'm in the Engineering Dep-" she paused, smiling awkwardly at her own excitement. "But you deduced that. I deal mostly with structural systems and I've served as mining specialist and an emergency response specialist. New to the crew though, and an import for the Chief, so when I requested my transfer, I just put in to be in the department on board. That way they can use me as they like." She paused. "I'll admit, though, I'd love to hear about the tech you opened up to us, if you're

allowed to share. The *Galileo* will be outdated in a matter of months if the Federation gets moving on anything you've shared with them. I'd hate to see that happen to this beauty, considering she's not yet out of the womb. We might could plot out some upgrades and see what we can manage next time we hit a drydock." She beamed at the idea of being able to play with something new. Even if it went nowhere, even if there was no way the new technology could be integrated with the *Galileo*'s current systems... she still wanted to know what it did, what it was capable of, how it worked. All knowledge was worth having. "If you've time and interest, that is."

"Well, most of the technology I have shared has been an expedition of technology the Federation is already in possession of. For example, most Federation doctors have dermal regenerative devices. So one of the first things I showed them was the *Khaln~'zh'rah*. It is a biological implant designed for cellular regeneration in a matter of seconds. You attach it to the organ or wound and it absorbs and synthesizes the correct cell and replicates it!" he explained. "You may be interested to explore the *talhimaen* with me," he offered with a gestural click of his facial tentacles. "I have attempted to produce a similar technology in the Alpha quadrant. It is designed to condense warp particles to produce more power in a smaller containment field," he told her animatedly.

Lilou blinked twice in quick succession. To condense the warp particles... She probably looked like a fish out of water, mouth agape as the idea sunk in. Of course! Why had that never occurred to her? Probably because it was impossible. Except... it wasn't. Here was a Wega-ar - she needed to remember what his people were called - who had traveled on a ship capable of such a thing. Of course he had. How else could you- She shut her gaping mouth and nodded, trying not to tear up from how overwhelmed and happy she was that he'd offered to include her in his project. "Yes! Yes, I'd..." She stopped, embarrassed by how thick her voice was. "I'd very much like to explore the possibilities of such technology. Yes." She centered herself to keep from hugging him. What a wonderful thing that he'd come to them, to share with them, and her specifically. How perfectly nice that he was here on

her ship with her willing to talk about such fascinating things. Then again, why... she wrinkled her nose thoughtfully. "You're looking for a new home... you're not planning on going back to Andromeda?"

The alien gave a shake of his head. "It is one of the reasons I have shared much of the technological knowledge of my species. I cannot return," he told her puzzlingly, with a mild click. "I knew this when I left. In exchange for a new home it seems fair to share what I have. The Federation Diplomatic Corps called it *free-exchange*. I am happy to help wherever I can, excepting a few concepts such as weapons technology," he told her. It was a precaution he had undertaken himself.

"No, of course. It'd be a great deal better if we'd work harder to improve our defensive systems and stopped building upon our weapons. It only exacerbates those outside the Federation into-" She stopped. "No politics," she said, lifting her hands with a grimace, surrendering to her own gaff, and moving past it. Back to him. Back to what he'd said. "Why can't you go-" She stopped herself again, rolling her eyes towards the ceiling. "Not my business. Is it a painful topic - not one you wish to speak of? It's okay. Everyone has a right to their privacy. I certainly love mine."

The alien whistled in amusement. He wasn't that familiar with the political structure of the Alpha quadrant but he knew enough to realize that people often got into heated debates about it. His own views were rather simplistic, coming from a society that rarely ventured outside their own system. "It is complicated and will likely sound illogical," Ziyal told her with a shrug of a few arms.

"It is forbidden for *W'qa'arr* to leave the homeworld permanently. Those that do cannot return. We are ... isolated," he chose carefully. "Some are xenophobic. They do not wish to pollute our society with alien beliefs. I was offered the chance to leave because I could not fit into our society," he explained. It was a stilted sort of explanation, not born out of secrecy but more like he couldn't find the words. The translator did its pause-stop-start thing frequently.

Ziyal suddenly looked up, as the chronometer chimed the hour. "Tomorrow is launch day!" he started with a wide blink. "I did not realize it was so late. I did not intend to keep you for so long," he apologized with a shake of his head. "Would you like to meet in engineering some time?" he asked her chirpily as he finished off his meal. "I could show you the schematics I am working on. It would probably not be successful for a while but it is fascinating."

Lilou had been gearing up to ask just why Ziyal hadn't fit into his home society. She had a vested interest in understanding feelings of isolation in what should have been natural cultures. But the chronometer reminded her, too, that she still had a lot to put in order before she officially went on shift. "Yes," she answered his offer, obviously pleased. "I'd very much like that. Thank you." She stood and offered her hand. "Very nice to meet you, Crewman Ziyal. I look forward to our next meeting."

Clicking a little in untranslated garble, Ziyal took her hand carefully in his own, making sure not to scratch her with his claws. He blinked up at her contentedly and nodded deeply. "It was very nice to meet you too, Miss Peers." He clicked a little more, before he stood up and started clearing the table, made easier of course by the fact that he could clear practically the whole thing in one go, watching as she exited curiously.

[OFF]

Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers
Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

CN Nazhzhah
Biotechnologist, *U.S.S Galileo NCC-80010*

A Fond Farewell (Part 1)

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Rear Admiral Talla H'Rhar & Commodore Amara Damian & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: Starfleet HQ, Banquet Lounge

Timeline: MD 05 - 1800 hrs

Thirty hours before departure, the crew of USS Galileo arrives at Starfleet HQ's banquet hall for a formal farewell reception...

[ON]

Standing outside of the large double-doors to the banquet lounge, the Orion captain took a deep breath and mentally prepared herself for the inevitable plethora of Starfleet personnel waiting for her on the other side of the door. Though normally a social and outgoing woman, Lirha had been dreading this moment for several days now. She was already a bit apprehensive about her ship's launch and the preparations, or rather lack thereof, and now she had the added stress of having all eyes on her for her first official command. The reason for the reception had been a bit puzzling to her at first until she had finally figured out it was the doing of her good friend and fellow commanding officer, Captain Rosewell. It was a well-intentioned ceremony, but nonetheless one that Lirha would have preferred to skip. At this point, she simply wanted to get her starship off the ground with no hiccups.

She checked the time on a nearby wall terminal and noticed she was a bit early, which she preferred rather than the alternative of arriving late. The green-skinned woman tugged on her dress uniform's white jacket and checked her sleeves to make sure she looked presentable, then opened the traditional-style hinged wooden doors and stepped into the lounge. The captain was somewhat surprised upon first glance, as only a handful of personnel were wandering about the large room. She walked past a

security MP who stood at attention and gave him a polite nod before walking further into the room. Several large, white-clothed tables were arranged along the far wall and were neatly lined with silver platters and chafing dishes which contained a variety of food items. Along the adjacent wall was another row of tables which were set up with what appeared to be a fully stocked bar. Anxious for a drink to calm her nerves, Lirha slowly made her way over to the table and hoped some familiar faces would soon show up.

Robin hated wearing the dress uniform. It felt stodgy, stiff and the high collar dug into his neck. But when the Commander called dress, he was happy to comply. He pinned the last of his medals on his right chest under his commbadge and left the small area of his temporary quarters. It was 6:00 and he realized he was already late.

He hurried out the door, down the stairs and headed towards the Banquet lounge. A waiter appeared with Champagne and a red wine. He asked the young man where the darker wine came from. "Chateau La Barre, 48 Doctor." Robin took the red sniffed it and took a swig. He let it roll under his tongue and allowed the tastes over take him. It was good, but could use another twenty years.

Robin walked around the room and found his seat in the dais facing the front doors.

For the XO, these kinds of events were equally as painful as the rest of his colleagues seemed to have found this situation as soon as they were informed by their CO that they would be required to attend. Dress uniform seemed to serve so little purpose to him, if something were to happen, then even if they were completely unprepared, at least they would look presentable - another little bit of Starfleet doctrine that never made too much sense to him. The white dress shirt was more than a little restrictive, and did not lend itself to doing other than listening to assembled dignitaries and high ranking officers make windy and usually elongated speeches about anything that they happened to come across.

As the transporter reassembled his matter stream, he observed the entrance to the lounge that the

ceremony was expected to take place in. With its traditional, control-less wooden doors, it seemed to call back to a past age, back when the final frontier were the oceans of Earth, rather than the four quadrants of the galaxy. Pressing his left palm against the door, he felt it give under his weight, and swing open, allowing him to enter the room where hopefully, they would be able to escape quickly enough.

There were certainly enough seats to go round, as of yet, there had not been an overly large gathering of crew or command officers, in fact so far he hadn't noticed too many people that outranked him, small pockets of the enlisted crewmembers scattered around the room who probably felt as uncomfortable and nervous here as he did. Desperate for somewhere to stow himself for the evening, he spotted the bar, and a familiar green skin helping to prop it up.

Realising his CO was here, he straightened his uniform, and headed towards the bar, quickly catching the attention of the barman as he approached.

"Scotch...and quickly" he quipped as he got close enough to be within earshot without being audible to those on the other side of the room. Taking his drink from the man, he placed it on the bar to the right side of his CO.

"Tell me you hate these things as much as I do ma'am?"

Lirha turned at the sound of a familiar voice next to her. With a glass of Andorian brandy in hand, she quickly looked him up and down, very impressed with his dress. "You look nice, Commander." she remarked with a smile then paused for a second to consider his question. "Hate? No. Disapprove? Absolutely." she answered.

"I know the feeling....if you like, I'm sure I could have one of the crew left aboard the ship call us to deal with some urgent matter...like a warp core breach?" He said half-jokingly, yet still with a sense of seriousness in his voice.

She chuckled and took a sip of her drink. "An

emergency beam-out in the middle of our reception? That would be quite a sight.... I'll keep it in mind." she said with a friendly wink.

"A sight it might be, but I'd rather wade into Engineering and deal with a rupturing core than listen to too many speeches in here....at least there's a free bar, it's like the Admiralty knew something we didn't" He replied, taking a long draw on the glass of scotch in his hand, replicated, and loaded with synthehol, but the taste was about as close as he was going to get to the real thing for now.

Amara had gotten used to public appearances and dress uniforms but she found herself more than a bit nervous. This would be her first public gathering since her capture during Victorious' last mission. Since the ship had stopped over to gather supplies and it provided Commodore Damian a chance to attend a special event. Commissioning ceremonies were always interesting. Purposely deciding not to arrive too early Amara checked her uniform one last time then took a deep breath before entering the Banquet room. There were not a lot of familiar faces but that was to be expected. However here and there she saw a few either from personnel records or face to face discussions like Commander Saalm. After getting a drink Amara started to make her way through the crowd. Cordially greeting those she passed, "Good evening."

Dru opened her eyes as she materialised outside of the room the banquet was to be held in. She had always hated travelling by transporter, the logical aspect of her always told her that a person could not be taken apart molecule by molecule and reassembled without a few molecules going missing in-between.

As Dru took a few breaths to calm herself she stepped forward to the door of the room, waiting for it to open. She quickly places a hand on her collar to reassure herself her new pip is there, the Captain may have been willing to overlook it being missing, but she was sure the Admirals would be. The white dress uniform she had on felt strange, but not as strange as the pips in her collar.

Walking through the door way, Dru looked around herself trying to see if there was anyone she knew

present. She noted the Captain and XO over at the bar but figured they might want some space if there were discussing last minute details pertaining to the ship leaving. Dru grabbed a glass of wine from one of the waiters in order to be seen to have a drink in her hand but her nerves made her realise it might not be a good idea to try drinking alcohol at this moment in time. The counsellor walked over to the buffet table in order to see if there was anything there she would be able to stomach.

Markum enjoyed Banquets, especially when there were going to be senior captains and Admirals. They always brought out the best food and drinks for such functions. He wasn't a 32 year veteran of Starfleet, and not been to his share of these things. The Chief Engineer entered the large room and walked to the bar. "Yridian ale." The kid behind the bar reached into a cooler, then handed Markum an ice cold bottle. "Here you go Chief." Markum smiled and took a long swig. It was refreshing to have the real stuff, not that synthehol the replicators gave you.

Markum noticed a couple of his shipmates standing with the Captain. He approached and smiled, "Good evening Skipper, Commander. May I join you? I trust you are enjoying being in this monkey suit as much as I do. Rather be doing this down at the shore, in my jeans and boots.."

Looking up from his drink, John acknowledged the approach of his Chief Engineer, and raised his glass in agreement.

"I agree with you entirely Chief...in fact I was just discussing with Commander Saalm here, how most annoying it would be if we all had to suddenly go back to the ship to deal with some kind of disaster...I don't think we're going to get much luck with that though."

Looking around the room, he observed a new face, a senior officer wearing the dress uniform of a Commodore, but not one that he had ever had dealings with before.

"Looks like the brass have arrived" he mentioned in passing "Anyone got any idea who that is?"

Just as the question was asked, an Andorian admiral arrived, flanked by a younger Andorian male on her left, and a handsome Bajoran male on her right. The Bajoran seemed to be her escort, while the younger Andorian trailed a little behind them. She looked both confident and actually happy, because she was here with her family.

As they walked, the Bajoran seemed to gravitate towards her, in a most protective manner, his eyes scanning the room. While the admiral's dress uniform bore the markings of a commanding officer that of the Bajoran commander bore those of the intelligence department. The couple waited, until they would be noticed by someone who could direct them to the correct place. The Andorian youth too wore a dress uniform, with the insignia of the medical department, however his also bore the markings of a 4th year Academy cadet.

"Looks like I spoke too soon" John piped up as he saw the arrival of yet more senior officers. The room was quickly filling up with various dignitaries and crew members now, and with the arrival of an Admiral, he knew that there probably wasn't much time left before the ceremony would begin.

"What do you think Commander? Should we mingle?" he mentioned to his CO.

Lirha shrugged then smiled at her XO. "That's what we're here for." she replied simply.

Evelyn entered the Banquet Lounge, tugging her dress uniform down. "I miss the old design, much more comfortable..." she muttered to herself, trying to keep from frowning. She looked around, the Lounge was filling up and there were a few faces she recognized, and others she didn't. She moved towards the bar, deciding to get herself a glass of Champagne.

Markum sat down at the table, and looked about. "Yeah, indeed the brass has arrived. It won't be a party until some of the Marine Generals and Senior Colonels arrive. Now those are the party animals of Starfleet." Markum took a long swig of his drink, then asked, "So how long do you think it'll take before a big wig arrives and takes notice of us?"

"I have no idea...but hopefully we can get through this without too much pomp and circumstance...really not my scene"

The desire for that impending warp core emergency was slowly growing inside his mind, it would be so easy just to convince one of the junior officers to help him out in exchange for an extra duty shift off, but he had already decided he was going to hold on for now, and see how this whole thing went. The room was certainly filling up now, and he was becoming rather uneasy with the number of unfamiliar faces and the mixture of ranks inside the chamber.

Will fiddled with the lieutenant commander's pips on the collar of his dress uniform as he walked into the banquet lounge. The whole walk there, he had been unable to convince himself that the hollow pip was aligned with the other two. But once he was inside he dropped his hand and put on a more professional air. Walking with unhurried steps, he made his way towards the bar and ordered a glass of champagne and then standing off to one side. His cool grey eyes drifted around the room as he tried unsuccessfully to identify many people besides the captain.

Tarishiana loved her dress uniform. A lot of that had to do with the fact that she loved parties and dressing fancy. It was a hazard of being raised by her mother. One of two things happened in that instance, you either grew to adore parties or grew to hate them. With a smile on her face and her hair pulled back she happily entered the banquet room. She loved the buzz of being around other people even if most of the other crew didn't want to be there. That wasn't completely true, the young crew was excited and anxious. Tarishiana was sure this was simply from the fact that this was a new experience. She couldn't help but smile as she moved deeper into the room.

Amber Rose had been reassigned to the Galileo fairly recently. As soon as she boarded she was told there was a banquet to be held for the crew. She looked over the requirements and pulled on her uniform. Once that was done Amber Rose made sure the uniform was straight and wrinkle free. With a deep breath she left her quarters and returned to

HQ. Outside the Banquet Lounge she hesitated. She was new and didn't know anyone, but if she was to be a part of the crew she had to set aside her nervousness and get it over with. That being thought she stepped into the room and saw many others were already there.

[OFF]

To Be Continued...

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey (Will) Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Amber Rose Scuito
Chief Security/Tactical Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

SWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

RADM Talla H'Rhar
Task Force Commanding Officer
USS Sarek

COM Amara Damian
Task Group Commanding Officer
USS Victorious

A Fond Farewell (Part 2)

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Rear Admiral Talla H'Rhar & Commodore Amara Damian & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: Starfleet HQ, Banquet Lounge

Timeline: MD 05 - 1815 hrs

After the crew arrives at the official banquet, they begin to settle in and mingle amongst each other...

[ON]

Upon seeing her two immediate superiors enter the room, Lirha politely excused herself from her XO and wandered slowly over to the first, a dark haired Betazoid woman who she recognized as Commodore Damian, her Task Group Commanding Officer. With a drink in hand, the Orion stopped in front of the blue-eyed woman and gave her a smile. "Commodore, it's good to see you again. I hope you weren't inconvenienced by our little gathering?" she said with a sweeping motion of her hand to indicate the large and festive lounge.

"Not at all. Victorious needed to make a stopover for supplies anyway," Amara replied extending her hand to greet Galileo's Commanding Officer. "Besides gatherings like this one is just part of my job." Looking around the room, "You've done a nice job."

The Orion captain grasped the commodore's hand and gave it a firm shake, accompanied with a nod of approval. "Thank you, Ma'am. I agree, this reception is shaping up to be better than I had planned." she said with a small grin. "Are you enjoying your time in San Francisco, so far?" she asked.

With a smile Amara replied, "I'm enjoying it as much as I can. Victorious only has a short 48 hour layover. They're keeping us deployed more often than we get a chance to be home or at a starbase

lately. Do you have your initial mission orders yet?"

"Yes," she started in a subdued voice as she moved closer to the commodore, "They are somewhat...complicated." she said in her best attempt to hide her reservations about the assignment. "I would have preferred some time for a shakedown cruise, but as our orders currently stand, we will be departing tomorrow evening."

"Keep morale up and your crew will do fine. Believe me we all feel like that our first time out its normal," Amara responded with a smile.

Lirha smiled back and squeezed the commodore's arm, thankful for the reassurance. "Glad to know I'm not the only one... I'll be sure to remember that." she said, then glanced around the room at the various personnel wandering about. Wasting no time, she emptied her drink down her throat and looked back towards the bar. "If you'll excuse me for a moment, I think I need a refill of this delicious brandy." she said, then squeezed her thin yet curvy green frame through the crowd in search of the bartender.

"Well"" the commander began, watching as his CO headed off to hopefully distract and delay the senior officers in the room.

"I guess it's time I met the team...wish me luck Chief" He nodded to Quinn before heading off into the room, a freshly refilled glass in his hand. There were certainly a variety of species, ranks, and specialties here tonight, with everything from security right through to xenobiology being represented. He had to admit though, most of the faces he wasn't familiar with. After scanning the crowd for a few moments, he noticed their new Counsellor had finally arrived, one of the few senior officers he had been given the chance to meet recently.

"Nice to see you again Lieutenant, I trust the engineers managed to get your office up and running? I passed along your..thoughts, to the dockmaster directly and it seemed to have the desired effect"

Dru turned suddenly as she heard a voice behind her, trying not to splash her drink, suddenly glad

she had taken a white wine. "commander! Sorry, you caught me by surprise there." Dru smiled up at Jonathan, suddenly glad to speak with someone she knew, "Apart from some gel packs which seem to have taken up residency on my desk, it is pretty much finished up. You didn't have to go to so much effort, I'm sure there are more important areas of the ship you needed to look after first."

"Nonsense!" he replied with a sense of humour in his voice. "With a crew this small, and after our chat in the mess hall, if anything I can vouch for us needing a counsellor on more than one occasion before this first mission is complete!" He smirked at her reference to the gel packs, his desk in the XO's office hadn't been in a much better condition when he first arrived. "You'll get used to the gel packs, either a sheepish looking engineer will come to retrieve them, or you'll have to keep them as pets!" he joked, before looking around the room.

"So these are the people we'll be serving with, I don't think I recognise any faces at all as of yet...anyone you know?"

"Hum...I wonder how much feeding a gel pack would require if I did take one on as a pet." Dru smiled softly as she surveyed the faces around her, "Well I've met our Doctor over there for my medical and a few of the faces I recognise from either running into them in corridors or seeing them early for their psych evaluations." Dru paused slightly as she chose her next words carefully, "I seem to have run into our new Captain more than anyone else over the last few days. She's been good with helping me to settle in. From our conversation the other day, I think you understand, it's been unsettling trying to readjust coming from such a large ship and crew. People would think it easier, less space and less people, but it really isn't that easy."

"You'll get no argument from me Lieutenant, this first cruise is going to be pretty interesting. From what I've read of our launch orders, we won't even be getting time for a proper shakedown cruise...so if anything breaks down, we'll have to fix it ourselves, real flying by the seat of the pants kind of exploration."

He took a sip of his drink and decided that it was probably time for the pair of them to mingle. As he looked around the room, he saw the doors part, and another lieutenant step in, this time wearing the markings of the Operations division. This face however, wasn't exactly one he didn't recognise, as an ex-tactical instructor, he had made sure to read up on the profile of their new Chief Tactical officer.

"That's someone I need to get to know...would you care to accompany me Dru?" He motioned towards the doors and the recently arrived officer.

Dru takes a small sip of her wine before moving to walk after the Commander. Dru was curious to meet this new person the Commander seemed to be very interested in. As she followed the Commander she noticed a small group containing two Andorians and a Bajoran. Going back through her memory, she recalled information on a one Admiral Talla H'RHAr and her son Ayden H'Rhar who were to be accompanied by a Commander Kentar Chinari. Dru smiled and nodded her head. She made a note that once she was finished here, maybe she should go over and introduce herself, make herself seem more sociable.

Heading towards the doors, John made sure he caught the attention of the new arrival's eyes before he got close, preferring to get within earshot rather than simply bellowing across the room.

"Lieutenant Scuito I presume?" He spoke in a low voice, waiting for a reply before continuing. Although he was pretty certain this was indeed the correct officer, he would rather be safe than sorry!

Amber Rose looked around and nodded when she saw who it was.

"Jonathan Holliday, First Officer, this is Lieutenant McCarthy, our ship's counsellor, I'm glad you could make it, the way this mission had been shaping up so far I was concerned we were going to depart Earth with an unmanned Tactical station!"

Amber Rose gave a small smile. "Well you don't have to worry anymore, Commander. I'm actually glad to be here." She was unsure of what to do next, but she held out her hand in a greeting. A

handshake wasn't bad. It was a sign of respect or at least it was a more adult like greeting that spoke wonders.

Dru took Amber Rose's hand smiling at her gently, she noticed that the girl couldn't have been much younger than herself. "It's nice to meet you Lieutenant."

Waiting for Dru to finish, John too extended his hand to greet the young officer, her sense of politeness earned her a few points in his book at the very least, and it was always a good idea to have a tactical officer that you got on with, at least as far as John was concerned.

"Well that's good to hear, how was your trip back to Earth? Uneventful I hope?"

Amber Rose nodded. "Yes, sir. No problems." She shook his hand as well and smiled. It seemed this crew was going to be a fun one.

"Excellent, just what I like to hear. Tell me, what are you expecting from this assignment? Was it one you requested, or just the orders from Command that brought you to our little ship?"

Amber Rose pondered the question for a moment. She needed to gather her words just right to provide the right answer, "I expect nothing but good things from this assignment. Each assignment has their own pros and cons. As for the second part I was transferred by orders, but I look forward to seeing how my time here goes." She smiled at the man.

"Looks like we're in the same boat then Lieutenant, here by the command of our superiors rather than by our own choice. From what I've seen so far the ship is pretty tough for a science vessel, just make sure you keep an eye on those targeting scanners though, in case anyone decides that a bunch of scientists are too easy a target to pass up" he said with a wry smile on his face

Amber Rose laughed, "I'll be sure to do that." She grinned at the man and felt completely at ease around him. Her time with this crew should be VERY interesting.

"Well Lieutenant, my glass is getting empty, I feel a trip to the bar is in order, enjoy your evening" He said, excusing himself from the conversation, and heading for a reloading of his quickly consumed drink.

As Dru watched Holliday and Amber speak amongst themselves she smiled softly and excused herself, looking around the room to see who might want some company.

Markum took notice of the Rear-Admiral and her small entourage. If memory served him right, she was the Task Force Commander, and skippered an Ambassador- Class. He also knew the Chief Engineer fairly well. Markum stood and approached the Andorian Admiral.

"Admiral Talla H'RHAr , ma'am. I'm Senior Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn, Chief Engineer of the Galileo. It is nice to meet you." He nodded to the younger Andorian, then addressed her escort. "Commander, sir. Nice to meet you as well. I understand you have a Kovartii that can be a tad bit over-technical with his speech. Nice guy, the Lieutenant just needs to let loose a little. You know how us engineers are a tight group. no one understands an engineer, quite like another engineer."

"He does get a bit technical," the Andorian commanding officer replied with a smile. "Allow me to introduce my company. Commander Kentar Chinari, my chief intelligence officer and partner, and my son Cadet Ayden H'Rhar."

The younger Andorian smiled politely. "It's a pleasure to meet you sir. But uhm, does the Galileo also have a chief medical officer yet?"

Talla smiled again. "Ayden's soon graduating from Starfleet Medical," she clarified before her son could respond.

Markum looked brightly at the Cadet. "I have a son that is a Cadet studying Health Sciences at the Academy too. He's in his second year. Not sure if you know him. His name is Marcus Quinn. As far as a Chief Medical, yes, Doctor Holliday is a fine physician. Maybe you can get your Cadet Cruise

under him, or once you graduate and do your internship with us."

Markum returned his attention to the Admiral and Commander. "It is a pleasure to meet you Commander Kentar. Admiral, I always loved Andoria. I graduated from the Andorian University of Structural Engineering, back in 'fifty-five."

"I see. I haven't returned to Andor since my husband was killed." She felt Kentar pull her a little closer in an attempt to offer comfort, and Ayden looked downright uncomfortable. "Why don't you show us around, and introduce us to your shipmates?"

"I'm sorry ma'am." was all he could think of to say regarding the Admiral's loss. "Please, this way." Eying Saalm, he guided the Admiral, and her guests, over to the Orion CO. "Excuse me, Commander Saalm? Let me introduce you to Admiral Talla H'Rhar, her son Cadet Ayden H'Rhar, and her partner and Chief Intel Officer, Commander Kentar Chinari. This is Commander Lirha Saalm."

The captain turned around at the mention of her name and looked at the entourage of people standing before her. She smiled at her chief engineer then focused her eyes on the two tall Andorians and the Bajoran man accompanying them. She nodded respectfully at the three of them.

"Admiral, it's a pleasure to finally meet you," she said in a soft voice, "Thank you for joining us tonight, I hope it wasn't an inconvenience for you."

"Not at all, it was only a small detour." The admiral smiled, though to the keen observer it was clear she wasn't feeling up to staying around for too long.

Lirha turned to the young blue-skinned man who's facial features resembled his mother's. She held out her hand for him to shake. "Cadet, it's a pleasure to meet you. I take it you are enjoying your time in Starfleet so far?" she asked with a smile.

"I'm in my final year ma'am," the younger Andorian answered politely. He was unable to keep his eyes off her, even though he did try not to stare. "But my professors told me my grades are such that I can

afford a slight delay to do an internship on my mother's ship."

"Well that's great news." she responded enthusiastically, "What is your field of study?" she asked, unsure if the cadet's blue-trimmed dress uniform meant that he was a future science or medical officer.

"Medical ma'am. I'm already a qualified coroner, but once I graduate I'll be the first one in my line to be a medical doctor." The young Andorian smiled proudly. "Mother used to be a tactical officer and my father...he was intelligence. I think. I don't really remember my father."

Lirha was slightly unsure of how to respond, as she wasn't certain of the young man's family history or dynamics. "Well congratulations," she said with a smile as she delicately stepped around the subject. "I can tell you from experience that doctors are a hard commodity to come by these days. I'm sure you'll make your mother proud." she said, then looked up at Talla and winked.

Turning towards the Bajoran commander, she held her hand out and offered a smile. "Commander, it's always nice to meet a fellow Intel chief." she said happily, in reference to her previous departmental background.

The Bajoran merely smiled, while taking the offered hand. His keen eyes had already spotted the minute movements the Orion made and had already deduced that she must have a background in intelligence. That, and of course he'd done his homework. "The pleasure is all mine commander," he answered quietly. "Please excuse me while I go walk about." He squeezed Talla's hand, then quietly disappeared into the crowd.

"You must forgive him, he's not really used to being in the spotlight, he prefers to stay anonymously in the background, so he can do his job. When do you sail out?" Talla asked while Ayden too walked off to go off on his own.

"Tomorrow evening." she answered while staring into the Andorian's eyes. "Our departure date has been moved up by twelve hours so we now have a

midnight launch scheduled." she said with a shrug and a sigh. "The crew and I completed our inspection and systems check earlier today and I'm quite impressed with the state of the *Galileo*. I know the engineers and dockworkers will have her ready to go, but I wish I had more time for a shakedown cruise." she admitted.

"Sometimes, you make do with the time you have, and you make sure your crew believe they are miracle workers. A night launch is good training for the gamma shift, I've had to do my fair share of them. The Sarek will be departing soon again too, in a few days in fact. So we don't have too much time to linger around because I have briefings to prepare."

"Well I just hope we don't run into any unexpected problems in the middle of the night." Lirha replied with a cautious smile. "How long have you been here in San Francisco for, Admiral?"

"Not for very long, as I said we do leave in a few days. Sooner rather than later, in fact." She waved Ayden off, suggesting he go mingle on his own. Kentar merely smiled, but didn't stray from her side that far. It was almost, as if he was watching her.

Will finished off a bit of his champagne and picked up a second glass. He started walking across the room until he felt in beside Tarishiana. "Good evening, warrant officer," he said with a pleasant smile, offering her the second glass of champagne.

Tarishiana was loving the party. That wasn't a surprise. She felt her smile grow as the Lieutenant Commander approached her with a drink. "Good evening, Sir." She replied smoothing with her standard flirty grin. "Thank you." she said motioning towards the glass. "Enjoying the party?" She asked as she took a sip of the newly delivered champagne.

The human raised his glass slightly towards her and inclined his head towards her. "Oh, I am, very much," he assured her, "Commander Remington, chief of operations. But please, call me Will, or William if you really must be formal."

"Ok Will, I am Tarishiana Barel... Chief Science

Officer" she started, "Feel free to call me Tarish, or Tarishiana...Just not Ms. Barel" she paused somewhat for dramatic effect. "She is my mother." She finished with a laugh. "So do they do parties like this for every new ship and her crew?"

From the human, her Betazoid senses picked up his previously tight and concerned emotions relax, even daring to let a sense of enjoyment creep in. He felt far more comfortable with this woman he had just met than with most people. Why, however, was hard to tell, but he seemed to feel a sense of familiarity towards her.

"Not that I know of," he said to her words in reply, giving her a subtle wink, "only the important ones with beautiful science officers aboard. I should know, I've seen a few ships launched and a lot of science officers in my time serving space stations." He paused to take a sip of champagne then leaned forward to whisper conspiratorially. "Mostly Vulcans, all cold as ice and half the time those frowns make them look ridiculous." He stood up straight and made a 'snobbish' face, looking down his nose at her and raising his hand in the Vulcan salute. "Pleasant conversation is illogical, Ms. Barel," he solemnly decreed.

Tarishiana let out a loud but light laugh at the impersonation. Her hand moved to her lips and she tried to quit her enjoyment. "I had that exact conversation with a Lieutenant on the *Kodiak Island*." she said through a large grin. "He couldn't understand my need for conversation. You should have seen his face when I told him it was a pleasant way to pass the time." she took a sip of her drink while the smile remained permanent on her lips.

Will was unable to keep his Vulcan look much longer and he broke out into a wide grin. "Well, that's Vulcans I suppose." He gazed at her while consuming the remaining contents of his glass. "So, non-com scientist, got all the way up to warrant officer, and now you're a bridge officer? Impressive."

"Thanks." Tarishiana started. "I always thought I would regret not attending the Academy after I was accepted, but I like what I have accomplished." She finished the remaining sip in her glass. "Languages

are fascinating regardless of rank or commission." She grinned at him.

"You're a language specialist?"

"Yes, I specialize in xeno-linguistics as well as any of the ships systems that are involved with the universal translator." She set the empty glass on the tray as waiter came to collect it. "I am quite useful." she finished with yet another smile. She was enjoying his company. Unlike most of the people she had met in her time he seemed more at ease around her. Most often people were convinced she would steal their deep dark secrets. "You are Chief of Operations, right?"

Chuckling when she declared herself useful, he nodded as she continued to speak. "Yes, I am." He said, "I have to admit that the Galileo seems a bit of a downgrade compared to what I am used to, but..." he hesitated, then gave her a smile, though there was clearly more he would have said.

Tarishiana felt the hesitation. If they had been in a different setting she might have pushed it, but this wasn't the time. She made a mental note to follow up on it later. "Well compared to the USS Genevieve this is a huge upgrade for me. I am excited to have a computer system that wasn't fabricated before my father was born." she finished with a smile.

Will looked up from her features and gestured towards a few seats by the window that were empty. "Please, why don't we sit?" he suggested, reaching to touch her arm gently and guide her, "You can tell me about the Genevieve?"

Evelyn quietly made her way out of the Banquet Lounge and stepped out onto the balcony. She had a glass of Tarkarian Ale in her hand as she leaned against the rail looking out into the moonlit night. She took a sip of her drink, and turned her gaze back to the party inside, remembering the first "New Ship Get Together." Evelyn chuckled at the memory of the crew of the Lexington. It was her first true assignment with a new crew. "Here's too ya lads." she whispers and drinks her ale.

Seeing one of her crew members standing alone

outside, Lirha slowly made her way through the crowd and out on to the balcony. She stopped next to the tall blonde intelligence chief and smiled up at her. "Not too fond of parties?" she asked in a quiet and soothing voice, feeling the evening breeze on her face and neck.

"More like been to so many of them, just wanted a moment to self-reflect." Evelyn stated turning to the commander. "Hard to get excited about a new adventure when you've been through so many."

"I suppose." Lirha replied, then stood quietly next to Evelyn, not saying a word for several moments. She was a bit taken aback by the El-Aurian woman's lack of enthusiasm. "I know you've been to plenty of these events, but they are still exciting for many of us. We don't all have the privilege of living as long as you." she finally said with a one-sided smile.

Evelyn arched her eyebrow, "It was my personal opinion, not a judgement on how the crew should be behaving. Of course this is an exciting time for the crew and for you as well." She said sincerely, "I apologize for my "lack of enthusiasm," been paired with a Vulcan during my assignment at Starfleet Intelligence, guess that damn lack of personality had rubbed off on me."

Lirha shrugged, "I'm sure you have a great personality, Lieutenant. And I understand how Vulcans can behave sometimes. They're not exactly the liveliest bunch, are they?" she said with a chuckle. "Do you plan on staying for a while tonight and socializing with the crew?" she asked. "I have the feeling there will be an after-party somewhere once this finishes." she added in a quiet voice.

Nodding, "I intend to go back. I just, needed a moment alone to reflect my thoughts." she smiled, "As for the after-party, I suggest you tell the bar to provide more synthehol than the real stuff."

"I'll be sure to remember that, but no promises." Lirha said with a dry smile as she patted the tall woman on the shoulder. "I'm going back inside, see you soon, Lieutenant." she said, then made her way from the balcony and back into the festive lounge.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey (Will) Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Amber Rose Scuito
Chief Security/Tactical Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

SWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

RADM Talla H'Rhar
Task Force Commanding Officer
USS Sarek

COM Amara Damian
Task Group Commanding Officer
USS Victorious

A Fond Farewell (Part 3)

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Rear Admiral Talla H'Rhar & Commodore Amara Damian & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: Starfleet HQ, Banquet Lounge
Timeline: MD 05 - 1845 hrs

Thirty minutes later...

[ON]

With a few drinks now inside of her, Lirha was beginning to feel better about the evening. She had loosened up and as she looked around the room, noticed that her crew seemed to be finally enjoying themselves...at least somewhat. She took a quick detour back to the bar table and acquired another glass of Saurian brandy, then moved through the crowd until she met her operations chief, Commander Remington.

As Will left Tarishiana's side, he saw the captain and had a feeling he was her next target. He watched her as she approached and sure enough she was headed his way. His vibrant expression faded as she approached, to a more neutral but still pleasant smile.

"How is your evening turning out, Commander?" she asked as she stood close to him, and looked up at him with light green eyes.

"Oh, quite well, ma'am, thank you," he said, raising his second glass of champagne towards her. "To the Galileo."

The Orion captain raised her glass of brandy and clinked it against the commander's. "To the *Galileo*" she said in a soft voice with a happy smile.

"I just met our chief science officer," he told her, "and I believe our chief engineer is also a warrant officer? That is a touch unusual." He gave her a

polite laugh, "Not just trying to annoy the brass, hm?"

"Oh yes, they are both NCOs, but some of the best and most experienced whom I have seen in Starfleet. At least, in my experience" she replied. "It's funny." she began as she looked up into her ops chief's eyes, "Our ship's enlisted personnel seem to have twice the experience of many of our junior officers." she finished with a glint in her green eyes. "I think our new ship is in very capable hands."

Will caught her gaze and smiled a bit more genuinely for her, something of a twinkle in his grey eyes. "I'm sure it is," he agreed readily. The atmosphere and champagne had loosened him up a bit. "Is this your first command, captain?"

"Yes, it is." she replied, then narrowed her eyes at him. "Am I that obvious, Commander?" she asked with a grin. Lirha knew that she did not behave like the typical Starfleet officer, especially captain. She had always thought of herself as a rather outgoing and genial woman, but she had an uneasy feeling that the stresses and pressure of command would somehow change her over the upcoming months.

"Perhaps not..." Will replied, only partly kidding now. "But with my time on a Starbase you get to know a lot of captains. You are... unique, if I may say so, ma'am."

"Oh?" she replied with a raised eyebrow. "In what way?" she asked. The question wasn't indignant and she agreed with his assessment, however she wanted to hear his particular opinion. Hearing the various crew member's impressions of her was always interesting, to say the least.

"Ah, well," he began, "you *are* a newly promoted captain, aren't you? And young, an Orion woman... your people are not members of the Federation. I imagine the brass would put a bit of pressure on you?" He spoke openly and honest with her, offering an understanding smile.

Lirha smiled back at the lieutenant commander. "You are very perceptive, and also correct." she began as she briefly thought through her Starfleet career. For the first two years of her service, it had

been an uphill battle for her to be trusted and treated as an equal amongst certain members of her department. "I settled on Earth when I was sixteen and turned my eyes towards Starfleet. I come from a space-faring family, and I wanted to continue to explore the galaxy but in a more professional career. Fortunately, I seem to have done a fair enough job at my post that I was recommended for command several months ago. So far, Starfleet Command has been encouraging, if not a tad demanding." she finished with a big grin.

Will nodded his head slowly as she spoke. "I suppose it is to be expected. But there have been plenty of Orions in Starfleet before. Though... I admit, I don't know of any becoming captains."

She took a big drink from her glass and paused before responding, savouring the taste of brandy on her tongue. "I am the first. And a woman, nonetheless." she said simply. Despite her best attempts to break the stereotype, there was still a negative stigma in the Alpha and Beta Quadrants regarding Orion women. Being a Starfleet officer definitely helped bolster her species' perception, but there were times when she still felt objectified.

Will seemed to share some of her thoughts, but he kept them to himself. "Ah, yes, well..." he laughed softly, "I'm sure you will prove yourself, despite the doubts others may have."

"Thank you, Commander." Lirha replied with a genuine smile and a nod of approval. "It's always nice to have the support of my crew. I have the feeling we will be relying on each other a lot throughout our upcoming assignment." she added, then finished her drink with a final swig. "Would you like another drink?" she asked, wondering if he needed a refill of his champagne.

"Oh, I think two is quite enough for me, thank you. At least for now." He finished off what was in his glass upon saying that. "I always support my captain. It is my duty."

The Orion gave him a gentle squeeze on the shoulder, accompanied by a warm smile. "I appreciate that." she replied, then turned towards the bar. "I'm going to get another drink." she said,

then headed off towards the large table with many bottles of alcohol on it.

Will gave his captain a smile and watched her thoughtfully as she walked away.

Having finished his rather in depth weapons discussion with their young Tactical Officer, John had found himself wandering the room in search of further conversation, after all, when was there going to be a better time to find out a little more about the officers working alongside him than when the alcohol was flowing and those around him were at their most relaxed.

Looking towards the bar, he spotted an individual wearing the colours of the Intelligence division, something that was usually enough to send shivers up his spine, he had never trusted people who worked behind closed doors and snuck around in the shadows. Of course he entirely understood why it was necessary, as much as the Federation was trying to change the galaxy for the better, there were always going to be some less desirable elements of galactic civilisation trying to undermine everything that had been achieved in the past couple of centuries.

Picking up a glass of champagne from a passing waiter, he headed towards her.

"Good evening, I don't believe we've officially met yet, John Holliday" He stretched out his hand to greet her.

Evelyn looked at the outstretched hand and took it. "Evelyn Coleman, nice to meet you." She said politely, finishing off her glass of Tarkarian Ale.

"I'm going to go out on a limb here and guess that you're our attachment from Starfleet Intelligence? I wasn't aware that we were going to be graced with their presence on this journey?" He said with a hint of joviality in his voice as he took a small sip from his glass.

"Well you are, I hope that isn't a problem." Evelyn commented, not sure how to take his remark.

"Hey hey take it easy, not trying to get personal

with ya, after all, if I had a problem with your division, I wouldn't be serving under Commander Saalm now would I? One of your ex-colleagues right?"

He realised that what he had said might not have come across as the most pleasant, but he wasn't trying to put anyone's backs out this early in the night

Evelyn shook her head, "No, while we both were in Starfleet Intelligence, I was part of a separate division." she said vaguely not wanting to disclose to much of her previous assignment.

"Ahh, classified right? I understand Lieutenant. So, are you able to reveal anything about your assignment to our vessel, or is it need to know only?"

"I think my assignment is straightforward. My job is to serve as your Intelligence officer, no hidden agenda."

"Sounds good to me, if you don't mind me mentioning it Lieutenant, you seem rather closed off, is that some kind of training thing or do you just not like me?" John asked with an inquisitive look in his eyes, he was trying his best to get on with as much of the senior staff as possible, but so far he seemed to have managed nothing more than to annoy or offend this particular Lieutenant within a few moments of opening his mouth, at least that's how he saw it

Evelyn arched her brow and then sighed, "I apologize Commander, guess you can say, I spent too much time with Vulcans." She mused, "had this same type of discussion with the Captain. My last assignment I was partnered with a Vulcan, the assignment took 1 1/2 years to complete. He rubbed off on me I suppose."

"The Vulcans huh? I never quite got my head around those guys...interesting to the point of irritating...well Lieutenant, I promised one of these Admirals here I'd buy him a drink next time I saw him so I need to attend to my duties...I'll catch up with you on board though, see if we can't get around some of those Vulcan attributes you've picked up."

Nodding to his fellow officer, John picked up his drink, and headed off into the room, intent on reminding the assembled dignitaries and Admirals that he was very much ready for this first command assignment.

Quinn grabbed another bottled beer and walked about the room, when the familiar golden chevrons surrounding a black pip caught his attention. It was attached to a young woman's teal coloured collar. The seasoned engineer approached the young lady and then realized to whom he was about to speak with.

"Master Warrant Officer Barel, I presume?" asked Quinn as he smiled. "I'm, Senior Chief Warrant Quinn. I do not believe we ever officially met before. You are our Science Chief if I'm not mistaken."

"I don't believe we have." Tarishiana replied happily with a grin. She was holding a recently refilled glass of whatever sparkling wine the servers were providing. "If I am not mistaken, you are the Chief Engineer." she took a sip of her drink before continuing, "It is nice to meet you."

With a nod, and followed by a swig of his bottled beer, "Thank-you. It's nice to have another Warrant Officer aboard the ship. Where were you stationed at before the Galileo, Barel?"

Tarishiana smiled, "I was initially stationed on the USS Kodiak Island before I was transferred to the USS Genevieve" she took a sip of her champagne, "How about you? Stationed anywhere interesting?"

"A few places." remarked the old engineer before continuing, "I did a six year deep space exploration tour. Talk about freedom. Of course, you had to get along with your crew to get through it with your sanity."

"I can only imagine" Tarishiana said lightly with a laugh. "The longest mission I have taken part of was eight months, and I was convinced we would have a mutiny on our hands."

Markum laughed aloud. He wasn't sure if it was the amount of beer he consumed, or if she really was

just that funny. He decided she was just that funny. "Yeah, I had an overbearing and rather abusive XO once. Somehow he ended up in a Zero-G Suit, while strapped to the port nacelle. Not sure how he got out there, but he was a new man once we got him back inside."

Tarishiana couldn't help but smile at the Engineers recount. "I would imagine that would change just about anyone." She replied lightly as she raised her glass to her lips, enjoying another sip of her champagne. "Maybe we will have another opportunity to share some more service stories...after tonight that is."

"Yeah, I'd like that. I'm sure there will be several chances." Quinn returned the smile. "I'm going for another beer, and hopefully a way out of this place. I need to get out of this penguin suit. I'll catch ya later Tarishiana."

With a smile and a nod Tarishiana turned from her departing company. A part of her was hoping to find Commander Remington again. She set her empty glass on the table and moved into the crowd.

Amara was moving about the room. Quickly she ordered another drink. From what she could tell Galileo's crew seemed to be enjoying themselves. Making her way over to her Task Force Commanding Officer to at least say good evening. "Hello Admiral I hope you are enjoying yourself."

The Andorian smiled as she extended her hand. "Commodore Damian, it's a pleasure to finally meet you. To be fair, I think my son is enjoying himself far more than I am, and Kentar just keeps watch." She indicated her Bajoran companion before leaning forward. "I'm pregnant," she confided to the other woman.

Shaking the Andorian's hand, "Congratulations Admiral. I'm glad to finally meet you as well. Honestly I'm surprised they didn't insist on sending Security or someone with me as it's safe to say medical would probably not agree with me making a public appearance so soon after our last mission. However Victorious is only stopping over for a short time to resupply then we're headed out again so I made it clear the crew needs what leave they

can get."

Talla nodded towards Kentar. "He wouldn't let me go without escort either, and I'm sure you'll be fine." She smiled. "Come let's go mingle."

As Dru looked around the room she noticed that the alcohol had started to flow very freely and it was causing everyone to be more relaxed. Dru placed her own untouched glass on a table and went out onto the deserted balcony in order to look at the nighttime sky.

As she straightened out her white uniform jacket, the Orion captain glanced around the room, then through the glass window and to the balcony. A single person stood out outside who Lirha quickly identified as her counsellor. Drink in hand, she wandered casually around several waiters and back onto the balcony for the second time that evening. She took a long swig of her brandy and then walked next to Drusilla. "Enjoying yourself?" she asked in a quiet voice.

Dru stood staring at the night sky, her arms supporting her on the balcony railing, as she heard the Commander's voice behind her, "Captain. I just needed a breath of fresh air. Are you having a good night?"

"Yes, I'm enjoying myself much more than I thought I would." she admitted. Her previous conversations with the senior brass had gone rather smoothly, and Lirha felt a weight suddenly lifted off of her shoulders. "And yourself?" she asked.

Dru thought back over her conversation with Ayden earlier and hesitated a few moments before finding an answer, "I'm enjoying meeting with the rest of the crew and the different groups of people here tonight. It's a very interesting dynamic we have here, it'll make for an interesting voyage. How are you feeling about our departure tomorrow?"

"Well right now I feel wonderful." she said with a big grin, in reference to the enjoyable alcoholic buzz coursing through her head, "But I'm sure tomorrow will be a different story. The *Galileo* is pretty much ready for departure, just a few final supplies that need to be loaded and some minor

engineering work. I'm very impressed with how smoothly our systems check went." she added.

Hearing an almost bounce in Lirha's voice which she had not heard before, Dru turned around to face Lirha and suddenly realised by her mannerisms that Lirha was bordering on being slightly drunk, "You might want to ensure you get a good night sleep tonight Captain so you've a clear head in the morning." Dru smiled softly at Lirha.

"Oh, I intend to..." she said quietly with a sideways grin, then folded her arms tightly across her chest as a shiver ran through her body. "It's getting a bit chilly so I'm going back inside. Coming?" she asked as she moved toward the balcony door.

Dru hesitated for a moment, not quite feeling ready to go back in, "You go ahead, I could do with some more air to clear my head." Dru smiled gently at Lirha before turning back to the balcony railing.

"Very well, I'll see you inside." Lirha said with a nod, and walked back inside the warm lounge. Moving past the buffet table, she spotted a group of the *Galileo's* junior enlisted personnel gathered near the bar table. With curious interest, the captain walked over to them and began to converse with the young personnel.

To Be Continued...

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey (Will) Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
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LTJG Amber Rose Scuito
Chief Security/Tactical Officer
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SWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

RADM Talla H'Rhar
Task Force Commanding Officer
USS Sarek

COM Amara Damian
Task Group Commanding Officer
USS Victorious

Breakaway Chat from 'A Fond Farewell'

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Rear Admiral Talla H'Rhar &
Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Banquet Lounge

Timeline: MD05 – 1900 hrs

[ON]

Dru looked around at everyone talking to each other and suddenly noticed a young Andorian boy standing in the corner, away from everyone else. She recalled from earlier that he had been part of the group who came in with Admiral H'Rhar. Feeling bad that he was all on his own Dru walked over to him, trying to dodge waiters who kept trying to refill her glass.

Ayden watched the girl approach him and deftly pulled her to the side when a waiter blindsided her. He'd seen her dodge the waiters. "Perhaps you should put down your glass if you don't want a refill," he suggested quietly.

Dru looked down at the man's hand on her sleeve in shock. She wasn't used to people touching her, "Tha...Than..." Dru closed her eyes and took a breath before opening them back up, *Calm down Dru, he's an Admiral's son, he's safe, be professional* "Sorry. That last waiter caught me by surprise. If I put down my glass then I'll have everyone around me trying to give me a new one and asking why I'm not drinking. It's easier to keep one in my hand and take tiny sips, the rate alcohol is being drunk around here, noone will know any different soon." Dru turned to smile at the Andorian and bit her lip, "Um...I'm Lieutenant JP Drusilla McCarthy by the way."

"Why not take a glass of water then?" Ayden suggested with a slight smile. He removed his hand from her arm and held it out to her. "Cadet Ayden H'Rhar," he added, smiling shyly. His antennae swayed slightly as he spoke, not really sure what else to say. "I'm in my final year," he continued, by way of defense should she think he was far too

young to be here.

Dru took Ayden's hand and smiled at him, "You know what, water would be a good idea, but what happens when one of those waiters catch me and pours wine ontop of it...even though I guess at least it'd be watered down wine...wonder how that'd taste..." Dru blushed as she realised she was rambling and pulled back her hand as she realised she was still holding Ayden's. "Cadet? Which course?"

"Medical ma'am, though I'm already a qualified coroner." He let his hand drop back to his side when she released it, not sure what else to do with it. "As for watered down wine...you could just on occasion grab a drink elsewhere or indeed just lose the glass and tell them you've just had a drink?" He studied her and took note of her blue collar. "How about you ma'am? Medical, science or counseling?"

"Qualified coroner? Well that's an interesting area to decide to go into. Why study being a coroner?" Dru blushes as she realises the questions she is asking, "Sorry...I think you can guess my role."

"Ship's inquisition?" Ayden arched an eyebrow as he smiled. "It was just something to pass the time outside school really, and I found it interesting to do. My area of medicine will probably lead me to be a pathologist, or something. Quiet patients are so much easier to deal with than well...talkative ones, you know? I don't mind the quiet..."

"So you must be absolutely hating standing here with me rambling on at me." Dru bit her lip and looked down at the glass in her hand. "I'm sorry, I try to over compensate in social situations for my shyness."

"Ah..." Ayden wasn't sure what to say to that, being a little socially awkward himself. "No I don't hate you ma'am, not at all. I'm really sorry if I gave you that impression, I really am.." Now who was rambling?

"You'd think as a counsellor I'd know how to talk to people easier. By the way, can you do me a favour? Can you drop the Ma'am, it's Drusilla or Dru." Dru smiled up at Ayden still slightly blushing.

"Yes ma'am, I'm sorry ma-," the Andorian caught himself and turned a deeper shade of blue, his antennae drooping a little. "I'm sorry. It's a habit, you do outrank me, by a fair way. That and my mother always taught me to be respectful towards women ma'am." There he did it again, though not on purpose. "You're a counselor?"

"Not as impressive as the ship's inquisition I'm afraid. I promise I'm a better counsellor to others than I am showing myself to be here today. Do you mind if I just call you Ayden?" Dru smiled up at Ayden as she found herself relaxing abit easier.

"Well I don't rate a sir just yet, so Ayden's fine," the young Andorian replied slowly. "Have you been on this ship long? I was introduced to the captain earlier.." His blush deepened as he recalled he'd barely gotten a word out and had been staring at her like a freshman in love.

"Lir..." Dru paused and blushed as she realised what she was about to say, "Captain Saalm? She takes abit of getting used to alright. I remember our first meeting she kept touching my arm and such. She's very affectionate in her mannerisms, comes from her Orion background I guess. But she is one of the nicest people who'll meet, she's a good Captain to us aswell.""

Dru looked down at the glass in her hand as she frowned. She knew she shouldn't be thinking of the Captain in such familiar terms but it felt...confusing. As Dru looked back up at Ayden she felt he might still be abit awkward in the banquet lounge, "I've an idea, fancy a walk? I believe there is some beautiful gardens outside."

Promptly, Ayden offered her his arm; it felt only right to play the gentleman and escort her out. "Please. So what made you go into counseling?"

Dru looked down at the offered arm before taking it and smiling up at Ayden, "I wish we had more gentlemen like yourself in this universe." As Dru allowed Ayden to lead her out she thought over his question, "Honestly? My first love was medicine, it's what I went into the academy to study, but my grades weren't strong enough so I figured the next

best thing to medically helping helping people was to mentally help people." As they stepped outside towards the gardens Dru looked up into the night sky, watching the ships pass over the night sky almost like shooting stars."And you? Why medicine?"

"The need to help. I lost my father when I was very young, and there was no-one to help him before he died. My mother saw many people injured during her service and it just instilled a need in me to help. My mother's background is in security, you see. And now I'm doing my internship aboard the Sarek, before returning to the academy to defend my thesis. I have the grades that allow me this break from it all, and see a bit of the universe." He smiled. "Not to mention to spend some time with my mother and her new partner. It honestly doesn't bother me that he's only thirteen years older than me. He's good to her, and she's happy and that's what matters. Right?"

Dru thinks over which part she should ask him about first, "There's a phrase I always used when I wanted to go into medicine, if you can take away the pain for one millisecond from someone who's hurting or you can cure a person of something which has inflicted them for a long time, doesn't it make it all worth it? It sounds like you have a similar way of thinking."

Spotting a seat nearby, Dru gently tugged on Ayden's arm to lead him over to it. "Apart from the age, how do you feel about your mother's new partner?"

"He's the chief of intelligence. I would've expected him to be a little shady but he strikes me as an honest man, and I can see he loves my mother and I also think he'll be a good father. I'm not sure what to think on having a brother or sister now...to be honest. Am I too old to be a big brother now? I have no other siblings..not many Andorians do for that matter."

"Why not would you think your too old to be a big brother? If anything your at a better age. As the child grows up you'll be in a better position of your experiences in live and matured to be able to help guide him or her." Dru paused for a moment as she

remembered growing up with her own brother put pushes it back, she can't let personal interfere if she's trying to be a friendly ear for someone." A brother is someone who help's to protect and guide from the guidelines. When the child's parents are being over bearing and intense, his or her brother is someone they can turn to for advise, or even to just have a rant at."

Dru touched Ayden's arm gently, "I don't know you long but I think you'd make a good brother. You've a passion inside of you which shows through your aims you've set yourself in medicine and you obviously care alot for your mother, so much that you want to ensure her new partner is good enough for her. You've a head on your shoulders, you've planned well your years in the academy and where you want to go and what you want to do. Your a person anyone would be lucky to have as a brother."

"I'm old enough to be his or her father. I'm old enough to have children of my own," Ayden argued. "Do you have siblings?"

Dru tried to think of a way to bring this back around to Ayden, "What does age matter?"

"It matters to me. Please answer my question?"

Dru hesitated before standing up and walking over to one of the flower beds, leaning down to brush her fingers against a petal, "Yes. I have one sibling."

"Are you close to him or her?" Ayden asked as he watched her. He didn't need to be a telepath to know she was uncomfortable. "As I explained, I don't know what it's like to have siblings. I only had my mother growing up as my father was killed when I was fifteen."

"It's abit more complicated then that. Sometimes sibling relationships aren't black and white they can be grey. You can't compare me and my brother to you and yours, there is only 2years between me and Brendan." Dru picked up a disregarded petal from the ground before straightening back up.

"As I said, I can't relate. Plus I don't know yet if I'll have a brother or sister, it's too early to tell and he or she won't even be full Andorian. Commander

Kentar is Bajoran even if he doesn't look it because he doesn't have the nose ridges." Ayden seemed a little frustrated but truth to be told, he was just scared about becoming a big brother. What if he failed?

Dru breathed a sigh of relief the subject was pulled away from her and walked over to crouch in front of Ayden so we would have to look directly at her, "Your relationship with your brother or sister is made by you and you alone. The relationship you have will be dictated by the person you are. As I said earlier you are a good person. Of course it's unknown what you're going into but so is everything in life. How did you feel when you first left home for the academy? I know you're close to your mother, you were facing into the unknown."

"I was scared as anyone," Ayden admitted, "and I suppose I'm still scared. I'm not the warrior everyone expects me to be you see. I didn't grow up on Andor, I wasn't subjected to the rigors of my mother's home planet. Earth is my home, even though I do prefer the colder continents. I'd rather be in northern Scandinavia, than the campus in San Francisco. We'll see how I'll fare with being a big brother. It'll be a few months so I can get used to the idea."

"Ayden just remember one thing. Be yourself, don't be a person someone else expects you to be. Not everyone is a warrior, you'd be surprised how many aren't. I used to know of an Andorian who was CMO of a hospital on one of Starfleet's colonies, that's a big task and he was entrusted with it."

Dru handed Ayden the petal she held in her hand. "Take this and remember, it's separated from its family but yet it continues to show its true colours, to represent its family. If you put it in the middle of a book and press it, it will still retain its colour and be there whenever you wish to look at it."

"There are other means of preservation," Ayden pointed out, "like fixing it with plastics, and putting it in plastic. Then it will never wither away." He smiled slightly, then leaned in to kiss her cheek. He had no ulterior motives with it, he simply wished to express his gratitude. "Thank you."

Dru blushed deeply at the kiss on her cheek, raising her hand before she realised it to touch her cheek. As Dru quickly brought her hand back down she smiled softly, willing the redness in her cheeks to disappear, "I forgot I'm talking to a future Doctor who can sometimes be a scientist of sorts. At least in plastic it'll be always in your line of sight."

"That too, and it'll make me remember you." The young Andorian smiled. "You do look rather cute when you blush."

Dru stands there unsure how to respond, and feels the blush coming back again. "Um...thank you?um..." Dru tried to clear her throat to say something more so she didn't seem like a blundering idiot.

"Come, we should return lest people start to see things that aren't there. My mother likely would want to return to the Sarek by now, after all we do have a mission to prepare for ourselves and she is the captain. And Kentar is the intelligence chief, and well...our mission has that kind of nature so he'll want to brief the staff." He got up and offered her his hand.

Dru looked at the hand Ayden held out and stepped forward to take it, "I guess being one of the senior crew members I am probably being missed myself. Is the Sarek heading out again soon?"

"Yes ma'am, tomorrow morning if not tonight already. May I contact you some time?" He glanced sideways as he escorted her back inside like a proper gentleman.

Dru laughed and looked over at Ayden, "On one condition. You drop the Ma'am and call me Dru."

"Only when we are off duty and not at a formal function," Ayden stated as counter condition.

"In which case, thank you for a nice break from the evening Cadet." Dru smiled over at Ayden before gently squeezing his hand on arm and taking her hand away. She found she liked this Andorian, despite his confidence in himself, Dru recognised a strong soul buried deep underneath. She knew that no matter his worries, he would pull through them

and do himself proud.

"IT was my pleasure ma'am," Ayden responded politely, offering her a slight bow. "Goodbye." Another bow by way of farewell and the Andorian disappeared into the crowd.

[OFF]

Cadet 1st Class Ayden H'Rhar
Medical Intern, USS Sarek
apbL RAdm Talla H'RHar
TFCO 72/CO USS Sarek

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

A Fond Farewell (Part 4)

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Rear Admiral Talla H'Rhar & Commodore Amara Damian & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel

Location: Starfleet HQ, Banquet Lounge

Timeline: MD 05 - 1930 hrs

Forty-five minutes later, the banquet begins to wind down and some of the crew make their way home for the night...

[ON]

An hour and a half into the function, and the banquet was finally beginning to wrap up. Some of the crew and personnel had slowly been making their exits to retire for the evening, and Lirha was looking forward getting some rest herself. With a final drink in her hand, she sat by herself at one of the centre tables as she prepared to call it a night.

Tired, Talla and her family quietly left the banquet after saying choice farewells. They had a mission to return to, and preparations to make.

Will spotted Tarishiana again and made his way towards her. "Tarishiana," he said with a smile, approaching slowly, "would you care to join me for a walk?"

"I was hoping to find you again." Tarishiana replied as Will approached her. "I would love that." She answered simply with a smile and a tip of her head.

Markum walked through the main banquet hall and stopped at the bar. "One more for the road, please." the bartender gave an awkward look, "Okay Chief, last one."

Markum took the bottle and enjoyed a slow swig, enjoying the flavour of the beechnut-aged brew. "Mmmmm, that is good." Quinn had his jacket off and holding it with his right finger, over his right

shoulder.

Having spent some time outside, Dru headed back into the main banquet hall. As Dru looked around her she spotted that the crowd had grown thinner, people had started to leave. Seeing the time, Dru decided that she would visit the garden outside once more before heading to the ship they would soon be leaving the planet for their mission and she wished to try see the flowers once more before she was locked away in a tin can.

After a long time wandering between various dignitaries that had made themselves known to him during the last few hours, John knew that enough was enough. He had already managed to endure this for as long as he was required to, and he was under no obligation to hang around unnecessarily. Deciding on a quick exit, he slapped his combadge discreetly.

"Holliday to Saalm, I'm gonna call it a night ma'am, too many diplomats and officials trying to shake hands after too many ales for my liking...have a good night Commander, I'll see you in the morning"

Lirha sat up straight with surprise as her communicator sounded. She quickly processed her XO's words and found a grin grow on her face at the use of such a subtle technique. She tapped her comm badge and replied, "Understood, see you bright and early for our pre-launch checks."

And with that, he headed for the doors, and the short walk to the transporter station before he returned to his quarters aboard the Galileo, dreading the inevitable hangover that followed these events...

Evelyn left the party, as briskly as she entered, she made her way to the transporter platform grateful she had finished her unpacking.

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey (Will) Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Amber Rose Scuito
Chief Security/Tactical Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer
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LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

SWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

RADM Talla H'Rhar
Task Force Commanding Officer
USS Sarek

COM Amara Damian
Task Group Commanding Officer
USS Victorious

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 1)

Posted on 14 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman

Location: *USS Galileo*, Crew Quarters, *El-Auria*

Timeline: MD 05 – 2000 hrs

[ON]

Evelyn was walking towards her new quarters on the *USS Galileo* a duffle bag hanging by the strap off her shoulder. She moved down the corridor and stopped in front of her quarters. "Home, sweet home." She whispers.

Evelyn walked into her quarters, placing the duffle bag onto the desk. Sitting down, she looked around and the sight triggered something within her. There were no personal knick-knacks, pictures, anything up yet. Her bag was filled with casual clothing but nothing to put on the shelves. She looked around, remembering a box she brought.

She shifted to the side and opened a drawer at the bottom of her desk and pulled out the crate she brought. She opened it and pulled out a clear pane of glass. Touching the corner of the glass, it activated the device and an image appeared. It was one of her and three other people. She was between a tall man and woman, with another man to the opposite side of the woman.

She stared at the picture, her brows scrunches up as she doesn't recognized the moment captured in the picture.

"You see the future, but you don't remember your past."

The words echo at the back of her mind and she blinked. She stares at the man standing right beside her in the picture, his arm draped over her shoulder. She tapped the glass and the imaged zoomed to being only the man's face. Evelyn's thumb traced the cheek and the memories flooded back....

Illustratia, El-Auria: 287 Years Ago

"Say 'cheese'" the man announced as he focused his camera.

Evelyn wrapped her arm around her friend and smiled, saying cheese and hearing the click of the camera. She pulled away once the man smiled and went to take a picture to others.

"He's really enjoying that gift you gave him." Her friend and commented.

Evelyn nodded, "Yeah, I'm sort of regretting giving him the camera; he's been taking pictures of everything." She chuckled and looked up at her friend, "You're not upset with your gift are you?"

Narco looked at Evelyn, shocked she would make such a comment, "Of course not. I wouldn't even be upset if you haven't gotten me a gift."

Evelyn nodded and then there was silence between the two friends.

"So you are leaving for Earth tomorrow?" It wasn't a question, and from the look on her friend's face she knew it had been something he wanted to ask for a while. Evelyn knew it was going to come up, it was inevitable. "Was staying ever an option to you?"

When he asked the last question it made her think of her recent conversation with her father. She straightened up to him, "Don't you start," she replied, "I had this very lecture with my father; I don't intend to have it with you." She added, albeit colder than she intended.

Narco flinched back at her response, "Why? Evelyn, you are my best friend, I think that gives me some sort of right to know if I'm ever going to see you again or not." He uttered, his blue orbs piercing into her green ones.

She saw the sadness and concern for her in his eyes and she instantly deflated, "I have a duty on Earth, Narco. Remember when I told you I joined an organization?" She waited for his acknowledgment, and when he nodded, she continued, "I joined

Starfleet."

Narco's eyes went wide, "What?!" his voice raised an octave

"Look, the only way I could really understand humanity was to join..." she tried to explain.

Shaking his head, "Evelyn you know how dangerous it is? The risks you put yourself in?" he asked looking at her. "And for what? A mere Thesis?"

"Like you have room to talk," Evelyn countered, "you went to Cyonia and participated in their backward beliefs of space and nature."

"You can't possibly compare a Theological study on culture, to joining a military establishment." Narco feverishly responded.

Evelyn opened her mouth to rebuke but decided not to. Signing she ran her fingers through her short blonde hair, not minding the loose strands that fell over her eyes. "See this is why I didn't want to discuss this, because I knew we would fight, and I don't want to fight with you, Narco."

With the most sincere, caring eyes, Narco replied, "I don't want to fight with you either."

"Then what is the real problem?" she asked almost afraid of his response.

Narco shifted on his feet, looking away for a moment and when his eyes returned to hers he responded, "You are not leaving because of me are you?"

Evelyn shook her head, "No, of course not, why would you even think that?" her eyebrows furrowing.

Shrugging, Narco answered, "I don't know, just trying to understand what this is all about."

Evelyn narrowed her eyes at him. "You trying to psychoanalyze me," she accused.

Narco smirked a bit, "maybe."

"God, there is nothing more that I can't stand than psychiatrists. They seem so damn arrogant."

Arching his brow, he commented, "And that doesn't sound familiar to you?"

She slapped him on his shoulder, "shush up."

He extended his hand out to her, "Let go for a walk."

"But what about Lucia and Maurice, they wanted to hang out with us tonight?" Evelyn asked, hesitantly taking his hand.

Leading her out of the building he smiled, "Well they know they can contact us."

Evelyn didn't say anything else as they walked. Narco lead her outside of town, away from the noise of civilization. "Taking me to the forest Narco?" she asked, "You think that is wise, this time at night?"

Narco chuckled as he led them; moving past trees and shrubs, walking along the dirt trail, only illuminated by night sky, "Only you would worry about the Tranquil Forest of being dangerous."

"Can't be too cautious," Evelyn commented, letting go of his hand. "It seems when I am most relaxed the dangerous it is."

Narco was startled by her comment and glanced at her, "Did something happen to you on Earth?"

Evelyn shook her head, "No..." she sighted as they walked along the trail, which now lead them to the open area of the forest.

"You're hiding something," Narco accused as he watched her.

Evelyn turned about and looked at Narco, "No I am not, and if I was I would have told you about it already, you know that." She said confidently as she lay down on the soft grass, her eyes starrup up above. She always loved staring at the heavens, it was so beautiful. "We know the lifespan of a star, from birth in a stellar nebula, to death of a nova. How the light will finally be extinguished. We also

are able to plot the chain reaction of a particular star's death perfectly. We don't have any questions anymore."

Narco lay beside her, "Is knowing a bad thing?"

"Knowledge is never bad." She replied shaking her head, turning to face him. "It is just sad to know." She frowned.

Looking at her, he asked, "Why?"

"When you don't know, things are different; you get thrills, excitement, anticipation... There is imagination."

"Is that the reason you're going back?" he had to ask.

Evelyn looked at him and nodded, "It is a huge part of it. I may not feel the excitement myself. I may not even get nervous over a new discovery as they may, but at least I feel all those from them. Sort of like convection of feeling."

Narco nodded, understanding Evelyn, "And you feel temptation."

"What is there to be tempted about?"

"Because you know and don't tell. Telling would be easy yet you chose not to and so the temptation grows with each adventure." Narco explained.

Evelyn thought about it for a moment and something dawned n her for the first time, "That is why we're called a race of Listeners."

Narco smirked at Evelyn, turning to stare into her green eyes, "Because we have nothing else to say..."

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 2)

Posted on 14 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman

Location: *USS Galileo*, Crew Quarters, *El-Auria*

Timeline: MD 05 – 2002 hrs

Previously, on In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 1)...

Evelyn thought about it for a moment and something dawned n her for the first time, "That is why we're called a race of Listeners."

Narco smirked at Evelyn, turning to stare into her green eyes, "Cause we have nothing else to say..."

And Now, the Continuation...

[ON]

Evelyn turned away to look back at the sky above. Two moons illuminated the sky, a whisper of a nebula wisps between them. Her eyes searched through the different stars, like diamonds in the sky she was looking for one in particular. She identified each constellation and when she found the one with her star she noticed where once as a point of light was now a dark area. "Aww, my star is gone."

Narco blinked and followed her eyes to the dark patch, "Well you already knew the star had died when you picked it."

Evelyn nodded, feeling poignant. "I know...still disappointed." She sighed, "They're supposed to last forever, when everything in life fades, the stars would always shine."

Narco smiled sadly at her comment, "So tell me about your ship, the on you're returning to." He asked, wanted to change the conversation to something more positive.

"The USS Lexington, it is a new Constitution class." Evelyn spoke proudly.

"Met any of your shipmates yet, or not until you get back?"

Evelyn thought for a moment, "Only met one officer, named O'Ryan. Nice guy..."

Narco arched his brow "That it, he's nice?"

"I only met him for a few moments, seems too eager though. Maybe slow down and chill for a moment, appreciate the time he's living in." Evelyn commented.

A question popped into his head and he smirked, "Have a uniform?"

"Yup, golden, virtually one piece. It's a darn skirt, but I like the boots."

Narco chuckled and thought about how she might look in it, "Nice..."

Evelyn closed her eyes and sighed, "I had that dream again."

"You mean, nightmare." Narco countered.

"Whatever, I had it again last night. Ever since I returned home, it's been more vivid."

Narco looked at her, "You remember more of it?" he asked, "last time you told me it was a dark cloud and then harsh winds and a blinding light."

"The thundercloud was still there, as were the winds. However, the cloud was darker and I could swear I saw machinery inside."

"Inside the cloud?" Narco asked.

"Yeah and the light this time...It didn't come right at me, it was more of a ray of light through the cloud, shining on the city."

"I don't know Evelyn, change the darkness, you could be describing a summer day here."

Evelyn added, "The ray of light was green, and then there was noise." Narco looked at her and she

continued, "Like when you are in a crowded room...but only lasted a minute." Evelyn sighed, "I talked to the Grand Minister about my dreams, he said not to worry."

Narco nodded, "Then don't, considering we've been talking about pretty much how boring your life is here and so I would put it past, subconsciously, your mind deciding to be imaginative."

Evelyn propped herself up with her elbows and looked at him, "What is up with you and psychology?"

Narco smirked, "Just trying to spark something inside you."

Evelyn burst out laughing, "Yeah, me a psychiatrist, what you going to say next, I'm married to a Klingon?"

Narco chuckled, and thought for a moment, "You know I could see that..."

"What!?"

He rolled onto his side, facing her, his arm adjusted to hold his head up, "I'm hoping not, even though you're leaving; I'd hope you still would end up with one of your own kind romantically."

Evelyn's eyes widened as she heard him. "How am I supposed to take that statement? Either you're trying to be my father or you are a bigot."

Narco looked at her, "I am no bigot, or your father. I'm your best friend."

Nodding with understanding she replied, "I know, only wants what's best for me." She lay back once more.

Narco watched her, "You know, you never told me what happened earlier with you and your family."

Evelyn groaned, shutting her eyes, "If we were a primitive species, I think I would have been disowned." She turned her head away from Narco, she felt tears burning her eyes, and the last thing she wanted to do was cry in front of him. "I just want him to understand, I want him to know why I'm

going back to Earth."

"Have you told him?"

"Obviously but he takes it too hard. He claims the only reason why I want to go back is because I hate being El-Aurian. I don't hate what I am, Narco."

Narco reached out and grabbed her hand, squeezing it. "Eve, your father is going to miss you, that's all." Narco reasoned not liking when his friend is sad.

Rolling over, Evelyn sighed, "I know...Rao! I hate saying that." She growled, "Me knowing everything is what is causing all of this. I just want to be stupid sometimes."

Narco laughed, "Please, you were always the smartass." He stared at her, smiling wide, "I just can't imagine how you are able to keep your mouth shut."

Evelyn glared at him, "You think you're funny, huh? Anyhow, besides me leaving, what about you? Heading to Aurian City with Maurice?"

Narco shook his head, "No, I'm leaving too." He spoke softly.

Her eyes widen, "Where you going?"

"El-Moira" he answered unhesitant,

"But they are isolationist." She said agape. "Would they even allow you to enter their space?"

"We're the same race, Evelyn." Narco pointed out.

Evelyn looked at him, "Yeah, and so was Angenon, but that was before the enlightenment era."

Narco laughed at her comment, "'Enlightenment era' if it was so grand why are our parents and grand parents bitter about it?"

"The nexus changed us, Narco, we're not the same people we were 2 millennia ago. And they are probably bitter about the Q dealings."

"Ah yes the Q. I still want to know what they meant

when they said we can't see what we don't know."

Evelyn shrugged, "My guess it is multiple dimensions. We can see the future but not of an alternate reality."

Narco shrugged, "I feel like that Angenon was the price for our Enlightenment."

She shook her head, moving to stand up. "No, they are the reasons we're listeners."

"Eve, they destroyed themselves, all because of the knowledge acquired, that same knowledge is why you want to return to Earth."

Evelyn looked at him, "I feel like we're talking in circles." She said pacing. "Why El-Moira?"

"Why Earth?" he asked, rising to his feet.

When their eyes met, Evelyn had the same sense of clarity she had a few moments ago. "You feel it too, don't you? You sense that same nag I do..."

Narco stiffened, "What feeling?"

Evelyn moved closer to him, "You know exactly what I mean, you have that same feeling, urging you to leave."

When he didn't say anything she knew she struck a nerve. "I have this feeling I need to leave, almost instinctual. I've been feeling that since before I visited Earth." She looked at him, "You feel it too."

Narco nodded, "Yes, I feel like I need to escape from here. But I don't know why. You are the only one else who feels the need to leave."

Evelyn nodded, before now she thought she was alone, "I'm going to miss you."

Narco closed the distance between them and wrapped his arms around her small frame. "I'll miss you too." He whispers into her hair.

Suddenly a sound erupted from his pocket, making them step back away from one another. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the small communicator. "It's Maurice, and Lucia. They want

to know if we're still going to meet them at the Colluendome." He looked at Evelyn.

She nodded, "Tell them we're on our way." Evelyn smiled to that fact, "It's my last night on El-Auria...might as well indulge in it while I can before heading to the dark ages."

Narco nodded and smiled, "This is going to be fun."

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 3)

Posted on 14 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman

Location: *USS Galileo*, Crew Quarters, *El-Auria*
Timeline: MD 05 – 2003 hrs

Previously, on In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 2)...

She nodded, "Tell them we're on our way." Evelyn smiled to that fact, "It's my last night on El-Auria...might as well indulge in it while I can before heading to the dark ages."

Narco nodded and smiled, "This is going to be fun."

And Now, the Continuation...

[ON]

Evelyn and Narco arrived at the Colluendome, walking through the arched doorway, and down the steps towards the center floor of the complex. She saw her friends sitting on the benches talking. "We're here!" she called out.

Jumping up, the female rushed to hug Evelyn. "Eve, I have such exciting news!" she exclaimed, hugging Evelyn tightly. She pulled back, smiling and then turned to hug Narco.

"Well," Evelyn breathed grinning, "What is it?"

Lucia lifted her arm and resting on her wrist was a ornate gold bangle. "Choron asked to bond with me!"

Evelyn's eyes widen and a exciting scream escaped her lips. "Oh my god! When did he asked?"

"About an hour ago... you and Narco left early so you weren't able to see it. He is with his parents right now and I just had to tell my two best friends." Lucia, grinned grabbing both Evelyn's and Narco's hand, "Maurice was the first one I told

considering..." her voice trailed.

Evelyn pulled Lucia into another hug, "Don't worry about it. I'm thrilled this happened before I left for Earth!" While hugging Lucia, Evelyn glanced at Narco, who was only standing with a shocked expression. She watched him and when his eyes met hers, she saw the hurt in them. He had feelings for Lucia. She pulled back and breaking the hug.

Lucia began explain more about Choron when Evelyn reached for Narco's shoulder and squeezed gently. "Luc, he sounds great." She smiled at her, wanting to change the subject.

"Thanks Eve," Lucia smiled.

Maurice clasped and rubbed his hands together, "So we're going to do this?"

Narco blinked as if lost in thought, then asked, "Do what?"

Lucia smirked and moved to where she was seated a moment ago, "Why do you think we decided to meet here?" she asked pulling a wood box out from her bag.

Evelyn narrowed her eyes to get a better look, "Wait is that what I think it is?"

Lucia handed the box to Maurice, nodding "Yeah, we are going to perform the Auriae to Rao."

"Wait, don't we need the High Cleric to perform that?" Evelyn asked.

Narco smirked, "What's wrong Evelyn, scared?"

"No," she glared at him, "but we need at least the Magistrate's permission to be even allowed to witness one, let alone perform one." She objected.

Maurice rolled his eyes, "Stop and listen to yourself Evelyn, barely a hundred and you already sound like an old woman."

Narco chimed in, "And what's the worst that could happen? You get in trouble? You'll be in Earth before they even put you in trial."

Evelyn nodded admitting to herself he has a point.

Chuckling Maurice placed the box onto the table at the heart of the Colluendome. He opened it and pulled out; four slender shot glasses, a smaller wooden box, and metal container. He turned to Narco, "Could you grab the water bottle I brought over there for me?" he asked gesturing to where he was sitting before it.

Narco replied with "Sure." And went to retrieve the bottle, and proceeded to ask, "So, has anyone ever seen what we are about to do before?"

Evelyn shook her head, "Nope. I have read about it, however never witnessed it."

"Me either, I think Maurice the only one that has, thus why he's in charge..." Lucia answered.

"You know on second thought, maybe we should evacuate right now." Evelyn grinned, teasing, resulting in the group laughing.

"I'm so glad my friends have that much confidence in me." Maurice feigned being hurt as he poured water into each glass. Once he finished he opened the small wooden container, revealing a small pile of salt crystals. He pulled out tweezers that was in a secret compartment of the box, and placed one crystal in each glass. "Alright everyone gather around."

Evelyn moved to the table, standing across from Maurice. Narco and Lucia stood at opposite ends of each other. In front of her and the rest of them was their glass of water. In the middle of the table, Maurice stacked the boxes making a small pyramid. He lifted the metal container and twisted the bottom a quarter turn, a metallic unlatching sound echoed out. He placed it gently back on top. "What now?" Evelyn asked, intrigued by this.

Extending his hands out, he smiles, "We hold hands."

Evera reached out and took Narco's hand and intertwined her fingers with Lucia. "Now we have to say in unison, 'Rao and Devina, Hope and Truth, Knowledge and Wisdom, Light and Shadow;

Unveil Revelation."

[OFF]

Lucia looked at him, "We have to say all of that?"

Evelyn chuckled, "It's worth it." She looked at Maurice, "Let's do this." She smiled and nodded.

There was a moment of silence and nodding amongst the friends. In healing, they spoke.

"Rao and Devina; Hope and Truth" The metallic box shifted, sections began folding in on itself.

"Knowledge and Wisdom." The rest of the metallic box, slide into the bottom section, revealing a crystalline octahedron.

"Light and Darkness" The box then raised a little.

Evelyn watched with amazement at her friends, her heart was beating faster. Then they spoke the last verse with excitement.

"Unveil Revelation!"

A brilliant beam of light fired upward, striking the middle of the dome. The light spread out evenly along the dome for a moment before falling back, showering the group with sparks.

"Wow," Evelyn cheered, as she let go of her friends' hands, to try and catch a falling spark of light. Some landed on her hand, fading instantly into nothing.

Grinning Maurice announced, "This is only the beginning guys." He said.

The showers of sparks didn't end. The room was filled with light, and the colors became more vibrant. Then flares, varying in color, began to shoot out of the white beam of light.

Suddenly the beam ceased, the light faded instantly. Evelyn had to blink for her eyes to adjust the dramatic shift. Before she could ask if that was it, they crystal octahedron glowed vibrantly, and then there was a blinding flash of light...

To Be Continued...

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 4)

Posted on 14 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman

Location: *USS Galileo*, Crew Quarters, *El-Auria*

Timeline: MD 05 – 2004 hrs

Previously on In A Picture, Rememberance (Part 3)...

The showers of sparks didn't end. The room was filled with light, and the colors became more vibrant. Then flares, varying in color, began to shoot out of the white beam of light.

Suddenly the beam ceased, the light faded instantly. Evelyn had to blink for her eyes to adjust the dramatic shift. Before she could ask if that was it, they crystal octahedron glowed vibrantly, and then there was a blinding flash of light...

And Now, the Conclusion.

[ON]

Evelyn felt as if she was submerged under water, without being wet and the need to hold her breathe. Her once exciting feeling calmed, and she felt purely relaxed. She turned about and didn't feel the ground underneath her feet; in fact they appeared to be dangling. She looked around, only a red crisp light with orange and yellow wisps of clouds were around her. She couldn't see her friends but she wasn't concerned, in fact she felt giddy. Evelyn giggled and twirled herself, she feels like she's flying.

A voice echoed, as the color shifted from red to purple, and then finally blue. The clouds also changed from yellow to white, and orange to pink. Evelyn strained to hear the voice despite it being completely silent.

"Comfort and Joy, Evelyn" the voice whispered, "Comfort and Joy."

Evelyn closed her eyes and leaned back, watching

as the colors faded and replaced with a starry night as seen through a glass dome.

Evelyn blinked and shifted, realizing she was lying on the ground. She sat up and grinned. "That was awesome!"

Lucia was sitting up on one of the benches, "Wow" she gasped.

Narco was already on his feet, brushing himself off, "That was intense."

Maurice grinned, feeling proud of himself for certain. "I told you."

Narco moved back and stared at the untouched glasses, "What were the drinks for?" he asked Maurice.

Evelyn looked at Narco, as she returned to where she stood earlier, "Isn't it obvious, after what we just went through?" She looked at him. "I need a strong drink." She reached for her glass, grabbing it. The instant her fingers touched the glass, the water turned into a dark blue liquid. Taking the shot, Evelyn gulped it all down in one shot. Licking her lips she grinned, "Aurian whiskey."

Narco grabbed his, and so did the others. His turned a reddish yellow before he drank, "T'Karrian Brandy"

Lucia's purple concoction saved by her "Violet Tea, yummm" she expressed with a grin.

Maurice's remained clear when he grabbed his. "Nothing like a shot of Vodka!"

Evelyn chuckled and looked around at her friends, they've been with each other for decades. She looked down and blinked hard, pushing back the tears. "I'm going to miss all of you!"

Lucia moved to hug her quickly, "You're coming back, after all you're going to be here for my Bonding Ceremony, and you are going to be my Chief Patron Maiden, after all." She pulled back smiling.

Evelyn hugged her tightly, "Nothing will stop me from being there."

Lucia pulled back, her eyes red with unshed tears, "You got it."

Maurice went to where his stuff was when Lucia and Evelyn were hugging. He came back holding his camera. "Well if you are going to miss us then you need a picture to remember us with." He chuckled.

Evelyn laughed and shook her head, "I'm glad you love your gift."

Narco spoke up, "Maurice, set it up and with the timer." He moved and wrapped his arm around Evelyn, "Don't worry Evelyn, we'll see each other again."

"I'll hold you to that, Narco." She replied looking into his eyes.

"Alright everyone!" Maurice announced rushing to the group.

Evelyn wrapped an arm around Lucia's waist and Maurice took the other end. They all stared at the camera and she smirked hearing Maurice "All right, Say 'cheese!'"

"Cheese!"

[USS Galileo, Crew Quarters, Present Time]

She pulled the picture against her chest and lowered her head her eyes shut tight. Trying to keep the the flood of sorrow and remorse at bay.

Evelyn couldn't prevent the memory of the day she took her station on the USS Lexington's bridge and the ship picked up a faint signal in subspace. An El-Aurian transmission informing her of the Borg destroying her home, and killing everyone she loved.

The transmission wasn't translated to the crew and when she collapsed to her knees sobbing by the station, her colleagues on the Lexington were concerned for her.

"Eve stop!" She yelled at herself, shaking her head, trying to stop the flood of memories. "Just stop." she sniffled as she placed the picture on her desk. She wiped her tears away and leaned back in her chair.

She looked at the picture of her friends and smiled sadly, "I still miss you guys..." she whispered. Evelyn didn't blink back the tears this time

[OFF]

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

A Chat with Nice Company

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III

Location: Starfleet HQ

Timeline: MD 05 - 2000 hrs

[ON]

Tarishiana was more than glad to accept the invitation to join Will for a stroll after the banquet. She had found him intriguing during their talk and his comfort around her was a pleasant change from the normal apprehension most people experienced.

Her mother would have been furious if she could have seen Tarishiana with her hands hooked behind her back. No daughter of Diviana would have stood in such a submissive manor, but Tarish had long since given up trying to appease her. "So, Will...I must ask. You are more comfortable around me than most humans I have met." She looked over at him with a smile, "I am far from complaining, but it has piqued my interest."

Will smiled slightly and answered with a certain eagerness. "Humans tell me I keep to myself and don't open up to them. I guess it's true to an extent. The truth is, Betazoids are different. Your kind understand me better than humans and it would be foolish not to be open about myself. I've lived on Betazed and I know your culture, your ideas about privacy. I've always embraced your ways."

Tarishiana watched him as he spoke. She was glad he was eager to share with her. It was far nicer than having to pry the information from her company. "You lived on Betazed?" Her tone was almost amazed. "Not many humans chose to live among a bunch of telepaths." An gave him an almost mischievous smile. "I am kind of impressed."

"Oh, it's not that hard," he assured her. "But you know of all the inter-species relationships in the Federation, betazoid and human is one of the most common. We've even allowed ourselves to be genetically bonded." he glanced at her with a smile. "Every time I take leave, I spend at least a few days

on Betazed. I've developed many friendships there."

Tarishiana couldn't help but let her smile falter at the mention of genetic bonding. She attempted to recover quickly look over at the Commander. "I guess it depends where you grow up. There were not many humans in the social circles I was raised in." She paused for a second before continuing. "Genetic bonding isn't all the hype would lead you to believe." she flashed him her best practiced socialite grin. "At least not in my experience."

"You don't want to marry your betrothed," he guessed, in the sort of tone that said he was familiar with such situations. "I never approved of the practice myself. I've seen it divide families. If you ask me, all it will take is enough social pressure and Betazoid culture will change, at least in that way."

Tarishiana laughed, "I didn't hide that very well did I?" She shook her head slightly. "And to answer your question, I don't." She figured she would clarify. "My bonding was made for...uh...political gain." She let out a sigh, "Most parents don't expect their children to follow through, but ours do." She smiled at Will, "I hope you are right."

"I'm used to Betazoids. You are an open race and I know what to look for. But... will your family be disadvantaged politically if you do not marry?"

Tarishiana laughed at the thought. "The only person who will feel *disadvantaged* would be my mother." She shook her head, "My family is more than taken care of and all my marriage would do is give her bragging rights." She turned towards the handsome man she was walking with. "I don't know about you...but I don't want to get married to a man I consider a sibling so that *Diviana Barel* can brag to her friends about it." she smiled lightly.

Will smirked at her, meeting her gaze from the corner of his eye. "I wouldn't marry a man I consider a sibling so *Diviana Barel* could have bragging rights either. Not that I need a reason to avoid it..."

Tarishiana laughed at Will's comment, despite the fact that at times it was a serious topic. "So now that I have embarrassed myself with my dramatic

past...why don't you regal me with some of your history...besides your love of Betazed."

"Oh, it's nothing particularly interesting," Will replied, at least thinking himself that it was true. "I was just an operations officer aboard the USS Galaxy, but we did fight in the Dominion War."

He paused in the hallway, mostly quiet except for a security ensign walking by. "Where would you care to go?" he asked her, "HQ has plenty of gardens."

"I'd like that." Tarishiana smiled as they turned to head in the direction of the garden outside.

As they continued walking, he continued his story.

"The first time I ever went to Betazed was right before the Dominion invaded." He paused and glanced her way, hoping that she wasn't upset by the memory, then proceeded carefully in that gentle tone of his. "The Galaxy was participating in training exercises with the Tenth Fleet and the Jem'Hadar caught us off guard. I had disembarked that morning on a brief one-day leave... I ended up fighting the Battle of Betazed instead."

Tarishiana had been on board the USS *Coltan* with Lestian when the Dominion had invaded Betazed. She had been sick to death with worry about her parents. She had been relieved when she had finally gotten in touch with her mother. Her father and mother had come out the other side physically unscathed. "I have no doubt we were lucky you were there. I was fourteen when the Dominion invaded Betazed...but I was off planet on board the *USS Coltan* with Lestian...the man I am bonded too." She could help but feel a little guilty about her absence. "So I guess in a way I was lucky....depends on how you look at it I suppose."

"People died," he declared gravely, "you were lucky. But once I realized it was hopeless, I found a damaged runabout and got as many civilians as I could. Took some work but me and an engineering chief got us off the ground. We barely made it, but we made it." He smiled and looked at her almost apologetically. "Sorry, we should talk about something more pleasant."

Tarishiana turned and touched his arm with both hands, one on the front and the other opposite as she spoke, "Don't apologize." She gave him a genuine smile, "I am not opposed to changing the subject...What would you like to talk about? Anything you want to know?"

The human eyed Tarishiana's hand and followed up her arm to her face. With a slight nod he gestured to a nearby door that led out of HQ. "Anything I want to know?" he asked, "What should I know about you?"

"Well you already know about my unwanted betrothal..." Tarishiana looked up at him with a grin. "Which normally I keep to myself." She gave him a wink. "I have an obsession for mythology and medieval Terran weaponry." She looked down at where her hands were resting on his arm, "I have been told I lack the understanding of personal space...much like most Betazoids I know, so if I make you uncomfortable please let me know."

Will placed his free hand atop hers reassuringly. "Betazed is the closest thing I have to a home off my ship; it doesn't bother me. So, Terran weapons?"

Tarishiana smiled at his response, "Yes, I love pretty much anything with a blade." She looked around the garden appreciating the beauty of it all, "My family doesn't approve...as you might have guessed..." She gave him a wink, "How about you? Besides Betazed, what do you love?"

"Oh," Will replied carelessly, "my parents. I have a few friends outside of Starfleet who are close to me." He paused to give an odd smile, "I have a son now too."

"Really?" Tarishiana asked with genuine excitement. "That is amazing." She smiled, as she thought over the idea of having children. The corner of her lips pulled up in a grin as she posed her next question, "So, is he back on Betazed?"

"Yes, he is. With m-" he hesitated for a moment, unsure, "with his mother, where it is safe." he gave a half nod and turned down a narrow path which led towards a secluded section of Starfleet's grounds.

Tarishiana noticed the hesitation. She nodded as he spoke unsure if she was going to press for the information. "Are you and his mother still together?" She could have retrieved the information herself, it was sitting at the front of his thoughts but she was a firm believer in allowing her companions to have secrets from her. She easily followed his lead.

A moment's silence followed, but he answered. "It is complicated," he admitted, "we never really have been together. But we've been close... ever since we met, at the Battle of Betazed." He glanced at her, "Whenever I go on leave... I visit her," Will gave a soft laugh. "Betazoid or not, I've no place to be so open."

"I understand" Tarishiana said with a smile. "I didn't mean to pry." She pulled her hands from around his arm with the rouse of smelling a near by flower. In actuality she felt guilty. She hadn't meant to pry, it wasn't her place. She sometimes forgot how easy it was to feel close to someone she just met, yet another thing she should have warned the Commander of. She closed her eyes as she inhaled the scent of the beautiful purple flower. She placed her arm behind her back with her hand holding the opposite arm by the elbow. She took a few steps forward, "I think I love this place."

Will was not upset though, silently watching her as she turned away from him. At length, he looked around the garden. "Yes, I suppose it's nice," he agreed."

"While I am not a botanist..." Tarishiana started, "I love plants...they are a finicky as people on what they need to thrive." She reached out and touched a soft leaf allowing her arms to return to her side. "If only everything was so straight forward. She flashed Will a smile, "So, what should we talk about now? Since we have covered our awkward personal lives."

Will smiled back and knelt down beside her as she examined the plant. He turned his eyes to it as he spoke. "I think sometimes things *are* straightforward," he offered, "maybe it's us who over-complicate things that are really very simple?"

Tarishiana looked over at Will, appreciating his features before returning the plant. She gently touched the leaves with her fingers times as she contemplated his theory. "I might have to agree on you. While it doesn't apply to all situations I do believe we have to take part of the blame for the chaos in our lives."

He didn't seem to notice her looking at him in such detail, he gaze mostly fixed on the flower as if entranced by it. "I don't think I know nearly a much about that sort of thing as I should. Most of my life has been about serving Starfleet."

Tarishiana gave a little chuckle, "In contrast I have spent my life as a socialite...who has attempted to escape though service to Starfleet."

"Do you see it as more than an escape now?"

Tarishiana's lips curled into a grin as she rose to her feet. "Are you sure you aren't the ship counselor?" She laughed a little bit. "Starfleet is an escape. As long as I retain my position, I get to postpone my wedding, irritate my family, and avoid the parties of *that* life." Her tone was very matter of fact as she spoke.

"Sorry," he replied with a grin, standing up beside her. He appeared more serious as she continued to speak. "So, no fascination with seeking out new life and new civilizations? Come now, Tarishiana, doesn't it excite you even a little when you find a new particle or whatever it is you do in that lab?"

"I never said I didn't enjoy my escape." She started easily. "I have always enjoyed learning how other species communicate. While I am good at what I do, it is simply not what drove me to enlist. Nor is it what drives me to stay." Tarishiana paused for a moment pressing her lips together as she thought over how to phrase what was yet to come. "I enjoy my life...and I have fought hard to keep it...just not for the reasons most do."

"I see," he replied thoughtfully. "Well, if you are happy then that is all that matters, yes?" He smiled and after a time continued, "What do you think of the Galileo?"

"She is a ship." Tarishiana said matter of fact. "The labs are impressive, the crew is more than competent. Should be interesting." She took a few steps continuing their walk, "How about you? What are your feelings on your new home?"

"Oh, I like it well enough," he replied, "I am just used to bigger ships. I have served on a galaxy class ship and a station. My last ship was an Akira-class. A science vessel isn't too bad though, I wouldn't mind captaining one someday."

"I think you would make an impressive Captain." Tarish replied with a smile. "As long as I am around other people the size of the ship doesn't bother me much." She glanced around the garden. "I always tend to find interesting people who capture my attention." She turned to Will giving him a wink.

It was clear from his thoughts that he was pleased by her words, and when she winked he gave her a knowing smile. "With luck I could be there in a few more years, who knows." There was a gentle flux in his emotions as he considered the implications of being promoted. "What do you aspire to?"

The thoughts in Will's mind went back to the same women who had infiltrated them when he spoke of his son. She assumed she was the Betazoid on Betazed that mothered his child. There was more to the story and someday she might ask about it, but that day was not today. With a smile Tarishiana thought over Will's query. "I would love to be part of a first contact mission...I have been working on an upgraded version of the universal translator that requires less input from the language it intends to translate." As the words left her mouth she realized how different she was from the rest of the members of the crew.

Most of the people Tarishiana had met in her time in Starfleet had been more like Will. They had a desire to achieve which she lacked. She loved Starfleet and she loved what she did but she had no desire to accomplish much more than day to day things. The thirst for knowledge was only marginally motivating to her. She let out a sigh and shook her head. "You are probably wondering how someone with my lack of ambition could achieve my position and rank...Lord knows some days I

wonder..." She felt like explaining more, but she didn't know where to go. This conversation was one she typically only had with Lestian, and it never ended well. She flashed Will a smile in an attempt to cover whatever emotion was showing on her face.

"I enjoy first contacts," Will said with a smile. He could sense her unease, though he was unable to guess at its source. "What's wrong?" he asked, reaching out to lightly touch her arm.

Tarishiana's hand moved to rest on Will's. She appreciated the concern but felt guilty she had let her practiced lightness falter. That didn't happen around many people. She looked over at him, "It has been a long time since I have had anyone to talk that didn't have an agenda of their own...in fact I don't know if I have ever had someone like that." She smiled a genuine smile. "Perhaps you are more of Betazed than I first gave you credit for."

Will smiled at that. "If I have an agenda it's the well-being of my new family, Tarishiana. I won't think less of you for having less idealistic beliefs than most. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you."

"I appreciate that more than you know." Tarish said with a sigh. "Your family is lucky to have someone like you on their side."

"Well, I try."

[OFF]

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

Uncertainty

Posted on 12 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: Starfleet HQ, Garden

Timeline: MD 05 - 2010 hrs

[ON]

Lirha wandered through the HQ's botanic garden located just off to the side of the banquet hall which she had just left. Despite her reservations about the crew banquet, it had turned out to be a rather pleasant and enjoyable evening with the help of several glasses of brandy. Now, however, she found herself in a strange state of mind. She didn't want to retire to her quarters just yet, but also knew that she shouldn't continue on with the festivities, especially the enlisted crew's after-party at the recreational complex. With a tranquil and serene mind, Lirha slowly walked through the garden while softly humming her favorite childhood Orion melody.

As Dru stood up, she attempted to brush the dirt off of her trousers and frowned as she realised dirt and white linen did not mix well. She had placed her jacket on a bench behind her, so as not to get dirt on it. Dru just shrugged her shoulders as she figured the ruined trousers were worth the opportunity to brush her fingers against the Washington Lily she found poking out of the shrubs beside the path.

It had been a long few hours, Dru found she could never mingled well in crowds where alcohol was involved. Her mind kept being drawn back to Ayden and the conversation they had had, she smiled slightly as she remembered his offer that they could keep in communication, it might help her on the voyage having someone outside of the ship to be able to speak with.

As Dru moved to pick up her jacket, she heard a faint humming and was unsure where it was coming from. Dru hesitated for a moment before moving towards the sound, wanting to ensure whoever it was wasn't drunk and lost having left the party. As Dru came into sight of the person she smiled as she recognised the Captain. Over the last few days they had grown close, Lirha had become a friend that

Dru could depend on. "Captain?"

Lirha snapped out of her trance at the sound a familiar voice and looked around briefly before settling her eyes on a shadowy female figure. "Yes?" she asked, unable to clearly see who had spoken to her. Taking several more tentative steps, Lirha moved closer and finally recognized the person. "Oh, hello Lieutenant." she said with a courteous smile. "I didn't realize you were here as well."

Dru smiled slightly as she watched Lirha, "Are you ok Captain?" Dru noticed the steps Lirha took, almost as if she was trying to stay stable, Dru smiled a bit more as she realised Lirha was very drunk, "You've enjoyed yourself tonight Lirha?" Dru found herself lapsing into using Lirha's name as Dru saw her as a friend, especially in this situation when they were both off duty.

"Yes, I'm okay." she said in a quiet voice. "I think I've enjoyed myself quite enough for the night." she added with a smirk, then slowly moved to take a seat at a nearby bench. She removed her uncomfortable dress jacket and let out a long sigh as she sat down on the wooden bench, then looked over at her blue-eyed friend. "Would you like to join me?"

After their conversation last night, Dru had started to feel more at ease with Lirha and part of her was slightly concerned about the Captain's state. Dru knew she could look after herself but it didn't stop her from feeling worried, "Well I tell you what, why don't you walk with me? It'll help you clear your head."

Lirha nodded without saying anything and got to her feet, leaving her jacket on the bench to retrieve later. "Where are we going?" she asked Dru as she stepped close to the woman. The captain's black hair had fallen out of its pins and now hung loose around her shoulders, hiding the side of her face from view.

"Hum...well lets just follow a path and see where we end up", Dru attached her comm badge to her under shirt to ensure she had it in easy reach should something happen, "I always find you can stumble

across hidden areas when you just mindlessly wander. How did you find your first official function as Captain of the *USS Galileo*?"

"It was enjoyable...surprisingly." she answered. Though she was usually a talkative and vibrant person, she now felt much more calm and subdued in the large, dark garden. As they began to walk, Lirha slipped her arm in between Dru's and looked over at her quietly, studying her face. "What about you?" she asked in a soft voice, now walking arm in arm with the counselor.

Dru blushed slightly as she looked down at the path, feeling Lirha's arm wrapping around hers, "Honestly? I feel I never fit in at parties. I'm not really a drinker. I must admit I enjoyed myself tonight though, the Admiral's son and myself had a very interesting conversation."

"The Andorian?" Lirha asked curiously. She felt butterflies begin to manifest in her stomach as a strange feeling spread throughout her. The captain sighed mentally, refusing to acknowledge the jealous twinge. She hadn't admitted it to Dru, probably because of her position as commanding officer, but Lirha found her to be quite attractive, both on the inside and outside. Their growing bond over the past several days had led to the development of...well, Lirha wasn't sure.

Dru remained oblivious to Lirha's reaction as they were in the dark. Dru smiled slightly, "Yes the Andorian, Ayden. I guess we were similar personalities in the party. We went for a small walk and I helped him with some things which were confusing him. Did you have opportunity to be able to meet with him?"

"Yes, I spoke with him briefly." she said, then looked down at the ground. At Dru's mention of going for a walk with the cadet, Lirha had swallowed a lump in her throat as she tried to not think of what might have transpired between the two of them. "What did you talk about?" she asked quietly and moved herself closer to Dru.

Dru looked over with a slight frown on her face as she felt Lirha tighten the gap between them. The counsellor tightened her grip on Lirha's arm

concerned that maybe she was unstable on her feet from the drink, and needed her support "Ah now Captain, I can't discuss patient counsellor type stuff."

Lirha stopped and held on to Dru's arm, pausing her in her tracks as well. She pushed a lock of her dark hair behind her ear and stared into Dru's eyes as she took another small step forward. "You seem to be very adept at keeping secrets." she remarked in a soft and sultry voice, then took her free hand and wrapped her fingers in between Dru's.

Dru looked down at Lirha's hand intertwining their fingers and looked back up into Lirha's eyes, feeling confused as she tried to establish what exactly was going on, "Well I wouldn't be much good as your ship's counsellor if I couldn't keep secrets Ma'am."

In such close proximity to each other, a flood of hormones surged through Lirha's body. Unable to control her feelings for her friend, she moved her head forward and licked her lips, then slowly pressed them against Dru's as she closed her eyes. She felt her heart beating rapidly in her chest and she opened her mouth slightly to take Dru's bottom lip in between hers. After several brief moments of intimate contact, she finally released it.

Dru stumbled backwards she separated from Lirha. Dru's fingers instinctively moved to trace her lips where the feeling of the kiss still lingering on her lips. She looked at Lirha with a look in her eyes of a deer caught in a spotlight.

"You're beautiful." Lirha said quietly as she looked intently at the counselor, then stepped forward to kiss her again. She could tell Dru was apprehensive...even slightly shocked, but the Orion wanted to be close to her again regardless.

As Lirha kissed her again, Dru instinctively leaned into the kiss before pulling back sharply, looking at Lirha with confusion in her eyes. She didn't understand what was happening. She had only ever kissed men before. This felt.....she didn't know how she felt, "Lirha?" Dru whispered, trying to make sense of the situation.

Hearing the confusion in the counselor's voice made

Lirha put her hands protectively around Dru's waist. "I'm sorry," she said quietly, "I probably shouldn't have done that. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable...again." she said with apologetic green eyes.

Dru moved her hands to Lirha's chest, prepared to try push her away but something made her stop. There was an uncertainty which was flowing through her body but it seemed to be at war with a feeling of safety and security she felt in Lirha's arms. "I...I don't understand."

"It's okay, Dru. Just trust me." she whispered. With her friend's hands still on her chest, Lirha moved her own underneath the fabric of Dru's dress shirt and rubbed her smooth skin. She leaned back in and kissed her again, tilting her head to the side to allow their tongues to rub against each other.

Dru felt her chest fill with a deep inbreath as she felt Lirha's hands against her skin. She responded to Lirha's kiss the only way she knew how, by grabbing the Captain's under shirt in her fists as she softly pressed her lips against Lirha's. Dru started to realise that she was finding it difficult to breath.

The Orion pulled Dru even closer so that their bodies pressed firmly against each other. With her eyes now closed in pleasure, she continued to slowly kiss the young counselor and relished in the intimate sensation of having her shirt being tightly clenched.

As Dru felt Lirha's body closer to her, she suddenly became aware of another sound in the background. A woman's laughter could be heard above the sounds of Dru's and Lirha's deep breathing. Suddenly realising the situation herself and Lirha were in, Dru pulled back quickly, taking a few steps backwards. Her breathing was laboured as if she is unable to catch a breath. As she watched Lirha in silence, afraid to give them away, she heard a voice accompanying the laughter and realised it was the CSO of the ship. Dru stayed silent, waiting until the voices had passed, never breaking eye contact with Lirha.

As the voices pass by, Dru opened her mouth slowly, trying to form her thoughts into words, "We

can't do this."

Lirha slowly glanced around and spotted a pair of familiar silhouettes and voices. She nodded and gave Dru a small smile, then let her eyes travel down to the dark pavement beneath their feet. "I know." she answered quietly, unsure of what to say or do. A conflict of interests erupted inside of her, torn between her feelings for the lieutenant and her responsibilities of command. Frustration began to mount and the captain shook her head with regret while mumbling an Orion explicative under her breath.

As Dru watched Lirha she felt a confusion of emotions inside of herself. The young counsellor wrapped her arms around her own waist as she felt a tear fall down her cheek, "I...I can't do this." Dru had thought her feelings for Lirha were of friendship, now she no longer knew. Dru had never felt this way for a woman before, it unsettled her to the core but part of her recognised the burning feeling she still felt against her skin where Lirha had touched her, almost as if Lirha had imprinted herself on the counsellor's skin.

"Please don't cry, Dru." she said as she put a hand on her shoulder to reassure her. "I didn't mean to upset you."

Dru looked down at Lirha's hand against her shoulder. As slowly she closed her eyes to keep back the tears, she internally relished the feel of Lirha's touch before stepping back. She felt so conflicted, one part of her wished to rush back into Lirha's arms but the other part of her said this was unknown, it wasn't safe. And then, as smaller part of her, the officer side, whispered this was her Captain, her superior in career and in life, why would she want someone as lowly as Dru.

The captain took a deep breath and looked up into the starlit sky, letting the cool breeze flow through her nostrils as she attempted to sort out the situation at hand. She honestly had no idea what to do, and thought the best solution might be for them to part ways for the night and speak about it the next day. Over the last couple of days, Lirha had recognized Dru as being a rather emotional, even for a Human. Not wanting to upset or confuse her any further, she

finally spoke up. "I think I should go and get some rest." she said with a small, apologetic smile.

Dru nodded her head slowly, still not trusting herself to be able to speak, "That might be for the best Captain." Dru attempted to rebuild the walls between them, pushing a distance.

Lirha nodded and slowly turned around to walk away. She took a couple steps before turning back to look at Dru one last time, wanting to comfort her while knowing the best thing she could do at the moment was to leave. She put her head down and slowly made her way back down the path to the bench on which she had placed her jacket. Slipping her sleeves into the white fabric, she pulled on the top of her dress uniform and walked out of the garden.

Dru looked into Lirha's eyes when she turned around before breaking the contact first and letting Lirha walk on. As Dru heard her footsteps disappear into the distance she felt another tear rolling down her cheek. She was a counsellor, she should be able to handle this but all she could feel was confusion, and buried somewhere under the confusion she felt a small stab of regret. A few moments passed before she felt an ability to be able to walk. The young councillor went back to collect her own jacket before taking the long route back to the transporter platform to return to her quarters.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

The Sins of the Fathers

Posted on 16 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: *USS Galileo*, XO's Quarters

Timeline: MD 05 - 2100 hrs

[ON]

Sleep was not coming easily to the Commander; it seemed that every time he managed to distract his mind from one subject, it immediately latched onto another. Tossing and turning in his bunk, every facet of the last few days flashed through his subconscious, his thoughts on his fellow crew, his orders, his experience with Command earlier on, nothing seemed to be capable of settling him.

Finally with an indignant sigh, John opened his eyes and lifted himself from his bed, rubbing his eyes as he slowly padded barefoot across the bedroom, heading back towards the living space. The sight of a planet out of the window of a starship still felt slightly unusual to John as he looked out and across the small segment of San Francisco visible from this point. Every so often, a small shuttle would fly overhead, ferrying workers to and from the dry-dock, shifts being set up around the clock to make sure that in a few hours time, the launch would go successfully.

As he watched, a slight beeping noise caught his attention, at first he ignored it, then decided that it must have been coming from one of the repair teams, or their equipment, before his brain finally caught up and realised that it was being generated by the access terminal on his table. Heading towards it, he looked down at the display, which indicated an incoming communication.

For a moment, he studied the data, reading through the numbers and figures, before identifying its point of origin - the colonies on Mars. This wasn't going to be good. Settling into the chair beside him, he tapped in his access code, and the channel opened. The sight that greeted him was not one that he had wanted to see any time now.

An older human male, his face wizened with years of experience, looked through the depths of subspace with an icy glare and an unimpressed disposition. John took a moment to study the details in front of him, noting that same penetrating stare from the man's deep green eyes that he had encountered so many times in his past, before he finally found his voice once again.

"Father"

He spoke only a single word, not wanting to do anything more than acknowledge the presence of a man who for the past decade, had done nothing more than belittle his son's career aspirations, and permanently resent him for choosing a lift in Starfleet. Their last encounter before he had abandoned Mars had not gone well, in fact he remembered having to control his rage, and fight the urge to use his fists to knock the old man to the floor after the way he had spoken to him previously.

"Still running around playing soldier are we John?"

The reply from his father was no warmer than he had expected, in fact, the ice of Andoria would have trouble being any colder than this. John knew that his father had never appreciated him for his own achievements, having groomed him from a young age to take his father's place in the scientific community; instead, John had followed his own path, and leapt into the world of Starfleet without a second thought.

"Still spending your days finding other people's shortcomings to make up for your own old man?"

John had given up on formalities, the respect that he once had for his father had quickly eroded over the torrent of abuse and disappointment that he had been subjected to, John had no regrets though, he had lived his life the way that he wanted, free of the control of his parents, and free to make his own choices, his own mistakes, his own successes.

"Perhaps...but you know I'll never admit to that...or any of the other insults you deem suitable to throw at your own father...hell I'm only on this channel because your mother insisted on it"

John's mother, the saint that she was, had been the driving force behind their family dynamic for years, the only person who John really felt he could trust, and the only thing that had stopped him from hiding his existence from his father, or disappearing off on some deep space mission that would make him nigh-on impossible to track down with any great amount of ease.

"Don't bring mother into this Dad...you know how I feel about you, and it's none of her concern"

"Dammit John...I'm not here to talk about your mother. I'm here to talk about you and me"

John had heard this all before, his father making sure that he got his own way on everything, it didn't matter if you were his son, or a research assistant on one of his projects...you were still there to obey his every whim, and not a lot else.

"Here we go again Dad. All about you right? Let me guess, you're giving me one last chance to move back to Mars, join you in a laboratory, and all my past mistakes will be forgiven?"

"Not quite son...besides, by the time you see through your own arrogance, I'll probably be pushing up daisies out in the temperate zones on the equator"

"What are you talking about? What trick are you playing this time?"

"I'm dying son...no jokes...no tricks...here; I'm transmitting you a copy of my medical records...if you don't believe me you can look them over yourself"

As his father spoke, John saw a small indicator light appear on his monitor, giving away the existence of a file transfer. Half with shock, and half still not believing what he was being told, John touched the screen, and watched as the emblem of Starfleet medical, followed by patient logs began to develop before his eyes

"Sharat syndrome...terminal...looks like you're going to get your wish at last John, no more of me"

hounding after you any longer"

A look of sadness appeared in the once strong eyes that belonged to his father, in his entire life, John had never seen the old man before him looking as weak as he did now, and he had never been one to allow others to see his pain, his suffering, until now.

"Are you serious...I...I can get back to Mars tonight, just give me a few hours to..."

"No"

His father hit back with the tone of authority that would have petrified the XO in his younger days, stopping his sentences in his tracks before he could even come up with another thought.

"You have a mission to complete, I might be dying but I still have a few friends in the scientific community, not to mention Starfleet Command...plus I'm sure your CO would never forgive me if I took you off the ship right before launch...no son...I won't be going anywhere for a while...docs here have given me a few months at least. Your mother wanted you to swing past on your way back to Earth next time"

"I...I...yes father...but I want Starfleet medical to send me regular updates...I'll be back as soon as I can..."

John could not deny his father's logic, as he had so often tried to do in his youth. It was true that the Commander was needed here, and leaving now would be a dereliction of duty in both his, and his father's eyes.

"I'll make it happen...I'll see you soon...Son."

And with that, the channel closed, his father's aged face being replaced by a simply Starfleet logo, and a stardate, before fading into nothing, leaving John alone with nothing more than his thoughts, and his now-emerging regrets.....

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

Robert Holliday
Father
NPCd by Holliday

Mission Dedication & Sleep Deprivation!

Posted on 18 Mar 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: *USS Galileo*, XO's Office

Timeline: MD 06 - 1000 hrs

[ON]

Tarishiana kept her eyes focused on the PADD as the turbolift moved through the ship. One day she would take the time to appreciate this particular piece of technology, but today was not that day. Within a few moments she had arrived at her chosen deck and disembarked the lift.

The walk to the office of Commander Holliday wasn't a long one. Straightening her uniform and smoothing out her pulled back hair, as she always did in this situation, she rang the chime. She waited for permission to enter and smiled as a familiar voice rang out on the other side.

Finally heading towards his final report of the day, John knew that as soon as he was able, he was going to head straight for his quarters and make a very close acquaintance of his bed. Right now there was no force in the known galaxy that was going to keep him from getting some sleep. It appeared that the fates themselves were playing a practical joke on him, and he was sure that the junior crew members were having a good laugh at the expense of their now almost delirious XO suffocating under the weight of their requisition submissions.

Almost preparing to shut down his desk consoles, John was pulled sharply back to reality by his door chime. Looking at a nearby chronometer, he realised that he had in fact ended up working through the night and into the middle of the following morning. It seemed he should have been less focused on sleep, and more on what was on the menu for lunch.

"At this rate I'm gonna be swinging past sickbay for a stimulant" he muttered to himself. Turning his attention to the door, he called out.

"Enter"

Tarishiana took a few steps into Holliday's office before stopping in her tracks, "Are you ok, Sir?" She asked with a grin before completing the journey to the chair across from his desk. "Uh...I have some requisition requests from the science department, but I can come back?" She was trying not to read what he was thinking, but his exhaustion was overwhelming her telepathy.

"I'm learning today that ok is a very relative term Warrant Officer...nothing half a dozen coffees won't sort out...you have no idea how much paperwork a requisition for self sealing stem bolts involves....don't worry about me, how can I help?"

Tarishiana stretched across the desk extending the PADD to the XO. "Nothing too serious..." She started with a smile, "Just some supply requisitions as well as a request from one of my virologist team to have access to the computer core as well as all as increased in designated power. They are more than willing to work around whatever schedule the Operations department would require but it needs to be signed off by either you or Command Saalm. " She took a breath and gave John a sympathetic grin.

"Well, it could have been a lot more complicated than that, I suppose I should be grateful that some people don't need a huge amount of supplies."

He slowly studied the information located on the PADD in front of him, reading each item in turn. There was nothing particularly unusual or that would require any kind of special authorisation from command. The only main problem was going to be assigning additional computer power to another department. That said, there wasn't quite yet a full crew compliment on board, so some of the other science departments were not yet in need of any processing time.

"Consider it approved. We don't seem to have a quantum mechanics team aboard yet, so I'm sure they won't mind if I transfer some spare time to your virologists. How's your dept shaping up? Ready for launch?"

Tarishiana leaned her hands on the chair in front of her. "Thank you sir." She said with a grin. "I am just waiting for the last three specialty teams to arrive which should be though out the day, today." She thought for a moment. "Most everything is ready, we are still waiting for Operations and Engineering to finish up the last of the equipment installs." She was fully capable of doing them herself but if it was one thing she had learned in all of her time in Starfleet was that if you didn't want Ops trying to do experiments in her labs, she would have to leave the install to them. "After that...the science department will be ready for whatever comes our way."

"Sounds like you have deck 4 running like a well oiled machine. Good to know the senior staff around here have their finger on the pulse. Means that poor, shattered XO's like me might actually get some sleep later on. I didn't realise command postings would lead to this many late nights and missed meals..."

Tarishiana couldn't help but laugh as a thought popped into her mind. "Well don't skip too many meals, Sir. I don't much like the idea of beating you again by default." She resisted the urge to give him a flirty wink like she would have out of uniform instead she simple gave him her best professional smile.

"Sounds good to me - at this rate I'm going to end up having a word with the transporter chiefs to make sure I get to the mess hall on time. I'll get these requisitions in place by this afternoon Chief, now if there's nothing else I wanna try to get these wrapped up before lunch?"

"Thank you, Sir." Tarishiana said with a slightly nod. "I will leave you to your work and return to mine." She turned on her heel and returned from the way she came. She had plenty of work to get done herself and more then a few scientist to get in line before the launch.

"See you around Chief, don't be a stranger"

As he watched her leave, John smiled as he returned to his reports. The conversation had been a nice

distraction from the repetition of his work so far, but he still had plenty more to do.

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

Commiserating with Compensators

Posted on 22 Mar 2012 by Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn

Location: *USS Galileo*, Deck 7, Various

Timeline: MD 06 - 1030 hrs

[ON]

As Lilou slithered down the tight access crawlway along the EPS relay route, she wondered - not for the first time - if all the crewmen and officers who weren't in the Engineering department actually realized how brave they were. Not for the jobs they knew they had - they could think whatever they liked about those, she didn't really care - but for the simple fact that they were wandering around this starship, putting their things in order and doing the little things they did to prepare for the voyage, all without any evidence to support the conviction that the ship would actually do what they told it to. How many of them had actually even paid attention in the two or three classes in basic engineering they'd been required to take? And even if they had... they still probably couldn't comprehend how complex and magnificent the ship around them really was. And even if they could... they wouldn't know how it worked. Or how it didn't. And that, in Lilou's mind, was courage to the point of fool-hardiness.

Take, for example, the EPS manifold system she was now inspecting, according to Quinn's detailed Fix-It list. The relatively small crew was churning about the decks, simply trusting that everything worked just fine just because it had been approved for launch. It was a matter of faith. And they could do so, because there were faithless, detail-oriented engineers on board to make sure - or at least do their best to make sure - that they didn't all explode or transform into jumbled gelatinous goo.

She flattened herself inside the shaft, pulling her PADD up to a few inches from her nose - the farthest it could be in the available area of this part of the crawlspace. The electro-plasma had been re-routed through the impulse manifolds temporarily, but that couldn't continue for very long. It would

cause an overload, eventually, that would either black out the entire system - leaving them potentially without life-support or defense systems - or knock the relay system out of alignment and cause even worse problems. Eventually. The trouble was, with the way the system was constantly in flux - antimatter wasn't exactly the most stable fuel source one could imagine - it was hard to make an accurate guess as to how long they had beyond a certain point. Which meant putting the problem off until they reached a starbase was out of the question.

The PADD showed her the same data she'd seen on the MSD in Main Engineering, no changes. With a little grunt, she stowed it in a pouch attached to her left thigh and fished out a hyperspanner to open a small panel directly above her and reveal the electro-plasma matrix running alongside the optical data lines that networked the details of the plasma flow into the computer database. Reaching into a similar, but larger pouch strapped to her right leg, she withdrew a long metal coil with a small gel pad on the end of it and, holding the far end of the coil, she held the gel sensor right beside the EPS. The readings matched those she'd seen on the PADD, but it was worth having checked the whole line. She'd never quite gotten around to trusting one set of permanent sensors, although these seemed to be reliable enough. This time.

Stowing the coil, she replaced the panel above her, secured it, and pulled out her PADD again. So it wasn't a false read, which meant... she should start getting abnormal readings as she crawled closer to the primary taps. Twisting her head, she rested her PADD on her stomach and shimmied on her back, almost gracefully with a sort of backstroke motion, until she reached the next access panel. Sure enough, the readings here were elevated, and as she continued shimmying and collecting readings along the access route, her data matched right along what she'd expected. Which was lovely, except it didn't help her solve the problem.

As she reached the area of the access route where she could follow it out into the rest of the ship or directly to the main matrix, she chewed her lower lip. The core wasn't the issue; she was ninety percent sure that that had been checked nine or ten

times at the very least. She'd taken a look at it herself before she'd begun her slithering journey through the access crawlspace and, according to her PADD and the readouts of the inordinate number of sensors attached to the data points around the core, there was still no issue there. No. The issue wasn't at the source, but in the organization of the relays which meant...

She lifted a brow, inputting a stream of information from memory into her PADD and watched the screen light up, tables flickering rapidly as new datapoints were added to the matrix. It was a reasonable hypothesis, if nothing else. She tapped her comm. "Peers to Engineering. Chief, you around?"

Quinn was dangling half in-half out of the Waverider's ladder-equipped hard umbilical connection. "Peers, your timing is perfect. What?"

"I've been re-checking the relays to make sure the EPS imbalance you observed wasn't due to false reads on the ODN. Everything's reading true in here, but I had a thought. Has anyone checked the phase compensator? It's possible that the phase margin is out of line; if an incorrect amount of the phase shift is being subtracted from the signal directed by the compensator, the computer may automatically be redirecting the EPS from its prescribed route to avoid an over-amplification. I'd like to pop in there and do a system scan, make sure the circuit's aligned properly. What do you think?"

Quinn could be heard through the com yelling at another engineer, "Willis, does this look like a hydrospanner?" Then a sound of several metallic clangs echoed in the background. "Sure Peers, just don't break anything that you can't fix. Also, remember while you're bellied up to the phase compensator to adjust your tricorder to compensate for the high induction of plasma feeding in from the plasma manifold. Trust me, that's one mess you do not want to clean up."

Lilou emitted a little snort of mirth, "You got it, Chief. I'll let you know what I see down there. Good luck, sir."

With a glove in his hand the Chief Engineer gave a

muffled answer, "mummfff wammfff..."

Slipping her PADD back into its holster, she twisted around a corner and began the process of climbing down ladder rungs in the tight space deeper into the belly of the ship following the main taps until she reached the correct section of the shaft. The entire access area up and down the latter was thrumming from the power of the engine just beside it. Busy little bee. Hooking her foot through the ladder rungs, she unhooked a miniature maglock from her belt and opened the access panel, attaching the removed panel to the side of the access shaft temporarily, and crawling in through the narrow hatch. The phase adjustment coil was just one small ring around the immense warp engine that towered above and below her in the otherwise empty space. She took a moment for herself there to simply appreciate the beauty of the technology at work. When the moment passed, she hooked her self-ratcheting clamp into the base hook of the ladder and climbed all the way through the hatch until she was hanging on the inside of the warp shaft. Pushing out with her legs all the way onto her tip-toes, she stretched horizontally across the exceedingly long drop and ended up using a stretch of binding cord to pull herself across to the phase adjustment coil.

Carefully, on her knees on the grate that encircled the coil, she drew her tricorder from her right leg gear holster and adjusted it to Quinn's specifications. "All right," she muttered to herself, "let's see what's got you in a mood, hm?" She scanned the data readout and frowned. Readjusted her inquiry and frowned again. "I see. Well, I can't blame you, ma'am. I'd be irritable if my phase shift was being subtracted without being added to in equal share, too. Let's see if we can correct that compensation circuit of yours. Shall we?"

She hunkered down, rolling her wrists a couple times until they cracked pleasantly, and bent to her work. With an eye on the tricorder, she gently removed the bottom plate of the phase adjuster attached to the coil and bent her head to peer up inside of it. The optic cables in the control loop hadn't been properly secured and had shifted just enough so they weren't making proper contact to redirect the system compensation. She glanced at

the tricorder readout again and carefully rearranged the cables so that they connected at a phase margin of fifty-two degrees. "Computer," she tapped her comm. "Run a diagnostic on EPS routing with the current phase compensator adjustment."

"Electro-plasma system route adjustment has been sent to your PADD, Warrant Officer."

"Thank you," she said sincerely and finagled her PADD out where she could see it... and... yes! She grinned. "Peers to Engineering. Chief, just a glitch with the cables in the compensator. I'm sending the route adjustment with current specifications to your PADD. Give me the go-ahead and I'll patch her up."

Quinn replied while crawling under the Waverider on his back, "Hang-on, hang-on. It's wedged... wait....rrrrrrr....Here it is. Okay." It suddenly got quiet for a brief moment. Then with a sigh from Quinn, and a chuckle in the back ground from Petty Officer Willis, "Go shove an ODN cable in your mouth Willis. Good job Peers. You got lucky. I umm, I should of figured it would be something simple. Now, if you want me to be proud of you, fix it and do it right the first time, then find your way out again." Willis, in the background was in a full fit of laughter. "I...told you....she'd....fix it...." Quinn looked back at Willis. "ODN cable Willis! Keep me posted Peers."

"Sure thing, Chief!" Lilou smiled up into the phase compensator, purring, "Hear that, sweet thing? We're going to get you all sorted out. Don't you worry." Another burst of Willis' laughter came through the con and she flushed. "Ah... right. Peers out." She tapped her comm, disconnecting, her cheeks stinging. 'Way to look smart in front of your superior officer, Lil,' she thought, rolling her eyes. There was a quiet bleep and whirr from the phase compensator. "It's okay, honey, give me a second." No use taking out her embarrassment on a perfectly innocent data circuit. A few minutes and a few carefully doled out microdrops of nanopoxy later, the circuit was good as new. Well, to be fair, it was new as of now, really. She closed her eyes and counted down from ten as her cheeks cooled. "Computer," she murmured. "Show me the relay routing as of now."

"Current electro-plasma system route has been sent to your PADD, Warrant Officer."

"Thank you," she said, checking her PADD again. All clear. Fantastic. Gently, she reattached the base plate over the compensator circuit and shimmied back towards the edge of the phase coil grate, carefully lowering herself back to the outside edge of the cavity with the still looped binding cord and crawling back into the access crawlway. With a foot hooked into the ladder, she leaned out and soaked in the vibrant energy pulsing around the engine. "I'll be back," she promised, "just please don't give me a reason to." With that, she used the maglock to resecure the hatch access and climbed back up into the crawlway. Her skin was still buzzing from the close proximity to the warp engine at maximum, continuing to twitch and buckle the whole way back to the corridor hatch. In the corridor, she rolled out and paused, scrubbing her hands together to get them to stop vibrating. She heard a couple awkward coughs and looked up, this time to see a pair of officers staring at her curiously.

She could imagine what they saw - a short girl, her uniform askew from the crawling and climbing, belts and pouches strapped every which way, crouching on the floor and acting like she was trying to start a fire with her hands. She probably looked crazy. Joy.

She stretched her arms up over her head, cracked her neck twice, and reattached the access hatch, ignoring them studiously as she strode down the corridor back to Engineering. As she passed through the door, it was like coming home. Not even a full day and she knew exactly where she belonged. That was nice. Absent-mindedly, she made a vague attempt at righting herself as she crossed into the repair bay.

She found Petty Officer Willis smirking at the underbelly of a Waverider. "Did it tell you a joke?" she asked wryly before she heard the tell-tale sounds of someone working on the inside.

"Did the compensator kiss you goodbye?"

"That and more," Lilou remarked dryly. "My lips are sealed." She hunkered down next to the

Waverider, "Chief? Doing all right in there? Need anything?"

"Peers?" he could be heard as he tried to mumble to himself, "Man she is fast. The power is still on so I take it you didn't break anything. Yeah, I do. I need a new Petty Officer that keeps his trap shut!" Willis gave a 'who, me?' look and started laughing as he went to wash his hands.

"I'm done here, and I'm hungry. That means you get to buy lunch Peers, and I could eat the entire nacelle of a Galaxy-Class." As he slid out from under his newest project he chuckled a bit at the sight before him. "You llok like you actually did some work, Peers. That's how my engineers should look while on duty. If you aren't dirty, you aren't workin." He gave a friendly wink, then looked to Willis, "Yo, Willis, you're in charge while we go get some chow." Willis gave a wave and walked away. Then Quinn turned back to Peers, "The problem is, he always thinks he's in charge. Let's go grab some chow."

Lilou nodded, beaming. He didn't look all that spic and span himself, which made her feel inordinately better as she followed him out into the corridor. She glanced over her shoulder as the doors closed on Willis whistling. Her stomach rumbled ominously, churning on itself. "Your will is my command, Chief."

[OFF]

Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers
Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn
Chief Engineer
USS Galileo

Operation Counselling

Posted on 15 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy

Location: *USS Galileo*, Counsellor's Office

Timeline: MD 06 – 1100 hrs

[ON]

Dru leaned over to pick up the next PADD on her desk. As she noted the person's name she smiled to herself, Lieutenant Commander Chauncey William Remington the Third...now there was abit of a mouthful.

Dru settled back in her chair in order to read through the file. As time passed the smiled on her face turned to a frown before she threw down the PADD in frustration and cursed to herself. *Bloody Starfleet. Three weeks ago he looses most of his crew and they don't highlight with me that I need to keep an eye on this person?!? If starfleet had their own bloody way they'd keep throwing people to the lions without giving then pscycological help.*

Dru continued to grumble to herself before hitting the commbadge on her uniform jacket,

=^=Counsellor McCarthy to Commander Remington; I would appreciate if you could meet me in my office within an hour please.=^=

Dru usually didn't like to order people around, but in this case she felt she needed to see the Commander sooner rather then later.

=^=Uh... I am not scheduled for a counseling session. What can I do for you? If you need a work request...=^=

=^=I'm trying to get the crews evaluation's done and it just so happened you are next on my list. I have some time free so I'd appreciate it if you would find the time to come see me.=^=

If Will was annoyed or upset, one couldn't tell from the calm tone of his voice. =^=Very well, I'm on my way.=^=

Dru frowned slightly at her commbadge at the effort it had just taken to get Will to come to her office for an appointment. Surely every starfleet officer, especially a Lieutenant Commander would be fully aware they must meet with the counsellor when first onboard. Dru decided to give Will the benefit of the doubt and sat back to reread his file so as she would be fully prepared.

Several minutes later, definitely longer than it took to get to the counselor's office, Will arrived. "Counselor," he said with a polite nod.

Dru looked up at Will as he walked into the office and a natural smile developed on her face. Dru stood in order to offer her hand to the man, having to look up at him given their height difference. "Commander. Thank you for making space in your schedule for this, I know you are very busy at the moment prepping for launch but at least we can get this over and done with."

"Ah, yes, I'd like that very much," Will managed in a conversational tone, taking her hand and shaking it with a firm but gentle grip.

As Dru pulled back she indicated for Will to take a seat on the padded seat on the other side of the room while she took the one facing it, pulling her legs under her as she sat down. "Well I guess first and foremost we need to establish a few things. Which in here I prefer that ranks be left outside, for me to be your counselor we need to be on equal standing so I'm Dru or Drusilla and with your permission I would like to call you Chauncey." Dru tried to set the scene so as Will would be as relaxed as he could be.

Will wrinkled his nose at the counselor as he took a seat. "Good Lord, no, Counselor." he declared, "The name's an honor to carry, but a pain to hear. Please, call me William or just Will. Don't worry about my rank."

"Will it is so. But please, Counsellor is a title, Dru or Drusilla unless you are uncomfortable with that." Dru smiled across at Will as she made herself comfortable. "First and foremost let's tackle something which could otherwise hinder this session. I get the impression you are not quite happy

to be here?"

"Very well, Dru," he said, saying her name as if he were testing how it felt on his tongue. He gave the counselor a look as she mentioned him not wanting to be here. "Why shouldn't I?" he asked.

"Well why don't you tell me, Will?" Dru noted the deflection but didn't look too much into it.

Her response earned a hesitation from Will. After a pause he replied, "I have no objection to you, Dru. I simply do not enjoy having my brain picked."

"Well why don't you tell me about yourself, about the things you feel I need to know and we can see if the merge up with what I feel you need to talk about. That way I'm not picking your brain...yet anyway." Dru smiled over at Will.

"Seeing as I don't feel you need to know anything about me I tell you in the office, perhaps you had best pick my brain." There was a hint of amusement in his voice, but it was hardly noticeable.

"I'll tell you what Will. Your job on this ship is head of operations if I recall correctly. You need to know the layout of a ship in order to assign quarters. You need to know the circuitry of a ship to be able to repair systems. You need to know all of this to do a job. My job on this ship is Counsellor. To ensure the mental well being of each of the crew by aiding and helping them where it is needed. How do you propose I do my job if I don't have the information I need to be able to do it." Dru kept the soft smile on her face to show Will she was trying to reason with him nothing more.

"If your worried about what will be noted on your file or what will go outside of this room I can assure you what is said in here, stays in here. If something is off the record it stays off the record unless it puts this ship and it's crew in danger. I'm here to help Will, nothing more. A shoulder to cry on when you don't want others knowing, someone to bounce things off of." Dru shifted slightly in her seat to lean forward to look Will in the eyes, "Let me do my job."

It occurred to Will briefly, as he listened in silence

to all that Dru had to say, that she was probably in the least likely position to get through to him. She was human, and she was a counselor, neither of which worked in her favor. He even contemplated telling her a much, but settled on something less blunt. "In any other situation, I would compliment you on your persistence. But I can assure you, any concerns you have after reading my record are unfounded. The Phoenix accident occurred almost two months ago, I've come to terms with it and I'm not about to have a nervous breakdown."

Dru kept the soft smile as she realised Will was going to be difficult and she needed to approach this differently. "Who said my concerns are in relation to what happened two months ago? Maybe my concerns are in relation to your claustrophobia? You've just transferred to a ship much smaller than you would ordinarily be used to. How are you coping with that?"

"Oh, come now," he said with a smile, "I've been around the block more times than you know. I know what you counselors are up to." He gave her a subtle wink before continuing, "I don't have claustrophobia... I'm just uncomfortable in tight spaces like Jefferies tubes. Being on the Galileo won't bother me, though I'm used to bigger ships."

Dru took note of Will's use of flirting she assumed was to draw her attention away, "It can't make your job very easy if you've to spend time crawling through jeffery tubes in order to do sensor maintenance? Being a science ship I'm sure the sensors will require alot of maintence with the use they will get."

"I may be uncomfortable, but I won't allow that to prevent me from servicing the ship." He paused, looking quite seriously at her. "Don't you have some ink blots for me or something? Take some neurological scans?"

Dru laughed lightly before returning Will's stare, realising he is trying to deflect again, "Do you not think that ink blots would get you into more trouble? They give us an insight into how you view things and think about things, which we then pick them apart. How did you handle your claustrophobia when you had to use an escape pod

to leave the Phoenix?"

"I memorized the standard answers to all your tests," Will replied with a smirk. He turned a bit more serious though when she mentioned his last ship. "Ensign Likara," he replied, "a bolian girl. I was too busy helping her to worry about myself. I was the Phoenix's second officer and the ranking officer still alive. We don't have the luxury of selfishness in emergency situations."

"Whatever happened to Ensign Likara afterwards?" Dru settled back into her seat, internally happy Will had stopped fighting her.

"She's on leave back home."

As Dru sensed Will's reluctance she decided to pull back again, giving Will some breathing space. There was time to discuss the bigger of the issues either today or another day, "So tell me, how do you plan on handling your fear of certain illnesses/infections onboard a primary science vessel?"

Will frowned at her. "Handling my fear?" he asked, "I'm not *afraid* of getting sick. I have a prudential caution around biohazards, that's all. I should think it serves me quiet well when we beam some sort of alien virus aboard. Don't you get concerned when you're exposed to something dangerous?"

"Honestly...we are in space, everything is a hazzard. If we are here to find new planets, new people, we need to be open. Something's will harm us, others won't, why will we find which it is if we don't take chances." Dru paused for a moment before deciding to end this session with one more question, "what are you so scared of Will?"

"Nothing," he reiterated, "whatever reservations I may have about certain activities do not effect my performance. Only a fool is afraid of nothing. Would I be afraid to face the Borg? Yes. Or species 8471? Of course. It doesn't mean there is something wrong with me."

"Did anyone say there's something wrong with you? Why would you feel there is?"

Will smiled at her. "I think I've had quite enough counseling for one day. Thank you, Dru." With that he stood up and began to leave.

Dru smiled to herself as she watched Will walk away. Before the doors closed she called out loud enough for him to hear, "I'll see you at 1100 hours in two days, Will." Even though Dru knew they would have already left for the mission, she didn't see a reason to recommend him being pulled from the ship, she was determined though that he would talk about what had happened...even if it took them awhile to get to that point.

Will paused just outside the door and looked over his shoulder. "Have a good day, Counselor," he replied before turning down the hall.

[OFF]

Lt. Cmdr. Chauncey William Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counsellor
USS Galileo

Unexpected Visitor

Posted on 16 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Si'tar Del'an & Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an

Location: *USS Galileo*, Captain's Ready Room
Timeline: MD 06 - 1515 hrs

[ON]

With less than twelve hours before launch, Lirha sat in her ready room aboard the *Galileo* and looked over the final status reports and updated itinerary items. She had been hard at work all day and was now scrambling to take care of several last-minute issues which had arisen. She pushed her dark hair out of her face and let out a frustrated sigh as she attempted to calm her nerves.

Without warning, the door chimed. "Enter." Lirha called out, then quickly paused the document she was currently reading on her console. She looked up with curiosity to see who had interrupted her work.

The doors swished open to reveal a hooded form framed by the entrance to the ready room. It moved into the room with a grace and fluidity unsurpassed, but no introduction. As the figure moved closer, delicate hands appeared from the folds of the robes and as she stepped into the light her face was revealed.

She had the bearing of one who was ancient, mirrored in the wisdom of her emerald eyes and the strength in her mature features. But she was not worn by the ravishes of time, her skin as smooth as a maid's, pale as a Earth's moon, and she lacked any sign of weariness. One would be hard pressed to guess her true age, rather it was easier to say she was ageless. Stray locks of dark, auburn hair framed features as her eyes gazed upon Lirha with an intensity that was almost tangible. Her lips bore neither smile nor frown. Upon her brow rested a fine line, a set of cranial ridges rising from the bridge of her nose and sweeping up only to curve back towards one another and then split in two just below her hairline. A similar ridge gave her chin a striking appearance.

Her robes were a deep amethyst color and

shimmered in the light, revealing wisps of periwinkle, cobalt, and turquoise within its depths. They clung loosely to her womanly form, cinched just above the waist with golden links from which hung a ruby dagger sheath with an elegant golden hilt hinting at the quality of the gently curving blade within. Upon her brow rested a very small by very lustrous ruby, ensconced in gold and hanging from a slender chain.

Pausing directly in front of the desk, the woman made a complicated motion with her hand. She raised her first and middle finger together to touch the center of her forehead, then with slow, elegant motions twisted her hand down and around, raising it again in front of her before lowering it. She looked like she might at any moment begin to dance. Silence passed between them for a few moments before she spoke, her voice rich, soft, but powerful. "You are the one called captain. I know you."

Lirha sat in stunned silence as she stared at the alien woman, trying to make sense of who, what, how, and why she was in her ready room. It took the captain several moments before she recognized the familiar-looking cranial ridges on the woman's face, and she finally identified them as being similar to Cadet Mor'an's, the young Red Squad trainee whom she had recently met.

The captain slowly got to her feet and looked the woman up and down, taking note of her strange movements and elegant robes, her eyes finally settling on the curved blade attached to her hip. With a tense and cautious posture, the Orion quickly glanced at her desk's drawer which housed the nearest hand phaser. The Tarkannan woman's presence was unsettling and left many unanswered questions, the most pertinent of which was how she managed to get aboard the ship without Lirha's knowledge.

"Yes, I am the captain of this vessel." Lirha said in a firm tone, staring into the woman's eyes. "Who are you and how did you get aboard this ship without my authorization?" she asked in an authoritative tone.

Del'an saw how the Orion woman's gaze wandered,

sensed the tenseness in her voice and bearing. She allowed a thin smile to grace her lips and spoke in a soothing, if somewhat bemused tone. "There is no need for you to fear me, Captain. I have been a liaison between the Ta'rkan and the Federation since your First Contact; Starfleet knows me. I am Si'tar Del'an, Daughter of Si'lani, Fa'iel of the Order of Ban'kina. I am here to see Mor'an, for she is my student."

"I see." Lirha replied with a still-cautious gaze. "I'm Commander Lirha Saalm. You said you know me?" she asked curiously, temporarily ignoring the woman's request for Mor'an. "How is that possible if we have never met?"

"It is a recognition, a greeting," Del'an explained, "I know you *are*. To *understand* someone, that is different. I may never know you well enough to understand you."

Lirha nodded in understanding of the cultural differences and offered the woman a small smile. "It is nice to meet you Si'tar Del'an, Daughter of Si'lani, Fa'iel of the Order of Ban'kina." she said, unsure of how to formally address the woman. "You know, you could have sent me a communique regarding your visit and I would have been happy to make arrangements for you. As it is, we are all in a bit of a rush preparing for our departure. I believe Cadet Mor'an is currently aboard and I would be happy to summon her for you." Lirha said, then motioned towards the replicator along the wall. "May I offer you a drink while you wait?" she asked.

"You need not concern yourself with me," the woman replied, raising a hand up and drawing it in to her chest. "I wish to accompany you on your first mission, now that Mor'an is to be away from the Academy for an extended period. Please, summon her."

The captain blinked several times at the woman's unexpected request to join the crew, then paused for a moment before tapping her commbadge. "Cadet Mor'an, please report to my ready room." she said, then motioned to an empty chair across from her desk. "Please, have a seat while you wait." she said to Del'an. "I'm sorry, you've caught me a bit off

guard...did you say you wish to join us on our mission?"

"As an observer," the Tarkannan woman replied with a smile.

Lirha scratched her chin as she considered Del'an's proposal. "And what...or who, exactly, would you be observing?" she asked. "Mor'an?"

"Yes. As well as your ship."

"My ship?" she asked with a raised eyebrow and a tilt of her head. "I apologize if I don't understand, but if you are the Ta'rkan's liaison to the Federation, surely you are familiar with our starship operations?". Lirha wasn't quite sure what was so special about the *Galileo* to warrant a foreign observer aboard for the mission.

Upon receiving the unexpected request of her presence in the captain's ready room, Mor'an immediately made her way there, intrigued at what the captain might have to say to her. She hit the door chime and, after hearing the captain call for her to enter, Mor'an breezed into the ready room.

Upon seeing her mentor standing before her, Mor'an touched her fingertips to her forehead and twisted her hand out in greeting. Del'an, ignoring the captain's questions for the time being, turned to her student and made the same gesture. They touched fingertips and then stepped back. "What brings you aboard the *Galileo*?" Mor'an asked, forgetting to greet Lirha.

The captain stood from her chair and cleared her throat to interject into the conversation. "Your mentor and I were actually just discussing that. Please, have a seat, Cadet." she said to Mor'an and motioned to a nearby empty chair. Lirha returned to her seat and leaned back as her eyes darted back and forth between both Tarkannan women, waiting for some sort of explanation to manifest itself.

"Now that you have moved to a new level of your Starfleet training," Del'an explained, "I have come to see you. Not only that," she smiled fondly, "I will be accompanying you for your first mission."

Mor'an did not know whether to be overjoyed at her mentor's presence or afraid of her coming scrutiny. "The entire mission?" she repeated in a neutral voice. "I never would have expected you to accompany me on a Starfleet mission."

"Not as your mentor," the elder woman reminded her, "that is Starfleet's place when you wear that uniform, and mine when you wear your robes, only to see how much you have become." Only then did she turn to the captain. "You asked me why I wish to see your ship. It is not because I have an interest in technology. I have never been on a Starfleet mission, we Ta'rkan have little interest in outside affairs. Only with Mor'an's entrance to Starfleet do we have a reason to know what transpires on your ships."

The Orion captain sat silently as she considered the woman's proposal. The *Galileo* was equipped with ample space to house up to ten civilian VIPs, and diplomatic duties weren't necessarily unheard of for Nova Class starships. Lirha wasn't opposed to the idea, just more so confused at the manner in which it was presented. "Have you spoken with Starfleet Command regarding the matter?" she asked Del'an, then turned to Mor'an. "And what are your feelings on this?"

"If your superiors need to know who is on your ship," Del'an said, "you may inform them of my presence." She did not seem to have much regard for protocol.

"I am very pleased that Del'an is here," Mor'an said in reply to the captain's question, "She will be a tremendous help to me."

"Well," Lirha began as she held her hands open, then clasped them back in her lap, "I suppose I don't have any objections to your visit either." she said to Del'an with a smile. "I will inform Starfleet of your presence and take care of the required paperwork. In the meantime, are there any special arrangements which you require while you are on board?" she asked, wanting to provide the Tarkannan woman with the best possible hospitality.

"Anything you provide me with will be sufficient. However, I would appreciate private quarters. Size

and quality is of far less concern than solitude."

"Of course," the captain replied with a nod, "I currently have several vacant VIP quarters which are rather spacious and well-equipped, and should provide you with a great deal of privacy." she said, then paused as a possible concern crossed her mind. "I'm curious, have you spent much time around Humans before?"

"No," Del'an replied, "very little. Still, Mor'an is the only Ta'rkan who has spent more time with them. When we must interact with the Federation, I am among those called upon to serve."

"They are a very pleasant race," Mor'an offered, "Though they are more concerned with physical needs and possessions than they are with sharpening their minds."

Lirha grinned at Mor'an's description, wondering if either of them had spent much time around Orions. Humans paled in comparison to the hedonistic tendencies of her green-skinned species. "Yes, Humans are quite materialistic, but more importantly, they are some of the most curious beings I have even encountered. I'm pretty sure many of them have never seen a Ta'rkan before, so please don't be offended if they stare or ask questions. It is simply their way of understanding something unknown to them." she said.

"I do not take offense at curiosity," Del'an said with a smile. "Now, captain, I will let you return to your duties." She glanced at Mor'an, "I will speak with you this evening." She turned and made her way towards the door.

"I look forward to it." Lirha genuinely replied as the elder Ta'rkan woman moved towards the door. "In the meantime, I will contact Operations and see to it that your quarters are arranged." she said as she picked up a PADD and hastily typed up a memo to the department chief.

Del'an paused outside the door as it opened and nodded in her head in consent. Then she was gone.

The captain turned back towards the cadet with a curious expression on her face. "Are you sure you're

okay with this? I'm not familiar with Ta'rkan customs so I will trust your judgement on the matter." she said to Mor'an.

"De'lan knows what is best," Mor'an said, "It is not my place to say otherwise. If she is here, then it is for a very good reason."

"Very well. In that case, I look forward to spending time with both of you and learning more about your culture." she said with a small smile. "I have nothing else for you at the moment, Cadet. You're dismissed, unless you wish to speak to me about something?" she asked, giving Mor'an one final chance to share any of her thoughts, opinions, or reservations.

"No, ma'am," Mor'an replied, "Nothing comes to mind." She stood and waited for the captain's response before leaving.

"I'll see you on the bridge in a few hours then." Lirha replied with a nod, and waited for the cadet to depart after having already dismissed her.

[OFF]

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an
Red Squad Intern
USS Galileo

Si'tar Del'an
played by Chauncey William Remington III
USS Galileo

A Shot In The Dark

Posted on 19 Mar 2012 by Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday

Location: *USS Galileo* - Holodeck 1

Timeline: MD06 - 1800 hrs

[ON]

Dru sat back in her seat, rubbing her eyes which felt tired from staring at PADDs all day. As the young Counsellor tilted back her head, closing her eyes, she went over everything which had happened in the last 24 hours. As her thoughts turned to Will, Dru couldn't help feeling a mixture of worry and of excitement. She was worried about the slight hostility she picked up their session and his reluctance to open up. Her excitement was over the challenge she would face to get him to open up, it was a chance to get her teeth into something and would stop her dwelling over Lirha.

Lirha was another item on Dru's mind. The more she thought about their kisses, the more wound up and frustrating. She felt

As Dru allowed her eyes to close she realised she needed to unwind. Being as wound up as she was right now, she wouldn't be able to help anyone requiring counselling or even just advice.

Suddenly an idea came to mind, only a few days ago the XO had told her his favourite way to relax was time spent in a holodeck shooting phasers, he had even offered to show her a programme. Dru smiled to herself as her hand went up to her combadge. An hour spent blowing things up....what could be better than blowing things up to relieve stress.

=^=Counsellor McCarthy to Lieutenant Commander Holliday; Would you be able to spare an hour to show me one of your phaser shooting programmes? I've some free time now if I'm not imposing on yours.=^=

Listening as his combadge chirped up, John was rather impressed that the young lieutenant had decided to take him up on his offer of some

additional training. He had been on his way to the holodeck of his own accord to get in a little sparring practice before his next bout with his chief science officer, but the offer to demonstrate his visual acuity with a phaser was as good an offer.

=^= sounds like a good offer to me Lieutenant. I'll meet you there =^=

A short walk separated him from the holodeck and he was soon inside, the familiar yellow glow of the holo emitters ready to entertain their guests.

"glad to see you took me up on my offer Lieutenant."

Dru looked up and smiled warmly at John as he walked in. The last time they had met, the Commander had seemed extremely stressed, Dru was looking forward to getting the opportunity to see him more relaxed. She liked him, saw in him a strong strength to have gotten where he was in his career.

"Well Commander you recommended this for a good stress relief and that's something I could do with right now. Any warnings or such you need issue me with?" Dru pushed herself off of the wall she'd been leaning against and made her way over to John's side.

For a moment it was scarily easy for John to decide to spill his emotions onto his chief counsellor, his natural defences quickly reasserted themselves and simply refused to allow it to happen. His recent personal developments with his father had been weighing rather heavily on his mind, but for now at least, he decided to keep it under wraps.

"Apart from the fact that my trigger finger is feeling more than a little itchy and I've been meaning to get my phaser on the range for the past few days, I think I'm ok, how about you?"

"Outside of what I previously mentioned nothing really. I can point and shoot a phaser with confidence, just expect me to miss more times than I hit the target. Don't stand too close incase I singe something." Dru grinning across at John, already starting to feel the tension inside of her lift.

"Feel free to give me pointers, I won't turn the phaser on you for offering to help." As Dru came up beside John she looked at him with a soft smile, "So what programme have you got to foist on me?"

"I thought we should start off with something simple rather than overwhelming you this early on with something like a recreation of one of the land battles from the Dominion Wars - the phaser range of this ship is probably more suited to a learner than the Battle of Betazed"

Heading over to the panel adjacent to the large holodeck doors, John quickly pulled up the database of holodeck programs in the memory banks of the Galileo before he saw one he was familiar with. Pressing a few controls the criss cross design of this holodeck was quickly replaced by the standard Starfleet phaser range - a black background with a large circular dais mounted on the end of a long metallic walkway leading from the door. On the dais was a small pedestal topped by a pair of type 2 phasers and a pair of rifles.

"Remember this program from your academy days lieutenant?" John enquired as he headed back up the walkway to join his companion on the platform.

Dru rubbed the back of her neck as she realised ever since, whenever John moved close she literally had to tilt her head back to look up at his face. It's occasions like this she hated being so short. As she looked around her she felt a broad smile on her face.

"Doctor Twitchy McSkittish. That's the memory this place brings. Remind me to tell you about her sometime." Dru shook her head as the memories came flooding back. "Our old instructor loved our class. I think we were the reason he turned grey at such an early age."

Dru moved to take off her jacket, preferring not to contend with the confinement of it while trying to shoot a phaser. As Dru rolled up her sleeves she moved over to look at the phasers and rifles, "I think I should be fine with the phaser but a rifle? Can't say I've ever handled one. The joys of being a counsellor, we are trained to use our mind, not our brawn."

Looking down at the collection of weapons, John smirked as his eyes locked onto the compression rifle on the bench. It had been a while since he had handled one himself, and he was relishing the chance to get reacquainted with an old friend.

"You'd be surprised how useful these things are, when I did survival training on Andoria, this meant you didn't go without heat, food, or light...plus the power cell lasts a darn sight longer than in the type 2's. We'll start off small though, care to choose our weapon madam?"

Dru weighed up her choices, keep with what she knew or take a chance, "Well you know what, let's live a little. If you're up for the challenge and the holodeck safeties are on, why don't we give the rifle a try? This is meant to be a bit of fun after all." Dru turned and grinned up at John, enjoying the feeling of freedom and ease she was feeling.

"And Madam? Just don't lapse into *Little Lady*." Dru said the last part in an exaggerated deep Western American drawl.

"I'll try my best lieutenant" John replied as he picked up one of the rifles, deftly deactivating the safety switch and activating the power cell. The weapon gave a slight audible hum as it powered up. Taking a moment to look down the weapon sights, John aimed it down the range, as if targeting some unseen object in the black background. After pausing for a moment, he lowered the weapon, heading over to the control panel on the dais handrail, and tapped a few commands, which after a moment, caused the holodeck to produce a large spherical target a short distance away.

"I thought we'd start small - a stationary target to get you used to that thing."

To demonstrate his point, John quickly raised his own rifle to a firing height and squeezed the trigger, releasing a small orange sphere of phaser energy which quickly hit the target. As it impacted, the target flashed from white to a shade of blue to confirm the impact.

"Give it a try. These latest rifles don't have a habit of lurching to the left like the last generation,

they're pretty much point and shoot now"

Dru watched the commands John entered into the rifle carefully and watched as he lined up and absorbed the kick back from the shot. Waiting for him to step back, Dru moved over to position herself infringing of the target, before lining up her shot, she threw John a weary glance over her shoulder. "Do you think you could just all me Dru? I'm here to use this as relief from a stressful few days. I'm Dru in my counselling sessions and I'm Dru in my personal life, I'm only Lieutenant when formality calls for it."

Dru moved her attention back to the rifle, activating the power cell and replicated the commands she had watched John enter, positioning the rifle at firing height, Dru then braced her legs and pulled the trigger. Within a few moments she realised the weapon had not fired. "What the..." Dru looked down at the weapon, keeping it levelled at the target incase there was a delayed discharge.

"Well Dru" John said, making an extra effort to use her first name as requested, even though it still felt very much out of place to him. That said, a lot of things on this mission was likely to force him out of his comfort zone at least a little.

"You might have gotten a little more success from the rifle if you remembered to unlock the safety catch" he pointed delicately at the small red light illuminated on the side of the weapon.

Dru looked down at the light and blushed deep red before laughing, "I did warn you I'd be abit silly around these things."

Dru thumbed off the safety and again lined up the rifle at firing height, once again bracing her legs and pulling the trigger. As she watched the ball of energy leave the rifle and hit the wall above the target. "Hum...well I guess at least I got it to fire and managed to get it to fire at the direction of the target."

Dru thumbed the safety back on and turned around to grin at John.

"Well, it could have gone a lot worse - at least that

was in the same general direction. Try tucking it closer to your shoulder this time, you're overcompensating for the recoil and it's throwing off your aim. Go ahead, give it a try, if it works out well we can try something a little more challenging"

John was relishing being able to act as a professional mentor once again. Although he had not enjoyed working with the senior management at the Academy, he had definitely gotten a strong sense of satisfaction out of getting the best results for his students.

Dru picked up the gun, leaving the safety off and positioned rifle as John had indicated. As she held the rifle tighter against her shoulder and mimicked taking a shot she spoke to John, "Like this?"

Dru found she was enjoying this, she had never been good with weapons but she felt she was doing well today, dispute the incident with the safety lock. It made her feel proud of herself, made her feel she had a focus for her mind, something to achieve.

"Perfect, your stance is pretty much how I taught my students to be, now just make sure you line the two sights up with your target, and squeeze the trigger slowly. There's a nasty habit with some first year cadets to breathe in as they fire, all that happens is you end up throwing your targetting off and you hit a wall rather than the target."

During his tenure at the Academy, John had pretty much seen it all, from forgetting to remove safety catches, to forgetting to actually insert any kind of power cell into the rifle. It was worrying sometimes, that these cadets would be expected to defend the Federation where some classes could only just about fire a phaser if they used their combined aptitude. That said by the end of the first semester, John and his fellow staff members had managed to get even the worst class at least firing in the right direction.

As Dru lined up her sight she took a deep breath in and out to regulate her breathing to prevent automatically breathing in. As she squeezed the trigger she then moved to automatically place the safety back on. As she watched, the energy ball hit the target only slightly off centre.

Dru stared at the target in silent shock. Never before had she picked up on something so quickly. She turned around to John with a grin on her face, "Wow.....You are some miracle worker Jonathan." Dru stepped back to let John step up, still staring at the target in disbelief.

"A teacher can only teach as well as his student can learn. I'm impressed, there wasn't much room for improvement on that shot....lets try something more complicated....a moving target."

Smirking to his companion, John leant over to the console again and entered a new set of command codes. As he did, the target sphere shrinking to only half its original size, and began to move around at considerable speed, pausing at random intervals before moving off in another direction again.

"This is an old program, they developed it when the NX class were in service, but its still a good one. Basically, track the ball, and shoot!"

To demonstrate, John picked up his own rifle once again, and fired at the target, striking it on its top edge. As he did so, the sphere reacted by moving to a different location, allowing the commander to turn and fire once more, hitting the sphere almost as well as he had the last time.

"The trick...is to anticipate...where it's going!" He called out as the sphere moved a third time. This time, John fired...but hit nothing except empty space, the holodeck responding with a distasteful noise indicating the failure of the objective, and the sphere quickly dissipated back into nothing more than photons in the void.

"Dammit!" The commander exclaimed rather more loudly than would have been expected. Rage bubbled up from within some unseen reservoir inside of him, and without warning he cast the phaser rifle at full force over the side of the platform, disappearing into the abyss below for the computer to dematerialise. Turning his attention to the panel, John formed a fist with his right hand, and struck the railings with all his strength, teeth gritted, and panting heavily though clenched jaws.

As Dru watched the sphere, she didnt have a notion

how she was going to handle this target practise. As John missed his last shot, Dru turned around with a smile on her face to gently tease the Commander but the smile disappeared as she witnessed the anger on his face and the punch to the railings.

As Dru watched the scene play out in front of her, she moved to grab John by both arms, suddenly realising he was a danger of hurting himself, holodeck safeties or not. The force he has punched the railings with would normally have easily broken skin. Watching John's breathing Dru started to speak with him in an authoritative voice, hiding the fact she was worried about why he would change like this, it wasn't his character to do so.

"Commander. I need you to look at me now. I need you to take three deep controlled breaths and I need you to focus on me, focus on my voice."

For a moment, John forgot who he was, why he was here, and what exactly it was that he was doing, the pain in his hand hadn't even registered yet with his brain, for now, he just stared down and over the wall at the black abyss ahead of him, as if it was threatening to swallow him whole, unrelenting, unending, just....darkness. Right at that moment, he was truly alone, nothing else in the universe mattered to him, or even existed. A cold, desolate place that did nothing more than strike fear into his heart, and terror into his soul.

But then, a voice began to break through, there was something familiar about it, yet still distant, he could hear his heartbeat pulsing through his ears, as if his whole body was taken over by this rhythm, before eventually, he began to breathe. As that air surged into his lungs, he felt the world around him begin to return, begin to coalesce and take shape around his fragmented emotions, until eventually, the voice began to ring clear in his ears, and the pain in his hand began to make itself known.

"I'm...I'm ok lieutenant...don't worry about me...I'm just a sore loser....erm....I apologise...I think that's enough practice for one day...I must be short on sleep or something"

Embarrassment quickly leapt to the forefront of his emotions, the first of many that were going to

surface over the next few minutes, and least of all did he want to convey any of those to another member of his crew. For now, he was satisfied with retreating to the comfort of his quarters with a hypospray for the pain in his hand, and a strong drink.

Dru maintained her hold on John's arms worried he might try run and realising that something was wrong. If the result was this burst of anger, the young counsellor was worried what more damage he might do outside of a safe environment. "You wanna tell me what exactly is going on Jonathan?" Dru continued to look him directly in the face, softening her features as she tried to establish eye contact. She knew he wouldn't open up as long as he viewed her as someone he was in charge of.

As he took in her words, John's first instinct was going to be to rebuke her for her use of his name rather than his rank, afterall, as far as he was concerned, they were still on duty, and there were still certain principles to obey. But the sight of her eyes staring into his very soul seemed to be enough to relieve him of any command structure he still envisaged in his mind.

"Its nothing...really its nothing....I just got some news from back home ok...guess I'm not taking it as well as I should do..."

After a moment, he sighed deeply, before shaking his head and thinking back onto that earlier comm call that had done so much damage to his emotional state.

"My old man's on his way out....ordered me to stay on board....the funny thing is, I hate the guy, I mean....I really hate the guy....so why should I care what happens to him?"

Dru slightly loosened her grip on John's arms but maintained the contact, feeling he needed some connection to keep him grounded. Realising John was looking for answers aswell as understanding Dru tried to figure out how to approach this.

"Because at the end of the day no matter how angry you are at him he's your Father, the man who helped give you life." Dru paused for a moment to allow

John to absorb this. "When did you find out?"

"Last night...I got a subspace message delivered through to my quarters....suffice to say...it wasn't the best news I've ever had....I thought that a trip to the phaser range would sort out my emotions...seems to have done the opposite effect."

Rubbing his temple once again, John put his back to the metallic handrail that made up the wall of the dais, and allowed his legs to slowly buckle under his own bodyweight, tumbling slowly to the floor, his back sliding down the surround like a droplet of water along a solid surface, until he felt himself come into contact with the floor. Sitting with his feet slightly apart, he rested his hands on his knees and contemplated his situation

"Sorry to spring this on you Lieu--Dru....sorry...not quite getting the hang on the first name term stuff"

Dru took her hands off of John's arms as she felt him buckling, she could see he still had some control of his movements and he'd only pull her down with him otherwise, Dru wouldn't have the strength to hold him up.

Dru smiled softly at his words, "Stop looking at me as a crew member your in charge of, look at me as a friend given that is what a counsellor is."

Dru lowered her body to the floor next to John, taking his hand to satisfy herself he hadn't done extreme damage before letting it go again. Dru folding her legs under her as she did in her counselling sessions, she always found herself more at ease in this position.

"Tell me about your Dad, and not just the stuff that makes you feel angry, tell me of what you view him as."

"Whats there to say? When I was a kid....sure he was great...I looked up to him you know? But...damn he never approved of me wanting to join Starfleet....said that no son of his was going to be in a military organisation when there were so many openings in the science academies....that was the last time we spoke properly"

It was true that the decisions of John's formative years had led to some rather explosive confrontations between him and his father, and he had often found himself heading for the nearest transport ship to escape, but every time he thought he had managed to get away, he was dragged back in.

"Even when I was promoted to Lt Commander he refused to see that I'd made something of myself....that I'd stepped out of his shadow....I just wanted him to be proud of me I guess....and I never got that."

"But yet he has never disowned up, he still continues to initiate contact with you?" Dru paused for a moment to allow John to digest this, "What was he like as a father when you were a child? Was he attentive, affectionate?"

"He was....demanding. Always leaning on me to go the extra mile, learn the extra subject...I guess...in a way....he pushed me towards Starfleet - if I was going to better myself...I couldn't find a better place in the quadrant to be. He was always attentive....up until then...after I told him I wasn't going to stay in a lab for the rest of my life...he became distant..."

Dru paused for a few moments, trying to digest what John was saying and turn it into something which may help. "If he's so set against Starfleet do you think he blames himself for you joining? You say as a child he continuously pushed you to better yourself. Maybe his anger isn't with you, it's with himself but he directs it at you as he doesn't know how to fix a situation he blames himself for?"

Dru turned to look at John, at the end of the day she didn't know his father or the full situation, maybe her analysis was wrong but it would help John think beyond both his and his father's anger.

"Its possible....to be honest I've never taken the time to psycho-analyse myself...if I did I guess you'd be out of a job...I think....I think I'll go see him once our mission is taken care of...maybe he can set the record straight after the past decade...give me some sort of closure, for both of us"

Dru frowned slightly uncertain how to word the

next part, "Don't leave it that long. Send him a sub space communication in the next day or two, you initiate the contact with him, remind him that at the end of the day you love him and will be there for him through this, it will break the ice."

"I'll take it under advisement Lieutenant" John chirped up, his barriers slowly reforming as he began to reassert himself. It was strange, this time spent discussing a problem that he never really thought was particularly complex, was indeed making him feel a little better.

"I might just take you up on your offer....now....I promised you a phaser lesson....and I'm not about to disappoint...would you humour me with continuing this exercise?"

Dru briefly laid a hand on Johns arm, "Just remember I'm here 24/7, if you don't like the idea of talking just remember this is my job. As you said if be out of the job if people did talk to me to analyse situations. My door is always open Jonathan."

Dru stood to her feet and grinned down at John, feeling she might have somewhat helped and still feeling the energy from her success earlier, she held out her hand to help him to his feet, "Sounds good to me, but I'm standing well away from you, I'm not taking any chances you miss and decide to fire at me." Dru playfully winked to show no harmful intent behind the comment.

[OFF]

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LTJF Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

To the Stars (Part 1)

Posted on 25 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Crewman Nazhzhahh & Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an & Si'tar Del'an

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*

Timeline: MD 06 - 2345 hrs

[ON]

A chilly March breeze manifested itself under the clear night sky while the twinkle of stars dotted the horizon as far as the eye could see. The city of San Francisco was almost asleep for the night, with the exception of a large crowd which had gathered on the Golden Gate Bridge to witness the launch of Starfleet's newest Nova Class starship. Five miles from the Bay, all of the Fleet Yards' construction sites had gone dark and silent for the night...except for one. Perched elegantly on her landing struts, the *Galileo's* silver hull shined brightly under the drydock's spotlights. A myriad of support craft buzzed around the complex, delivering final supplies and withdrawing construction personnel.

Quinn stepped back into the shuttle craft as he finished the final check on the Skipper's requested art on the port nacelle. It was perfect. He took a moment while standing on the nacelle. It was a beautiful night; it was slightly cool, and clear. Quinn couldn't remember the last time he had seen such a clear night. It was almost as if the stars were out to personally watch the maiden launch of the *Galileo*. Fitting he felt, seeing how *Galileo* was the man to first come out against the old church and proclaim it was the Earth that rotated around the Sun, not the Sun rotating around the Earth. He was brought back with a warm hand on his shoulder. "Thanks for bringing me up here dad to see you off. I'll miss you."

Quinn gave his only son a bear hug and with trembling words, "I'll miss you too Champ. Take

care of your mother, and don't get kicked out of the Academy while I'm gone. I love you." The two looked about one final time before Quinn gave to command to beam Markus back to the viewing area. Quinn hustled down the access hatch and sealed it.

From the Bridge, John found himself entering the final set of requisition commands into a nearby console, it would be useless now, but it would ensure that when they reached the Starbase, they would find their remaining supplies ready and waiting, including the all-important torpedoes that John had been banking on them receiving. As he worked, a small panel caught his attention informing him that one of their shuttles was still outside of the bay, with one, now well-trusted Chief Engineer still on board. Thumbing the comm panel, he called out.

=^= Galileo to Quinn, Chief we could do with you back here any time soon, that warp core isn't going to monitor itself ^=^=

Quinn replied ^=^= Aye-aye, sir. Already on my way to Main Engineering Commander. Let the Skipper know that her requested mural on the port nacelle is completed, and looks magnificent."

=^= Understood Chief, I'll pass on the message. See you shortly ^=^=

On the bridge of the Galileo...

Lirha stepped out of her ready room and onto the bridge, looking around as several officers and enlisted crew arrived and moved to their stations. With a tug on her uniform to straighten it, she walked to the center of the room and stood quietly next to her chair, arms folded across her chest as she gazed at the viewscreen while deep in thought. The moment she had diligently prepared herself for over the last few weeks had finally arrived, and her anxiety had now reached an almost unbearable level. She picked up a PADD from her seat and began to read over the dock master's final status report in an attempt to calm herself.

Tarishiana had watched the CO enter the bridge. A

ripple of anticipation ran through her as she awaited what was to come. She had never been on the bridge during a maiden launch and had barely spent any time manning the science station. A smile crossed her face as she turned to her console, double checking the status of her department.

Beside her, one of the junior officers, a Crewman Nazhzhah, was perched on a chair balancing on his feet which more or less represented a bunch of claws that held his balance as he sat with his hands poised over some controls. Ziyal as he preferred was simply fascinated by all of the bridge technology, and the fact that he'd been invited at all. He looked up from his reverie as the captain approached.

"Captain on the bridge!" Remington took the liberty of announcing from his station at ops. In a formal ceremony, the traditions of formality asserted themselves and he came to attention in order to acknowledge the official start of Lirha's command.

After hearing the words of his Ops officer, John turned around from the auxiliary console that he had been using to complete his own duties before launch. The sight of his captain appearing was somewhat calming, the command structure was now in place, and he was pretty confident that she would be able to get this vessel off the ground and into the cold depths of space without too much trouble. Signing off from his console, John headed towards the XO chair and gingerly lowered himself down, it was becoming more and more familiar each time he used it, and he was sure that he would be spending plenty of time there, or in the so called "big chair" over the course of this voyage.

"Nice to see you on board Ma'am, ready to get this show on the road?"

Lirha nodded and once again glanced around the brightly lit bridge before her green eyes finally settled on Commander Holliday. "As ready as I'll ever be." she answered, and gave him a reassuring squeeze on the arm. "Did you take care of the 'arrangements'?" she asked in a quiet voice.

"Yes ma'am, everything is prepared and accounted for...you just give the word" He mentioned with a

smirk of his own, before giving her a brief tap on the elbow to reassure her himself.

"Just make sure you get this baby off the ground without scratching the paintwork huh? I can imagine the look on Command's faces if we had to repaint the hull before leaving the Sol system"

After his tour through the port nacelle and port strut, he entered Main Engineering. The area was alive with noise. Chirps, buzzing, multiple conversations, and not all in Federation Standard. "Wink, get the mains online, bring up power to pre-launch status." The specialist nodded and replied with an "Aye, Chief." Quinn thought, *'All these years, and I still get butterflies when we get ready to depart.'* Quinn pressed the internal communications relay switch. "Engineering to Bridge. We are Green for pre-flight systems checks."

After a moment of pause, the captain's voice sounded clear through the comm channel, "Acknowledged, Engineering, stand by." she replied.

The turbolift halted at the bridge and, before stepping out, Cadet Im'er Mor'an breathed deeply to calm herself and ready her mind. The young Tarkannan had been waiting for months for the moment when she would step foot on the bridge of the *Galileo*, her first mission from Starfleet. The turbolift door slid open with a delicate hiss and Mor'an breezed onto the bridge with confident strides. She was ready for this. She immediately greeted Captain Saalm with the traditional Tarkannan hand gesture.

Seeing the young cadet promptly arrive and greet her, Lirha smiled and gave her an appreciative nod. "Take your station, Cadet." she said, her eyes flickering towards a vacant console in the raised starboard alcove. With a full complement of personnel aboard the bridge, Lirha had to improvise and figured the mission ops station would be a good starting point for Mor'an on the upcoming journey.

Mor'an watched the captain's eyes flicker to her appointed station. "Aye, sir." She turned and walked calmly to her station, settling herself on the seat.

As the ship was leaving her dock, Dru had decided it best to join everyone on the bridge. Not just would this give her the best vantage point to watch lift off, it would also give her an opportunity to observe the crew in their working environment. Dru laughed softly as the phrase, mixing work with pleasure came to mind. As the young counsellor stepped onto the bridge, she stumbled slightly seeing Lirha already there. This was the first time they were seeing each other after what happened last night. Lirha had been busy prepping the ship and Dru had been busy...well avoiding Lirha. Dru recovered her step quickly and stood to attention, "Permission to come onto the bridge Ma'am?"

The captain turned around at the sound of a familiar voice and smiled slightly at the counsellor. "Permission granted, Lieutenant." she said, secretly happy that Dru had decided to visit the bridge for the launch. "We're a bit full at the moment but you're welcome to give Miss Barel a hand at one of the secondary science stations." she added while motioning towards the raised port alcove bristling with scientific monitors and consoles.

Dru nodded her head in acknowledgement, "Thank you Captain." Dru headed over to Barel, feeling slightly worried about being put in front of a control panel again after what happened during the system tests. All she needed was to somehow blow up a panel and make Lirha cross at her because the ship's departure would be delayed.

Ziyal watched as everybody began piling onto the bridge, tilting his head a little from his spot in the shadows as they all milled about. He was like a big scientist looking at bugs in a microscope, totally fascinated by all the people in front of him.

Evelyn stepped off the turbolift walking towards her assigned station. She sat in her chair, getting comfortable. She looked around and saw the eager faces of the crew and smiled softly. She turned to the console and began to review the intelligence reports for the surrounding systems.

Robin entered the Bridge from a forward turbolift and sat down at an auxiliary station. He turned it on to interface with the Sickbay Monitors. Since there were no patients in the infirmary, the monitors were

silent. But not his heart. It was pounding loudly in his ears.

Ungracefully, Ziyal stood up as the bridge got more and more crowded. Eyes seemed drawn to him as he stumbled a little, and he blinked sheepishly and raised a couple of tentacles in their direction. He made a slight scratchy noise and tacked on, "Ehh, hello!"

Hearing a strange familiar sound behind her, Lirha turned around and smiled as she saw the unique-looking form of the ship's biotechnologist. "Well hello, Mister Ziyal." she replied, happy to see that he had found his way to the bridge. "Please take your station." she said, and pointed to one of the terminals in the science alcove.

Ziyal gave a solemn blink. "Yes, sir!" he said excitedly as he crawled-climbed-walked back into his seat and began once again monitoring the status of the science labs.

To Be Continued...

CMDR Lirha Saalm
Commanding Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Jonathan Holliday
Executive Officer
USS Galileo

LCDR Chauncey (Will) Remington III
Chief Operations Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Robin Hilyer MD
Chief Medical Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Evelyn Coleman
Chief Intelligence Officer
USS Galileo

LTJG Drusilla McCarthy
Chief Counselor
USS Galileo

CWO Markum Quinn
Chief Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Lilou Peers

Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

CN Nazhzhah
Biotechnologist
USS Galileo

CDT(SR) Im'er Mor'an
Red Squad Cadet
USS Galileo

Si'tar Del'an
Ta'arkan Observer
USS Galileo

To the Stars (Part 2)

Posted on 25 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Crewman Nazhzhah & Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an & Si'tar Del'an

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*

Timeline: MD 06 - 2350 hrs

[ON]

With the bridge crew all assembled and manning their stations, Lirha reached down to her chair's armrest console and activated the ship's internal communications system. "All stations, report status." she said as her voice echoed loudly throughout the ship.

"Operations ready," Remington said, "Ship's computers operating at full capacity, all sensors are active, auxiliary systems are online." He glanced over at Mor'an as she stood beside him, wondering who the cadet was and whether he was supposed to assist her.

Robin turned his chair, "Sickbay status, clear and ready to disembark."

Quinn looked up from the Warp Core central console, "Engineering is a go, just give the word Skipper."

"Science reports ready for launch sir." Tarishiana said easily. It was easy to hide the nervousness she felt. This was the first time that she was the bridge officer for her department. All in all the nervousness and her excitement were balanced.

Ziyal chirped and squeaked happily as he worked at his station, now once again sat down. "All science labs are reported operational and unpacked, sir!" he said in his usual jaunty, though precise tones.

"Things are good on this end Captain." Evelyn

reported eager to get underway.

As the myriad of status reports came in from each and every member of the Bridge crew, John began to relax a little more, settling into his seat as he watched the various indicators on his panel turn green and indicate that they were preparing for launch.

"Excellent, well done everyone" He said, not wanting to take the attention away too much from his Captain, who was busily preparing for her first starship launch, that said, he didn't want to feel useless sat beside her and giving no input whatsoever.

"Cadet Im'er, set up a datalink with Starfleet satellite telemetry, I want to make sure we get a record of our launch in the database, as a memento of the day." He smirked towards his captain.

"Aye, sir," Mor'an said from her station. She swivelled around and her fingers danced across the appropriate buttons. "Datalink open, sir."

Thumbing his own comms panel, John decided to add his own comments to the Engineering team hidden in the bowels of this awakening metallic beast.

=^= Bridge to Engineering - your teams have done a great job Chief. Bring our power output up to maximum and prepare to reconfigure the intake manifolds to stellar mode as soon as we clear Earth's atmosphere ^=

Quinn looked around to his engineering staff and gave a nod to the Propulsion Specialist standing next to him, then replied. ^= Power at one hundred percent, plus six, sir. Intake manifold reconfiguration is ready on your mark, Commander. ^=

Markus spoke aloud to his team, "Okay everyone, let's get this lovely lady space-bound."

The *Galileo's* dark nacelles began to flicker, emanating a soft light blue hue across the ship's midsection. As the warp core came online, the ship's engines came to life and increased in

brightness until they glowed a bright shade of cyan. Slow red swirls began to manifest themselves in the bussard collectors as the ramscoops reached operational status.

=^= Great job Chief, as soon as we clear the moon we'll be needing warp speed, I'll leave that in your capable hands. There's a spot on the Bridge going if you want it? ^= John looked across at the currently empty Engineering station, it was true that whilst the Chief could easily run the show from Engineering, it just felt right to offer him his space in the nerve centre of the ship.

=^= I thought you'd never ask Commander. I bring the drinks. Quinn out.=^= Markus gave a salute to Ensign Slak, "Keep an eye on my baby until I get back...and make sure the kids behave Ensign." Quinn didn't wait for a reply. In only moments he was in the nearest turbolift, and walking onto the bridge to his Duty Station. With a few commands on the console, the MSD lit up. "Main Engineering Commands are transferred to Bridge Engineering Station Alpha."

Lilou followed him up, PADD in hand, in case anything was needed while they were on their way from Main Engineering to the Bridge. She hadn't been on the bridge of a starship since... years. It was fascinating, heart-warming, to see the collection of people all gathering together and focusing on the ship. If she'd had to believe in a religion, this would have been it. She came to a halt beside the MSD console and waited until the commands had been transferred before crossing her arms behind her back, scanning the data on the panel.

As everybody continued on their way to making *Galileo's* flight happen, Ziyal vibrated with anticipation at the energy and rhythmic order that flowed around him. He settled himself a little, using three arms to press commands into the console he was at as well as the fourth to operate a PADD in his lap.

With a final glance around the crowded bridge, Lirha noticed one final station of rather crucial importance which was currently unoccupied. Despite being assigned several flight control officers, one of them had recently contracted a rather nasty flu virus, and the other two were down

on Deck 7 prepping the shuttle bay. The captain glanced around at the different personnel on the bridge before her eyes finally settled on her XO. "Mister Holliday, would you like to take the helm?" she asked him with bright green eyes. Lirha felt that it was only fitting to reward the commander for his hard work and assistance over the past six days.

"Yes ma'am!" John replied almost too excited to contain his emotions. It had been a while since he had last piloted a starship and he was looking forward to another chance. Almost jumping from the XO's chair John made his way to the front of the Bridge and settled himself at the conn, watching as the panels lit up as they acknowledged his sign on codes. His hands flying across the console, the commander watched as the power that the teams in engineering had worked so hard to provide began to surge through the engines.

"Warp and impulse engines standing by. Manoeuvring thrusters powered and ready on your command configured for atmospheric flight. Antigravity fields and landing struts prepared for deactivation and retraction."

He turned back to the captain's chair with a broad smirk on his face

"Helm ready when you are ma'am"

Lirha returned his smirk and squeezed her hands together as butterflies began to manifest themselves in her stomach. Taking a deep breath, she looked back in her chair towards her operations chief and the young cadet.

"Cadet Im'er, notify the docking crews that we are ready for departure and have them seal all hatches and airlocks. Mister Remington, open a channel to the dock master." she said.

"Aye, ma'am," Mor'an said. She looked around quickly before turning back to her console. No one could contain their excitement, herself included. "Docking crews notified, ma'am."

Remington nodded, mostly to himself as his hand slid over the LCARS. He was calm and collected, not nearly as excited as most of the people on the

bridge seemed to be. "Frequency to docking control open, ma'am."

As the operations officer finished speaking, the turbolift doors opened and a woman dressed in amethyst robes walked onto the bridge with swift, fluidic motions. Her head was covered by a cowl of soft fabric; the jewelled dagger at her waist probably gave at least the security chief cause for initial concern. As she glided across the bridge, she held the air of one who owned everything she saw. She made her way to the captain's chair and took up a position to the side. Si'tar Del'an had arrived.

Out of the corner of her eye, Lirha saw a robed figure walk onto the bridge and make her way next to her. With a quick glance, Lirha took note of her elegant clothing and strong presence, and quickly identified her as Del'an, the Ta'arkan observer whom she had met several hours previously. The captain gave her a polite nod and a warm smile, then turned her attention back to the open comm channel.

"Dock control, this is *Galileo*, all systems are online and we are ready to begin the launch sequence. Request permission to depart." she said.

Several seconds passed and the dock master's voice sounded clear through the comm and across the bridge. "Commander Saalm, this is Control, we confirm all main systems at operational status. We're withdrawing the umbilical along with all final personnel. You are cleared to bring your warp core to full capacity and begin departure on your command. Godspeed *Galileo*." he said, then the comm closed with a chirp.

Lirha smiled at the dock master's blessing and sighed, then turned her attention back to Del'an, greeting her with a slight bow. "Welcome to the bridge, Ambassador. Your timing is impeccable, I must say." she said with a grin. "We are just about to get underway. Please, have a seat." she said, and motioned to the currently vacant captain's chair right behind her. Lirha wasn't interested in sitting at the moment, instead preferring to stand and supervise the launch of her ship.

"I am always on time," Del'an said matter-of-factly. Her robes shifted color in the lighting of the bridge

as she moved to the captain's chair and lowered herself to perch elegantly in the chair.

Quinn reviewed the incoming data from Main Engineering. He pointed to the small command console on the bottom right side of the MSD screen. There were several green bars spanning the bottom of the console. "See that Peers? That means all mains are online, and engines and manoeuvring thrusters are all ready for launch. Now you get the privilege to let her know."

Lilou blinked, glancing askance at the Chief, then, flushed with pride, she inclined her head gratefully to him. The information on the console was in a slightly different configuration than she was used to, but the data was clarified with the adjusted perspective. "All mains online, Captain," she repeated, lifting her voice. "Engines and manoeuvring thrusters ready for launch." Soon, they'd be back among the stars and this brand new Nova would have a chance to prove she was more than just shiny.

"Thank you, Miss Peers, well done." the captain replied. With all stations reporting green status and ready for launch, she had only to give the command and they would be underway. Lirha tapped a button on her chair's console and opened a channel through the ship. "Blue Alert. All crew, prepare for departure."

The overhead lights on the bridge dimmed, casting shadows across the metallic walls and highlighting the bright purple and yellow colors of the bridge's LCARS displays. The alert panels lining the walls and consoles glowed blue and began to pulse in a methodical manner as they shrouded the room's personnel with their on-and-off pattern.

Mor'an glanced discreetly from her station to where her mentor was. Del'an had not acknowledged her student's presence, but that didn't mean she wasn't aware of every movement Mor'an made. On the contrary, Del'an was probably cataloguing every gesture, eye movement and body shift that not only Mor'an made, but every other crew member on the bridge as well. If she wasn't already used to it, Mor'an would find her mentor's sense of perception uncanny.

Quinn gave a cheeky smile, then whispered to Peers, "Let's hope I remembered to turn on the inertial dampeners and set the auto-grav." then motioning to a set of indicator lights he added, "These are the ODN's associated with propulsion, and this indicator is for the landing gear. Planetary launching always exhibits the greatest amount of stress to the engines, and frame. Gravity can be a real bummer. Now," pointing to the highlighted ODN's, "you want these to always be green during planetary launching." Almost on cue one turned yellow. With a flick of his finger against the MSD it returned green, then without any change in his demeanour, "Green, right. Yellow is okay. But red is always, always, always bad.....unless I say it's okay." He then pointed to the landing gear icon, "Now that is green now, and once we lift off and achieve a height of fifty meters, it will turn red if not closed. Warp is theoretically impossible with them hanging out. So once the gear is retracted, you will confirm it after the helm states it is closed. I hope you have your talking voice tonight Peers."

Ziyal looked up as the final docking procedures commenced, staring at the viewscreen in fascination, a hand halted hovering above a command sequence at the console he was sat at.

Lirha moved forward next to Commander Holliday and stopped next to him, resting her green hand on his shoulder. "Take us out, Commander." she said as she gazed at the viewscreen and across the night-time skyline of San Francisco.

To Be Continued...

[OFF]

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CWO Markum Quinn
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MWO Tarishiana Barel
Chief Science Officer
USS Galileo

MWO Lilou Peers
Engineering Officer
USS Galileo

CN Nazhzhahh
Biotechnologist
USS Galileo

CDT(SR) Im'er Mor'an
Red Squad Cadet
USS Galileo

Si'tar Del'an
Ta'arkan Observer
USS Galileo

To the Stars (Part 3)

Posted on 25 Mar 2012 by Commander Lirha Saalm & Lieutenant Commander Jonathan Holliday & Lieutenant Commander Chauncey Remington III & Lieutenant JG Robin Hilyer MD & Lieutenant JG Drusilla McCarthy & Lieutenant JG Evelyn Coleman & Chief Warrant Officer Markum Quinn & Master Warrant Officer Lilou Peers & Master Warrant Officer Tarishiana Barel & Crewman Nazhzhahh & Cadet Senior Grade Im'er Mor'an & Si'tar Del'an

Location: San Francisco Fleet Yards, *USS Galileo*

Timeline: MD 07 - 0000 hrs

[ON]

"I thought you'd never ask Ma'am"

John turned his attention back to the helm, a myriad of indicators and data panels flashing and pulsating as the once-dormant starship came to life under his hands. Slowly, he began to feed power into the thrusters, watching as the levels began to rise, slowly compensating for the vast weight of even a small starship. Soon, the entire vessel began to pulse and throb, vibrating under the force of its thrusters, before John increased the power ever so slightly again, and the starship lifted from the floor, the clunk of the landing struts coming away from the dock audible throughout the vessel.

The air around the dry dock began to shimmer in rippling waves under the intense heat and force of the *Galileo's* ventral thrusters. Dirt and debris kicked up from the Earth, creating a large swirling dust cloud around the base of the construction site. The ship ascended and slowly cleared the nearby moorings, finally beginning a slow turn as it passed near to the HQ and approached Golden Gate Bridge.

With a set of special arrangements already prepared to mark the momentous occasion, Lirha looked back across the bridge at Mor'an who was currently situated at the mission ops station. "Cadet, please take the tactical station and bring our torpedo launchers online." she called out. It was a strange order considering the circumstances, but Lirha didn't feel the need to explain herself just yet.

"Aye, sir," Mor'an said, raising an eyebrow but refraining from making any other comment as she moved to tactical next to Holliday. "Torpedo launchers online, ma'am," she said a moment later.

Lirha walked next to Mor'an and reached down, tapping several command sequences into her tactical console to load a cluster of specialized ordinance into the fore and aft launchers. It took several seconds for the automated loading mechanisms to complete their process, after which the flashing red 'Fire' button turned solid red to signify its readiness. Lirha entered a customized firing pattern into the console then stepped back and looked over at the helm console, taking note of the *Galileo's* position over the city of San Francisco. "As soon as we pass over the bridge, you're clear to fire." she said to Mor'an.

"Aye, ma'am." Mor'an waited with bated breath for the beautiful little ship to glide clear of the bridge. As soon as she had done so, Mor'an pressed the red button. "Torpedoes fired."

As the torpedoes cleared the launchers, they quickly followed their pre-assigned trajectories, separating from one another into a broad strip across the San Francisco sky, like miniature stars shining brightly as they headed away from the newly-christened starship.

A few moments passed before the torpedoes completed their journey and detonated, acting not as weapons of war, but as images of celebration. Large antimatter fireworks designed especially for tonight launched bright hues of blues, reds and golds into the night sky, interspersed with greens and purples as the *Galileo* soared through the colourful haze. Anyone stood on the ground would have been more than suitably impressed as they glimpsed up at the silvery hull of the latest Nova-class vessel in the fleet being changed from one shade to another as the antimatter glare bounced off the mirrored finish.

"Atmospheric thrusters at 40%....retracting landing struts"

John firmly believed in keeping everyone aware of exactly what the helm was doing, calling out every manoeuvre and alteration as it happened. Looking

to the other side of the helm, he quickly tapped the controls to order the four landing struts usually stowed in the belly of the Nova-class to retract, watching as the indicators turned from red to green to indicate their position.

"Struts retracted, Engineering please confirm?" He called out in the direction of the Chief and his newest assistant

Lilou nodded, watching as the landing gear icon on the console blipped from green to yellow to green again. Steady as she goes, she thought with a little smile. "Landing gear is fully retracted, sir," she called out.

With the ok from his colleagues, John increased the power yet again, watching on the sensors as the *Galileo* headed further into the air, the dock becoming more and more distant as he proceeded.

"Thrusters now at 85%....altering trajectory for orbital approach"

A few more helm commands flickered through his fingertips and into the conn station, as the thrusters towards the front of the *Galileo* came to life, forcing the ship to climb until her nose pointed to the heavens, and her stern towards the dock.

"Thrusters to 100%....approaching Earth orbit in 45 seconds"

John gave the command to the helm just as he finished speaking, and the whine of the starship's engines sounded like it could have been heard from orbit itself, a warning to anything up there to prepare for Starfleet's latest arrival. Looking up from his work, he saw the dark night time sky over San Francisco begin to shift, the stars seeming to change positions as the *Galileo* headed for orbit. Occasionally a wisp of cloud would part in front of the viewscreen image as the bow of the tiny science vessel broke through, heading for its natural home in space.

Finally, the last levels of clouds departed, leaving the ship alone in the coldness of the upper atmosphere.

"Approaching upper thermosphere....transferring to

impulse engines....thrusters to station keeping"

With the atmosphere thinning, the landing thrusters were quickly running out of punch, rather than delay the launch for a few moments waiting for the standard thrusters to reassert themselves, John switched straight to impulse power, feeling the strain as the much more powerful engines began their contribution to the mission.

Eventually, the turbulence that had juddered the Galileo from the moment it left the dock came to an end. They were in space.

"We've cleared the upper atmosphere...impulse engines holding steady....Chief, is she ready for warp speed?"

He turned once again to the Engineering console, letting the helm take care of itself for a few moments, waiting to hear hopefully good news.

Lilou scanned the console, checking and double-checking. Now wasn't the time for guesswork. "Inertial dampeners in the green, auto-gravity online, landing gear stowed..." she ran through her mental check-list quietly, indicating icons as she went to make sure she was reading the console correctly. Quinn would correct her if she went astray. That, or just tell her to shut up and take control of the thing himself. She narrowed her eyes on the optical data network read-outs Quinn had pointed out before. They weren't steady, but they were green. She searched the MSD quickly, seeking out the icons that would tell her what she needed to know to be sure: "Phase inducers online... check. Aligned with propulsion ODN matrices... check. M/AMR in the green... check. Containment fields at full... check." She glanced at Quinn. "I'd say we're good to go. Second?"

Quinn smiled as he stood with his hands behind his back as he observed Peers' assessment, "I concur. We are ready to rock 'n roll Skipper."

Knowing that he was going nowhere until he received orders from his CO, John turned his head slightly to face up towards his CO, who for the last few moments had been almost rigidly glued to his shoulder. Her nerves were understandable though, it

was never a good time to mess up a launch than when your ship is brand new. A wry smile crept across his face as he remembered his earlier meeting with her sister, and decided that now was about the perfect time for a comment he had been saving up all day.

"Looks like our launch went well....congratulations *ReeHee*" he muttered in a low voice, about loud enough for the captain and he to hear, but for the rest of the Bridge crew to be left hearing nothing but the sound of consoles bleeping in the background.

"Ready to set a course when you are"

The captain nodded in approval and returned to the middle of the bridge, satisfied that her crew had conducted a smooth and successful launch. *ReeHee?* she thought to herself with an incredulous shake of her head. She would have to thank Nesh for that at the next convenient opportunity. Lirha tapped several commands on her chair's console and smiled down with bright green eyes at Del'an as the ship returned to Green Alert and the overhead bridge lights came back online. "Well, that was a fun ride, no?" she asked the Ta'arkan liaison.

Del'an tilted her chin up at Lirha. She sat in the captain's chair with as much regality as a queen. "An... impressive ship," she acknowledged, her expression serene as ever, leaving no sign of her thoughts.

Turning her attention back to the conn, Lirha spoke in a calm yet determined voice. "Set a course for Starbase two-three-four, maximum warp." she said to her XO.

Nodding in acknowledgement, John turned back to the conn and quickly accessed the database for pre-prepared coordinates; all Federation starbases and facilities were held in the LCARS memory system for a more expedient journey for the myriad of starship's that wandered the quadrant. After searching and locating the starbase, he transferred the coordinates into the navigational computer, watching as the course trajectory appeared in front of him.

"Course laid in, Starbase 234, standby for warp velocity"

The final order was simple enough, but one which marked a historic day for all involved, and represented the culmination of everyone's hard work. "Engage." she said.

John was a little nervous right now, after all, the warp engines on this vessel had never been tested outside of a computer simulation, and there was always that possibility that something could go wrong. Accessing the warp control systems, he began to funnel power from the reactor to the warp coils, watching as the warp field began to form around the starship. After a few moments the stars ahead of the viewscreen seemed to shift and distort, before finally the moment that they had all been waiting for arrived; the Galileo thrust itself into warp, leaving normal space behind, and heading out of the solar system.

"Warp one..." John called out as he continued to increase the power to the nacelles, he had no desire to leap straight to maximum warp, but was instead preferring to gradually build it up.

"Warp three..." Slowly the power curves began to build, their shapes becoming more and more distinct as more and more power was taken from the now-fully operational warp reactor, countless matter and antimatter particles disappearing every second in the reaction chamber, fuelling their mission to the stars. He continued the starship's acceleration

"Warp five...." The Galileo's cruising speed seemed to arrive easily enough, looking across at his panel the warp field seemed stable, no obvious errors or abnormalities for him to worry about...intently he stared at the display, his hands still increasing the starship's speed further, waiting in anticipation of any blips...but thankfully they did not come. Eventually, he reached the top of the Galileo's standard range.

"Speed holding at Warp 8...eta to Starbase 34 hours 9 minutes" He signed with a relieved tone in his voice, they had finally gotten into space, they were on their own.

Dru stood back leaning against the wall. Babel and Ziyal had everything under control, she took this opportunity to observe the people scattered around the bridge. She saw faces of people she knew and faces of people she still had to meet, she still had a lot of work ahead of her. No matter the person one clear thing was evident, the excitement which shone through in the eyes of everyone, especially Lirha and Holliday. As Dry quietly observed the two of them it was clearly well evident Starfleet had made a good decision to pair them together. Even though they both experienced high levels of stress and worry over this launch, they seemed to compliment each other easily, helping the other.

It was all so much more real now with the ship having left dock. While everyone was busy prepping their stations, Dru quietly slipped off of the bridge. She had her own work she needed to put a dent into and she was only in the way of the people at each of their stations. She had seen what she needed, that this ship was a good crew who worked well together and she knew her job was going to be made easier by that fact alone.

Quinn watched over the Propulsion Dynamics read out on the MSD. "Peers, you see that number ratio their? That's the M/AM Intermix Ratio Calculate. Also, the algorithm next to it is the current speed we are traveling at."

Lilou leaned closer, following Quinn's indications. "When I was studying the ship's schematics, I didn't take into consideration the reorganization of the MSD," she admitted, brows drawing together in consternation as she reviewed the console. It had been a rookie mistake; that, and she'd grown used to being shunted into the repair bay. She'd simply stopped being concerned with the larger responsibilities of her position. The fact that she was being oriented to those responsibilities again now - was exhilarating. But it also meant she had to learn and fast. They were safe and on their way and maintaining a steady speed on the way to their objective. Now it was just a matter of keeping that pace even for the next thirty-four hours. She watched the numbers in the algorithm shift while maintaining the same final speed. The balancing matrix of the system was incredible. The flux on the Cheyenne had been broader.

The *Galileo* cruised through space at high warp, the streaking stars blurring as they passed across the ship's shiny hull. Their projected course would take them through the Wolf 359 system and next to Andoria, until they finally entered open space in Sector 003. With less than two days before they arrived at Starbase 234, the crew had much to prepare for on their first journey. But for now, the tiny vessel had accomplished her first mission: up, and to the stars.

[OFF]

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THE END

