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25 or 6 to 4

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Summary

Sometimes, the bridge's night watch isn't as quiet as you think...

Notes

Historian's Note: This drabble takes place in 2412 within the Star Trek Online universe.

Lieutenant (jg) Semi's brows furrowed in a mixture of concentration and burgeoning unease, the luminous glow of her console eerily reflecting in her wide, worried eyes. "Commander?" Her voice, though softly spoken, wavered perceptibly with a tremor of perplexity that cascaded through the otherwise routine serenity of *Exeter's* bridge.

Lieutenant Commander Fokt Jemma, with her characteristically disciplined demeanor and Bajoran earring shimmering subtly, vacated the command chair and joined Semi at the science station with a measured pace that belied her curiosity. "A 'blip?' Define 'blip,' Semi," Fokt's inquisitiveness subtly shaded by a hint of concern.

Semi, ever-earnest and diligent, tried to suppress a sigh, her fingers subconsciously tracing the ridges of her prominent Ferengi ear. "I hypothesize that Douglas Station's new sensors could be experiencing teething troubles..." Her voice trailed, an unsatisfied skepticism lingering in her eyes.

But Fokt, whose expertise transformed her movements into a delicate, yet assertive ballet of practiced motions, leaned forward, fingers dancing across the controls. "Diagnostics are clear," she affirmed, a tick of bewilderment subtly unseating her stoic expression. "There's a chroniton flux at two-two-seven-Mark-four-seven, just shy of five hundred thousand kilometers."

Semi's eyes, intensely focused, flitted anxiously across her display. "It's minuscule... If the sensors aren't playing tricks, it's less than two microns across," she murmured, the flutter of her pulse audible in her throat. "Should we perhaps...?"

Fokt, her gaze meeting Semi's, continued the unfinished thought. "Should we *what*?"

A hesitant breath escaped Semi, "... go to yellow alert?"

Fokt's expression, a balance of wisdom and determination, scanned the bridge before she made her way back to command, issuing commands with a calm assertiveness. "Helm, all stop."

Ensign Eileen Nystrom responded, her voice steady yet laced with a faint undercurrent of tension, "All stop, Commander."

The bridge became momentarily suspended in a hushed anticipation, bathed in the low hum of starship at rest, before Fokt pierced the stillness, "Distance and bearing, Semi."

Semi's voice tiptoed in, threading a tapestry of curiosity and foreboding through her words, "Bearing holds steady. But it's growing, sir. Now eight microns."

Fokt didn't hesitate. Her fingers gracefully danced over the command panel, bathing the bridge in a cautionary amber hue, the ship-wide chime signifying a shift to yellow alert.

And then Semi's voice, previously a soft stream of composed analytical observations, began to quiver like a leaf in a tempest, "Commander,

it's ballooning... nearly two millimeters, and I... I think it's creating some kind of event horizon."

As the undulating whispers of escalating concern threaded through the bridge crew, Nystrom's voice spiked sharply with apprehension, "Commander, thrusters are responding sluggishly. Engage impulse?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Fokt leaned forward, her voice honed with a steely resolve, "Yes, get us away from it."

Exeter remained stubbornly resistant, and Nystrom's perplexity entwined with her frustration. She reported, "We're only reaching forty percent power, sir."

Semi's words now faltered, fragmented by the ascending tide of trepidation, "It's expanding exponentially... we have mere seconds before the shear overpowers us."

Fokt's voice rose like a beacon amidst the unfolding chaos, "Red alert! Captain to the bridge! Helm, maximum warp, now!"

But the stars outside refused to streak into the familiar lines of warp speed, Nystrom's voice crystallizing into a desperate whisper, "I can't establish a warp field!"

In a heartbeat, Semi's voice, teetering on the edge of disbelief, shattered the frantic tension, "There's a craft! Inside the flux! It's hurtling toward us, I—"

Their eyes locked, and in Fokt's gaze, an unspoken apology flickered, just for a moment, as she whispered, "Semi, I'm sorr—"

A small vessel, suspended momentarily in the surreal calm of the event horizon, catapulted into *Exeter*, splintering the shields and dismembering the once-majestic starship in a cataclysmic instant.

In the aftermath, amidst the oscillating shadows of emergency lighting and the mournful groans from the ship's maimed hull, Semi clung to her station, tears forging rivers down her cheeks, mingling with the warm droplets that escaped from a gash on her forehead. And her voice, a frail whisper barely eclipsing the sobs wracking her frame, wafted through the bridge's tomb-like silence, "Is anyone... here?"

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