



STAR TREK COURAGEOUS

1x02 "THE FAMILY BUSINESS"

Written By Alex Matthews

Based on 'Star Trek'
created by Gene Roddenberry

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Executive Producer: Alex Matthews

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STAR TREK COURAGEOUS

1x02 "The Family Business"

CAST

CAPTAIN T'SARA FROST	Lena Headey
LT. CMNDR DAMIEN ERICKSON	Tyler Hoechlin
LT. CMNDR R'NARA KELLINNIN	Diane Guerrero
COMMANDER LEONARDO DA COSTA	Peter Davison
DR. NYIA LANJAR	Aisha Hinds
LT. CMNDR HROVIIN BHRASH	Paul McGillion
LT. ALEXIS MATTHIAS	Karen Gillan
LT, J.G, JHISINSHER CH'LENE	Sam Witwer
LT, J.G, ASEEMA SINGH	Anjali Mohindra

GUEST STARRING

LT. ELYSE KARRIN	Madeleine Mantock
VARRAK-SAR	Ryan Guzman
SAREN	Rachel Skarsten
GRAEVEN	Brian Thompson
RE'KAN	Nonso Anozie
VEVOZK	
PETTY OFFICER VANIK	
PETTY OFFICER ANTOS	

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The stillness of space is disturbed by beams of DISRUPTOR FIRE that shoot across frame, followed soon by the menacing form of an ORION MARAUDER.

It's continues on course, the energy beams continuing to fire and pummel the shields of its target - the U.S.S. *COURAGEOUS*.

The *Excelsior*-class ship is taking a hammering, as TWO other Marauders, positioned to the port and starboard of the starship, fire their weapons alongside their comrades...

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. *COURAGEOUS* - CONTINUOUS

As the ship bucks around them, the bridge crew and senior officers each valiantly try to keep their positions.

T'SARA FROST sits in her command chair, the picture of calm and control. Behind her, DAMIEN ERICKSON stands at the Tactical station alongside ALEXIS MATTHIAS, each working their area of the panel with efficiency and professionalism.

In the foreground, ASEEMA SINGH mans the Conn console, struggling to keep the ship stable, biting her lip anxiously as she works. Beside her, JHISINSHER CH'LENE keeps systems at optimum balance and precision, twin antennae laying flat against his hair the only sign of nerves.

At the Science station, his assortment of screens lit up with sensor data, is LEONARDO DA COSTA, keeping track of the enemy vessels power readings and tactical ability, eyes narrowed in concentration.

On the viewscreen, the approaching Marauder pulls up and moves out of sight - but not before launching FOUR pinpricks of red that come straight for their target.

MATTHIAS
Torpedo spread incoming!

The ship ROCKS violently. A starboard console EXPLODES, showering those closet to it with white-hot sparks. A non-com engineer quickly uses fire-suppression spray to deal with it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CH'LENE

Shields down to 67% percent, minor breach in the forward hull, there was an overload in the Deck 3 plasma junction.

T'SARA

Continue evasive maneuvers and returning fire.

SINGH

Trying, ma'am, but they're a lot faster and smaller than us, it gives them the advantage.

T'SARA

Understood. What's their tactical status?

ERICKSON

We're inflicting our fair share of damage on them, but they're working in concert to allow one to take pot shots at us, while the others lay down covering fire.

DA COSTA

I'm scanning them for any weakness in the shields, but they have redundant systems installed. Not to mention their armored hulls.

T'SARA

Options?

DA COSTA

I think we should get the hell out of here.

Matthias's head SNAPS UP from her controls, *stunned*.

MATTHIAS

You want us to tuck tail and run?

DA COSTA

(angrily)

I don't see any other choice, Lieutenant!

(beat, calmer)

I don't like it either, but at least we'd be alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON

What's that Klingon saying, "Only a fool fights in a burning house"?

T'Sara turns her chair full around to lock eyes with her XO. They exchange a look, before she nods. Turns back forward.

T'SARA

Lieutenant Singh, get us far enough away so we can fire a spread of quantum torpedoes. I want them blind as warp out, obscuring our trail.

Singh looks around, *surprised*. But she nods and works her console.

BEEP, BEEP! Erickson consults his console, working the panel. His expression shifts from confusion to sudden anger!

ERICKSON

Captain, wait!

(works console fast)

Sensors just confirmed, that the Marauders out there are the same ones that attacked and crippled us before!

T'SARA

That's interesting, Commander, but hardly relevant right now. Lt. Singh, carry out my orders.

Erickson bolts from his console and approaches T'Sara, his face a mask of betrayal.

ERICKSON

Captain, we can't retreat, not now! We have to stay and fight!

T'Sara cocks an eyebrow, looking very Vulcan as she slowly stands and faces down the burly form of her first officer.

T'SARA

Resume your station, Commander.

The ship rocks again. An overhead panel smashes to the deck with a crash! T'Sara and Erickson maintain their footing, barely, using the Tactical station for support.

ERICKSON

If we retreat, we'll never show these punks that Starfleet means business. The whole sector will think we're a joke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

T'SARA
Commander, I--

ERICKSON
(interrupting, fuming)
These bastards killed the man who
should be sitting in that chair. We
need to bring them down!

T'SARA
At the expense of this ship and crew?
Listen to yourself, Commander!

BE-BLEEP! BE-BLEEP!

Both T'Sara and Erickson turn towards the Science station as Da Costa silences the alert and checks his readings, surprised at what he sees.

DA COSTA
There's another vessel de-cloaking
out there.

T'SARA
Another Orion?

DA COSTA
No. It's Klingon!

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Space literally ripples as the avian-like form of a KLINGON BIRD-OF-PREY materializes into existence, the forward torpedo tube already glowing RED as it prepares to fire, it's wing-mounted disruptors taking aim--

-- before unleashing a FIERY BARRAGE onto the closest Orion ship! Within seconds, the shields collapse, allowing the devastating onslaught to breach the ship's hull.

Seconds later, it EXPLODES in a maelstrom snuffed out by the vacuum of space within moments. The bird-of-prey SWOOPS through the fragmented remains of its kill, before it banks and aims itself towards the next Marauder.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The bridge crew collectively stare at the viewscreen, with stunned amazement or disbelief at what just happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DA COSTA
What in the blue blazes..?

MATTHIAS
The Marauder has been completely
destroyed, Captain, Commander.

CH'LENE
It's an old-style *B'rel*-class bird of
prey, Captain. *Highly* modified.

DA COSTA
I'll say! It packs a wallop for a
scout ship!

MATTHIAS
The two surviving Marauders are now
focusing their attention on the
Klingon.
(beat, miffed)
They're ignoring us completely.

On the main viewscreen, the fight continues between the
evasive bird-of-prey and the now-defensive Marauders, as
their shields take a beating, and their own weapons fire
hits its mark every other shot--

---until a lucky shot GRAZES the engine housing of the bird-
of-prey, causing it to FLICKER for several seconds and loose
speed.

DA COSTA
That last shot caused a power surge
in their main fusion reactors.
They're coasting on thrusters right
now.

The two remaining Marauders, using this to their advantage,
quickly reorient themselves, before disappearing in a FLASH
of light as they both jump to warp!

T'SARA
Mr. Da Costa, track those Marauders
for as long as possible.

DA COSTA
Aye, Captain.

T'SARA
Lieutenant ch'Lene, hail the bird-of-
prey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ch'Lene nods, but his panel BEEPS before he can work the controls. After a moment, he turns to look at T'Sara, surprised.

CH'LENE
Captain, they are hailing us.

T'SARA
Onscreen.

With the touch of a few controls, the image of the bird-of-prey is replaced by one of a dark, smoky interior, recognizable from the previous episode.

Standing at the main forward console, is a tall, handsome and well-muscled ORION MALE. flanking by GRAEVEN and RE'KAN.

T'SARA (cont'd)
This is Captain Frost, of the Federation *Starship Courageous*. Thank you for your timely assistance.

ORION CAPTAIN
The first and only time, Starfleet. This sector is a dangerous place, maybe it's time you realized that and left it to those who can handle it.

ERICKSON
(scoffs)
And leave the Orion Syndicate in control? Don't count on it!

ORION CAPTAIN
Then you better up your game, or stay out of our way.
(beat)
For your own good. You got lucky this time. We wont always be here to save your asses.

He makes a throat-slashing gesture. Seconds later, the image shifts back to the bird-of-prey, it's engines glowing with power before it LEAPS into warp and disappears.

As the bridge crew REACT...

BLACKOUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. WARP SPACE

The *Courageous* passes through the void at WARP SPEED, the stars passing by as thin streaks of light as the ship carries on its way forward.

T'SARA (V.O.)

Captain's Log, supplemental: With repairs mostly complete, I've ordered the *Courageous* on a pursuit course of our attackers. The *Leicester* and the *Nimitz* have been informed of the situation and will continue on with their convoy run without us.

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The place is a hive of frenetic activity as Chief Engineer HROVIIN BHRASH issues silent orders to his engineering and repair teams, while working the main 'POOL TABLE' console.

T'SARA (V.O.)

Chief Bhrash assures me the ship is ready for battle if needs be and that shields will be at full power by the time we intercept our targets.

INT. MAIN SICKBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The medical staff are being kept on their toes by the small assortment of patients they are now treating. 3 of the six BIO-BEDS are occupied, and each patient is being tended to by a nurse or medical technician.

T'SARA (V.O.)

Dr. Lanjar informs me we suffered only minimal casualties, mostly engineering staff caught by the rupture of the main plasma junction on Deck 3. Thankfully, no fatalities.

On the central EXAMINATION TABLE lays a young Trill woman (dark-skinned, pretty with curly hair) in an engineering uniform. She sports a nasty BURN on her face, being treated by DR. NYIA LANJAR.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lanjar offers a sympathetic smile, as she calmly runs a DERMAL REGENERATOR over the burn...

INT. ASTROMETRICS LAB, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

DA COSTA works the main array of consoles at the edge of the raised upper deck with practiced ease. On the upper deck, at one of the free standing consoles, stands CH'LENE.

The large VIEWSCREEN displays a STAR CHART of the sector, a TARGETING CROSS-HAIRS intermittently moving from place to place as the ships sensors are trained on various locations.

T'SARA (V.O.)

Commander Da Costa and Lieutenant ch'Lene are working to improve sensor efficiency to pierce the Marauders cloak, but so far no success.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Standing by Tactical, ERICKSON talks with MATTHIAS, pointing at the auxiliary tactical displays. SINGH keeps the ship on course as it cruises at high warp speeds.

T'SARA (V.O.)

The crew is tense but performing at peak efficiency. They have yet to disappoint me.

(beat, sighs)

Unfortunately, that cannot be said for my Executive Officer.

Erickson finishes with Matthias, taking a PADD she offers, and heading for one of the aft egress hatches. EXITS...

INT. READY ROOM, DECK TWO - MOMENTS LATER

T'SARA sits at her desk with a cup of tea, steam wafting from it, engrossed in her computer terminal until the door chime pulls her attention away. She takes a steady breath.

T'SARA

Come in.

Erickson swiftly enters, and stiffly hands her the PADD.

ERICKSON

The final damage reports and repair estimates, Captain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stands at parade ease, allowing her a moment to read it.

ERICKSON (cont'd)
Lieutenant Matthias also included a request to run security drills.

T'SARA
(reads, nods)
Approved. We need to be as ready as possible for our next encounter.

T'Sara puts the PADD down, and stares up at the stony-faced Erickson for a long beat.

T'SARA (cont'd)
We need to have a talk, Commander.

He doesn't reply. Merely shoots her a quizzical look.

T'SARA (cont'd)
Don't play innocent, Mr. Erickson. You questioned my orders in front of the crew.

ERICKSON
Because I believed you were making the wrong call. As first officer, it's my duty to present you with other options.

T'SARA
There's an old Earth expression, Mr. Erickson...
(pauses, angry)
Bullshit.

ERICKSON
(surprised)
Captain?!

T'SARA
(seething)
Your actions flagrantly undermined my authority. Not only that, but you offered one recommendation only to make a drastic U-turn on it.
(pauses, calmer)
I can only surmise that this has something to do with recent events, and your belief that you'd found the people that killed your mentor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON

(annoyed)

Captain, with all due respect, I don't need you to psychoanalyze me.

T'SARA

That is far from my intended goal, Commander, but since you bring it up, I want you to make the earliest available appointment with Counselor Kellinnin.

ERICKSON

(disbelief)

Are you telling me to get my head examined, Captain.

T'SARA

(loosing patience)

Damn right I am, Commander. Be thankful I don't relieve you of duty. I will not tolerate outbursts like that again, is that clear?

ERICKSON

(silently fuming)

As crystal.

(deliberate pause)

Captain.

T'SARA

Dismissed.

Erickson turns on his heel, practically marching out of the ready room. T'Sara's steely demeanor cracks, as an air of worry envelops her...

INT. STAR-VIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The ship's lounge, a place where rank is left at the door, and anyone is welcome to come in for a drink or some food, and just have some time away from their duties.

A large room, similar in dimensions and layout to the Mess Hall from earlier, also features a bar, complete with enlisted waitstaff and larger wall-recessed replicators. Behind the bar is a large model of the *Courageous* herself.

Through the starboard-side double doors walks in a tired-looking Matthias, stifling a yawn as she looks around the room. After a moment, a big grin spreads across her face, as she spots who she was looking for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sitting at a table near the large frontward facing windows, showing the stars streaking by at warp speed, is the Trill engineer seen earlier in Sickbay - LT. ELYSE KARRIN. She returns the grin just as widely as Matthias joins her.

MATTHIAS
(affectionate)
Hey, you.

KARRIN
Hey yourself, stranger. Had an eventful shift?

MATTHIAS
Something like that, yeah. Not as bad as you, though. How's the burn?

KARRIN
(surprised)
How did you--?

MATTHIAS
Bhrash sent me a private alert to my console. He didn't want me to worry, apparently. Didn't work. You should have told me.

KARRIN
(defensive)
I was going to, later on.

One of the civilian waiters comes over, holding a PADD to take their order.

KARRIN (cont'd)
Two raktajinos, please. Hot, and extra sweet.

The waiter nods, and leaves the couple be.

KARRIN (cont'd)
(points to cheek)
Look, see, completely healed, not even any discoloration left over. It was a minor second-degree burn, I got lucky, unlike T'Ryn and Laya. They got the worst of it.
(sighs)
You had the entire ship to worry about, you didn't need to be distracted by me being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MATTHIAS

Hey, I *like* being distracted by you,
okay.

(sighs)

With everything going on, I could use
a little distraction.

KARRIN

You mean between the captain and the
X.O.?

MATTHIAS

You heard about that?

KARRIN

(shrugs)

You know what they say about gossip
moving at trans-warp speeds.

The waiter returns with their order, placing the drinks on
the table, as they each smile a thank you.

MATTHIAS

I get where Commander Erickson was
coming from, we'd all love to find
the bastards responsible for Captain
Windsor's death. But the way he spoke
to Captain Frost..?

KARRIN

That bad?

MATTHIAS

Worse.

They sip their drinks in silence...

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The frenetic activity from before has calmed down somewhat,
but Chief Engineer Bhrash hasn't moved from the 'pool
table', still scrutinizing its displays as Da Costa enters
from the connecting corridor.

DA COSTA

Afternoon, Lieutenant.

BHRASH

Commander. I thought I'd sent a
repair team to sort out the problem
with the lateral sensor array?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DA COSTA

Oh, you did, you did, that's not why I'm here.

(pauses, sighs)

Can we talk plainly?

BHRASH

Let me guess... You want to ask me about a certain Executive Officer?

DA COSTA

Good guess.

Bhrash taps the controls once more, before moving away from the console, leading Da Costa to an out of the way corner, near the Jeffries Tube access door.

BHRASH

Look, sir, I'm no gossip, and I'm not one to talk trash about my fellow officers.

(pauses)

That said, you have to understand; Damien, he has a lot of baggage.

DA COSTA

That I'm getting, Chief. But it's like he has it out for T'Sara for some reason.

BHRASH

Can I ask you something? You need to be honest with me here.

DA COSTA

Of course.

BHRASH

(bluntly)

Are you sure you're not being overly sensitive because of your own relationship with the Captain?

DA COSTA

(blinks, caught off guard)

Uh, well--

(pauses, sighs, shakes head)

I'd be lying if I said I was completely impartial on that front, Chief.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DA COSTA (cont'd)

(defiant)

But that doesn't change the fact he was deliberately antagonistic with her.

BHRASH

I know, I heard. The whole ship is probably talking about it by now.

(beat, pleads)

What he did wasn't right, by any means, but you have to understand that Damien didn't just lose a mentor, he was also up for his own command, the *Fearless*. But he didn't get it. Losing the Captain and his own ship, it's been really tough.

DA COSTA

I suppose I can understand that.

(softly)

If anything happened to T'Sara...

BHRASH

Exactly.

The intercom CHIRPS.

T'SARA (OVER INTERCOM)

Commander Da Costa, please report to the bridge.

DA COSTA

(taps commbadge)

On my way.

He turns to leave, with a parting nod to Bhrash.

BHRASH

(calls after him)

Commander? I know it's a cliché, but just given the X.O. some time.

DA COSTA

(dissatisfied)

Hmm. Given just how dangerous this sector had apparently become, I just hope we're given that time.

Off his dubious expression as he exits Main Engineering...

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - MOMENTS LATER

The port-side turbo-lift doors open and Da Costa steps out, spotting T'Sara with Matthias and Erickson at Tactical.

DA COSTA
What's going on?

T'SARA
We picked up the ion trail of our
Good Samaritan.

Da Costa takes his station, consulting the displays.

DA COSTA
They're stationary, with intermittent
power readings. Shields are down,
weapons not operational.

SINGH
We'll arrive at their coordinates in
approximately 30 seconds.

T'Sara moves back to her command chair.

T'SARA
Bring us out of warp, Lieutenant.

EXT. SPACE

The *Courageous* slowly slips from warp space, coming to a slow and steady low-impulse speed as it approaches the lone ship hanging in the void. All around it float large pieces of DEBRIS.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

On the MAIN VIEWSCREEN, the BIRD OF PREY can be seen in all its less-then-stellar glory. Hull plates missing, several areas burnt and scorched, engine lights flickering like a busted light-bulb.

ERICKSON
(grimly)
Looks like their own luck ran out.

Off the reactions of the bridge crew at their find...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SPACE

The *COURAGEOUS* hangs over the crippled, beaten form of the BIRD-OF-PREY.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

T'SARA stands at DA COSTA's station, as the science officer runs a series of scans.

DA COSTA

Life support is still active, and they've got some back-up generators kicking in at the moment.

T'SARA

Life signs?

DA COSTA

About a dozen or so, I think. There's some kind of refractive coating to the hull, makes it hard to get a clear reading.

T'SARA

What about that debris?

DA COSTA

I think it's the remains of one of the Marauders, hull composition matches.

T'Sara turns to face CH'LENE, seated at his Ops console.

T'SARA

Any response to hails, Mr. ch'Lene?

CH'LENE

The communications array sustained severe damage. I believe they are receiving our transmission, but are unable to respond.

T'SARA

Our turn to play the Good Samaritan, then.

She turns to face ERICKSON, with MATTHIAS at Tactical.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA (cont'd)
Commander, assemble an away team.
Establish a presence there before we
send over full engineering and
medical support.

ERICKSON
I recommend a fully armed security
contingent as well, Captain. We don't
know anything about these people yet.

T'SARA
Agreed. Get to it.

Erickson nods, swiftly heading to the port-side turbo-lift.

ERICKSON
Matthias, ch'Lene, with me.

As one, both officers hand their stations over to relief crew and join Erickson in the waiting turbo-car. T'Sara resumes her seat as the door closes.

T'SARA
(to ops officer)
Amend our message to the bird of prey
to let them know about the incoming
away team.

OFFICER (O.C.)
Aye, Captain.

As T'Sara settles into her chair, keen eyes fixed on the image on the main view-screen...

INT. BRIDGE, BIRD OF PREY - SOME TIME LATER

The bridge is even more gloomy and dark as it was as seen earlier. Several consoles spark pathetically, as the surviving crew do what they can with what's left intact. None of the crew are familiar.

The bright light of a TRANSPORTER BEAM briefly illuminates the cramped space, as Erickson, Matthias, ch'Lene and DR. LANJAR, alongside two SECURITY GUARDS, materialize in front of the command console.

They all wear phasers at their hip, bar Lanjar, who instead has a medkit in hand. With surprising swiftness, three of the bridge crew pull out and aim their own side-arms at the away team, who quickly respond in kind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON

Lower your weapons, we're here to help!

They stand across from each other, weapons aimed, wondering who will blink first. *Stalemate.*

SAREN (O.S.)

(no argument)

You heard him! Put those weapons down!

From out of the gloom steps a tall, gorgeous ROMULAN WOMAN, dressed in a casual sleeveless shirt and form-fitting pants, wearing bloody SURGICAL GLOVES. With a brief look to her, the three with weapons slowly holster them, but don't move.

ERICKSON

I'm Lt. Commander Erickson, of the *Starship Courageous*. We're here to offer aid and assistance.

SAREN

Happy to have it. What passed for my medical bay was totaled during the attack. I've got a lot of wounded.

LANJAR

(steps forward)

You're their doctor?

SAREN

More a medic, really.

LANJAR

I'm a healer, I can help.

SAREN

I've set up a triage facility in the Mess Hall, down the corridor and the next deck up.

ERICKSON

Matthias, go with her.

SAREN

(annoyed)

I'm not about to bite the hand that's feeding me, Lt. Commander. I promise your doctor will be safe.

ERICKSON

Forgive me if I don't trust you yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAREN

I could say the same to you, but I really don't have time to deal with macho posturing. I have a crew and a ship that needs fixing. So, you and your Starfleeters do what you do best, and 'help'.

She pulls out an old-fashioned COMMUNICATOR and flips it open.

SAREN (cont'd)

Saren to all hands. We've received assistance from the Starfleet ship we saved earlier. Do not interfere with their efforts, and offer any and all cooperation until further notice.

She flips the communicator closed, and shoots Erickson a look.

SAREN (cont'd)

Satisfied?

ERICKSON

I'll have our medical team and repair crews sent over shortly.

Saren gives him a curt nod, before turning and heading out, Matthias and Lanjar following her through the door and into the dark corridor beyond.

As Erickson watches them go...

EXT. SPACE

The *Courageous* hangs over the crippled bird of prey. Several small figures in ENVIRONMENTAL SUITS can be seen climbing over the green hull, fixing several breaches in it's dented and cracked surface.

T'SARA (V.O.)

Captain's Log, supplemental; our repair teams are prepping the bird of prey for a warp-tow to Star Station Charlie.

INT. MAIN SICKBAY, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Wounded members of the bird-of-prey's crew occupy several of the bio-beds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One of them is GRAEVEN, the Nausicaan first mate. He sits ramrod straight, clearly barely tolerating the ministrations of the nurse examining him.

At the central surgical table, underneath the raised clamshell operating suite, is the ORION CAPTAIN, unconscious and oblivious as Lanjar treats him. Behind her, the picture of nervous worry, is Saren, fidgeting.

T'SARA (V.O.)

We've beamed the injured aboard to take better care of them, and I've allowed those treated limited movement under escort around the ship as a gesture of good faith.

By the doors stand two SECURITY OFFICERS, phasers slung at their hips, at parade rest, keeping a close eye on the 'guests'. They quickly come to attention as the doors open to allow both T'Sara and Erickson to enter, just as Lanjar finishes her work.

LANJAR

There, finished. The auto-suture is closing up the wound now, but all the internal damage has been taken care of. He's going to be fine.

SAREN

(impressed)

That would've taken me a lot longer, even when my med-bay is in working order. Maybe now I'll convince Varrak to pay for a damn upgrade.

T'SARA

Doctor Lanjar?

LANJAR

(noticing)

Oh, Captain, Commander. The majority of the crew we beamed over have been released. A couple beamed back over to help with repairs, the others are in the Starview Lounge with their security escorts.

SAREN

Thank you for allowing them your hospitality, Captain. I'm sure they appreciate getting into some more spacious surroundings for a bit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

T'SARA

Our pleasure. You understand the need for the escorts, though?

SAREN

Of course. I'd do the same in your position.

ERICKSON

(indicating the Orion)

So, this is your captain?

SAREN

For lack of a better term, yes. We're not a military vessel, we don't hold ranks, but he's in command.

ERICKSON

(to Lanjar)

Can you wake him? We need some answers about what's going on.

LANJAR

I'd rather not wake him so soon after surgery, Commander. He needs at least 12 hours rest and recovery.

SAREN

Any questions you have, I can answer.

T'SARA

You're the ship's medic?

SAREN

Medic. Scientist. I do what needs to be done where it needs doing.

Graeven abruptly stands and stalks over towards Saren, pushing his nurse away. The security guards place their hands on their weapons, moving forward as one.

GRAEVEN

We owe this Starfleeters nothing! We wouldn't even be in this mess if we hadn't come to help them.

SAREN

(angrily)

Back off, Graeven! Why not go down a few flagons of synthehol? That's what you do best, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

With a low, menacing growl, Graeven EXITS. Erickson gives a quick nod to one of the security officers, who follows after the Nausicaan.

SAREN (cont'd)

(sighs, tired)

Sorry about that. Graeven's the first mate, but he's not exactly a fan of either Starfleet or the Federation. Nausicaans and their grudges, huh?

T'SARA

So I've heard.

(beat)

Doctor? May we use your office?

LANJAR

(nods)

Go ahead, I want to check on the remaining patients.

She heads over to the nearest occupied bio-bed, as Saren, Erickson and T'Sara head out of the main ward...

INT. LANJAR'S OFFICE, MAIN SICKBAY - MOMENTS LATER

Saren makes herself comfortable, sitting in Lanjar's chair, her feet up on the desk, showing off long legs with great affect. Erickson frowns at the seeming lack of respect, while T'Sara cocks an eyebrow in typical Vulcan fashion.

SAREN

So, where should I start?

T'SARA

Some introductions would be useful.

SAREN

Simply put, we're freelancers. We go where we're needed, asked for or just wherever we want to. Pay us to do a job, we'll get it done for you.

ERICKSON

(unimpressed)

How humanitarian of you.

SAREN

Like it or not, we've been keeping a lot of the colonies the Federation abandoned in this sector out of trouble.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAREN (cont'd)

You'd do well to get on our good side, it might help win some of them over to your cause.

T'SARA

The Federation didn't abandon anyone. There's been a war on, resources had to be diverted to the front line.

SAREN

At what cost, though? While you and yours were fighting your latest 'bad guy', the Orion Syndicate was able to get a significant hold on this entire sector. Because of that, the Federation, and by extension, Starfleet, has lost the trust of a lot of people here.

ERICKSON

That's why the *Courageous* was assigned to this damn sector in the first place!

SAREN

One old-style cruiser, that's what, about 40 years old? Nice message to send!

(takes a calming
breath)

Look, I'll admit, you've done good work since you arrived. You've beaten down a lot of the smaller families, crippled a few operations that had going in the outer fringes of the sector, arrested some minor bosses. But the real people in charge, they're easily coping with the limited damage, and we've had to keep innocent people deeper within the sector out of harms way when the Syndicate retaliates out of anger.

ERICKSON

(incensed)

We've taken losses too. We lost a lot of good people not that long ago.

SAREN

(abashed, sincere)

Yeah, we heard about that. I'm sorry for your loss.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAREN (cont'd)
 (beat, determined)
 But you've got a long way to go.

T'SARA
 Perhaps we could work together?

Both Erickson and Saren shoot incredulous looks at the half-Vulcan woman.

ERICKSON
 Ma'am? Are you serious?

T'SARA
 They came to our aid earlier,
 Commander. We've since returned the
 favor. To me, that signifies at least
 the beginning of a relationship.
 (to Saren)
 What kind is up to you, Ms. Saren.

Saren lowers her legs off the desk, leans forward, wracked in indecision.

SAREN
 (caught off-guard)
 I-- I can't make that kind of
 decision. I'll need to talk to
 Varrak-Sar when he recovers.

T'Sara seats herself across from the Romulan woman, hands grasped loosely on the desk in front of her.

T'SARA
 I won't lie. Starfleet has had
 difficulty in keeping track of the
 Syndicate and how they've influenced
 this whole sector. Any assistance you
 and your crew can offer could prove
 beneficial.

The two women, both powerful in their own right, lock gazes for a long moment, until Saren finally nods.

SAREN
 I'll see what I can do, Captain. But
 no promises.

They both stand.

SAREN (cont'd)
 I should see to my crew and ship.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

T'SARA

Mr. Erickson, escort our guest to the transporter room, and check with our repair crews on board her ship.

ERICKSON

(grudgingly)

Aye, Captain.

With a nod, Saren exits the office, and heads out of Sickbay, Erickson following after, leaving a contemplative T'Sara behind. Off her cautious look...

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - LATER

Inside the softly lit, spaciouly designed and lightly furnished room, COUNSELOR R'NARA KELLINNIN sits, her legs crossed delicately, hands clasped over the knee, waiting with infinite patience.

Opposite her sits Erickson. Everything about his posture and body language screams that he does not want to be there.

R'NARA

The session would go a lot quicker if you actually talked to me, Damien.

ERICKSON

Don't, okay? Don't act like we're 'all friends here'. I'm only here to get this out of the way.

R'NARA

Because the captain ordered you to come here.

ERICKSON

Exactly.

R'NARA

Why? Why did she order that?

ERICKSON

Look, I lost my cool. It was a one-time thing, it wont happen again.

R'NARA

You lost 'your cool', because you felt that she was ignoring the fact that the ships that attacked us were the same one that were responsible for Captain Windsor's death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON

Damned right I did! We could have nailed the bastards!

R'NARA

Why is that important to you?

ERICKSON

Because! Captain Windsor deserves to be avenged!

R'NARA

At the expense of the rest of the crew?

ERICKSON

(furious)

Yes!

(realizes)

No! I didn't mean that, damn it, you're confusing me.

R'NARA

You're definitely conflicted over this, but it's not my doing. I think you're fighting with yourself, your duty to the crew versus your desire to avenge the memory of your mentor.

Erickson relaxes somewhat, slumping forward, rubbing his face vigorously.

R'NARA (cont'd)

Damien, you came up through Security, you know that our line of work is dangerous and can take the life of a good person when you least expect it. What is it about the captain's death that's driving you so hard?

ERICKSON

(sighs, dark chuckle)

You know, he was retiring. Captain Windsor. He'd practically only told me a few days before he died. He'd put in his papers, and was hoping to finally take a trip to Risa, before returning to Caldos Colony.

(beat, emotional)

He-- he deserved better than what he got. Dying like that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(angrily)

Then, we get stuck with a pencil
pusher.

R'NARA

So, you're angry at Captain Frost for
replacing him?

(beat)

Or are you feeling guilty for being
angry at Captain Windsor for dying?

Erickson's head snaps up, his gaze locking onto R'Nara's, *furious* - but maybe, something else just behind the anger - *guilt*, maybe? He stands abruptly.

ERICKSON

(low, menacing)

How dare you. You haven't got a clue.
You never liked the Captain.

R'NARA

My feelings are not in question here.

ERICKSON

Yeah well, neither are mine. I think
that our time is up. Good day,
Counselor.

He storms out of the office, the doors barely open enough
for him to slip through in his haste, as R'Nara watches with
sad eyes...

INT. RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - MOMENTS LATER

The TURBO-LIFT DOOR opens, and Erickson stalks out, fists
clenched and held stiffly by his sides, walking with
purpose, barely controlled anger in every step.

He passes several ND crew-members, responding to their nods
with a curt one of his own, until he finally makes it to his
destination - his quarters. The doors open, allowing him to
enter...

INT. ERICKSON'S QUARTERS, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

...where he walks into the main cabin, and comes to a halt,
desperate to keep the flurry of emotions he's feeling from
overpowering him. He studies the familiar space around him.

The room is well decorated, and moderately sized, as
befitting the occupant's position and rank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Antique weapons, from a BOW & ARROW to a LASER PISTOL, decorate it, either hanging on the walls, or displayed on a shelf.

Several photos are also present: One, in an WOODEN FRAME, is of a YOUNGER ERICKSON, in an earlier style of uniform, stood with CAPTAIN WINDSOR, all smiles. Erickson, with care and respect, picks up the photo, smiling softly at the memory--

--until a SUDDEN FURY twists his handsome features, and he HURLS the picture across the room! It hits a far wall, and SHATTERS!

Erickson, emotionally spent, slowly sinks down into the nearby sofa, burying his head in his hands...

FADE TO:

EXT. SPACE.

The B'rel-class Bird of Prey hangs in space, her hull now clear of EVA repair teams, as slowly her power comes online, and various exterior lights come on.

BHRASH (PRE-LAP)

Finally! I thought we'd never get the damn thing fixed!

INT. BRIDGE, BIRD OF PREY - CONTINUOUS

The lighting in the cramped space has marginally improved, and debris has been cleared away enough to get many of the intact consoles functional.

At one of those stations, stands VEVOSK, the LETHEAN crewmember, alongside RE'KAN, the hulking Klingon engineer, arms crossed against his large chest. Neither look happy as they stare down at a pair of uniformed legs sticking out from the console underside.

With a grunt, BHRASH wiggles himself out of the access hatch, and rolls over, pulling down the cover, sealing it shut with his HYPER-SPANNER. With little grace, he clambers to his feet, tossing the tool into his nearby kit.

RE'KAN

So, you are done? You can leave?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BHRASH

(bristling)

In a hurry to get rid of me and my repair crews, are you?

RE'KAN

Just you. You smell worse than the Ketha Lowlands.

BHRASH

(temper flaring)

Listen here, you overgrown excuse for a targ's mother! Me and my crew here have come over here, helped you get your little ship back up and running, and we've even improved the rundown antique you call an engine!

(beat, baiting)

So why don't you just shove that so-called 'Klingon pride' and say thank you, properly, huh?!

Re'Kan GROWLS, low in his throat, and steps up to Bhrash. The Bolian engineer does not back down, and stares right back into the Klingon's steely gaze. SILENCE REIGNS. Breaths are held in anticipation...

...until Re'Kan abruptly LAUGHS, a full-on deep belly laugh, and flashes his jagged array of teeth in a wide grin.

RE'KAN

(amused)

Bolian, I like you!

He SLAPS Bhrash on the shoulder, hard, the smaller man barely maintaining his stance, as Re'Kan pulls him close and starts walking him out of the bridge.

BHRASH

(surprised)

Uh, thanks... I think.

RE'KAN

It has been too long since someone spoke to me like that. This crew of green-skinned *k'pekt* do not know how to talk like a real warrior!

(beat)

Come! Let us eat and share stories of our glorious victories in the one true test of a warrior's mettle - keeping their ship space-worthy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BHRASH
 (intrigued)
 Okay, sounds good!
 (to nearby officer)
 Chief, you're in charge of the team
 while I'm... 'otherwise engaged',
 okay.

The noncom, a chief petty officer, nods, as Re'Kan fixes Vevosk with a look.

RE'KAN
 Vevosk, see that repairs continue,
 and all systems are restored at once.

VEVOSK
 Yes, Engineer.

Re'Kan utters a noncommittal grunt, before exiting with Bhrash close by.

RE'KAN
 So, explain to me, Starfleet, how is
 it you know so much about Klingon
 systems?

BHRASH
 Actually, it's a funny story. See,
 before I was transferred to the
Courageous, I served at Starbase 325
 and--

The doors close on them, cutting off the rest of the conversation. Vevosk glares at the rest of the crew still standing around in quiet amazement.

VEVOSK
 You heard them! Get to work!

Snapping out of their dazes, the crew, Starfleet and freelancers alike, turn back to their tasks, under Vevosk's watchful gaze...

INT. READY ROOM, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

T'Sara sits at her desk, reading from a PADD, absorbed in what she is reading. The door alarm CHIMES.

T'SARA
 (distracted)
 Come on in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The doors open to admit Kellinnin. The lithe, petite Orion woman stands at parade rest in front of T'Sara's desk.

R'NARA
(curious)
You wanted to see me, Captain?

T'SARA
(pleased)
Yes, Counselor, have a seat.

R'Nara seats herself opposite T'Sara, who puts down the PADD she's been reading, and focuses on her counselor.

T'SARA (cont'd)
I assume you've heard about our guests?

R'NARA
Yes, ma'am.

T'SARA
Myself and Commander Erickson have already spoken with a representative of the ship's crew. A Romulan named Saren, the ship's medic, apparently. But Admiral Sawyer has requested we conduct a proper debrief with the ship's master.
(beat)
I want you to conduct the debriefing.

R'NARA
(surprised)
Me? Surely Commander Erickson or Lt. Matthias should lead it?

T'SARA
Both are capable, yes. But I have my reasons for choosing you. I want you to be more involved in command-level operations, Counselor, and this is one of them. Your record shows you've conducted debriefings of similar sorts, not to mention been involved in several criminal investigations throughout your career.

R'NARA
(nodding, reluctant)
It's not my favorite part of the job, I'll admit, but it's something I've had to do from time to time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

T'SARA

The other reason, is that the bird of prey's captain is an Orion himself.

R'NARA

(defensive)

Captain, whatever you've read in my personnel file, and the rumors about Orion females you may have heard aside--

T'SARA

(quickly)

I apologize, Counselor. That wasn't what I meant to imply. Simply that as someone who grew up in Orion culture, you might be able to offer insights and notice tells someone else might miss.

(beat, hesitant)

However, if you feel strongly enough about not taking the assignment--

R'NARA

No. No, Captain. I can do this.

(sighs)

Have we identified this-- this person?

T'SARA

According to Saren, his name is Varrak-Sar.

R'NARA

(shocked)

V-- Varrak-Sar?!

(beat)

Do you have an image I can see?

T'SARA

(nodding, confused)

Computer, pull up security surveillance footage from Sickbay, main surgical bed.

She turns her computer screen around as the image BLINKS ON. There, now awake, and sitting up, talking to Saren, as Dr. Lanjar scans him with a tricorder is the ORION CAPTAIN - Varrak-Sar.

R'NARA

(stunned, quietly)

I-- I don't believe it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

R'NARA (cont'd)
(smiles)
Varrak, you son-of-a...

T'SARA
R'Nara, do you know this man?

R'NARA
(sighs)
Yes, Captain, I do.
(beat)
He's my brother.

Off the stunned expression on T'Sara's face...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The *Courageous* is at warp, the blue effect of a TRACTOR BEAM pulling the now correctly-oriented BIRD-OF-PREY behind it...

ERICKSON (PRE-LAP)
(incredulous)
Your brother?!

INT. OBSERVATION LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The room, as befitting the main area for the senior staff to talk and discuss command matters, is spacious and set out in the *Sovereign*-class style, with several large windows looking out to the aft of the ship.

Sitting at the long, slightly curved table are the entire senior staff - T'SARA, ERICKSON, DA COSTA, MATTHIAS, LANJAR, BHRASH and R'NARA.

The eyes of the senior officers are all on the Orion counselor, who shifts uncomfortable with the attention for a moment, before meeting Erickson's gaze, *defiant*.

R'NARA
Yes, Commander. My brother.
(beat)
My estranged, long believed to be
dead, brother.

DA COSTA
(confused)
Wait, what?

T'SARA
Perhaps you'd better start at the
beginning, Counselor.

Kellinnin sighs, nods. She stands and moves to the large display console situated against the wall opposite the windows. She works the controls, and the default image of the STARFLEET EMBLEM is replaced by a red/brown planet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

R'NARA

I grew up on Farius Prime. When I was 14, I ran away and sneaked onto on a Federation freighter. The crew took me in, I became a kind of mascot for them. Eventually I ended up at the Academy.

MATTHIAS

And your brother?

R'NARA

At first, he was the only one I kept in contact with, I even told him when I got accepted in Starfleet Academy. Then, I found he'd joined up in the family business. But later, I discovered that like me, he'd severed ties with the family and went off on his own.

(beat)

Last I heard, he'd been killed during a skirmish between the cartel he was working for, and their competitors.

ERICKSON

So you had no idea he was out in this sector playing Robin Hood?

LANJAR

"Robin Hood"?

DA COSTA

I'll explain later.

BHRASH

But won't this make your job easier? I mean, if he's your brother, he'll be happy to explain things and answer your questions, right?

R'Nara squirms under their scrutiny. She's holding back, unable to completely bare her soul to them yet. T'Sara, seeing her struggle, clears her throat.

T'SARA

While I value the counselor's input, I believe the conflict of interest that could arise means debriefing our guest should fall to Commander Erickson and Lieutenant Matthias.

(beat)

Doctor, how's Sickbay doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LANJAR

All injuries treated, anyone needing extended rest has been released to quarters. The appropriate department and section heads have been notified to adjust duty schedules.

T'SARA

Excellent. Mr. Bhrash?

BHRASH

This old lady can take a beating. All repairs are well underway and should be completed by the time we arrive at Star Station Charlie. If anything acts up too much, I'll be sure to let the station engineers know.

ERICKSON

What about the Bird of Prey?

BHRASH

(sighs)

A different story. She's in dire need of some proper maintenance, their engineers are keeping it together with spit and bailing wire.

T'SARA

Will the engineers at Charlie be up to the task?

BHRASH

That all depends on whatever layover agreement they make with the ship's crew, Captain.

ERICKSON

Captain, you have to remember that Charlie may be in Federation space, but it's still very much a free-port that survives on trade and profit to keep itself going.

DA COSTA

In other words, there's no free handouts to the wounded, weary traveler?

MATTHIAS

Something like that. Also, I wouldn't carry any latinum or valuables on you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MATTHIAS (cont'd)

Their security people are good, but there's still a thriving criminal underground present. Pick-pocketing is common on the Embarcadero.

T'SARA

Noted. Please make sure that any and all new crewmembers are also aware of these tidbits, Lieutenant.

MATTHIAS

Of course, Captain.

T'SARA

Dismissed.

Everyone stands to leave and exit... except a deep-in-thought R'Nara, who stares at her reflection in the table-top for a long moment.

T'SARA (cont'd)

(softly)

R'Nara?

R'Nara looks up in surprise to see T'Sara standing beside her. The half-Vulcan woman puts a gentle hand on the other woman's shoulder.

T'SARA (cont'd)

You should go talk to him.

R'NARA

(surprised)

I thought you felt it better to keep me off his debriefing?

T'SARA

I mean that you should go see your brother. Talk to him.

R'NARA

(pleading)

And say what?!

T'SARA

You could start with "I'm happy you're alive", or something to that effect?

(beat)

Don't make the mistake of missing this chance to reconnect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

After a moment, R'Nara looks up, her moist eyes meeting the sympathetic gaze of her superior officer and nods...

INT. CORRIDOR, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Varrak exits Sickbay, arm in arm with the Saren, making their way down the corridor, studiously ignoring the security detail that trails behind them. Saren gently touches Varrak's side, prodding with gentle fingers.

SAREN

That Betazoid does good work.

VARRAK-SAR

Well, be that as it may, I'm glad I'm out of there.

(takes her hand)

You can stop that as well, thank you.

SAREN

(amused)

You still don't like doctors very much, do you?

VARRAK-SAR

I spent far too long surrounded by them as a child, being poked and prodded to understand why I was such a 'freak of nature'. That kind of sticks with you, Saren.

SAREN

I know it does, Varrak.

(beat)

Come on, apparently this ship has it's own bar. If we're lucky, they might actually have real alcohol!

VARRAK-SAR

Really? On a Starfleet ship? Now, that does sound like something I could get used to.

As they stroll down, passing various ND crewmembers...

INT. STAR-VIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - SOME TIME LATER

The double doors part, allowing JHISINSHER CH'LENE entry, the exhausted Andorian, massaging the back of his neck, wanting nothing more than a hot meal and a moment to relax.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The LOUD CHEER that fills the room derails that, as he comes to a complete halt and looks up, *startled*. His surprise gives way to a disappointed, yet resigned, understanding.

CH'LENE

(under his breath)

Oh no, not again..!

Standing at one of the smaller tables, surrounded by a engrossed audience of Starfleet personnel, with an array of empty and upturned SHOT-GLASSES in front of both of them, are ASEEMA SINGH, and the Nausicaan, GRAEVEN.

They wait patiently as one of the bar-staff places down two more shoot-glasses, each filled to the top with a thin green liquid. They glare unblinking at each other for a moment - before each downing their shot!

They each *slam* their respective empty glass onto the table top, resuming their staring match for a long moment... until Graeven *stumbles*, eyes blinking rapidly, until he finally manages to balance himself.

Singh raises her arms in victory amid congratulatory cheers.

SINGH

(grinning)

Ha! Got you! Knew I could beat your ass!

GRAEVEN

(displeased, growls)

No! That-- that did not count, I did not fall!

SINGH

(emboldened)

Ah ah ah, that wasn't what we agreed!
"First one to show weakness", those were your words, big boy! Suck it, loser!

She sticks out her tongue in a completely childish, impudent fashion, enraging the drunk Nausicaan. With what little sobriety he hangs onto, he rests his hand on a SMALL SCABBARD hanging from his waist belt.

Reacting instinctively, ch'Lene interposes himself between Singh and Graeven. The security noncoms watching Graeven reach for their PHASERS and advance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CH'LENE

That would not be the best move to make in a room filled with Starfleet security officers, sir.

(beat)

I suggest you leave under your own power before I am forced to inform your captain of your behavior.

The Nausicaan simply smirks, his fearsome facial features twisting into a sneer.

GRAEVEN

This *hiq'ta* belongs to you, Andorian?

SINGH

(affronted)

Hey! Who are you calling a-- a 'hick' whatever-you-just-said?! Now, pay up or get out!

Graeven growls low, once again, and quickly pulls out his WICKED-LOOKING BLADE--

--only for a strong GREEN HAND to grab his wrist, and twist with enough strength that the dagger drops from his grasp within seconds. Graeven looks up to see Varrak-Sar staring coldly at him.

VARRAK-SAR

Play nice, Graeven. We're these people's guests, remember.

He lets go of Graeven's wrist, the Nausicaan rubbing at it gingerly, as he appraises the tall, well-built Orion in front of him with a contemptuous sneer.

GRAEVEN

I think I've had enough of Federation 'hospitality'.

VARRAK-SAR

(stating)

Then maybe you should return to the guest quarters.

With a final leer at Singh, Graeven spits loudly onto the table top, before walking out with what remains of his dignity and pride intact. Off a look from ch'Lene, two non-com security personnel trail after him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CH'LENE

(sighs in relief)

That could have been a lot worse.

VARRAK-SAR

My apologies, Lieutenant. If you want to report this to your captain, I won't blame you.

CH'LENE

I will have to inform her, however I will also mention your assistance in the matter.

Varrak dips his head in thanks, before heading back to the waiting Saren, sitting in a far corner table with two half-finished drinks, who has been watching with amusement.

SINGH

(gleefully)

Jhishy!! My hero!

Ch'Lene's breath is knocked out of him when Singh leaps at him, swamping him in a bear hug, but he can't help but reciprocate the hug tenderly. The moment passes when he pulls free, and scowls at her.

CH'LENE

A drinking match with a Nausicaan, Aseema? Are you insane? What were you thinking?!

SINGH

(defensive, proud)

I was thinking that I didn't like the fact he was insulting my ship and crew-mates, even though we rescued his sorry ass, that's what!

CH'LENE

But See, Nausicaans aren't exactly easy to get drunk, you could have ended up loosing!

SINGH

(pleased)

Aha, that's where you're wrong! With me being a 'feeble human woman', he was willing to let me choose the drink, and that's where I got him!

She passes one of the empty glasses to ch'Lene, who gives it a cautious sniff, recoiling immediately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CH'LENE
Aldebaran brandy?

SINGH
From my personal collection!
(beat, cheekily)
Did you know it contains a mixture of
proteins that make it difficult for a
Nausicaan to tolerate it? That means
it affects them just as badly as it
does a human!
(barks with laughter)
Poor sap didn't know who he was
challenging!

CH'LENE
(shakes head,
disappointed)
Aseema, this is hardly the best way
to begin service on this ship, is it?

Singh's pleased demeanor quickly fades into annoyance at
ch'Lene's attitude. She points at him aggressively.

SINGH
I don't need you to come in here and
be all Mr. Judgey, okay, Jhish. I
just need you...

She trails off, her eyes glazing over with remarkable
quickness, as she starts to slowly wobble on the spot, her
finger moving to point into space just to ch'Lene's left.

SINGH (cont'd)
...and you...

Her finger moves again, now pointing to ch'Lene's right.

SINGH (cont'd)
...and you there too, to be my friend
and support me.
(beat, confused)
Jhish, why are there 3 of you all of
a sudden?
(giggles, drunkenly)
Oh, imagine the fun we could have!

CH'LENE
(trying not to smile)
I think I better get you to your
quarters, don't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SINGH

(grimaces)

Yeah, I think you should.

(moans, holds stomach)

I don't feel so good.

Ch'Lene gently puts his arm around Singh's shoulders, and leads her out of the lounge. Varrak and Saren watch with amusement.

SAREN

I think I like that girl. She can handle her drink.

VARRAK-SAR

Anyone who can out-drink Graeven gets my respect. Still, the sooner we get back on board, the happier I will be, Starfleet generosity notwithstanding.

He looks out the window, which faces aft, allowing a view of the rear of the ship, and the avian-like form of the Bird of Prey, caught in the pull of the *Courageous's* tractor beam.

VARRAK-SAR (cont'd)

(sadly)

She took a beating. It's gonna cost a hell of a lot to fix her back up, even with the freebies Starfleet has thrown our way today.

SAREN

You can afford it.

She stands, and saunters up to him, running an arm around his waist, and leaning on him.

SAREN (cont'd)

Either that or transfer your flag to another one of your ships.

(knowingly)

But you won't, because she was your first. The '*Lucky Shot*'.

VARRAK-SAR

(laughs)

So named because that was what won me her. A lucky shot.

R'NARA (O.C.)

You always did have terrible aim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Surprised, both Varrak and Saren turn around to find R'Nara, still in her uniform, standing with her hands behind her back, trying her best to exude an air of calm. The fact she's biting her lip doesn't help.

SAREN

(annoyed)

Excuse me, uh, Lt. Commander. Can we help you?

R'Nara doesn't respond, her eyes not moving from Varrak, who frowns for a long moment, uncertain, until recognition hits.

VARRAK-SAR

(shocked)

I don't believe it.

(steps forward,
hesitant)

Nara?

R'NARA

(emotional)

Hello, Rak. Long time.

Varrak breaks into a huge grin, and bustles R'Nara into a massive embrace, lifting her off her feet and spinning her around. They both laugh and cheer in each others arms for a moment, as Saren looks on, arms crossed. *Not happy...*

INT. SCIENCE LAB 8, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - LATER

The lab, set out in the usual style with a LARGE CIRCULAR CONSOLE as the main station, with several smaller ANCILLARY CONSOLES and work-spaces set around the room, is off-shift. Only the glow of active consoles provides limited light.

An ACCESS HATCH in the wall opens, and from out of the JEFFRIES TUBE, climbs GRAEVEN, his large form just about fitting inside the narrow confines. One free, he cautiously but quickly makes his way to one of the workstations.

Reaching up to his neck, he brushes his unkempt shoulder-length hair aside, to reveal a DATAPORT just under his ear. He pulls a ROUND DEVICE from a pocket, pulling it into two halves - one attaches to his port, the other to the console.

On the console monitor, as it begins running through various images at a super-fast pace...

INT. MAIN ENGINEERING, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at the 'POOL TABLE', Bhrash and KARRIN, his assistant chief, are working away on various diagnostics, occasionally consulting PADDs they've accumulated in small piles on the console.

BEEP, BEEP! Karrin quickly silences the alarm, frowning at someone on her display.

KARRIN

Uh, Chief? Someone's using the astrophysics lab to try and access the main computer, bypassing the security lockouts.

BHRASH

What?!

(checks for himself)

This is not good.

(taps combadge)

Bhrash to Matthias. I think we've got a problem.

Off the concerned look he shares with Karrin...

INT. SCIENCE LAB 8, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - MINUTES LATER

Graeven stands at the console, his eyes closed as his dataport continues to process and hack through the ship's database, until--

SWISH!

-- light pours in from the corridor outside, catching the hulking Nausicaan off-guard, as he turns around, squinting into the light.

MATTHIAS (O.S.)

Hold it right there.

Standing in the door way, flanked by two male security noncoms (one Bajoran, the other a Vulcan) is Matthias. They all have PHASERS drawn and aimed at Graeven, who lifts his arms slowly in surrender.

They slowly approach, the two noncoms keeping Graeven covered, as Matthias holsters her phaser and deactivates the console with a quick tapping of controls. She then removes the data port device from it, examines it, *impressed*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATTHIAS

Not bad, only a few models behind the latest version.

(to the Vulcan)

Vanik, confiscate any more of his equipment, then you and Antos escort him to the brig.

VANIK

Of course, Lieutenant.

She turns away, tapping her combadge.

MATTHIAS

Matthias to bridge. Security issue contained. Please inform--

THWACK! Matthias spins around, her weapon out of its holster in seconds, to find Vanik unconscious on the floor, green blood trickling from his mouth, as Graeven and Antos struggle with a PHASER now in the Nausicaan's hand.

MATTHIAS (cont'd)

Bridge! Security alert! Security Team
Bravo to Science Lab 8 on the double!

With a vicious HEADBUTT, Graeven knocks Antos to the floor, groaning, dazed. With a sneer on his lips, he advances on Matthias--

--who, without any hesitation, FIRES her weapon. A thin beam of RED ENERGY strikes the Nausicaan in the chest, staggering him back, but just barely. He grins wickedly.

GRAEVEN

That all you got, human?

Matthias quickly adjust the setting of her phaser, and FIRES again, the beam brighter and thicker, but all it does is elicit a ROAR of primal fury from the Nausicaan, who lunges at Matthias!

He smashes the phaser from her grasp. The woman responds with a hard punch to his face, followed by a series of blows to his chest. Not even a flinch in response.

With lightening speed, he LASHES OUT and grabs hold of Matthias by the throat, lifting her clear off the deck. She is soon struggling for breath, as the Nausicaan leers at her. He pulls her close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRAEVEN (cont'd)
 (into her ear,
 menacing)
 Scream for me, human.

MATTHIAS
 (defiant, breathless)
 Go. To. Hell.

CRACK! A swift boot to his groin area quickly causes Graeven to drop Matthias to the deck, as he groans in pain while she gasps for breath, massaging her throat. He stares daggers down at her, murderous fury in his eyes.

GRAEVEN
 Human whore!

As he lunges at her--

-- a green-tinged hand grabs hold of his shoulder, and SQUEEZES. The effect is instantaneous, as Graeven's eyes roll back into his head, and he crumples to the floor with a soft moan.

Standing behind him, is a conscious, if bloody, VANIK. He moves over and offers a hand to Matthias, who accepts it gratefully.

VANIK
 Are you well, Lieutenant?

MATTHIAS
 I'll live, Vanik. Nice nerve pinch.

Vanik nods in acknowledgment of the compliment as he assist the woozy Antos to his feet.

VANIK
 It seemed the most prudent course.
 However I was uncertain if it would
 work on a Nausicaan.
 (beat)
 It seems we were most fortunate in
 that regard.

MATTHIAS
 You mean, 'we got lucky'.

VANIK
 I believe that is what I said, ma'am.

Shaking her head at Vulcan literal thought, Matthias touches her communicator once again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MATTHIAS

Bridge, situation under control.
Please inform the Captain and First
Officer, we've had some trouble with
one of our guests.

Off the still form of Graeven...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. STAR-VIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS

Through the windows, the lounge is half-empty, the lights dimmed to show the lateness of the hour. At one of the smaller tables, sit R'NARA & VARRAK-SAR KELLINNIN.

R'NARA (PRE-LAP)

It was good of Saren to give us some time alone.

INT. STARVIEW LOUNGE, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The two long-lost siblings look very comfortable with each other, all smiles and laughter.

VARRAK-SAR

Yeah, she understands how much this means to me.

(teasing)

I've told her some stories about you.

R'NARA

(embarrassed)

Oh, I dread to think!

VARRAK-SAR

I just can't quite believe it. Of all the ships for you to serve on..?

R'NARA

(shrugs)

You remember what Grandfather always used to say, about how life works in mysterious ways?

VARRAK-SAR

(quoting 'old voice')

"As the Great Bird of the Galaxy wills it to be...", yeah, I do.

(beat)

He always hoped you'd find your own way in life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

R'NARA

(guilty)

I'm wish I could have made it to his memorial service.

VARRAK-SAR

It was just what he deserved, Nara. Small, intimate, no pomp and show, just the basics. Just like him.

(smiles)

It drove Mother mad, but she knew that to not honor Grandfather's last wishes would look even worse.

R'NARA

(disgusted)

And we both know that Mother is all about 'appearances'.

She takes a sip of her drink, before staring at her brother for a moment.

VARRAK-SAR

(noticing)

What?

R'NARA

How did you do it, Rak? How did you get away from the family?

VARRAK-SAR

It wasn't easy. I spent a lot of time bowing and scraping, keeping my head down. Saving what little latinum I got to keep from jobs.

(sighs)

Finally, I got sick of being second-class, because of my 'condition', so that's when I walked out. I stopped using the family name, went out to make something of myself, and secured work with a rival cartel.

(clears throar)

The rest, they say, is history.

R'NARA

I'm just glad to find out how you've been helping people in this sector from falling victim to the cartels.

Varrak's smile fades quickly, and he stands and turns away from her, facing the windows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VARRAK-SAR

I'm no saint, Nara. I've not been the model person over the years. I've-- I've done things I'm not proud of to get the job done.

R'Nara stands and puts a hand gently on her brother's shoulder.

R'NARA

Hey, I'm not judging, or even asking, right now. I'm just happy seeing my favorite brother again.

VARRAK-SAR

(smiles softly)

Me too, sister.

The moment is interrupted when the intercom beeps.

T'SARA (OVER INTERCOM)

Frost to Kellinnin.

R'NARA

(tapping commbadge)

Kellinnin here, Captain.

T'SARA (OVER INTERCOM)

Counselor, are you with our guests?

R'NARA

(cautious)

I'm with Varrak-Sar, yes, ma'am. Is there a problem?

T'SARA (OVER INTERCOM)

Please meet me on Deck 9. Lieutenant Matthias will be waiting.

R'NARA

(understanding)

Of course, Captain. On our way.

VARRAK-SAR

(frowning, cautious)

What's wrong? What's on deck 9?

R'NARA

(sighs)

The Brig.

Realization dawns on Varrak, as the two Orions turn and quickly make to EXIT...

INT. BRIG, SECURITY SECTION, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - LATER

Sitting stoically on the cell's bunk, not moving a muscle, is GRAEVEN. He stares blankly through the FORCE-FIELD that is keeping him contained.

Standing the brig control console is PETTY OFFICER VANIK, keeping a watchful eye on brig systems and their prisoner, sporting a large GREEN BRUISE on his lower cheek. In front of him stand Varrak-Sar, R'Nara, T'SARA and MATTHIAS.

VARRAK-SAR

(disappointed)

I can only apologize, Captain. You've shown us nothing but good manners, and it appears that wasn't enough for my crewmate.

T'SARA

You understand I cannot permit Mr. Graeven to roam free. However, he will be released back into your custody once we arrive at Star Station Charlie.

VARRAK-SAR

(angrily)

After which I will confine him to the *Lucky Shot* for the duration of our stay there. He can put himself to some good use with repairs.

MATTHIAS

I've recommended to the Captain that all of our 'guests' be confined to quarters.

T'SARA

I'll admit, it's a tempting suggestion currently.

R'NARA

(defensive)

No, Captain, that's not necessary, surely?!

VARRAK-SAR

It's alright, Nara, I can understand their distrust right now. I give you my word that if you don't restrict us, this will not happen again.

After a long moment, T'Sara nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRAK-SAR (cont'd)

Thank you. Has he said anything since you took him into custody?

MATTHIAS

He hasn't answered any of our questions as to what and why he was trying to access.

(grudgingly)

Apparently, he's the 'strong and silent' type.

VARRAK-SAR

(fiercely)

Let me talk to him.

(beat)

He'll answer my questions, I assure you.

T'Sara studies Varrak for a moment, before she nods.

T'SARA

Very well. Lower the field, Petty Officer.

VANIK

Yes, Captain.

Vanik works the console, as Matthias gently places her hand on her phaser, ready to draw it if needed.

The field FLASHES, and Varrak calmly walks into the cell and approaches Graeven, leaning in close, and begins whispering into his ear. Graeven's stoic face barely moves, but something in his eyes changes - is that *genuine fear*?

Matthias, T'Sara and R'Nara all watch with a mixture of reactions - confusion, curiosity, and concern. After a moment more, Varrak straightens up, and exits the cell. With a nod from Matthias, Vanik activates the field again.

VARRAK-SAR

(confidently)

He's ready to talk now.

With an eyebrow slightly raised, T'Sara faces the Nausicaan, and he slowly rises to his feet.

T'SARA

You attempted to access our systems. Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRAEVEN

Intelligence. I wanted to know what Starfleet knows about the sector. I thought that perhaps if it turned out we knew more than you did, we could come to some kind of arrangement.

T'SARA

I see. Logical, I suppose.
(beat)
Were you successful?

GRAEVEN

(grudgingly)
No. Your security was too good for the limited time I had.

T'SARA

Thank you for your cooperation, however reluctant. We're done here.

VARRAK-SAR

Captain, if you don't mind, I think I'll return to the rest of my crew.

T'Sara nods in understand, and gestures at where ANTOS, the Bajoran petty officer, stands near the Brig entrance.

T'SARA

The petty officer will escort you.

After a gracious nod, Varrak turns to a frowning R'Nara.

VARRAK-SAR

(cordially)
Talk again later?

R'NARA

(nods, distracted)
Of course.

With a sad smile, Varrak exits, followed by Antos, as the comm system CHIRPS.

ERICKSON (OVER INTERCOM)

(over comm)
Bridge to Frost. Captain, we're on final approach to *Star Station Charlie*. Also, Station Ops informs us that you have a communique from Admiral Sawyer waiting for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

T'SARA
 Acknowledged, Commander. I'm on my
 way up.

With a parting nod, T'Sara exits as well. Matthias leans in close to R'Nara. She tilts her head in the direction of the cell, and its recalcitrant occupant.

MATTHIAS
 (impressed)
 What the hell did your brother say to
 him?

With an amused smile, she too, walks off, not noticing the concerned look on R'Nara's face, as she studies the once-again-stoic visage of Graeven.

R'NARA
 (conflicted)
 I wish I knew.

Off her nervous look...

EXT. SPACE.

The *Courageous* and the towed *Lucky Shot* drop out of warp space with easy grace. As they slowly cruise past on impulse, their destination becomes visible.

STAR STATION CHARLIE, VULCAN in design, is a rather sizable installation, but still smaller than Starbase 19.

The top-most section is a 5-sided pyramid, connected via a central core to a central DOCKING RING, with crossbeams connecting the five main docking areas to the top. The core continues further downwards, housing the station's REACTORS.

The docking ring is busy - the cargo ships of the supply convoy, as well as the *Centaur*-class *Leicester* and the *Miranda*-class *Nimitz*, are secure in berths. Several other non-Starfleet ships, a CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER and a FERENGI D'KORA-CLASS MARAUDER also have berths.

T'SARA (V.O.)
 Captain's Log, stardate 53790.4. The
Courageous is currently docking at
 Star Station Charlie.

The *Courageous* releases its hold on the *Lucky Shot*, which, using thrusters, makes it's way to a nearby docking port of it's own. The *Courageous* slips into a berth, a docking point extending out to attach to the saucer section's airlock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

T'SARA

The *Lucky Shot* has also been assigned a berth of their own, which should allow it's crew to finish repairs in due time. Shore leave will be granted once docking is complete.

INT. KELLINNIN'S QUARTERS, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

The interior of these quarters has a much more feminine touch. Colorful drapes and silks hang across many of the walls, the tones lightening the gray, drab quality of Erickson's rooms. Think Guinan's quarters in "*Generations*".

R'NARA, off-duty and in relaxed clothing, sits on a sofa, legs curled up beneath her reading a genuine PAPERBACK BOOK, instead of a PADD.

BE-BEEP! She looks up with surprise at the sound of her door chime.

R'NARA

Who is it?

ERICKSON

(embarrassed, through door)

It's me. Damien.

R'NARA

(taken aback)

Oh. Come on in.

She stands, and pulls on a nearby silk robe, covering much of her exposed green figure as Erickson, clutching a PADD in one hand, walks in. He falters at the sight of her, clearly not used to seeing her in such an informal manner.

ERICKSON

(uncomfortable)

Oh, I'm sorry! I'll come back tomorrow if you're heading to bed.

R'NARA

No, no, it's fine.

(indicates book)

I was just reading to help myself wind down a little. It's been quite a day.

ERICKSON

I'll say.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON (cont'd)
(gestures at book)
A real book? Is it replicated?

R'NARA
(shakes head)
Not hardly. It's a proper antique,
made back in the early 20th century.
Remember that freighter I mentioned?

ERICKSON
Yeah?

R'NARA
The ship's doctor, he took me in,
looked after me, more than any of the
other crew. He'd lost his only son
during the Galen Border Conflicts,
and when I got into Starfleet
Academy, he gave me a collection of
books that had been in his family for
generations.

(smiles)
He was like a father to me when I
really needed one, and he was the one
who taught me to always keep an open
mind.

ERICKSON
Speaking of open minds...
(beat, lets out a
breath)
I came to say that you were right.

R'Nara smiles softly, and lowers herself back down into her
sofa, falling back into a professional manner. She indicates
to Erickson to take a nearby chair. After a moment, he does
so, letting out a heavy sigh, visibly deflating.

ERICKSON (cont'd)
I shouldn't have gone off at you like
I did.

R'NARA
You don't need to apologize for that.
Sometimes therapy means pushing a
patient's buttons, to make them
realize something about themselves.

ERICKSON
(chuckles)
Well, you did just that.
(hands her the PADD)
Here, I want you to read something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Somewhat cautiously, R'Nara takes the offered PADD, and gives it her full attention.

R'NARA

A personnel memo?

ERICKSON

You heard about me being up for command of the *Fearless*?

(off her nod)

Apparently, Captain Windsor was asked to write a letter of recommendation in order for me to secure the position.

R'NARA

(quoting)

"In his time aboard the *Courageous*, Damien Erickson has proven himself time and again as a worthy command-line officer and an excellent first officer."

(beat, reacts with surprise)

"However, I feel that promoting him to a command of his own at this time is premature. While we are feeling the losses of many good commanders during the Dominion War, that is not an excuse anymore to keep promoting officers ahead too fast. I feel that Erickson still needs several years under his belt as an X.O. in order to learn all the necessary skills to deserve a captaincy."

(sympathetic)

Oh, Damien. I'm so sorry.

ERICKSON

(waves it off)

No, I didn't come here for our sympathy, Counselor.

(sighs)

But this? This is why I've been so-- so angry of late. Angry at Frost, angry at Windsor. Angry at myself for being angry in the first place.

R'NARA

How did you even find out about this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ERICKSON

It turns out Captain Windsor had every intention of telling me about this evaluation, but died before he could. He did mention in a letter to his husband on Mars about it though...

R'NARA

(realizing)

And the husband contacted you, feeling that Windsor would have wanted you to know the truth.

He stands, and walks over to one of the large view-ports in the cabin, staring out into space. R'Nara simply waits as a good counselor does.

ERICKSON

You know, the man was my mentor, taught me everything he knew about how to command a starship. I thought I'd learned enough to take on a ship of my own.

R'NARA

And now?

ERICKSON

Now... I honestly don't know. Maybe that's a good thing?

R'NARA

What makes you say that?

ERICKSON

Because it makes me realize what areas I'm lacking in, areas that I couldn't develop over the last few years with everything going on.

(beat)

You know, I took some time to read Frost's personnel file in detail. It's actually pretty impressive. You know, she commanded several exploration missions back in the 2350s. Made first contact with several new races that went on to either join the Federation or initiate trade agreements.

R'NARA

Why bring that up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ERICKSON

Because-- because, as much as I learned from Captain Windsor, I think I could learn a lot more serving with Frost.

(hesitant, ashamed)

If I haven't screwed up my chances already.

R'NARA

(smiles)

I don't think you'd still be on board if she felt that way, Damien. I also think you already know what you need to do.

(beat)

I'm not the one who you should be apologizing to, am I?

Off Erickson's dawning understanding...

FADE TO:

INT. READY ROOM, DECK TWO, U.S.S. COURAGEOUS - CONTINUOUS

T'Sara is in her ready room, staring blankly at her desktop monitor screen, deep in thought. She looks up, frowning when the door chime SOUNDS.

T'SARA

Enter.

The doors open to allow ERICKSON entry.

ERICKSON

You wanted to see me, Captain.

T'SARA

(thoughtful)

Have a seat, Commander.

Erickson, carrying himself with a degree of hesitancy and discomfort, does as instructed, sitting ramrod straight.

T'SARA (cont'd)

I reviewed the message from Admiral Sawyer. He's managed to confirm that the *Redoubtable* went missing 5 months ago, conducting a long-distance cargo run between New Miranda and Kratos III, it's intended destination.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERICKSON

Kratos III? That's only a dozen light-years away or so, near the edge of the sector.

(beat, curious)

Why didn't that come up on our initial ident search?

T'SARA

Apparently, it got lost in the shuffle what with the various post-war reorganizations, not to mention the fact that New Miranda isn't exactly a model of democratic efficiency.

ERICKSON

So, she was probably attacked and boarded by the Syndicate, and then used as a lure and booby trap.

T'SARA

Either that, or as a decoy in an effort to leave the cargo convoy undefended.

ERICKSON

Possibly. We got lucky, I suppose.

T'SARA

Indeed. Very lucky. But what about the ship's crew complement?

ERICKSON

(sighs)

My guess, they were either killed or sold off. Given how long it's been, we may never know what happened to them. With your permission, I'll contact Starbase 19's intelligence officer, they may have heard rumblings or rumors about them.

T'SARA

See to that, Mr. Erickson.

Erickson stands and makes to leave-- only to suddenly stop, and turn about, to face T'Sara.

ERICKSON

Permission to speak freely?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

T'Sara, eyebrow cocked in curiosity, simply nods, leaning back in her chair, as Erickson closes the distance between them with a few steps.

ERICKSON (cont'd)

(contrite)

I believe I owe you an apology for my recent behavior. Not just my actions on the bridge during the fight with the Marauders, but since you came on board.

T'SARA

I will admit to perceiving a certain amount of animosity from you since I arrived, yes.

Erickson tugs his uniform tunic down slightly, the picture of a perfect Starfleet officer.

ERICKSON

(professional)

I can assure you that it won't happen again, and that my conduct from this point on will be as is expected from an Executive Officer.

T'SARA

(smiles softly)

I'm glad to hear it, Commander. Like I said when we met, I am very much looking forward to working with you.

Erickson nods gratefully. A weight has been lifted. He turns and EXITS. OFF T'Sara allowing a small smile...

INT. TRANSPORTER BAY, LUCKY SHOT - LATER

The starkly-lit room, as bad as the bridge, if not worse, is briefly illuminated by the BLOOD-RED KLINGON TRANSPORTER EFFECT. A stoic GRAEVEN alone on the platform materializes.

Manning the console, neither looking happy with the situation, are VARRAK-SAR and SAREN.

VARRAK-SAR

I'd say it was good to have you back, Graeven... but I'd be lying.

GRAEVEN

(growls, low voice)

I-- I ask your pardon, Varrak-Sar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRAK-SAR

You don't deserve it. But I'm willing to be lenient today, on account of the fact I'm in a good mood.

(beat, dismissive)

Salaazar is waiting to be relieved on the bridge. Be thankful I don't stick you on waste recycling duty.

GRAEVEN

(grudgingly)

Yes, sir.

SAREN

(quickly)

Actually, I want to take Graeven down to the medbay for a quick once-over. He might still be suffering effects from the phaser blast and nerve pinch. Nothing against Dr. Lanjar, but she doesn't know Nausicaans like I do.

VARRAK-SAR

I'm tempted to tell you to let him suffer, but fine. Go on. I'll be helping Re'Kan set up a repair schedule.

Saren nods graciously, as Varrak disappears out into the main corridor. For a moment, Saren and Graeven lock eyes--

--until she smiles, *devilishly*.

SAREN

You did good work, Graeven. Nice distraction.

GRAEVEN

Were you successful?

Saren gently reaches into one of her knee high boot, and pulls out a KLINGON ISOLINEAR CHIP. She examines it, turning it this way and that, reflecting what little light is in the cramped bay.

SAREN

We know have the latest intelligence on not only what the Starfleet know about Syndicate movements throughout the sector, but also a full manifest of all Starfleet activity.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAREN (cont'd)
(beat, faux-innocent)
Might come in handy, don't you think?

Graeven's face contorts into a rare small grin of his very own, as Saren's feigned innocent expression slips into something more devious, more cunning as we:

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

END OF EPISODE