



IN THE 23RD CENTURY

IT IS THE YEAR 2285. THERE IS UPHEAVAL IN THE ALPHA QUADRANT WITH NEWS OF THE BATTLE OF THE MUTARA NEBULA REACHING THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS.

CAPTAIN SPOCK IS DEAD. THE USS ENTERPRISE (NCC-1701) IS REASSIGNED TO THE GAMMA HYDRA SYSTEM AND THE KLINGONS ARE MAKING VEILED THREATS ALL ALONG THE BORDER WITH THE NEUTRAL ZONE.

IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF PARANOIA AND SUSPICION, ONE SHIP, THE USS GRISSOM (NCC-638) IS ASSIGNED TO UNDERTAKE A MISSION OF THE UTMOST SECRECY. UNDER THE COMMAND OF CAPTAIN J. T. ESTEBAN, THE GRISSOM WILL UNDERTAKE THIS MISSION IN THE SPIRIT OF STARFLEET. NONE OF HER CREW SUSPECT IT WILL BE THEIR LAST MISSION...

Chapter I

All rumors of wrath, past and to come

USS GRISSOM (NCC-638)

"Captain's log, stardate 8145.3, the Grissom is en route to Starbase 67 to pick up new crew assignments. Several of these are cadets, who were aboard the USS Enterprise during her recent encounter with Khan Noonien Singh. Rumours abound on the subspace relays that the Enterprise has suffered heavy casualties. More importantly at the moment, I anxiously await the posting of my new science officer, Commander Solak."

"So the rumours are true then, Captain Spock is dead?" exclaimed Jonathan Thomas Esteban as he sat down in the conference chair and viewed the monitor screen for the response of his friend Lawrence Styles.

"Yes, Starfleet Command has confirmed the rumours, and Captain Spock did die in the incident in the Mutara Sector," replied Styles.

J.T. noted the clinical newness of the conference room aboard Style's command, the USS 'Excelsior', a starship that was generating its own fair amount of rumour.

"Bound to happen J.T." continued Styles, "Kirk has been a loose canon, a maverick for far too long now, far too long."

Esteban suppressed a smile, it was obvious Styles was going to rant, something he was famous for since his Starfleet academy days.

"Lawrence, Kirk may be unorthodox, but you have to admire him after all..."



"Jon, I do admire his achievements, we all do, but not how he achieved them," interrupted Styles. Esteban knew better than to argue with Styles when he was in this mood.

"Lawrence, it looks like Kirk's paying for it now, I heard the 'Enterprise' was in a bad way following the incident in the Mutara Nebula and now the loss of Captain Spock..."

Styles reflected on this, drumming his fingers on the conference table beside him "Top Brass still aren't letting out what exactly went down in the Mutara Sector with Noonien Singh, but it's strictly off limits at the moment, makes you wonder what they're hiding!"

"Where is the 'Enterprise' now anyway?" enquired Esteban, "we're taking on six of her cadets at Starbase 67, reassigned following the whole sorry business, maybe they can enlighten me."

"Kirk's retained command of the ship; they're investigating the disappearance of the 'Gallant', she hasn't been seen since Stardate 8141.5 when she was patrolling section 14 of the Gamma Hydra system," replied Styles, rising from his chair and pacing the Excelsior's conference room, "and it's far too near the Neutral Zone for me not to be nervous."

"These are dangerous times we're living in Lawrence, I'll grant you that," sighed Esteban. Before he could continue he was interrupted by an internal hailing call "Captain Esteban, we are on final approach to Starbase 67."

"Thank you Chattman, I'll be there directly," replied Esteban, "Lawrence, hate to cut this short, I never even got to ask about the 'Excelsior', but I have to go."

"I understand, old man, and Jon, relax, it's dangerous out there, but nothing's going to happen to a scientific vessel, even the Klingon's wouldn't stoop that low."

"Understood" replied Esteban, "we'll talk soon."

STARBASE 67: AZATI SYSTEM



In her temporary quarters, Starfleet cadet Kara McLoughlin tossed and turned fitfully in her sleep. In her dream she was once again in engineering aboard the 'Enterprise', with Mister Scott telling his cadet crew that Enterprise was closing in on the USS 'Reliant', which was running silent. Her good friend and fellow cadet William Bearclaw was remarking that this was unusual and enjoying some good natured bantering with Peter Preston, midshipman and another good friend of Kara's. Then it all went white, searing heat and white is what Kara could remember, then Peter pushing her under the bulkhead as the blast doors came down, William dragging her out of engineering, screaming at Peter to save himself.

She regained consciousness being carried to sickbay by William, aware of other cadets running past in the pandemonium, Bryce, Sherwood and then Mr. Scott forcing by them with a bundle in his arms. She realised in horror that the bundle was Peter Preston. She could hear the red alert klaxon even now, she could.....

"SH*T!" she exclaimed as she came fully awake in her bunk, realising she had slept right through the alarm on her personal chronometer which was even now blaring at horrific decibels into her headphones. She feared she was never going to loose the nightmare, Peter smiling at her, then Peter, scarred, burnt, vacant eyed.

Kara moved quickly, her chronometer had been set to ensure she was 'ship shape and Bristol fashion' when her new assignment, the 'Grissom' hit Starbase 67, and here she was, late already. She headed toward the porthole of the communal cadet dormitory, pausing to say hello to Colette Adjani, another cadet, then proceeding to peer out. Yes, there she was, approaching Starbase 67 slowly in the right hand aspect of the porthole. Kara didn't think Grissom was much to look at, but she wasn't going to rock the boat.

She grabbed her kit bag and made her way to the showers.

A few hours later, Christopher Chattman and Rebecca Sato were walking down the central promenade of Starbase 67. Christopher, the Grissom's communications officer, was a young man in his early 30s, although he looked considerably younger. Years of professional sport, Rugby in particular, gave him a stocky physique, which was matched by his rough rugby humour. Rebecca, likewise in her mid thirties, was pure Starfleet through and



through, able to trace her starfaring roots back to the legendary Hoshi Sato.

"This is the place Becky" said Christopher, pulling to a halt outside a rough and ready looking bar.

Rebecca stopped alongside him, gazing up at the garish neon sign. "'Hunter's Moon'" she said, "is that as in a Hunter's moon, to hunt by, or the owner is Hunter?."

"To be honest, it's a bit of both" replied Christopher, "and I wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of the owner, that's for sure... shall we?"

Christopher stood back to let Rebecca enter first. They entered the dimly lit bar, a range of tables before them, all full of people here to maximise any free time. Rebecca recognised a few of the Grissom's shoreleave party and nodded in greeting as they moved towards some free tables at the back. Securing a table, they sat with their backs to the wall, surveying the area.

"I still cannot believe old J.T. gave twenty-four hour shore leave to the crew, it's not his style at all" said Christopher, perusing a drinks list as he spoke.

"He's not that bad Chappy," replied Rebecca, 'Chappy' being the name Christopher was called by his friends.

"I know Becky," Rebecca was known as 'Becky' to her friends. "It's just he's so by the book he makes a Vulcan look boring by comparison."

Rebecca laughed aloud. "Don't let our new science officer hear you saying that! But seriously, any more thoughts on the transfer?"

"I've an application in and I'm hoping for either 'Excelsior' or 'Hathaway', the Captain knows both of their skippers' and can put in a good word for me, but..uh, oh, here's trouble."

Christopher looked in the direction of the bar, from which area a tall, imposing brunette was bearing down on them. She reached the table and grasped Christopher firmly by the collar, kissing him fiercely before he could react.

"Chappy, you old rigger bugger" she shouted across the noise in the bar, coming up for breath "what brings you here?"



Christopher disentangled himself from the brunette and fixed his collar "Hello Hunter, good to see you again. Hunter, this is my colleague Rebe..Becky Sato, Becky, this is the owner of this den of villainy, Danielle Hunter." Rebecca proffered a hand, which was shaken warmly by Hunter. "All my friends call me 'Danni', welcome to my humble abode."

Rebecca eyed the Amazonian creature in front of her, her mind going through myriad possibilities as to her relationship with Christopher.

"Can I get you guys something then, I have a cask of Romulan Ale stowed away for special occasions, can I tempt you?" said Hunter as she winked at Christopher.

"Not for me thanks, I really want to hit the kiosks with a clear head before I head back to Grissom," replied Rebecca.

"Present hunting for her hubby Robert, he's an engineer on the 'Excelsior' and she misses her honey bun," teased Christopher, "better make that two coffee's, black no sugar." Hunter clapped him on the back, tousled his hair, winked and then wandered back over to the bar. "Don't ask, very long story, not going there" Christopher exclaimed, "but..." interrupted Rebecca, "EVER" concluded Christopher.

A waitress deposited two coffees on the small table and left, Christopher began to sip his coffee "So, I was thinking about the transfer request again, I would love to serve on either 'Excelsior' or 'Hathaway', that's where the future lies."

Rebecca sat forward "there's so many bad things happening out there Chappy, the Mutara incident, Captain Spock dying, the 'Enterprise' damaged, the 'Gallant' missing, I can't see why you'd want to be aboard anything that might involve the military."

"You really need to handle your paranoia Sato, you sound like you think somebody has got it in their nose for the Federation" replied Christopher.

"God's fishing in our pond now Chappy," Rebecca said earnestly "and who knows who will be caught next."



USS GRISSOM (NCC-638)

Commander Stephanie Ottair stood in the main transporter room facing the transporter pad. Without glancing behind she instructed Ensign Wood to begin transport.

"Energising." Wood said as she began the process. The transporter effect faded and Stephanie found herself looking at a group of Starfleet cadets. Wood blew the signal watch "Atttttttenshun." The cadets lined up and saluted and Stephanie moved forward.

"I am Commander Stephanie Ottair, Chief Engineer of the 'Grisson', on behalf of Captain Esteban, I welcome you. Some of you will be on your first assignment, others of you will be transfers from the 'Enterprise'. I will make one thing very clear to you, and that is, that although we are a vessel of science, we are still a Starfleet vessel and you will behave as such."

Kara McLoughlin shifted restlessly on her feet, catching Stephanie's attention "There is a problem Cadet?."

"No Sir, no problem, just..." began Kara.

"Just nothing cadet, if you have something to say, you can say it in briefing" interrupted Stephanie. "You will all accompany Ensign Wood, who will show you the crew quarters where you can stow your kit bags, you will then be given a tour of the ship and issued with a ship schematic." Stephanie paced the deck as she spoke, "you will all be acclimatised and at your posts by 3rd watch."

The cadets turned to one another with incredulous looks, quickly hidden as Stephanie turned. "Finally, any engineering cadets will be expected to have read and have a firm understanding of 'Cochrane's Thesis on Warp Propulsion' and 'Capell's' work on the nature of the dilithium matrix."

Kara piped up "Sir, permission to speak sir?"

"Granted cadet." Stephanie glanced at the name badge "McLoughlin."

"Sir, I am the only engineering cadet and I have never read Capell's work before now" ventured Kara.

"Then you will be very busy between now and third watch McLoughlin, now follow Ensign Wood," and with that closing remark,



Stephanie left the transporter room. Kara thought about calling Commander Ottair a bitch out loud, but perhaps wisely, kept it to herself. She turned and followed Ensign Wood with her fellow cadets.

"Transporter room advises all six new cadets are aboard Mr. Jata" said the Ensign on communications relief. "Thank you Ensign Childers, please note same in the ships log."

Bacari Jata sat in the Captain's chair overseeing operations between Starbase 67 and 'Grissom'. With all of the senior bridge staff on shore leave and Captain Esteban meeting Commander Solak on Starbase 67, Bacari had assumed the hot seat. He had to admit it felt good, even if they were at anchor off a Starbase. He examined his data pad, all seemed to be in order:

- ❑ Materials transfer 100% complete
- ❑ Supplies 80% complete
- ❑ Starbase Maintenance crews work on saucer hull 70% complete

All that remained now was the transfer of the new shuttle craft to 'Grissom', but Captain Esteban had decided to pilot it back himself to give Commander Solak a good view of his new assignment.

Bacari shuddered when he thought what had happened to the shuttlecraft it was replacing, during the mission at Jakala, he had very nearly lost his life. Finishing his overview of the datapad, he opened an internal channel to sickbay, "Doctor S'Raazh, the new cadets are aboard, I'd appreciate if you could process their medicals ASAP, the Captain indicated he wanted them all in post by 3rd watch." He heard fumbling, something banging as if dropped and a dog barking. "Doctor, are you there?"

There was a momentary increase in the barking, then a yipe, then a voice spoke, "Ah, Mr. Jata, yes, yes, no problem whatsoever, no problem. However, Muggle is causing havoc down here at the moment, so I'm afraid I'll have to attend to that, S'Raazh out."

Bacari smiled to himself, the Doctor was going to be in so much trouble if Esteban knew that her dog was in sickbay again. But he wouldn't be telling any stories.



PLANET PACIFICA

Sunlight penetrated the coral in a kaleidoscope of colours that refracted through the water. Michael Liebmann looked up and sighed with pleasure. He was happiest when here, beneath the waves away from the distractions of his administrative work. Movement to his left caught his attention, and he noted a shoal of andecs swimming by, the sunlight bouncing off their iridescent scales. If the andecs were in the area, then the birbeck pack could not be far behind.

Liebmann activated his air thrusters and dove deeper into the coral, down toward the marine forest in pursuit of the andecs. Yes, there they were, he could see the birbecks now, hiding in among the foliage of the marine forest.

His helmet indicator blinked and the face of his assistant, M'pursong, a Caitian female appeared on his visor.
"Dr. Liebmann, priority 1 call from Starfleet command."

"Thank you M'pursong, please advise Starfleet that I will take that call in 15 minutes in my office, I don't have a secure channel out here," her image purred in agreement and then vanished from his visor.

He reactivated his air thrusters and rose towards the surface. He broke the surface and drifted toward the waveskimmer, which was nearby. He clambered aboard, quickly divesting his dive suit and gunned the engine, heading towards the nearby island and his research centre, built in the shell of an old Pacifican temple. Within minutes the waveskimmer came to a halt at the dock and he jumped ashore, racing up the steps two at a time, at a pace faster than you would credit for his 55 years. Entering his outer office he barked at M'pursong, "Get Starfleet back online and secure the office and the channel."

Minutes later Liebmann was sitting behind his desk, the windows blacked out and lighting lowered. The Starfleet emblem appeared on the screen and then was replaced by the image of Starfleet Admiral Harry Morrow. Alongside Grand Admiral Stephen Turner, he was the most senior man in Starfleet, but he was also a personal friend to Liebmann.



"Michael, good to see you," smiled Morrow, "I won't waste time on small talk, please watch the following presentation." Morrow was replaced almost immediately by the Starfleet symbol and then the face of a beautiful blonde woman appeared. Liebmann recognised her as Carol Marcus. Her presentation began:

"I am Doctor Carol Marcus the director of the Project Genesis team at Regula I. What exactly IS Genesis? Put simply, Genesis is a procedure whereby the molecular structure of any given matter can be restructured changed-into anything else of identical mass.

- Stage One of our experiment was conducted in the laboratory.
- Stage Two of the series will be attempted in a lifeless underground;
- Stage Three will involve the process on a planetary scale.

What follows is a computer-projected simulation of Stage Three. Please watch closely.

It is our intention to introduce what we call the Genesis device or "torpedo" into the targeted area of a lifeless space body, a moon or other inert form-the device is fired-Unleashing, almost instantaneously, what we call the Genesis effect. Particulate matter is reorganized and electrified -with life introduced results. Instead of a dead moon, a living breathing planet, capable of sustaining whatever life forms we see fit to deposit on it... The reformed object you see represents the merest fraction of the Genesis potential, should the Federation wish to pursue these experiments to their logical conclusion. When we consider the problems of population and food supply, the usefulness of this process begins to become clear. This concludes this demonstration tape. Thank you for your attention. The Genesis team eagerly awaits the decision of the Federation regarding the next phase of our work."

"As the presentation ended, Morrow began to speak. "Opinion?"

Liebmann was flabbergasted. "Incredible, quite incredible, Harry, I can't believe it."

Morrow frowned. "By now you will have heard of the incident in the Mutara Nebula, this incident was the catalyst for the inadvertent launch of the Genesis device."



Liebmann was astounded but Morrow continued before he could speak "I don't have time to go into the minutiae right now, but I am forwarding a complete dossier to you, for your eyes only."

Liebmann nodded and Morrow continued, "I'm assigning a Starfleet vessel to pick you up en route to the Genesis Planet, get your stuff together, I want you on that ship as my specialist adviser."

Morrow signed off and Liebmann called M'pursong, "I'm going on a trip, can you get my away kit together and there's a file incoming from Starfleet, download it to my tricorder while I freshen up."

M'pursong dutifully went to her computer and began to download the file as it arrived. Liebmann was in the shower, she could hear him singing, happier than he had been in some time.

She opened a secure channel.

"Milady Valkyris, this is M'pursong, I think I have something which will be of great interest to the Empire."

A voice as cold as the grave replied, "Excellent, transmit now. I will ensure the credits are in your account as per our usual agreement."

M'pursong bowed her head in a catlike manner, "by your command."

SPACE LAB REGULA 1

David and Carol Marcus were having another row, their third one in two days. They were in the hydroponics bay of Regula 1, having returned with a small team to assess damage to the station following the effects of the Genesis shockwave. The station had remained intact.

"I can't believe you want to go gallivanting off again, we've only just got back to Regula 1, there's so much to do!" shouted Carol.

"Mother, I have to offer my services to the Federation if they are going back to Genesis, they need me, I know the project better than anyone except you" said David as he picked blackberries off a bramble.



"David, Starfleet have made the sector off limits, and they might not even be going back there for all we know," Carol sat on a bench beneath a Hawthorn, "your father, Jim, is off in the Gamma Hydra system last I heard, some more trouble with the Klingons, let him handle this."

David sat beside her and put his arm around her shoulders. "Ok, I promise I'll just offer my services, should they be required, not sign up."

She hugged him just then and laughed, "alright kiddo, I'll acquiesce but I'm going to contact Clive, he's a xenologist extraordinaire and I know he'll look out for you and watch your back."

Now David laughed, "Mother, you know I would be more than happy for Clive to be on any team I'm on, but you know he won't be interested."

Carol stood up and turned to leave, "Believe me son, he'll be going with you, I'll have him eating out of my hand in no time."

STARBASE 67: AZATI SYSTEM

J.T. Esteban sat in the officers' lounge on the observation deck. He had just had a full progress report from Petty Officer First Class Jata and all was well on schedule. Jata was a good man; he would make a good first officer. Esteban looked out the viewport at the 'Grissom' sitting at anchor. He would enjoy taking the new 'Von Braun' type shuttle craft over to 'Grissom' later, it was far too long since he had stretched his old sea legs. He watched the space dock utility vehicles buzzing around 'Grissom's' main hull as the maintenance teams carried out their works.

A voice broke him from his reverie. "Captain Esteban, Commander Solak reporting for duty." He looked up at the Vulcan male who would be his new science officer, stood and made the traditional Vulcan salute with his hand.

"Good to meet you Commander, I look forward to taking you over to 'Grissom' later, I thought we might take the new shuttle craft, give you a good look at the old girl."



Solak raised an eyebrow, "Grissom is hardly old in the life of a Starship sir, many ships have been in service considerably longer."

Esteban's communicator sounded. "Excuse me Commander."

He flipped open his communicator "Esteban here, go ahead."

"Captain," came the voice of Ensign Childers. "We have a priority 1 call from Starfleet Command for you."

"Thank you, Childers," replied Esteban scanning the nearby offices, "please transfer it to officers meeting room 2, it appears to be empty."

"Aye sir" said Childers.

Fifteen minutes later, Esteban sat in stony silence facing Admiral Harry Morrow's visage in the monitor.

"I take it you are shocked by the Genesis presentation Captain, most people are, on their first viewing" said Morrow.

"That's one word for it," said Esteban "so if I understand you correctly, since then, in this Khan Noonien Singh incident, a Genesis Planet has been formed."

"Correct Captain, and we have quarantined the sector and made it off limits to all our own fleet and any civilian traffic. We want one ship in the sector, carrying out any and all surveys required and that ship is 'Grissom'."

Esteban shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "Admiral, with all due respect, Admiral Kirk knows the mission, knows the sector and was involved in the incident in the first instance, shouldn't he be leading this?"

Morrow leaned forward and lowered his voice in a conspiratorial manner.

"James T. Kirk is a personal friend of mine, but he is far too emotionally involved, and besides, the Klingons follow his movements like a cat watching a bird in a cage. We don't want to draw their attention to the Mutara sector. 'Grissom' can slip in under the radar, you are a scientific vessel, and we don't want a heavy cruiser like 'Enterprise' in there."



Esteban leaned forward also, "Sir, I lack senior crew."

Morrow now sat back. "I am confident that your crew is more than capable of carrying out my orders. I will be assigning several specialists to your crew roster, their details will follow and Commander Solak will be an excellent addition to your team."

Esteban was preparing to reply but Morrow continued "Captain Esteban, you are to leave Starbase 67 as per schedule and make best possible speed to Pacifica, further orders will follow, is that understood?"

"Yes, Admiral."

Morrow was about to sign off but added, "you may bring your senior crew only up to date on the Genesis Project and once you leave Pacifica, will maintain silent running apart from direct communication with me, is that understood?"

"Yes, Admiral," replied Esteban.

"Good," replied Morrow, "Morrow Out."

USS GRISSOM (NCC-638)

Kara McLoughlin was about to enter sickbay as Cadet La Sprague was exiting.

"How'd it go?" she enquired.

La Sprague raised his eyes to heaven and kept moving. Kara realised that the other cadets must have hit the nail on the head about the eccentric CMO of the 'Grissom', the Andorian, Doctor S'Raazh, who had a reputation for intensive physicals.

The doors slid apart and Kara walked into the main sickbay reception. Classical music played in the background, Kara recognised it as something by 'Camille Saint-Saens', books lay scattered on the reception desk and a black dog sat on the chair behind the desk, looking at her with bright but disinterested eyes.

"I see you have met Muggle, he is a law unto himself, you must be Kara McLoughlin" said Doctor S'Raazh as she appeared from an



adjacent office. Kara was not used to being addressed by her full name by officers and was a bit taken aback.

"Er, yes, I'm Cadet McLoughlin, I'm a bit early."

"No problem my dear, I'm afraid our tyrant of a Captain has me processing you cadets like Andorian rock snakes today, in and out, in and out, but never mind. Do please follow me." The Andorian beckoned Kara into the main sickbay beyond. The dog jumped down from the chair and followed them into the main infirmary.

"Now my dear" began Doctor S'Raazh, "your records all appear to be in order, but I just need to carry out some basic blood work, vital signs and body scan, standard procedure you understand."

Kara lay down on the bio bed and the dog jumped up beside her. She patted its head and it settled down beside her.

"Muggle appears to have taken a liking to you Kara, you're the first cadet he has taken to today, you are most favoured," the Andorian flashed a bright smile at Kara and finished taking the blood samples.

"Doctor, what's he.., what's the Captain like?" enquired Kara, "you called him a tyrant."

"Merely a turn of phrase my dear, he runs a tight ship, but he has a heart of gold really. I think he enjoys our sparring." The Doctor finished her samples and began a bio scan. "Move Muggle, I have no desire to see what you had for dinner." She pushed the dog off the bio bed.

The examination concluded and Kara rose to leave. "Thank you Doctor, with your permission, I'll take my leave," she said.

"By all means Kara, but before you go, do you like dogs?" questioned the Andorian.

Kara smiled, "sure I do, we always had two or three back home in Ireland."

The Andorian smiled again and grasped Kara's hand shaking it firmly.

"Excellent. I am always looking for volunteers to walk Muggle on my busy days, I'll be happy to add you to the list."



Kara couldn't help herself "but I've tons of study to complete and I have a busy duty roster."

"I'm sure you do my dear, but I'm certain you'll find time to do a favour for a senior officer on your off duty time, yes?" replied Doctor S'Raazh.

Kara realised she was caught.

"Sure Doctor S'Raazh, just let me know what I can do."

SPACE LAB REGULA 1

"Clive, I know you have problems with Starfleet, God knows I've been through the mill with them this time, but David really needs you," Carol Marcus addressed her friend and erstwhile colleague Dr. Clive Saunders.

On the other side of the monitor, Clive Saunders sighed wearily "Carol, I am really hectic at the moment with the search for the location of the Aldean civilisation, I'm in the Epsilon Mynos system at the moment."

Carol decided to be blunt "Aldea is just a legend, like Shangri-La or Vorta Vor, it doesn't exist!"

Saunders replied angrily, flushing and getting agitated "Don't give me that Bullsh*t Carol, you can't say that for sure, I'm..." but she interrupted him

"Clive, I need you, please, I really need somebody watching David's back."

He paused, "how long is this 'mission' set to last then?"

"It's not even planned yet," she answered, "but I'm sure it will be soon, and David is intent on going."

"Ok then, I'm going to head for a small moon in the outer system, there's a Deltan research colony there where I can pick up supplies. It's near enough to the Mutara sector if you need me."

She couldn't hide her delight, "that's one I owe you Clive."



"We'll see, I'll expect you to be in touch," he said and signed off.

Carol breathed a sigh of relief, nothing would happen to David if Clive were watching his back and he had as good a reason as anyone to be on any mission to Genesis, he was an eminent xenologist.

Now if she could just convince Starfleet of that.

USS GRISSOM (NCC-638)

The shuttlecraft touched down on the deck and Esteban and Solak disembarked. Stephanie Ottair saluted as the signal was piped. Esteban and Solak returned the salute and Esteban began walking.

"Commander Solak, Commander Ottair, my chief engineer. Is all in order Commander Ottair?"

Stephanie fell into step beside Esteban who was moving quickly toward the shuttle bay exit. "Yes Captain, as per Mr. Jata's last report. We will be ready to depart within the hour."

They entered the turbo lift and Esteban replied, "I want all senior staff in the deck 3 conference room in 30 minutes, Ottair, have Chattman organise this."

They arrived on the bridge; "Captain on the Bridge" said Ensign Childers and the bridge crew stood. Esteban was about to introduce Commander Solak but noticed an absentee.

"Where is Chattman?" he asked.

Rebecca Sato stood, "Sir, he was...delayed on Starbase 67, he.."

"Was he indeed," replied Esteban coolly. "Ensign Childers, hail him on his communicator, put it on con."

"Aye sir." Childers moved quickly, "Grissom to Chattman, report."

The assembled bridge crew heard female laughter and a rustling sound



"Chattman here, sorry Grissom, lost track of time," came Chattman's voice.

"Get your sorry ass on to my bridge within the next 15 minutes or you'll be losing track of time in my brig Chattman, Esteban out," he said in a flat monotone before signalling Childers to cut the transmission.

Esteban turned and beamed at his smirking bridge crew.

"Now, where were we?"

An hour later, Chattman, along with the rest of the senior bridge crew and Commander Solak sat in rapt attention as Carol Marcus concluded the Genesis presentation on the monitor. When it finished nobody spoke.

"Opinions?" queried Esteban.

"Fascinating" replied Solak "and as per your pre presentation briefing, a 'Planet Genesis' does indeed now exist?"

Esteban stood. "Affirmative Commander, and Grissom is being assigned to its survey. At present this knowledge is for senior staff only and not to be discussed. We are under direct orders from Starfleet to head to Pacifica to collect the first of our specialist scientific advisers for this mission."

He walked around the conference table looking at each of his senior crew in turn; Chattman, Sato, Jata, Solak, Ottair, Doctor S'Raazh and then continued, "from Pacifica we will be in silent running, so if you want to talk to any loved ones, do it between now and then. This mission is for your eyes only, top secret, so you are under orders not to divulge any information to anyone, even relatives. Understood?" They all nodded, then chorused in "Aye sir."

Doctor S'Raazh enquired, "does that include Muggle, Captain Esteban?" as she smiled at him.

"Dismissed," said Esteban, "Doctor, please stay behind." The others left.



He sat down opposite S'Raazh but she spoke first. "You're worried Jon, I can tell."

He looked at her, "honestly Vindi, this is exactly the reason I chose scientific exploration, I hate skulking around in the backyard."

She rose and put her hand on his shoulder, "have you spoken to Lawrence about this, can you even?"

He took her hand away and stood up.

"No, I can tell nobody anything, I have to go through Morrow directly, and it's a pisser!"

She put her hand back on his shoulder, "Jon, what can I do?"

He took her hand and grasped it this time.

"What you always do Vindi, be vigilant, be my eyes and ears."

"Of course" she replied. She turned to leave.

"Oh, and Vindi" he said as she made her way to the door, "Yes Jon?" she halted.

"Keep the pooch out of sickbay!"

She turned and left.

Esteban sat back down and gazed out at Starbase 67. Then he stood and headed for the bridge, it was time to get underway.

EPSILON MYNOS SYSTEM

Clive Saunders felt the 'Tir ná nog' move into warp with a familiar shudder as his colleague and pilot Tara Grayson engaged the warp drive. The ship was a prototype long-range shuttlecraft, six man, and all he had been able to afford for his quest to find traces of the Aldean civilisation. It wasn't ideal, but it was a warp capable craft, and there were only himself, Tara and his research assistant Tawney Gerrard, so it wasn't too cramped. He moved forward into the cockpit and joined his colleagues.



Tara acknowledge him with a nod, "Won't be long till we reach the Deltan research colony boss, it's about 15 minutes at warp."

"What exactly are they researching all the way out here anyway?" enquired Tawney, as she came into the cockpit carrying a tray of hot beverages, "I mean, we know they're not looking for Aldea, we're the only losers at that game," she teased Clive.

Clive took a mug of steaming coffee off Tawney, admiring as always her auburn tresses, her slim figure and her dark skin. He reflected that it was tough being cooped up in here with two stunning women at times, and reminded himself that they were colleagues and friends.

"I have no idea Tawney, but I do know it is a pure Deltan outpost with no other beings, so let's hope we can all behave ourselves" he said, looking pointedly at Tara.

"Hey, you're the boss, not my Father," laughed Tara as she accepted a mug of coffee from Tawney.

"Well, whatever happens, it should be interesting," mused Clive.

"Just so long as I get to hear the audiocast of the diva, Plavalaguna" said Tawney as she sat down with her own coffee, "they're broadcasting live from Fhloston Paradise this evening and I don't want to miss it."

"I'm sure the Deltans will have no problem if you remain on the ship" laughed Tara, "one less sexually immature species for them to deal with."

USS GRISSOM (NCC-638)

"Captain's log, supplemental. We are about to depart Starbase 67 having completed routine maintenance, crew transfers and supplying. We are under direct orders from Starfleet command to proceed to Pacifica to collect a specialist in marine biology, a Doctor Michael Liebmann. From Pacifica, we will be taking orders directly from Admiral Morrow via priority one communication."

Esteban sat in the centre seat. The senior bridge crew were at their stations and the ship was stationary as the last of the space dock utility vehicles cleared her space.



"All umbilicals detached sir, our immediate vicinity is clear," said Bacari Jata.

Chattman turned in his chair at communications, "Starbase 67 advises our departure route is plotted and confirmed Captain."

Esteban stood, "take us out Sato."

The 'Grissom' began to move slowly along her preplotted course. She then cruised out of the space lanes surrounding Starbase 67 and headed out to the stars.

"Mr. Jata, plot a course for Pacifica" said Esteban, as he stood behind the helm station.

"Course confirmed, sir" replied Jata as his hands moved swiftly over the console.

Esteban stared at the monitor, "Sato, engage warp one."

Rebecca Sato's hands moved across her console with a fluid grace "aye sir."

The 'Grissom' leapt to warp.

Esteban turned to Christopher Chattman, "open a ship wide com channel please."

"Com open, sir" replied Christopher.

Esteban began to speak.

"All hands, this is the Captain speaking. We are en route to Pacifica under direct orders from Starfleet command. I welcome all of our new crew aboard, and hope you will play your part in our ongoing journey of scientific exploration. I am sure we will all continue to perform our duty to the best of our abilities. Esteban out."

Esteban walked to the communications console, "Chattman, from here on in all external communications are to be routed through the senior comm officer on the bridge. As per our briefing earlier, from Pacifica it will be silent running, but you know what to do."



Christopher Chattman nodded. "Yes sir, leave it with me, no messages to or from the ship without us knowing about it, consider it done."

Esteban nodded, "I will be in my quarters, maintain course for Pacifica, Mr. Solak, you have the bridge."

Solak moved to the centre seat as Esteban entered the turbolift.

The Captain breathed a sigh of relief and leant back against the wall of the turbolift. All the rumour running around the Federation about Klingons, the Mutara sector and the 'Enterprise' had him more worried than he could show. Whatever lay ahead of 'Grissom' and her crew, the future was looking more and more uncertain. He could only hope he would be up to the job.

NEXT TIME ON STAR TREK GRISSOM: GRISSOM IS DIVERTED TO THE EPSILON MYNOS SYSTEM WHEN CLIVE SAUNDERS GOES MISSING. DON'T MISS **ODERINT DUM METUAT.**

All rumors of wrath, past and to come

DEDICATED WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT AND ADMIRATION TO MIKE.W.BARR.

Plot: Seán Paul Teeling & Melissa Wilson

Script: Seán Paul Teeling

Editor: Melissa Wilson

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- ◆ Joseph Bonice
- ◆ Brad Hathaway
- ◆ Brian Childers
- ◆ Dan Wilson
- ◆ Jennifer Cole
- ◆ Jonathan Rofeta
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