

Earth Spacedock

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Earth Spacedock

by [Hawku](#)

Summary

In the early 25th century, Seifer and Aeris contend with their temporary positions on Earth Spacedock before reassignments.

Notes

Author's notes: Earth Spacedock was an RP by multiple players. I wanted to see what Seifer was up to off the LCs and ULCs, so I started him off-duty here, last seen in "Nibiru, Part III" where the Phoenix-X was severely damaged. For Aeris, I hadn't posted in a while and a bunch of story with other players flew by while she was in the Cargo bay, so I wrote in a temporal thing. This collection skims passed various story with other players, so characters and events related to those may seem out of place. Started in May 2016.

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Captain Oroku Seifer - Khao Sok Rainforest, Thailand

The joined Trill and Captain stalked through giant wet leaves and passed looping thick vines while he carried a long, sharpened bamboo stick. Somewhere, nearby, was the animal he had been tracking for the last 2 kilometers. In two seconds, a giant Klingon targ leapt out at him, causing him to fall back into a bush.

"Seifer to guy who's in charge around here," he pulled himself off the ground and tapped his commbadge.

A few seconds later, a Denobulan man transported next to him, smiling in a pleasant way. "Anything I can be assistance of?"

"Why is there a targ on Earth? Isn't that illegal and harmful to the Earth's ecosystem? And for that matter, why'd you give me a pointy stick?"

The Denobulan chuckled. "How do you expect to 'make the kill'? Oh, if you're interested, we also have Jackal mastiffs and, just yesterday, we recieved a Bardakian pronghorn moose!"

"I actually would be interested in that, but I think I've been off duty for too long. I'm dying to get back to my starship, the *Phoenix-X*. Did I mention it?"

Nodding and smiling, the Denobulan replied, "More than once, actually. You spoke of it in so much detail, I believe you missed the program initiation in which we taste tested the blood of a live kohlar beast. In the meantime, please be advised refunds are not allowed."

"Put it on my tab. Thanks!" Walking a few meters away, Seifer tapped his commbadge again. "Seifer to Spacedock. I need a report on a *Prometheus*-class starship currently in repair; the U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*?"

Over air, he received a computer response. "*Please be advised Spacedock communications are on hold.*"

"What's going on up there?"

The computer responded. "*Please be advised Spacedock communications are on hold.*"

"Ah. Classic. Well, I guess I could check it out, or finish this Earth targ hunt. Then again, I think they make us eat the targ. Spacedock it is."

Captain Aeris - Earth Spacedock, Cargo Bay 7

Aeris stood, looking at everyone, puzzled as to why they were looking at her puzzled. The environment around her faded in and out along with her security team. They disappeared and were replaced with medical officers in varying states of motion. When her transit ended, she found she was being scanned by an aging Human medical officer.

"You were out for quite some time, Captain," Doctor Lox said.

She stepped back, in shock. "Whoa! Aren't you that guy who experiments on kids and animals?"

"I haven't done that in weeks. What I'm saying here is, you were temporarily quantum-phased, likely missing a series of consecutive, relevant events."

Reeve walked up. "He's right. You missed a lot of stuff."

"Is it possible those undetectable devices caused me to quantum-phase?" Aeris asked.

Lox nodded. "Without examining them, I can positively say yes to that."

"Um," Aeris paused in reaction to the not-so-great Doctor. "You know, I'm good now. Thanks."

Doctor Lox put his tricorder on his belt. "Oh, I'm not too busy. I can hang around for a bit."

"Whatever," the Captain ignored his ability to take a hint. "Commander Reeve, what's the status of the Undine vessel we saw through the cargo bay hatch?"

Reeve replied, "Parked in a drydock, offline. Its occupant is unconscious, with fading lifesigns, in the *Firestorm's* sickbay."

"The *Zephyra's* Sickbay is more equipped to handle Undine physiology. We encountered and supported one of their vessels before," Aeris recalled.

Lox's expression perked up. "Oh? Do tell?"

"Conversation is not why I made that statement, Doctor," Aeris grumbled. "By the way, I can move from this spot and not be torn apart by the space-time continuum, right?"

The Doctor shrugged, then stopped himself half way. "I mean, yeah, sure."

"Nevermind," she dismissed before turning to Reeve. "Commander, let's save that Undine."

Captain Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Cargo Bay 12

Seifer manned a workbee from Earth and secretly approached Spacedock. He aligned his vessel with a cargo port and overrode safety protocols to attach. Sneaking his way inside Cargo Bay 12, he was suddenly confronted with a Starfleet security officer.

"Uh, what are you doing?" Reeve asked.

Seifer snapped back at the other man's sudden appearance. "Whoa! Oh, I'm breaking onto the Spacedock to get to the bottom of whatever is going on here. Communications went down."

"Well, they went back up a while ago, along with normal traffic," Reeve replied. "There was an Undine attack, but an unknown, uncleared, secret and powerful technology threw them all back into Fluidic Space. I'm sure it poses no risk to us." He then looked at the Captain. "Were you going to shoot me with that, sir?"

Captain Seifer quickly put his aimed phaser behind his back. "What? No, I was just, uh, taking this to get repaired somewhere. Carry on, soldier."

"Do you have clearance to be on base?"

Seifer waved it away. "Pfft! Clearance is for the weak. I'll be at Club 47 to investigate various things there."

Captain Aeris - Earth Spacedock, Operations

Aeris slammed her palm through the transparent, hovering console to its computer projector, shutting down the holographic interface. She had been searching for the *Firestorm* for hours, using sensor data from available relay stations throughout the sector, but it was nowhere to be found.

"Any luck?" Reeve approached.

The Captain gritted her teeth. "Nothing. How does a Federation starship just disappear with a defecting Undine with no one at Operations knowing anything about why they did that? Clearly, that Undine was trying to get an important message to us, but, now we'll never get that message."

"Not to mention, the last medical report from the *Firestorm* indicated the defector was near-fatally poisoned by an unknown acid compound. It's unfortunate we couldn't get him to your ship's Sickbay."

Aeris turned from her dead console. "I just hope he doesn't die before divulging that intel." When she looked for Reeve, she suddenly found him standing to her left, as if he just popped there by magic.

"Captain, you disappeared and then reappeared, frozen for several minutes," reported Reeve as he scanned her with his tricorder.

The human did a visual scan of her own body. "What the hell? Is it those devices?"

"They're doing something to you. We'll have to run more tests."

Aeris groaned. "Damn. And I had plans to hit the Synthbar later." She acknowledge him, "I don't want to leave Operations at the moment. Have a medical officer do what they can with me while I'm here."

"According to Spacedock roster, Doctor Lox is avail--"

She interrupted him. "No! Never that guy. Never again. In fact, anything you can do to get him off Spacedock would help me immensely."

Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Shipyard

Seifer approached Commander Barnes, an older Benzite and Starfleet officer.

"A martini?" Barnes said, noticing the drink in the Captain's hands.

The Trill put his drink aside. "Oh. Just came from the Synthbar. It's so strange they put that place on the same deck as all the important stuff. Well, convenience, I guess."

"If you're looking for your *Prometheus*-class U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*, I'm sorry to inform you that it's severely damaged and we're at a crossroads as to if we can ever repair it."

Seifer dropped his arms. "How could this be? We have the best Engineers in the Federation!"

"Your vessel was hit by a Breen dissapator, twice! By you, no doubt," Barnes explained. "By the way, your Breen ship, the *Darkseid* is docked as well, though, that ship was already running like a garbage scow's cargo."

The Captain nodded. "Well, it did traverse a blackhole to an alternate universe and back." He then looked to the side in realization. "This means I don't have a ship?"

"It's better this way. The *Phoenix-X* was an old vessel, even if it did help usher in transwarp technology. I'm sorry to report, but your crew is being reassigned as well."

Seifer wiped the sweat from his brow. "Oh, finally. They were the literal worst."

"Uh," Barnes just looked at him, in shock.

Recovering, Seifer finished, "The worst at being horrible! I mean, I'm going to miss them. Heh. Heh! Well, I have to go hijack the *Phoe*-- err, I mean, say goodbye to the *Phoenix-X*. Turns out the bottle smashing ceremony works both ways."

Captain Aeris - Earth Spacedock, Admiral's Office

Meanwhile, a Captain Dennison pulls an odd, blueish metallic Iconian sphere out of his pocket, pressing a few buttons on the metal extensions around the sphere. Suddenly, he vanishes into a puff of purple smoke.

Aeris and Reeve bolted up the stairs to the level where Quinn's windowed office was. They barely caught what was last said and Dennison disappearing in purple smoke. Aeris ran over to check on a Captain Sarah who was also in the room.

"Damn! Where was security?" Aeris complained to mostly herself.

Reeve replied. "Light duty to compensate that Undine invasion. Your orders."

"Ah, that," she recalled. "Reeve, go to Ops, check on the U.S.S. *Sally* and scan the system for any signs of Iconian ships. Lock Spacedock down and screen everyone for Iconian technology."

As he left, Aeris was suddenly joined by a medic, who began running a dermal regenerator over Sarah. "Lieutenant Cetra. I'm also a science officer. Reeve assigned me to investigate your problem."

"Oh, thanks," Aeris replied in shock and appreciation for the timing. She then looked down to Sarah. "Are you alright?" Then to both Quinn and her, she added, "I'd like to join the hunt for the *Firestorm*. I don't know what they're up to, but I do know they stole that Undine defector from us. If there's a threat to the Federation, we have to stop it."

Quinn stood up. "Fine. Do whatever it takes to get to the bottom of this. But you'll need a plan to take on *Firestorm* and whoever they're with. Dismissed."

Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Shipyard Docking Port 25, Corridor

Through the windows peering into the internal shipyard of Spacedock, Seifer could see the damaged U.S.S. *Phoenix-X*. Workbees and suited engineers were performing repairs all over the outer hull, but the Captain knew its operation was in far less condition.

"If you're wondering whether it'll fly again, the answer is maybe," came the nearby comment of a female Engineer. "Lieutenant Winry," she introduced herself. "I'm on the team assisting with the *Phoenix-X*'s mothballing."

Seifer dropped his shoulders in disappointment. "Damn. Any chance I can take it out for one last spin? Maybe pit it against a few Na'Khul?"

"If we weren't on lockdown, you probably could, and the ship isn't going to be completely decommissioned, but I wouldn't recommend it. The underlying charge from the Breen dissapator is embedded into its systems. Overuse of the ship could destroy it."

The Captain leaned against the window. "She was a good ship, with a good crew. I'll keep her in drydock for as long as Starfleet will let me."

"They'll want to keep it as a test subject for sustaining Breen weaponry. That, and several Academy Engineering courses will want to field trip it as a 'how not to run a ship' lesson. Did I mention, the Corps Engineers were sending pictures of your ship to each other on their lunch break?"

Anyway, think you'll get another one?"

Seifer sighed. "Plenty of letters left in the alphabet."

"Uh, not really. If the *Phoenix* is at X, there are only two."

He turned to address her. "Oh, good point. Well, they ran through like twenty four *Phoenix*-named ships in a short time, in a desperate attempt at perfecting transwarp technology. Anyhow, would you mind smashing this bottle of Chateau Picard on its hull for me?"

"I don't think you do that for mothballing."

Seifer looked at the bottle, before taking it with him. "Yeah, never mind. I'll drink it later."

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Captain Aeris - Earth Spacedock, Infirmary

Aeris sat up in a biobed with Cetra scanning her with a medical tricorder. "How's it looking Doc-- I mean, Lieutenant?"

"Actually, I'm earning my MD, so you really will be able to call me Doc soon." Cetra closed her device. "Oh, and along with elevated stress levels, I'm detecting residual bio plasma on you. It doesn't seem to be harming you, but I think you should wear this bio electric caliper for now."

The Captain attached a small device on her neck as an Engineer entered and went to a nearby bed. "Thanks," Aeris said. "Now, if I could deal with this lockdown and possible threats to ESD. Did you know there's a warship cloaked in the vicinity and we're okay with that?"

"No, ma'am," Cetra answered in shock as she moved to work on the next patient.

Lieutenant Winry sighed. "Just a headache. Ship decommissioning is so much fun, I think I got over-excited."

"Bio plasma, huh?" Aeris pondered. "The *Zephyra* once detected the same residue on Undine a long time ago. I wonder if it's related."

Winry perked up. "Hold on. Are you the Captain that spent weeks aiding a group of 8472 ships? They said you were crazy?"

"Doing nothing would've been crazy. The *Zephyra* developed specialized medical equipment to treat them."

The Engineer nodded. "I was more interested in the technology you created anyway. If you can localize Undine biology and detect their native realm's molecules, you could adapt that to some kind of interdimensional device."

"And, what, access Fluidic space? What for?" Aeris asked.

Winry shrugged. "I don't know. Scientific interest, I suppose."

"Lieutenant, are you developing interdimensional technology?"

The woman smiled. "How'd you guess? I'm heading a side project for a scanner with some of my team. We're competing with the Corps Engineers. They think they're so great."

"Huh," Aeris replied surprised. "Can you use my medical data to extrapolate quantum signatures and then scan those with your device?"

Lieutenant Winry nodded. "If you let me on the *Zephyra*, perhaps. I'd have to use your modified Sickbay equipment."

"Done. I'm taking you off ship mothballing duty, not to ruin your fun too much. In the meantime, I have to check ESD's lockdown--"

But then the station went to red alert. Reeve's voice flew over to her comm. "*Reeve to Aeris. You might want to get back to Operations.*"

"Acknowledged," Aeris tapped her commbadge. "Well, Doc, looks like those stress levels are going to have to wait."

Earth Spacedock, Operations

Later, Captain Terry walked around the curved hallway and into Operations. It was busy with senior personnel commanding and managing their own staff for various sections of Spacedock.

"Hi, I'm looking for Admiral Nat?" Terry said, approaching Commander Batou from Spacedock's engineering and showing him a PADD. "He gave me this mission I'm to join to a mysterious Dyson sphere."

Batou just looked at him, overly stunned. "Have you even been around lately?"

"Huh? I was working on my ship's approach strategy this whole time. I have so many ideas!" Terry said, knowing he probably couldn't ignore the fact Batou's implication was that he probably missed several key events.

The Commander took Terry's PADD and erased it. "Trust me. You're late."

"Well, this was unexpected," the Captain replied, but decided that it was probably better to accept things. "So, what's going on up here? Any Ferengi merchant ships?"

Batou shook his head as he continued working at his holo-console. "That's not my area, but I did notice a Ferengi ship, the *Fortune's Gold*, come right up to the window to tap it incessantly with its hull. Apparently, they couldn't wait for docking procedures."

"Oh! That is so interesting. Everything you do up here fascinates me, a man of strict Starfleet procedure."

The other officer looked at him. "You know, if you're up to no good, not everyone is going to judge you for it. Also, you could hide it better."

"Hey, people judge things all the time. I mean, it's not like I can read minds, but I know it happens. That, and my motives are not as transparent as you think."

Batou closed his console. "Well, what are they?"

"Huh?"

He asked again. "Your motives. I always find it odd that people go off on rants and then end them so cryptically. For once, I want to be that guy that asks straight out what's going on, negating further actions on the part of the subject and preventing what possible outcomes may arise." But as he had looked away halfway through his diatribe, upon returning to glance, he found Captain Terry had already left Operations. "Oh."

Earth Spacedock, Operations - A week later

Aeris worked intently in the command ring. "Reeve, we need to locate those lost ships. What have we found out so far?" Aeris asked. She wasn't going to lose the *Lexington*, the *Philadelphia* and the *Firestorm* all in one go.

The security commander turned to her in sudden shock. "You're back!?"

"I only went to get more PADDs. One for each ship we're searching for," Aeris said as she handed them to him. "An extra one for that Vulcan ship that keeps flying by the window."

Reeve shook his head and gestured to the pattern enhancers surrounding the Captain. "No, you disappeared from this spot for quite some time. You've been gone a whole week!"

"What?" Aeris replied, shocked. "What'd I miss?"

Commander Reeve brought up some data on his holo-screen. "The *Lexington* and the *Philadelphia* returned, reporting having been stuck in a dimensional void. The *Firestorm* went even more missing and the *Molly* appeared out of nowhere."

"Let me get this straight, everyone got to have a week of recovery and getting their heads together and I get nothing??"

The man shrugged. "I guess. Also, since you've been gone, I've taken over security again, and, in an effort to maintain heightened levels of awareness, I've been running drills and exercises around the clock. Living in fear! It's a new thing I'm trying. Also, I think, due to your situation, you should step down in your role in Security."

"Are you kidding me? I need to add to this heightened level of stress, if not, to channel mine into everyone else!"

Reeve shook his head. "Yeah, I'm already pushing the threshold. You'd just be a tipping point in our Tuvok sweat drills that would send our token Bolian officer off the edge."

"Forget that!" She pointed to nearby tactical officer Lieutenant Aramaki. "You there! Laps around ESD and don't stop until I tell you!"

Aramaki fumbled in shock. "Ye-- Yes, ma'am."

"Still got it," Aeris said as she suddenly noticed Reeve standing in different location than the last. She then turned to see Aramaki not moving, but panting, out of breath. "What did I just say? Now it's double laps!"

Aramaki groaned and then ran off.

"You disappeared again. He did twenty laps," Reeve reported.

Aeris cursed. "Damn. I guess you're right. And I was this close to normalcy, ever since the *Zephyra* had been recalled here. It was finally feeling like I had a life again."

"If it makes you feel any better, I'll call you for our weekly Cargo Bay raids? We mostly target unsuspecting Romulans."

The Captain smiled. "I'd like that."

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Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Food Court

Seifer took a few stabs at his monochrome plate of bland, cold, uneaten potatoes. The replicator-peeled vegetable slipped under misplaced fork-pressure and spun off the table onto the floor. In his heart, he knew he would have his revenge against that particular food item. In no way did he ever intend on letting that little inanimate spud go without a taste of his vengeance. Oh, he would spend the rest of his life, plotting and scheming the most elaborate and harsh—

"—Well, well. How the mighty have fallen," came the interrupting voice of an old, Vulcan man, from behind Seifer. "Do you plan on staring at your mess all day, or are you going to pick it up?"

Turning, in shock, Seifer came to perceive his old Vulcan teacher from Starfleet Academy. "Master Chivaul??"

"You've become weak, Oroku. Where once you commanded one of Starfleet's most over-powered, uber ships of incomprehensibly small scale, now, you sit in this pale and unforgiving food court with nothing to show for it."

Seifer shook his head in disbelief. "Uh, I saved my crew from that horrible Calibus VII sickness, and stopped the cross-dimensional Nibiru from reconfiguring our space— Not that that hadn't been done before. Mine was just more recent."

"Fulfilled with accomplishment, you are entitled to magnificence and respect. Your lack of position is a betrayal to you and what you have done in the past."

Pointing, Seifer replied, "You know what? You have always been rude and mean to me, with no explanation whatsoever; for what I can only assume is because I stuck with you until the bitter end, and—"

"You talk too much!" Chivaul knocked Seifer's pointing arm away and launched a claw-posed hand right at the Trill's face.

Grabbing the wrist of the incoming attack, shocked, Seifer was forced to use his other arm to knock a second incoming hand, this time, toward his throat. The old Vulcan twisted Seifer's grip free and jabbed both his fists, forward again. Seifer, while seated, shot both his feet up and kicked the fists away. He kicked again toward Chivaul's chest, where his foot was met with blocking palms, with enough force to push the old man back a few steps.

"Oh, real mature, you decrepit old Vulcan!" Seifer responded before noticing a few officers nearby standing up from their meals and looking at them in shock. The Captain quickly got out of his seat and addressed the food court. "—Uh, it's nothing, everyone. This senior is just looking for his meds. Poor guy can't even go to the bathroom without—"

But Chivaul force-palmed Seifer in the face, then quadruple-jabbed the Trill in the chest, before a second palm with force toward the same spot. The Captain grabbed the incoming wrist with both hands, softening the blow as much as he could, before being knocked right over his table and onto the floor, next to the potato.

"This is all your fault," Seifer turned to the spud in shifting anger. "If only you let me eat you, instead of this run-around, we wouldn't be in this m—"

The old fighting Vulcan, showing no emotion, flew over the table with an incoming foot of immense force. Seifer quickly wondered if picking up the potato would be metaphor enough to stop his old teacher. Unfortunately, he had to roll away from it to live. Chivaul landed his intense stomp, while, Seifer, still on his back, flung kick after kick at Chivaul. Each kick was blocked by the Vulcan's even faster-moving left foot.

"I— told— you—! No visitors— before— nap time—" Seifer said in mid-fight, noticing the shocked look of confused faces around him. Chivaul leapt another downward-forced foot, prompting Seifer to decide to roll underneath him, toward the potato.

Seifer picked up the food, got up and placed it on a table. Chivaul, after landing and turning his position to face the Captain, stopped his attack and continued his unemotional repertoire. "Meet me in the Holodeck to finish this."

"Should I bring your ointment??" Seifer replied, unimpressed, as Chivaul walked his way through the sea of tables out of the food court. The Captain dusted his Odyssey uniform off and noticed an Ensign looking at him with wide-eyed disbelief. "He has a skin thing."

Captain Aeris - U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Sickbay

The U.S.S. *Zephyra* sat out in space, near Earth Spacedock. Aeris entered Sickbay in search of her Doctor. Naturally, her medical case was shared with the *Zephyra* where people more familiar with her could assist in her situation. Who knows? She could disappear for a whole year next. Maybe even forever? She thought to herself.

"Where's Doctor Lila?" Aeris asked.

At a nearby, unfamiliar device, was the Spacedock engineer, Lieutenant Winry, working away. She took notice of Aeris' entrance and

addressed her. "Captain? They said you disappeared into a void or on vacation or something? I wasn't paying attention."

"Some kind of a jump out of this universe's existence, I believe," Aeris replied. "And how can my Doctor just disappear when I was clearly in crisis? Did they give up in three days or something?"

Winry returned to her large boxy device. "She left after two, actually. Though, she did mention consulting Starfleet Medical. I assume it was for you, or to transfer. She didn't say."

"Any luck on your end?"

The engineer began pulling hard on a tool she connected to the innards of her scanner. "Almost! I've been in here for a week, so I think the time has allowed me to perfect the dimensional scanner. Though, with it configured to your Undine medical equipment, it's only going to scan Fluidic space."

"Perfect. Should we give it a go?"

Winry nodded. "Hell yeah! Just need to get this out of here first—"

"Need any help?" Aeris asked noticing how Winry was struggling to remove the hyperspanner from the machine. Without waiting for an answer, the Captain began pulling Winry backward while Winry was pulling on the tool. After the two struggled, the threshold was suddenly broken and they both flew back onto the floor.

The hyperspanner hit the floor as well, causing the interdimensional scanning machine to unexpectedly start up with a rumble. Suddenly, thin beams of light began beaming out from random openings. The resonating sound began to increase.

"That's not good," Winry said, arching an eye brow while still on the floor. She took out her remote and tried turning it off with no effect. "Transporters and containment fields may not work on that thing. But, modulating the connected medical equipment might help. We just may need more than the two of us at operating consoles."

Aeris tapped her commbadge. "Captain Aeris to anyone nearby. Any assistance you can provide in Sickbay would be perfect."

Upon entering the sickbay aboard the *Zephyra*, Ensign Javan stopped just inside the threshold and looked around at the ensuing chaos. One of the *Zephyra's* other nurses, an ensign called Beltram, walked over to Javan and handed him a medical tricorder.

Captain Terry - U.S.S. *Kitana*, Bridge

Terry entered the Bridge of the *Vesta*-class U.S.S. *Kitana*. The ship was in space, a hundred kilometers from Spacedock. His body had been aching in pain from a sickness he'd been keeping to himself, plus something he just ate at the Food Court wasn't agreeing with him. At least he was better than he had been all week.

"You don't look so good?" Han said taking notice of him.

Terry waved it off. "Just an ache from a bottle of green Scotch last night. Never drink with a pan-dimensional humanoid, as I do on occasions."

"Captain," the tactical officer continued, dropping the other thing. "The *Zephyra* has disappeared from sensors! It's as if they're no longer in the space-time continuum."

The human stroked his chin. "I think you could say that about anybody who isn't in the same room as you. If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"

"No, I mean, the ship was there and then it disappeared. We detected the same phasing phenomenon that the Undine ships procured when they were sent back into Fluidic space," the Ferengi finished.

Terry sat in his chair. "Except they went through a portal? Hm. Send our readings to Spacedock. In the meantime, I want you to hail the *Falzon*."

"But— what about the *Zephyra*, sir?"

He nodded. "The *Falzon*, Lieutenant Commander." And after a few moments, the hail went out. "This is Captain Terry from the *Kitana* to Tran. I have to confess, I overheard you in the Food Court about the *Molly*. How can we help?"

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Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Holodeck 3

The doors to the simulation environment from the corridors swooshed open and Seifer stood at its threshold, steaming in short tempered anger. It was completely out-of-character for him, but when it came to his Starfleet Academy teacher, who he called Master Chivaul, things were different.

"Alright, you stringy old Vulcan," he opened as he stepped inside and took a fighting stance. "Let's finish this."

On the floor, in an old Earth training dojo program, Chivaul sat, cross-legged in his robes, meditating. His eyes remained closed, not even acknowledging Seifer for a few moments. "Sit down," he ordered.

"What? I thought we were going to punch this one out?" Seifer widened his eyes in confusion.

Chivaul waited patiently until Seifer hesitantly took a seat on the floor opposite of the Vulcan. "Your mind is on fire, and I don't need to meld with you to know it. Before we fight, you must clear yourself of all emotions, like I taught you."

"Ugh," Seifer rolled his eyes. "Not this again. Fine."

The Vulcan opened his eyes to watch Seifer fall into practice. In not too long a time, Seifer's heart rate had settled and his breathing had come to pace. "Are you ready?"

"Yes, Master Chivaul," Seifer opened his eyes almost a completely new person, calm and nearly expressionless.

Chivaul propped himself up by his arms, lurched out his feet and swung them around at Seifer. Expecting this, Seifer blocked both ankles with both his forearms and shoved the legs away from him. The two quickly jumped to their feet, took stances and began flinging fast-paced jabs, blocks and redirects at each other.

"I've got nothing left," Seifer explained, sampling his previous emotions in mid-punch. "I lost the *Phoenix-X*, and my crew. I've been stuck here for a week with delayed word from Command, and I'm going crazy, talking to my food. All I know is nothingness now."

Seifer caught Chivaul's left arm and flung a kick to his chest. The Vulcan caught the leg and used his superior strength to anchor the Trill by it and throw him around. Seifer went flying into a holographic pillar, landing on his feet.

"My pupil, there is something I do not commonly speak about," Chivaul began as he approached Seifer and launched a forced-palm at his head. Seifer dodged it and Chivaul's palm broke through the wooden pillar, sending debris out in one direction. "Oroku, before I knew you, I once lost everything as well, in the form of my death."

Shocked to hear this, Seifer's reaction time slowed and he was kicked in the chest in another direction. The Trill was sent through a nearby paper-made wall and into another room, onto his back. Chivaul stepped through to join him. "You died?"

"In that time, I knew what it truly meant to be nothing. Upon my return, I understood that we all come from emptiness and fulfillment is not our destiny, but only part of a greater truth. Our base state is nothingness, and your existence is therein."

He reached out his hand to help Seifer off his feet. The Captain accepted and they stood next to each other. "I think I understand. My losses, though harsh, are really my return. Thank you, Master."

"You're welcome, Oroku. I sensed you were in trouble, so I traveled to Spacedock to help you," Chivaul nodded, in his calm way.

Seifer, appreciative, also shook his head. "You must be older than I thought. If you don't mind my asking, how'd you survive?"

"A lesson for another time," Chivaul reassured before the simulation suddenly flickered on and off a few times.

When Seifer turned back, he found that he was alone. The Vulcan fighting master was no where to be seen. Confused, the Captain walked over to a control panel and turned off the program. He looked around the grey-meshed holodeck to confirm that no one was there.

"What!? He was a hologram??" Seifer said, shocked. "Ugh! Chivaul's going to get an ear-full as soon as I contact him, wherever he is." The Trill left the holodeck and exited to the corridors.

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Earth Spacedock, Pages 15-16

Captain Aeris - U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Sickbay

The entire ship was transported, and the crew were only now waking from simultaneous unconsciousness. Aeris pulled herself up, groggy and out of focus.

"Uhhhg. What happened?" she rubbed her head as everyone else began waking.

Winry went over to her dimensional scanning device. "It looks like we amplified whatever was going on with you. I imagine it encompassed the rest of the ship."

"All that because you couldn't remove a hyperspanner?" she said annoyed.

The engineer shrugged. "Happens more than you think."

Bridge

Entering the Bridge, a small scattering of Starfleet officers, comprising of part of the ship's skeleton crew, started checking systems and activating sensors. Aeris took her chair and Winry brought up the view screen. Outside was a greenish mesh.

"Damn! We're in Fluidic space!" Aeris realized.

Winry looked at it, trying to comprehend the situation. "How does being transported here, without a portal, correlate to your time-jumping?"

"It may be precisely what the original goal was, for me to be transported here," Aeris surmised. "The time-jumps were likely results of failed attempts."

The engineer gaped with her mouth open. "Wow. I can't believe we're actually here. Not that that mission with Tuvok to fight the Borg here wasn't equally as fascinating. But, without a portal, how do we get back? Are we the *Voyager* of Fluidic space?"

"Probably," Aeris answered, approaching the helm. "And I know exactly where we are and where to go to get back." She tapped in coordinates and looked back at the main viewer in determination. "Engage!"

Then she realized it was her at the helm.

"Oh, right," she conceded before tapping at the controls again and making the *Sovereign*-class *Zephyra* go.

Sickbay

Ensign Javan Eras headed over to a console to scan the room for any contaminants or radiation leaks. So far, the device had not done too much damage to -- hold on a second.

Javan went over to Winry as she returned. "Ma'am, may I ask you how you got a hold of that thing? Did you create it?"

Captain Aeris - U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Sickbay

Somehow Aeris found herself back in Sickbay. "Wait, what? I thought we both just left here?"

"As I was leaving the Bridge, you excused yourself and went to Sickbay with me," Winry reminded. "I had to check on this thing again."

Aeris grasped her head. "I must be stressing out. I'm going to administer myself a hypospray," she said before searching through the supply compartments.

"My team and I built this device," Winry answered Javan, as she inspected it. "We were competing with a team on the Corps Engineers. But it looks like it's dead now. Captain Aeris' crew built the medical equipment, in here, that they once used to service Undine. Neither of which should have done what it has done, even together."

Aeris returned with a small capsule. "Felicium? No. No, that would be crazy," she said, putting it away. "Anyway, if, hypothetically, we were to take on an army of Undine, is there a drug that would be advantageous in that hypothetical case? I know we don't have much in the way of Borg technology here. Just curious. Anyway, I'm going over to that console to check on our armory situation."

Clearly, something reacted with the two sets of instruments. Perhaps it was the anti-Undine devices on ESD? Javan shrugged it off. Not his problem.

He went over to Aeris as she plied a medical console to pull up the armory inventory. "Captain, shouldn't we be fine here? The Undine did sign a treaty with Earth, right? Why would we need to do anything more than hail the nearest Undine ship and ask them to create a portal into normal space?"

Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Security Office

Seifer had been sitting in the office, trying to track down his Vulcan fighting teacher. When he finally got a hold of one of Chivaul's peers at Starfleet Academy, he sighed in relief.

"I'm sorry, sir, but Chivaul left a few days ago on leave to Spacedock. He should be there with you?" replied Commander Meyer.

Reneging his sigh, Seifer furrowed his brow in confusion. "That makes no sense. So he wasn't a hologram?"

"Hologram?" Meyer perked, tilting his head. *"Is everything okay up there, Captain?"*

The Trill shrugged. "Is it ever? Thank you. Seifer out."

"Uh, can I help you?" Commander Reeve asked as he entered to find the Captain who had snuck onboard Spacedock earlier was now sitting at his desk and using his holo interface.

Seifer looked up from the controls. "No time for pleasantries, man! I'm on a missing persons case. In fact, I'm taking temporary command of Security onboard Spacedock. I have no ship, so perhaps this giant mushroom can be my ship."

"Can you even do that? There are clearances, paper work, reviews--"

The Captain waved it all away. "Pfft! What is this, the 21st century? Everything's streamlined now."

"I'm only onboard with this as long as you're not another Science officer."

Seifer tapped his Odyssey variant uniform. "Tactical. But I did completely ruin my own ship, so head's up."

"Here," Reeve handed him a PADD, reluctantly. "We've arrested Elihu M'Konel for the murder of Alyce Rose Cassidy. You'll need to question him before we move forward."

The Trill took the PADD and skimmed the data. "What? I'm already investigating something. Ugh. Fine. I'll do both, somehow. If anything, it'll get me back in the game."

Captain Aeris - U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Sickbay

Aeris took notice of Javan. "Unfortunately, we don't have any formal way of communicating with the Undine. I sent out a general distress signal from my short few moments on the Bridge, but, like before, it will probably not bring anything."

Winry approached from her end of the room. "Like before?"

"Yeah," Aeris sighed, not happy about recalling past events. "A while back, the *Zephyra* discovered an Undine ship, next to a portal, in distress. Something had gotten to its crew, but we weren't sure what. Since the general mission for our ship is to support those in need, especially medically, the crew and I decided we wanted to help the Undine-- despite the war."

The engineer shook her head. "Crazy!?! But, who am I to judge? I once engineered neural stimulators onto an army of dead Vorta. Oh, I lost a bet."

"We determined the Undine ship would be no threat if the crew was revived and had hoped our gesture would actually help the war. Unfortunately, our efforts were failing and we got so desperate we entered Undine space to find their nearest bio base for support. We finally found something. It was small. It was... unnerving. But in the end we succeeded."

She tried to gage Winry's reaction who felt Aeris may have been hiding more than she let on.

"Anyway, we're heading there now, based on my recollection and *Zephyra's* existing charts of general interplanetary fluidic patterns. Hopefully, they'll send us back. The weaponizing was just a thought I had. It's probably nothing. It may be a while before we get there, so sit tight."

Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Infirmary

Cetra pulled out Alyce's body from the storage shelving, bringing with it a mass of cold air which was not enough to mask the smell. Seifer recoiled in horror.

"Ugh!!!" he tried squeezing his nose, but it was not enough.

The medical officer continued. "After further investigation, by your orders, we did discover something interesting. We found a single nanite in her bloodstream. But instead of it being completely mechanical, it's mostly organic."

"You had to pull out her body just to tell me that??"

Cetra shrugged. "I just thought you'd want to see it again. Were you close with her?"

"You're thinking of a quadruple hybrid!" He began to take imaging scans of Alyce's tattoos. "Anyway, I'm shocked the first scans didn't discover the variant nanite?"

The woman nodded in appreciation. "Ah, classic need-for-explanation request. You see, not only does our find consist of her own DNA, but it's extremely small. It's much smaller than a nanite."

"Hopefully this helps Elihu. Thank you, Doctor."

She pushed the body back into storage. "Oh, I'm not a Doctor."

"Help! I need medical assistance!" came the howling cry of a grown man. Trelane stumbled into the Infirmary with a pulled arm muscle.

Seifer turned to criticize him. "Dammit, man, that's nothing!"

"Hey, you're not the one in pain!" Trelane argued. "Ever since Terry turned and ran like a little baby at our encounter at Risa, the *Kitana's* been dry-docked and locked down at ESD. He's nowhere to be found, so I've been trying to take command by repeatedly doing the 'Engage' gesture on its Bridge. Unfortunately, no one on crew will listen to me."

The Captain sighed. "It's possible he's another missing persons case. I'll add it to the list." He took out a PADD. "Anything you can tell me about his last whereabouts?"

"He was last seen boarding ESD. And something, I and some other crew have noticed... Terry is struggling with something. A sickness perhaps. But his eyes were witnessed to have glowed green."

Cetra began running a muscle relaxer device on Trelane's arm. "Green-eye syndrome. That could be the Romulan flu."

"Unlikely. He didn't show any signs of Plomeek soup addiction."

Seifer placed a hand on Trleane's shoulder, unconsciously causing him pain. "I'll find him, whatever you are." Then, attempting a guess. "Some kind of a space hipster?"

"I'm the under-powered version of an over-powered being! Everything in me is always in pain."

Eyeing him awkwardly, Seifer left the Infirmary.

Captain Aeris - U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Bridge

The Captain had been staring, seemingly unblinking at the viewscreen for hours as fluidic space flung by at incredible speeds. Winry had taken control of sensors, picking up something odd.

"I believe I'm reading three distortions in fluidic space. They may be Undine bio cruisers who are making themselves obvious on purpose," Winry reported.

Aeris sat up. "What!? Are you saying we lack the ingenuity to detect something without another's consent?"

"Well, I kind of just got off break with no intentions on making any statements, so, probably not," the engineer replied. "Anyway, do you want to hail them?"

The Captain nodded. "Undine vessels, this is Captain Aeris of the Federation starship *Zephyra*. We were brought to this dimension against our will."

T'Vix answered the hail. *"Yes. I know. Fortunately for you, you have been located by a vessel under The Infamous' influence, rather than an opposing faction, such as the one that attacked Earth Spacedock a couple weeks ago. You will beam to my ship immediately to discuss the terms of your surrender."*

"While I appreciate your restraint and that you have the ability to speak, surrender is not something we have time for. Though, I will discuss the situation with you," Aeris replied.

But before she could give the order to transport, the *Zephyra* was pulled out of fluidic transit by a large, disgusting green and veiny tentacle. It suctioned its end to the hull, followed by another one. The *Zephyra* was pulled toward a giant organic Undine biobase.

"Damn!" Aeris recognized the biobase. "It's the same one from before, only it's bigger?"

Winry got up from the floor at her console. "Well, I think we found what we were looking for."

"Prepare the environmental suits. We're going into that thing."

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Earth Spacedock, Pages 21-22

T'Vix - Bio-Cruiser, Bridge

T'Vix, in Vulcan form, watched as whatever was happening happened. "We are leaving," she told her crew. "Take us back to normal space."

Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Operations

As Seifer made his way through the darkened main concourse, he heard one officer scream in shock at the unintended disappearance of someone near her. Entering the main ring, Seifer found Batou bringing a console online.

"This wasn't my fault," the Captain blurted in shock, but then snapped out of it and said, "I mean, report?"

Batou got up and started accessing the controls. "Well, more than half the systems are down, and we're tracking several dampening pulse feeds coming from the cargo bays. They're causing the systems failures. Oh! You wanted me to give you those PADDs on the secret anti-Undine devices?"

"Thank you," Seifer accepted the PADDs and looked at them. "Yep. Still undetectable."

The Commander brought up two holo-images. "If we could get Power Generator 3 and 4, which are near the cargo bays, back online, they could be set into their resonance-EM modes which would theoretically block these type-dampening pulses."

"It may not stop the disappearances, but at least Spacedock will have a defense." Seifer then tapped his commbadge. "To any available officers. We need Power Generator 3 and Power Generator 4 back online and set to a resonance-EM mode. Any assistance would be appreciated, and people may or may not disappear around you."

Replies began over-air. *"Suvel here. I will lead a team of engineers to Power Generator Four."*

Admiral Quinn's Office

Krystal approached Admiral Chekov. "Sir? Where's Admiral Quinn?" she asked.

"Like most of the rest of ESD personnel," Chekov said from behind the desk in her new office, "he has inexplicably disappeared. I am temporarily restricting all travel to Sol System."

Captain Oroku Seifer - Earth Spacedock, Main Concourse

"Batou to Seifer. We only got one person on the mission queue; Suvel. He's down at Power Generator 4."

The Captain tapped his commbadge. "What a life saver. But why are the queues always empty? Anyway, I'll have to take care of Power Generator 3 myself."

"Acknowledged. Watch for Regalian fleaspiders. We got infested after the Ferengi ship Fortune's Gold docked with us. Next time, we need to wear protection."

Agreeing, Seifer turned to the opposite direction and was suddenly confronted by a disturbed and unnerving Captain Terry. "You're not disappeared?"

"No thanks to you," Terry spoke, with his voice slightly altered. He peered into Seifer with smokey, glowing, green eyes. "When I was in trouble, you let me get captured and transformed into this."

Seifer shook his head. "I tried to save you from extraction but was unsuccessful. That's not the same thing."

"Oh, but it is," Terry launched a punch for Seifer's head. "You've always been against Starfleet, sympathizing with our enemies. It's the base sentiment of the Seifer symbiont. You're a traitor at heart!"

The Captain caught his incoming wrist and countered with a back-hand. "And you've always had it out for me! Face it, Terry, you're not the perfect Starfleet officer anymore. You're sick now."

"Gggh!!" Terry was hit in the face, causing him to power up his arms in anger and double-force-palm Seifer in the chest. Captain Seifer went flying back into a railing.

When he looked up, Terry had inhumanly leapt up onto an upper level and out of there. "What the Grethor? So, he's off sensors then?" Seifer got up and shook his head. "Never mind. It's late and people are trying to sleep and prepare for their own plot lines."

Captain Seifer tapped his commbadge.

"Seifer to Suvel. Were you able to bring Power Generator 4 online and set it to a resonance-EM mode?"

There was no response except static.

Later, Suvel had been discovered and taken to the infirmary. Apparently an accident had occurred, severely injuring the Vulcan captain. Since then the few engineers remaining had managed to get the emergency generators running, but people were still disappearing. There were only a few dozen left on ESD, so most people remained on their ships.

As things settled, Chekov's voice went over-air. *"Now hear this: All Starfleet personnel are invited to Caldos III for the memorial services of those we lost. There will be a temporary lift on restrictions for this. Proceed to docking bay 2."*

The parade of individuals that marched through the main concourse toward the turbo lifts was a uplifting, despite all the recent catastrophes.

Captain Aeris - U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Airlock Corridor 3

Aeris and Winry approached an airlock which was connected to one of the large space-tentacles coming off the biobase. A green gel began to slowly spread from vieny sacks, off the tentacle along the surface of the hull.

"No help from the Infamous' extraordinary, trans-dimensional-reaching group, then?" Winry asked as the two adjusted to the suits they were now wearing.

Aeris shook her head. "Doesn't look like it. Anyway, what have we got here?"

"I've given us exo-armor," Winry explained, while adjusting a setting on Aeris' suit. "It's light-weight and resistant to psionic, toxic and energy damage. Just don't get tackled by an Undine."

The Captain pulled up a weapon. "And these?"

"Bio-molecular phaser rifles," Winry said, bringing hers up. "There's a beam setting and an unstable beam setting. The latter acts as a constant stream and creates an explosion at target; be careful with that."

The other woman then opened up the hatch, revealing the insides of the long and slimy tentacle. "Since the base is highly charged, this is our only way in sans transporters. The *Zephyra*, on the other hand, may not fare too well after another secretion."

"Another?" Winry then shook it off. "Never mind. Will Javan be assisting us?"

Aeris shrugged as she took position at the threshold. "There's an extra suit and rifle, if so. In the meantime, let's do this thing!"

She leapt right into the mucus-filled tube, disgusting Winry to the brink of throwing up in her own suit. Holding it in, Winry dove, feet first, right after. The two went sliding down the inside of the tentacle, until internal muscles took over passed gravity to push them toward the Undine biobase.

Unknown Undine biobase

In the biobase, the two were deposited into a gory, drip-filled organic corridor, lit by strips of green cells lining tubes. Two Undine officers and a unit commander, wearing tactical armor, turned a corner and began blasting anti-proton beams from their arm cannons.

Winry aimed her rifle and began firing at one of the officers on Aeris' queue. "Is this the welcome you were expecting??"

"That, and a basket of slimy cookies," the Captain replied, as the Undine officer was taken down, prompting the two to focus fire on the last two Undine.

SKKZT! Aeris activated the unstable beam, feeding it into the unit commander and an energy explosion took both enemies down. Aeris and Winry jogged passed the fallen soldiers, turned a corner and found a small hole in the wall.

"It's an exhaust pathway," the Captain said. "We can fit through it."

Winry dropped her defensive stance. "Uh, what? Are we going to live through this?"

"We'll see," Aeris suggested. "This way."

She stretched the opening with her hands, where a preliminary mucus was forced out and onto the floor. Aeris went through, followed by

Winry and they both struggled to crawl their way through the non-friction tube.

Exiting, they found themselves completely slimed, but in stealth on the upper bone-structured rafters of a large experimental operation room. Below, were giant energy-fused organic, alien structures being operated on by a lone, mutant psi-master Undine. The second half of the room was a giant holding cell with hundreds of Starfleet officers standing around, contained within.

"They're from Spacedock??" Winry recognized. "How'd they get here?"

Aeris pondered. "He brought them here," she pointed to the Undine below who, while moving slow, exited the lab. "But he can also put them back. Hopefully, we still have enough personnel on Spacedock and they don't go anywhere."

Earth Spacedock

Meanwhile, back in normal space, at Earth Spacedock, a procession of men and women, who were some of a few last from the station, boarded the Starfleet Civilian Transport vessel *Elysium* in Docking Bay 2. The ship prepared to depart for Caldos III.

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Earth Spacedock, Pages 22-23

Civilian Transport *Elysium*

Lydia made the decision to remain at the rear of the transport, away from Elihu, who was at the front with the brass.

On all of the monitors on the transport, a Federation reporter's face appeared and spoke. Little did they know, more Klingons, Gorn, and Orion would be waiting for them at Caldos III.

Elsewhere on the transport, Seifer sat back in his seat as he studied the PADD before him. Sitting with the group, he could sense a hint of uneasiness in the air, but wasn't sure if that was just his imagination. With much of Elihu's people around, he could question them about the murder, even though they had previously witnessed D'Ren attack several Starfleet officers, escape prison, and Steve Jedden attacking and being possessed, the murder was still of the highest priority.

"You think you're going to figure it out?" asked a security officer who was sitting next to him.

Seifer jumped in his seat in shock. "Whoa! Where did you come from?"

"I was here the whole time. Lieutenant Aramaki. I was the guy who Aeris told to go for a jog around ESD a bunch of times."

The Captain shook his head. "I don't recall. Anyway, it's my duty to pursue this, because who wants to deal with a diminishing Earth Spacedock situation and a dangerous Captain Terry? Seems irrelevant, now that I'm several lightyears away, if you ask me."

"You were right to forget about those things. But, isn't questioning Elihu's people, one by one, going to make a long trip even longer? Your active time is so infrequent, not to mention we're just going to a funeral. We have to get there at some point?"

Seifer waved him off. "What? There's no time for logistics, man! A person's life is on the line here, whom quite possibly cares whether I succeed or not. Maybe. I'm sure my efforts are totally worth it."

He collected himself and then went to speak with Lydia.

Captain Menchez - I.K.S. *B'Cnah*, Bridge

The *Vorcha*-class vessel sped through space at warp, cloaked and unnoticed. Captain Menchez had been sitting at his chair for far too long and was growing wearisome of their pursuit.

"Status of the distortion?" he asked his crew.

Kvok replied, "We can still see it. But it appears we've entered Federation space!"

"Ugh. I swore I'd never go back here. Did you know Starfleet officers sleep on cushioned beds? I mean, what is up with that? Am I right?"

Kvok nodded. "And they're always trying to 'help others'. What does that even mean? Like, make sense or something for once."

"Exactly! Well, anyway. It is our duty to put a stop to whatever this thing is. Heghto, how are the calculations coming along?"

The Klingon science officer perked from his console. "I believe a modulated, low-bandwidth tachyon emission may eradicate what we've been able to learn of that distortion."

"Captain!" Kvok interrupted. "It's disappeared from sensors!"

Menchez sat up. "Take us back to the point we lost it. Drop warp in that area."

After some work, the *B'Cnah* dropped warp at Earth Spacedock. Scanning the base, the crew found that there were barely anyone aboard it.

"What is going on?" Menchez questioned. "Is there no one in command over there?"

Kvok checked his console. "No replies to hails, Captain."

"Heghto, join me and several warriors in Transporter Room 2, where we will beam aboard the Earth mushroom. If that distortion is there, we can attempt the tachyon emission." He looked to the other officer who nodded in compliance. In seconds, they left the Bridge to continue their hunt.

Earth Spacedock, Main Concourse

The Klingon commanding officer, and his away team of several warriors, walked through the main area that was mostly empty, except for a few busy Starfleet engineers. He found that the lighting was in a state of fast flickering. It soon went off, and he heard a nearby man curse in the distance.

"This is impossible!" Batou said to his own men. "If only Suvel and Seifer had gotten to those generators in time, they wouldn't be in temporary state of repair. The prolonged dampening fields have ruined the mag coils and now resonance-EM mode won't stick. Ughh."

As the Starfleet officers trotted off in the dark, Menchez received a communication from the *B'Cnah*. "*Captain*," came KVok's voice. "*We finally got a hail, but it's from the U.S.S. Al-Batani.*"

"Replay and connect me," Menchez tapped the controls on his forearm bangle.

A voice came through. "*This is Commander Collins of the Al-Batani. Before she left, Admiral Chekov gave orders to not allow any ships near here. I believe a Klingon war cruiser counts as a 'ship', even by your own standards. Please identify, and yes, we can see you.*"

"You can detect Klingon cloaks now? It amazes me how over-powered you people are on a consistent basis. Your transparent attempts to antagonize me aside, I am not here as a threat. We're tracking an unusual energy distortion that was responsible for the destruction of I.K.S. *Meghta*, in the Qo'noS Sector. I am already aboard your abandoned Earth base-monstrosity of soft cushions, tracking it. I will have the *B'Cnah* forward you our data, but it is my duty to stop whatever this thing is."

Collins sighed over the air. "*Very well. Feel free to use any of our security personnel.*"

He cut off the transmission at the sound of distorted space, near them. His men pulled up their disruptors and Heghto prepared his tachyon emitter. Ukoth, the first in command, altered his disruptor settings as soon as the distortion became visible.

"We found it!" Menchez said in both shock and amazement. "Heghto, prepare the device and nullify that thing."

Instead, Ukoth aimed his rifle and fired into the distortion. The distortion began to grow into a portal. "Sorry, Menchez, but the people I work for would rather see Earth crumble."

"Traitor!?! You used the *B'Cnah* to get to Earth! And after we shared that giant bowl of gagh together??" He pulled up his rifle at Ukoth, but Iconian Herald Constructs and Thralls began stepping out and opening fire at the Klingons.

Menchez and his team turned their attention to the Heralds and began exchanging fire. Ukoth smirked, amused, and he and two more Klingon officers broke off from the group and into the darkness.

The two dozen or so Starfleet security officers who remained on ESD attempted to assist the Klingons in their defense against the Heralds. A few more security guards beamed onto ESD from the *Al-Batani* and other nearby starships.

Civilian Transport *Elysium*

Elihu, who was adept at keeping an emotional connection while also being awake, looked around and glared at Seifer as he questioned Lydia.

Captain Menchez - Earth Spacedock, Main Concourse

Menchez was hit in the shoulder by a Thrall anti proton beam. He was sent to the ground, but used his lowered angle to blast the unsuspecting creature in the head with a disrupter pulse. The remaining Heralds were taken down by the combination Starfleet officer and Klingon group. When the portal was destroyed, Menchez was helped to his feet.

"You looked like you could use some assistance," remarked Commander Barnes, a Benzite officer from the shipyard.

The Klingon nodded and tapped his wrist communicator. "Menchez to *Al-Batani*. It would appear we have boarded your base against your regulations. For that, and for what we have brought, I apologize. Now, Ukoth and two of his men have betrayed my crew and escaped onto Spacedock for reasons we do not know. Allow my away team and I to reclaim our honor and track him down. We will make him pay for what he has done."

Captain Aeris - Unknown Undine biobase

Aeris and Winry slid down a slimy path to the floor of the enormous chamber. They walked passed the giant energy-fused organic, alien structures to the cell wall which separated them from the large crowd of Starfleet officers by a powerful, horrifying scented transparent membrane.

"Captain??" came the voice of Reeve. He walked over to where Aeris approached. "How'd you get here?"

The woman replied, "Brought here by Kohogeth, like the rest of you."

"He's been taking men, one by one, and injecting them with different kinds of serum. He appears to be of the mad scientist-type."

Aeris shook her head and approached an organic device, sticking out of the cell membrane. "No kidding. He never had this kind of power before; the power to pull people from our dimension. And this base was certainly not this big."

"No, but I was able to tap into your precious anti-Undine devices," came the ominous voice of the mutant psi-master Undine himself. Kohogeth had re-entered the massive lab without any of them noticing. "When I thought I had lost your signal, people from all over your home base began transporting over. I then decided to use them for my experiments as a consolation prize."

Captain Aeris found her wrist was suddenly strapped into the very same console she was trying to hack, by strange Undine vines. "You bastard! I thought you were done with all this? And you modified your physiology so you could speak?"

"After you escaped, I pledged to do everything in my power to find you again. I resumed my work in genetic creation, here, on Vokughvegh Base, and grew several devices to access and modify cross-dimensional wavelengths."

She gritted her teeth. "Kohogeth, you were a monster. You stole the *Zephyra* and the *Kitana* from our space for your own devices. After I got away from you, I was hunted down by the Tal Shiar."

"Ah, the *Kitana*," the Undine recalled. "Terry was the only experiment I was really successful at. But I am so close to replicating it now, and now that we are together again, I am certain we will succeed!"

The sound of a bio-molecular phaser rifle loading up, caught Kohogeth and Aeris' attention off guard. "How about you get together with this?" Winry aimed her weapon at close-range to the enemy, but was suddenly attacked by a slimy, energy-laced, slithering tentacle worm-creature. Two more slithering worm-creatures joined and took her down.

"Do you like them? They're called the Sleri. I've had them from the very beginning and now there are thousands of them."

Aeris pleaded with the misshapen Undine. "Kohogeth, stop this. You know I'll never willingly join you, but... But if you return everyone back to Spacedock, I'll stay."

"Captain, no!" Reeve called out. "He's a monstrosity! Not the join-type! Plus, he thinks algae is good human food??"

Kohogeth breathed through his makeshift mouth, ignoring the ungrateful prisoner. A green steam permeated from his unnatural orifice and it creaked to the side in a sort of smirk. After some thought, he answered Aeris, "Very well."

Captain Oroku Seifer - Civilian Transport *Elysium*

As Seifer walked down the aisle of seats, he could have sworn Elihu was glaring at him in an odd way. He wondered if it was something the hybrid ate during the trip. Despite the food, Seifer had enough information to pass on that it would help Elihu in court. Entering the Bridge, Seifer met up with the three operators of the vessel. The *Elysium* dropped warp at Caldos III.

"How's it looking, team?" Seifer asked. But the visual on the view screen displayed the exact answer to that question.

Lieutenant Edward at helm swallowed her saliva nervously. "Uh, not good, Captain."

Several unmarked, unaffiliated alien starships comprised of two Klingon battle cruisers, a Gorn Tuatara, and an Orion Brigand approached the *Elysium* and locked tractor beams.

Earth Spacedock, Pages 23-24

Earth Spacedock, Pages 23-24

Captain Oroku Seifer - Civilian Transport *Elysium*

Seifer attempted to go through a holo screen of ship's systems. The intensity of the situation hounded him. "What kind of weaponry does this thing have?"

"Nothing, sir," replied Edward. "It's a transport vessel."

Suddenly, they received a hail which was directed to the screen. A bald and green Orion appeared. "*This is the Pirate ship Volocron. After hours of droning high warp, we have laid claim to your pathetic ship and all its contents therein.*"

"It's not supposed to be a comparable vessel!" Seifer countered, defensively. "And this is Federation space. You have no claims here!"

The Orion was too busy addressing his ship's controls and slave girl orders to indulge properly. "*Our systems say otherwise! The Syndicate will have your ship, one way or the other. Prepare to be boarded.*"

As his screen clicked off, several Gorn soldiers beamed onto the ship, beginning to harass and attempt to control its passengers. Seifer attempted to kick one, who had appeared on the Bridge, but his leg was caught with one scaly hand. The Captain then pulled out a phaser and shot the large, reptilian alien down.

Captain Menchez - Earth Spacedock, Corridors

As the Klingon group sifted through the darkened decks, they aimed and readied themselves for any type of enemy they may come across.

"Sir, should we not have waited for word and orders of Starfleet assistance from the humans before we spread ourselves throughout this giant Earth stick?" Heghto asked.

Menchez rolled his eyes. "Well, of course not! We have honor we must reclaim, and mine is wearing thin. At this point, if I don't get something soon, I will have to evoke the hegh'bat on myself and anyone near me. Besides, those prissy, Starfleet perfect-hairs were taking too long to respond."

"Understood, sir," the other Klingon responded moments before they heard a noise in the dark.

All the Klingons turned toward it and fired mercilessly into the dark corridor. Upon completion, Menchez held a light up to illuminate their hard work. Instead of Ukoth and his men, they found several Starfleet engineers now crippled beyond functional movement.

"Ugghh," one of them moaned, injured and in pain. "Why...??"

Menchez aimed his disruptor rifle away. "We thought you were someone else. Fortunately, you have not experienced the stinging betrayal of Commander Ukoth. Anyway, carry on."

"Bloody Klingons," another groaned as they watched the group trot off.

Civilian Transport *Elysium*

The Gorn leader of the enemy party wore a device on his belt that caused phase weapons to temporarily malfunction. The bridge was just out of range of this device, but firing phasers in the crowded transport hold would not be a great idea anyway.

Eli stood up, as did Admiral Chekov. Daggers drawn, the Gorn moved in to quell the resistance and panic. A Gorn soldier said, "We will fetch a fair price for you in the Orion slave trade!"

As Krystal stood up between Eli and the Gorn officer, Eli leaped over his chair and into the second row behind his, shoving a Klingon over several seats. Eli then turned back to fight several Gorn with Krystal Jade, taking the fight to the Bridge before finishing them off.

Eli looked around at Seifer and the others. "Well?"

"Thank you," Seifer replied to both Elihu and Jade. "There's a Gorn and an Orion ship locked onto us. A Romulan ship appears to be taking care of the Klingons, and it looks like a prison ship and an Undine vessel are just sitting around. I'm going to be honest, I was not briefed as to why the Undine were here in Federation space to begin with. I'm sending out a distress call, but, in the meantime, if there's any way we can take these two pirate vessels out, without harming innocent lives, the planet or ourselves, we should give it a shot. We don't have weapons, but the transport is built with some of the Federation's more wide-spectrum beaming technology. We may be able to get through any weak points in their shields, while simultaneously transporting non-essential passengers to the surface."

Suddenly, a vent from above busted off from two feet and Captain Terry dropped down to join them. His eyes had a green hue, strands of energy flowed around him, and slithering worms of Sleri moved all throughout his body, under his skin. Terry approached Seifer in pure anger. "This is what I was built for. I'll take care of the Gorn ship, and then I'll come back for you."

"You were on board the whole time?? You can't go out there. You're in no condition to be doing anything!" Seifer replied in shock.

The half-Human, half-Sleri grinned as he activated the transporter systems. In a few seconds he was gone.

"I have to go after him," Seifer said. "I lost my fighting teacher, Master Chivaul. He was like a father to me. The only way for me to come to terms with that is by not allowing myself to lose anyone else under me, present or past. That includes Terry."

"This is Lesset of the Volocron. We have your piece of junk garbage scow. We'll be salvaging what we want from it now," came the hail and growl of the Orion Captain.

Seifer smirked. "Your boarding party was easily defeated, Lesset. You're next."

"You insolent fools! You think your precious Federation's in control here? You're just puppets, being managed by a vast interstellar shadow group! You're pathetic!! Prepare for another boarding party!" He clicked off communications.

Oroku turned to Krystal Jade and, by-extension, Elihu. "Captain, clearly you and Elihu have got some skill here. Take that Orion ship down how you see fit. Edward, transport everyone we don't need to the Starfleet base on surface, and me to the Gorn ship."

"Do you really think you stand a chance against Gorn?" Edward asked as she turned to him.

Seifer shook his head. "It's the Gorn who doesn't stand a chance. Terry was bio-engineered as some kind of weirdly, worm-filled ultimate weapon by a maddeningly perverse Undine geneticist. If I don't get through to him, the extent of his transformation could go far enough to kill him and any innocent lives therein."

"Understood," Edward nodded, activating the transporters.

Captain Aeris - Biobase *Vokughvegh*

As promised, all the thousands of Starfleet officers were transported back, through universes, using the anti-Undine devices aboard Earth Spacedock as a proxy, back to Earth Spacedock. With the chamber empty, a pinned Winry and a released Captain Aeris were all that were left.

Kohogeth approached her and nearly put his slimy hands on her chin. "You are as beautiful as I remember."

"You're absolutely not what I remember. You're not the man I fell in love with," Aeris replied.

The Undine nodded. "I was in human form when you and I were together. But, does not your adversity look passed physical appearances? We are all the same inside, yes?"

"It's not about how you look, Kohogeth! You presented yourself as a decent human being aboard the *Zephyra*. You may have acquiesce to returning those people, but your base-self is that of a lair. Back then, you were just luring mine and Captain Terry's crew to your facility."

Kohogeth nodded. "Yes, but I have changed since then. Let me show you what experiments I have done."

D'ren - T.I.S. *Ra'Quella*, Bridge

Ra'Quella's image appeared on a small screen to his right. *"Most of the Gorn, Klingons, and Orions are from a colony on the other side of the Beta Quadrant. G'arto Prime. It's about the size of Earth, with a population of 4 billion."*

D'ren inhaled deeply, closing his eyes, already regretting what he was about to do. "Execute."

In the space between the *Ra'Quella* and the battle-damaged *Elysium*, D'ren had fired a single black hole torpedo, which opened a wormhole, and then vanished into it; the wormhole vanished as well.

Captain Menchez - Earth Spacedock, Operations

Menchez and his away team found Ukoth and his two warriors in the Operations center, attempting to hack the command ring. The lights returned all throughout Spacedock and Starfleet officers were re-appeared everywhere. When the Klingons raised their disruptors, the enemy was forced to take notice.

"Oh, you old fool. Do you not see how pathetic this Federation is? Rumour is they can't operate on their own without a baby-sitter," Ukoth argued.

The Captain nearly squeezed his trigger. "I do not care what you are speaking of, Ukoth. I'm just here to reclaim my honor and protect this base!"

"You can reclaim that by joining me. Never mind. You're too far gone as a Federation-sympathizer. That war we partook in was a complete farce! We should have joined the Iconians instead of allowing ourselves to be led around by that incompetent Kagan! Well, I've seen to it we gained T'Ket's trust."

Heghto's device went off. "Captain, my data extrapolation of that portal is complete. It was emitting a massive radius of triquantum waves, at warp, through subspace."

"Large enough for our own personal transwarp conduit," Ukoth smirked. "A little experiment we were happy to attempt. You see, the real Klingon war is only beginning! Now if you'll excuse me, but we must test out our new tunnel."

Suddenly he and his two dishonorable men disappeared in a red transporter effect. Outside the window, the *Negh'Var*-class *Mogholegh* and two accompanying Birds of Prey decloaked.

"Those jerks!" came the annoyed reaction of Commander Allura. She then turned to Menchez and his team. "Need a boost to that ship?"

Menchez nodded to the blind Aenar woman. "That would be most appreciated. We must stop whatever damage they intend to do."

"Leave it to me," she replied as she accessed the command ring holo consoles. She overloaded Spacedock's safe mode phaser banks and fired into the shields of the lead ship. Menchez and his away team were then beamed aboard it before the ship and its two companions entered the transwarp conduit.

Civilian Transport *Elysium*

Eli perked a brow at Seifer. "I would not doubt that once the Gorn and Klingons beamed aboard the *Elysium*, they raised their shields again immediately."

"Like I said," Seifer replied. "These transports are built with some of the Federation's more wide-spectrum beaming technology. If you boost one of their annular confinement beams, hot enough, you could get through the weak points of lower-grade shields, like the Orions and Gorn. I suspect the Dominion have the same principles in their technology, and that Terry, moving quickly, enacted on the same procedures. Wait. Why am I continuing to explain everything in some kind of ongoing exposition dump and not transporting?"

Edward turned from her chair. "Looks like Terry overloaded the transporters with whatever bio-electric energy source he's become. Elihu was right. There's no chance in transporting anyone, anywhere."

She went to the control deck to try to work things out. As she did so, bright flashes could be seen through the windows of the Gorn vessel, while all the ships stopped their actions from watching the projections. In a matter of a minute, large explosions began to blow from out the Gorn ship's sides and its tractor hold disappeared. The *Volocron* and the *Elysium* moved out of range as the Gorn were destroyed. Large chunks entered the planet's atmosphere.

"No!" Seifer's jaw dropped. "Captain Terry??"

Lieutenant Edward covered her eyes from the flash. "He may have gotten off yet. We know we can't detect him with sensors."

"An explosion like that? There's no way," the Captain replied.

A transwarp conduit opened nearby and the *Mogholegh* went spinning out, with two of its accompanying Birds of Prey exiting as well.

The *Ra'Quella* projected a hologram of the planet G'arto Prime between the two parties. The *Valdore*, severely damaged, stopped fighting to watch. All of the enemy ships did the same.

The black hole torpedo exited the wormhole, which promptly collapsed behind it, and then went straight for G'arto's sun. The sun slowly started to be sucked into the black hole formed by the projectile.

An announcement from D'ren went out over every comm channel: "*Cease. Or die.*"

"*This is Captain Menchez, taking command of the Mogholegh,*" came a call to the *Elysium*. "*We do not know what is going on, but our business with Iconians brings us here.*"

Seifer took the helm seat and tapped its controls. "Menchez! Standby. There's a large space-projection indicating a disaster at G'arto Prime."

Eli and Krystal made their way back to their seats. After the pirates transported back to their respective vessels, the small fleet limped away, though the Gorn ship had been destroyed by Terry.

Admiral Chekov stood at the front of the transport. "May we please go to our memorial now? We're over an hour late."

"This is insane," Seifer got up and turned to Chekov while everyone else meandered over to their seats, nonchalantly. "That decloaked ship just committed mass genocide, and, if my hunch is correct, it's by the same man Lydia said runs the galaxy behind the scenes."

Menchez replied over view screen, *"That is some serious case of over-power. Like, overly-serious."*

"Wait. You two know each other?" Edward asked, interrupting her own work.

Seifer was caught off-guard. "Huh? Oh, yeah, we both shared a horrifying situation of being undead from the Calibus VII virus, once upon a time. It's a long story."

"What the Gre'thor? Are you telling people about that??" Menchez erupted.

The Captain waved him off. "Forget that! I'm changing course for G'arto Prime to help save as many people as I can from that doomed planet before it's too late."

"Transporters are dead, sir," reported Edward. "And there's not even a chance we would get there in time?"

Seifer nodded, understanding. "We have to at least try, Lieutenant. Complacency is the mother of death." He turned to the screen. "Menchez, will you accommodate?"

"Seeing as we destroyed this specific conduit section leading to Earth, stopping the Klingon-Iconian threat and recovering my losses, I am currently free to assist. An entire world left to die is a grave dishonor, tenfold. There may be several other conduits that we can take."

The Captain stepped into an open space on the Bridge. After a moment of hesitation, Edward joined him, as did Aramaki. He addressed Chekov. "If you all can live with letting The Infamous get away with mass murder, time and time again, and go about your daily lives, then you're no better than him. His blood is on your hands, as well. The least you could do is try to clean them once in a while." At that, the three were beamed off the *Elysium* and onto the *Mogholegh*. The Klingon ship turned and entered another conduit.

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Earth Spacedock, Pages 24-25

Captain Aeris - Biobase *Vokughvegh*, Human Lab

Kohogeth led Aeris into a dank and disgusting room. There were blood and green stains all throughout the organic enclosure. Several bowls of indiscernible food lay against the wall, and a giant pile of something bad sat in the corner.

"Captain, I promised my masters I would find a way to bridge the gap between humanity and the Undine. We have had such a shaky past and what we learned of you fascinates us. I've finally found that gap and I bridged it. Joined it into one."

The Human turned to him. "Kohogeth, this is madness. You've gone to such extreme lengths for your passions in making a difference. It's that passion we often spoke about. But you've lost focus on what kind of difference you should be making. We all have potential, though many of us make the wrong decisions and push forward in them. Come back with me to my universe. If you truly love me, you'll abandon all this for me."

"Aeris," there was a moment of hesitation from Kohogeth. He breathed in to consider her offer and what it could possibly mean for him. But he was too far into it. He had put so much of his life and sacrificed many things he held close to him. "I cannot. This is what I made."

As giant doors opened, out fumbled a massive conglomeration of Sleri worms with dozens of human and Undine limbs in unsymmetrical, random places. The giant creature moaned and slithered and moved around in eternal pain.

"What... what have you done...?" she muttered in dire shock, speechless and tearful.

Kohogeth raised his arms in success. "I've united our universes!! I've united *us!*"

"Take two?" came Winry's voice. "Alright, take two. Unite this!" Entering the room holding energy flowing Sleri she finally was able to overpower, Winry threw several Sleri from her arms into an attack at both the massive hybrid creature and Kohogeth.

Free, Aeris ran over to the Engineer. "What did you do?"

"They spoke to me, telepathically, and I convinced them the Undine were their enemy," she answered. "They're disabling this base as we speak, and using its last remaining functions to open a portal in fluidic space to our realm."

Aeris slapped her slime-covered suit. "Nice work, Lieutenant! You just might make the perfect senior officer one day, after all. Now, let's get back to the *Zephyra*, whatever's left of it."

"Oh, man," Winry complained at the thought of all the repairs she would have to endure.

U.S.S. *Zephyra*, Bridge

Climbing through the large hollow tentacles, the two women returned to the slime-covered *Sovereign*-class starship. Barely even getting it to move and detach, the *Zephyra* impulsed toward and through the portal as the biobase began to shrivel up behind them.

"Was it worth it?" Winry asked.

Aeris pondered, relieved they would finally be returning to Earth Spacedock. "To know what a man is made of, versus what he is capable? I suppose it's always worth it; just not always a universal worth. Let's go home, Lieutenant. Engage."

Captain Oroku Seifer - I.K.S. *Mogholegh*, Bridge

Seifer took the Bridge with Captain Menchez and his away team, in a moment of appreciation of their work, as the ship entered into transwarp. "I'm impressed you were able to take over such a large vessel with such a small group of warriors. That, and the two Birds of Prey. Were you thorough?"

"Are you kidding me, Starfleet? Of course we were thorough! We defeated the enemy with the beating drums of our hearts and the blood quenching thirst of our stout souls," Menchez reaffirmed seconds before Ukoth and a group of enemy Klingons stormed the Bridge.

Captain Seifer glanced at Menchez disapprovingly. "Really?"

"Perhaps actual tactics may have been required, but that is always second to a Klingon," Menchez defended. "Brawn over brains for life! Yeah!"

The two pulled out their weapons in an eruption of a fire-fight. They, Menchez's away team, and the two Starfleet Lieutenants hid behind the Bridge consoles and fired disruptors and phasers at the group near the entrance.

"Don't give me that look, Seifer," argued Menchez, between disruptor blasts. "Like you were even going to stop a black hole to begin with? Are you going to stop the next one too? Or the 43t45034348 ones after that??"

Seifer took out one of Ukoth's closest men, and turned to the Klingon. "What? When did I say I was going to stop a black hole?? If only I wasn't so much more moral than Tuvok, the head of that unscrupulous Section 31."

"Didn't they burn down a Syndicate orphanage once?" Menchez asked, as he witnessed one of his own men taken down in horror.

The Trill's power cell ran out, so he threw his phaser into Ukoth's head. "Whoa, hey now, those kids were planning to create a divergent alternate universe full of flashy lens flares and non-stop adrenaline runs. Time traveling Pavel Chekov was all in a last-ditch tizzy about it."

"What the hell?" cried Ukoth, as the shooting all stopped. He picked up Seifer's phaser and rubbed the bump on his forehead. "Who just throws a phaser like that?"

Seifer stood up. "Uh, I do. I prefer to take things into my own hands, even if it means throwing everything I've got in a ridiculous manner. Serious things are still serious to the guy doing them."

"Well, it's played out and unoriginal. Not to mention, you'd have to throw your phaser at every enemy you came across, as it would have to be your signature move. I declare that this is so!"

The Captain crossed his arms. "Just because I tried it, doesn't mean I expected I was going to be successful at it. Also, thanks for trying to write me. Really appreciate it."

"Maybe you'll appreciate this!!" Ukoth slammed his palm into a nearby console, causing the *Mogholegh* to begin to self destruct. Panels and warp coils began to explode all over the ship as it and the two Birds of Prey exited transwarp to normal space.

Menchez turned to his fellow officer. "I think your attempts at doing things is being thwarted. It seems like failure is your style, Captain."

"I think you're right," Seifer replied as he and Menchez approached the transporter controls. "Next crazy, out-of-control-but-mundane-compared-to-over-powered-beings-adventure, then?"

The Klingon nodded, before they and their teams dematerialized. "Until then, Captain."

I.K.S. *Furt'gh*

Seifer and his two Lieutenants, Edward and Aramaki, beamed onto the Bridge of the *Furt'gh* and took command. They watched as Menchez had taken the other Bird of Prey, the I.K.S. *Keghgh*, and taken chase to escape pods from the exploding *Mogholegh*.

He hailed the *Odyssey*-class U.S.S. *Valhalla* on the long range relay network. Admiral Cid, a silver-bearded, aging Human, appeared on screen. "Captain Seifer," he greeted. "I received your message and am now nearing G'arto Prime to beam as many cut throats and thieves as I can off the planet as possible. Many directly into our Brig."

"Thanks," Seifer replied. "It looks like my transwarp conduit paths are down so I don't think I'll make it on warp before unapproachable damage is done."

Cid nodded. "We'll do what we can. Just keep these low lifes and murderers in your thoughts. They deserve to be remembered for their love of pillaging and general breaking of the laws."

"I will," Seifer said, feeling the heart crushing tinge of loss, once again. "Seifer out."

Caldos III

The *Furt'gh* dropped warp and returned to the planet where the *Elysium* had been forced to the surface to undergo repairs. The ceremonies for the dead had been put on hold until their arrival, and the planet's largest and most elaborate cemetery was set up for visitors.

Seifer joined the proceedings in dress uniform, recalling his closest mentor, Chivaul, lost cause, Terry, and the planet of thugs who somehow numbered in the billions and were able to function as a world together. Perhaps his discontent was selfish. His thoughts about them could have really been about him. Did he care about them, or were they just representations of his own abilities as a Captain?

Looking around, Seifer decided to momentarily clear his mind of regret. It was only with a clear mind he could operate better, as an officer, as a person, as an observer and participant in galactic events. With the Bajorans gaining some kind of oddly non-canon power, worlds like Cardassia were suddenly now under threat.

He noticed Elihu, who was in the most calm state he had ever seen. He had read that the quadruple hybrid was betrayed by The Infamous in the past, but they somehow appeared to maintain an interpersonal relationship of some sort. If The Infamous's power was shifting to people, would Elihu be a potential as one of those leaders, despite their apparent history?

Hell. Elihu M'Konel stood with his comrades, staring first at the names listed on the the gravestones of his friends and family who had died months ago, and then at the list of names on the marble wall behind it. There was a lot of silence at the memorial, indeed as well as the entire Scottish-colonized world. Hundreds of people surrounded the wall, each remembering and honoring the dead in their own way.

The Park

It was starting to get dark. A fog was rolling in. D'ren was hiding behind a tree in another plot of land several hundred meters away from the cemetery. He was sitting with his back against the tree, facing away from the memorial. Bringing his shaking hand up to take a swig from his flask. Pain seared through his throat and stomach. He coughed and groaned, and then laughed at his own weakness. He'd spent his entire life gathering armies, building armadas, enslaving worlds... and nobody could ever say why.

Elihu M'Konel, but not the one attending his friends' memorial service, walked over and stood over the dying man. He shook his head with contempt and leaned against the tree above him. This Elihu had a goatee and short black hair.

D'ren forced himself to painstakingly sit up. "I told them the truth, mostly. The Infamous armada will continue."

Elihu shook his head. "Under my authority, sure." He pointed the gun at D'ren's head.

"They don't know about G'arto," D'ren told Eli. "They think it's a planet full of... of pirates. It won't matter. The planet will be gone in a few minutes."

Eli nodded. "Good. And so will you." He leaned down and placed a hand on the dying rogue's temple, performing a very painfully invasive mind-meld.

Memorial Center

Elsewhere, near the stone, Seifer approached the original Eli. "Sorry to bother you at this time, Elihu, but I think I have a suspect in mind for your case. You were framed by someone who wanted to get rid of you, in favour of more power from The Infamous. It must've been someone in The Infamous' camp, with access to his nanites, so that they could simulate you murdering Alyce. Someone who displays a thirst for revenge and power, and possibly wants more of it, including the power that may have gone to you. It may have been Ro Laren."

Elihu turned to Seifer and shook his head. He patted Seifer's shoulder in a friendly manner. "It is not Ro Laren, but thank you for your continued diligence, Captain. There is no longer any need for an investigation. If I am guilty, I should be arrested. If I am not guilty, you will never find the person who did it, if The Infamous is actually involved."

He gave Seifer a pointed look, a stern gaze that was in no way meant to convey friendship. It was a threat. *Drop it.*

When Seifer was done speaking with the Vulcan-mindset Elihu, he was surprised to encounter a threatening gaze. It seemed like he wanted Seifer to drop the case for some reason. On top of that, Elihu wouldn't say whether he was or wasn't guilty.

Aramaki approached with a tricorder. "Well, scans of The Infamous, from several vessels, when he was onboard his ship, have completed processing. I think you'll find this interesting. We detected chroniton particles, indicating he's from another time."

"Fascinating," Seifer said as he took the device to read it.

The tactical officer handed him a medical tricorder. "Not only that, but this data indicates DNA on The Infamous, that isn't his own; it's Elihu M'Konel's. I think he had some kind of interaction with that time travelling The Infamous."

"Whoa! His connection to D'Ren, that guy who just killed 4 billion people, is confirmed, which could mean any number of things, including that of having access to those nanites to cause the murder of Alyce himself."

Lieutenant Aramaki nodded but then stopped before handing over another tricorder. "Oh! Something else. This is a picture of my neice. Isn't she so cute? Soooo cute."

"Thanks?" Seifer handed him back the three tricorders. "Unfortunately, Starfleet refuses to acknowledge adorableness as they're too busy minding their own hypocrisy. Anyway, as for the case, it would seem I didn't have a chance in figuring out who the murderer was to begin with."

Aramaki tapped his chin in thought. "The universe is a mysterious place. Want to search for anaphasic lifeforms? They loooove the Caldos star system."

"Can't. The Infamous' army has the entire place blocked off. We're not allowed to leave until we sign a release acknowledging fear for life. Also, my own plots may finally get some much anticipated traction. You see, I just saw one of my past love interests in the crowd and our whole complicated history is just about to unravel in a whirlwind of drama and passion, and—" Suddenly, he lost sight of the woman. "Damn! Never mind."

Earth Spacedock, Infirmary

Hours later, 23:00. Elihu M'Konel was lying in the infirmary of Earth Spacedock. The now-shaven Vulcan/Betazoid hybrid was completely unresponsive. Doctor Shran-Vix, blood-stained and covered in black soot, was exhausted but remained by his side as she shakily performed her medical duties. Lydia M'Konel was leaning up on her side, fearfully observing her nephew from the bed on his right. To his left was another patient, one who had not survived the ordeal. A sheet was covering them head to toe.

The former chief of the Tal'Shiar, Toreth, was being taken to the brig by several security officers. However, she was not wounded either. Later, she would say, "*I, Toreth, confess to personally overseeing the kidnapping and torture of several Federation, Romulan, and Klingon officers and soldiers, including one Captain Aeris...*"

Outside the sickbay on a large display was yet another list of recently deceased. However, the memorial terrorist attack was not what had sent Elihu M'Konel spiraling into a catatonic state. The breaking point came a little later...

Civilian Transport *Elysium*

Hours earlier, after the Caldos III terrorist attack, officers were beamed back to the *Elysium* and set course for Earth Spacedock. A transporter beam had deposited Talitha Roseblade in the center aisle of the passenger hold. The young lady collapsed onto her side. Her mind was unable to maintain any coherent thought. She did not even recognize her husband-to-be.

Eli simply could not handle it. After asking Jade to take care of her, Eli crumpled into his seat and did not speak or move again. Before long, he fell asleep, and when Shran scanned him, she reported that he had descended into a coma.

Captain Oroku Seifer - Infirmary, Earth Spacedock

As the Infirmary was being emptied out of its excess patients, Seifer was just finishing up treatments for his flesh wounds. The trip back from Caldos III had been so much faster than the trip there, that he wondered if Edward was just toying with everyone beforehand.

"Everything checks out with you, sir," reported Lieutenant Cetra. "You'll be free to go in a few minutes."

Seifer looked on as Lydia had been screaming in sheer madness at the comatose Elihu M'Konel for what seemed like hours. The sound rang through in his ears. "Wow. That really is terrible."

"Trauma comes with the territory when dealing with complex inter-personal relationships augmented by the vicious actions of unclear entities," she said, passively as she healed his hand with a dermal regenerator.

Confused, the Captain replied. "Yes? Anyway, doesn't all this bother you, since you're a Betazoid?"

"Actually, I've always injected myself with a compound that suppresses my empathy. All my life, I've been unable, nor willing, to deal with the pounding headache of telepathic power." She wrapped up and patted him in the shoulder.

Seifer smirked. "Yeah, those are the worst. Anyway, it looks like you're stuck here on Spacedock with all this like I am. I know how stale this station can get. If I hear about any deep space assignments befitting a nurse, I'll let you know."

Main Concourse

Stepping out into the main concourse, Seifer was met with Captain Aeris. He had skimmed her report of her time in fluidic space and was amazed that she survived.

"It's been a long time, Captain," Seifer said.

Aeris crossed her arms. "It could have been longer. But it was only after my time with Kohogeth, in the past, that I was eventually boarded by the Tal'Shiar on what I've come to learn were orders by Toreth. They wanted to know everything we did of the Undine."

"Now she's captured. A gift from someone, perhaps. Are you going to go into the Brig and beat her to a bloody pulp?"

The woman did a double-take. "What kind of a monster do you think I am? I dealt with my emotional reaction to that long ago. It was only Elihu's telepathic attack on me that regressed it out of my subconscious." She looked at him. "Anyway, the *Zephyra* is just as out-of-commission as your old ship, the *Phoenix-X*. I could crew it and fly it, but the damage by that Undine protoplasm makes it unfit for prolonged use."

"Drydock's getting full," Seifer realized.

She laughed to herself. "At least you're getting re-assigned. They told me to tell you that you've got a new ship, finally."

"What!?"

Aeris gave him a PADD. "Congratulations, Captain. The U.S.S. *Ragnarok* is yours. It's a *Pathfinder*-class starship modified with *Discovery*-class pylons."

"This is amazing!!" Seifer took the PADD and rushed through its stats. "Sure, it's not as powerful as some, but I can finally get off this cesspool dump— err, I mean, wonderfully constructed space mushroom?"

The other Captain waved him off. "It's fine. I'm stuck here until they find me a new ship too now. But, this time, after what I did in bringing the disappeared crew back, they won't keep me locked down here anymore. I'll be just as free as you, soon."

"Good to hear, Aeris," Seifer complimented. "I'll be recruiting that engineer you were with in Undine space, by the way. Lieutenant Winry sounds brilliant."

Shocked and insulted, Aeris dropped her arms. "You jerk?? Now I don't want to divulge the second piece of news I was going to bring to you!"

"The Infamous was responsible for everything malicious that's been done up to this point?"

She shook her head as she directed his gaze to their left. "No, Winry and I brought back your old fighting teacher, Chivaul, from fluidic space."

"Master Chivaul??" Seifer turned to see the old, greying Vulcan standing afar in wait to speak to him. He had thought he'd never see him again, and had already dealt with the effects of losing his own father-figure. The Trill turned back to Aeris, preferring the cognitive dissonance to the alternative. "Thank you, Captain."

Aeris smiled. "Sure." She watched as Seifer went off to speak to the man. Her duties now lay elsewhere, so she left as well.

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