

Ensign Costello kept her phaser in her hand when she lowered the force field to Subcommander Kelvew's cell. He was a good deal taller and broader than she was and Costello wasn't taking any chances.

"Come on, Kelvew." Costello ordered. "It's your turn."

The Romulan officer eyed her curiously for a moment before slowly coming out of his cell. She motioned to the door with the phaser. As they walked down the hall, Kelvew glanced over his shoulder at her and said. "This admiral must not think much of me to send one small female guard for me."

"I doubt the Admiral thought about that at all." Costello watched him carefully. If he was going to try anything this would be the time. "It is simply my normal duty shift."

They were almost at the briefing room that was serving as an interrogation room. There was a turbo lift at the end of the hall. Kelvew stopped. He turned suddenly swinging his arm at the phaser to try to knock it from her hand. He knocked Costello off balance but she kept hold of her phaser. Kelvew ran for the turbo lift. Costello aimed her phaser at him.

"Stop." She ordered. Kelvew had to stop when the turbo lift door did not open. He turned and faced his guard. She was walking towards him slowly with her phaser leveled at him. "I took the precaution of locking all turbo lifts on this deck. Standard procedure when moving prisoners. Now, Admiral Kirk is waiting. You can walk or I can drag your stunned body. Your choice."

"I will walk." Kelvew walked back towards her.

"Good." Costello motioned him to pass her. When he had, she reached up and put the phaser against his neck. "Now Subcommander. You move the wrong way and it's lights out. Understood?"

"Understood." Kelvew said.

When they walked into the briefing room, Kirk raised his eye brow at her. A phaser pressed against the neck was not the standard method of prisoner transport and Costello's normally neat ponytail was a mess. "Problem Ensign?"

"Nothing I can't handle, Sir. Subcommander Kelvew made an unsuccessful escape attempt." Costello said. To Kelvew her voice was much harsher. "Sit."

After Kelvew sat in the chair she indicated, Costello attached her phaser to her belt and stationed herself inside the briefing room door. She quickly fixed her pony tail without taking her eyes off the prisoner.

"Had you managed to get away from Ensign Costello," Kirk asked. "Where did you plan to go, Subcommander?"

"It is my duty to escape." Kelvew said. "Would you not do the same?"

"I should hope I would have a better plan." Kirk smiled. "Now, let's get down to business. You were second in command of the Heekrt."

"Yes."

"Your commander ordered the ship across the Neutral Zone." Kirk said.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"As I said before." Kelvew spoke slowly. "Commander Kcaaf did not discuss his orders with me."

"I find that hard to believe, Kelvew." Kirk said. The Romulan officer just stared at Kirk. "When Commander Kcaaf gave the word, what did you do?"

"Do?" Kelvew asked.

"The question is straightforward enough." Kirk shrugged.

When Kelvew did not answer, Spock asked. "What was your station?"

"Tactical."

"Solga's station?" Spock asked.

"Weapons."

"As the tactical officer," Kirk said. "What did you do when Kcaaf ordered your ship across the Neutral Zone?"

"I scanned for enemy ships." Kelvew said. "I did my job."

"But you did not question the breaking of the treaty." McCoy observed.

"I did my job." Kelvew repeated.

"Following orders." Kirk said. Kelvew nodded. "Not questioning."

"You were afraid of Kcaaf." McCoy said.

"I fear nothing."

"Then why did you not question an order that was an act of war?" Spock asked. "In the Federation, that would be required of a first officer."

"I am not a Federation officer." Kelvew said. "A Romulan officer is not afraid but he does not act foolishly."

"And to question your commander would be foolish." Kirk said. Kelvew did not answer. Without taking his eyes off Kelvew, Kirk opened the intraship comline. "Kirk to Sulu."

"Sulu here."

"Sulu, go down to the brig and have a chat with Subcommander Solga." Kirk said. "Nice and informal."

"Aye Sir." Sulu said. "Is there anything in particular I should chat about?"

"I am interested in why Subcommanders Solga and Kelvew keeps telling me it was not wise to question their commander." Kirk said. "It is a brick wall I keep running into."

"I read you, Admiral." Sulu said. "I'm on my way. Sulu out."

"Now." Kirk smiled at the Romulan officer across the table. "Let's talk about mine fields."

Commander Sulu strolled casually into the security office. He smiled at the lieutenant who sat at the desk. The broad shouldered man was studying his computer screen intently.

"Rafael. How's it going?"

"It's always more interesting with customers." Lt. Montaigne looked up from his work and smiled. "I heard you were away for awhile."

"Yeah." Sulu nodded. "I was home for a week."

"If I had a girlfriend that looked like yours, I'd go home whenever I could too." Lt. Montaigne laughed.

Sulu just laughed and asked. "Mind if I visit with your customers for a few minutes?"

"Go ahead."

"Subcommander Solga." Sulu smiled at her as he walked over to her cell. "They moved you to a different cell."

"Apparently your admiral's investigation requires that I not be able to talk to my shipmates." Solga observed from the middle of her cell.

"Is that a problem?" Sulu asked.

"It is an inconvenience." Solga shrugged. "What do you want from me, Commander Sulu?"

"I am trying to draw my own conclusions again, Subcommander." Sulu said. "I get my information where I can. I thought you might be able to help."

"And would you help me draw some conclusions?" Solga came closer to the force field to look Sulu in the eye.

"If I can." Sulu nodded. "What do you want to know?"

"I have cooperated with your Admiral." Solga said. "Is he satisfied with his investigation?"

"Satisfied?" Sulu smiled again. "That's a good question. Admiral Kirk would like to know everything. That is his nature. You can expect him to continue to ask questions."

"You have served him for a long time?" Solga asked.

"Yes." Sulu nodded. "What about you? Had you been on the Heekrt long?"

"Yes."

"Then you knew your commander well." Sulu said. "As I know mine."

"We were not friendly." Solga said. "Commander Kcaaf held himself apart from the crew."

"That's part of command, isn't it?" Sulu said. Solga shrugged. "On Federation ships, the senior officers have a duty to the laws of the Federation. If my commander ordered me to break a treaty without good reason, I would at least question the order before complying."

"But you would comply?" Solga asked.

"Unless I had lost confidence in my commander." Sulu said. "Yes. I would follow the order. Is it different in the Romulan Empire?"

"My duty is to follow the orders of my superiors." Solga said. "And in Commander Kcaaf's case, the orders of the Tal Shiar."

"The Heekrt was a Tal Shiar ship?" Sulu asked.

"No."

"Kcaaf was Tal Shiar?"

"No."

"I don't understand." Sulu said.

"I did not think you would." Solga said.

"I see." Sulu nodded. "Can you explain it?"

Solga lowered her voice significantly. "Without putting my life in danger? No."

Commander Sulu turned and went back to the security desk. He spoke loudly. "Lt. Montaigne, I am taking Subcommander Solga to interrogation room three."

"Interrogation room three?" Montaigne asked. There was no interrogation room three. The junior Romulan officers came to the edge of their cells and paid careful attention to the two Starfleet officers. "Sir, this is highly irregular."

"I understand, Lt. Montaigne." Sulu leaned on the desk. "If you feel you must check with Admiral Kirk, go ahead. I am sure he will authorize any actions I take."

Rafael Montaigne hesitated only a moment. He entered a code into his terminal which opened a locked drawer of his desk. He handed Sulu a phaser from that drawer. "Do you need a security officer to accompany you, Sir?"

"I think I can handle it." Sulu said. "Lower the force field."

"Yes Sir." Montaigne nodded. The other Romulan prisoners watched intently as Sulu waved Solga out of her cell with the phaser. When she came out of the cell, Sulu took her arm and walked her out of the brig.

As they walked down the hall, Sulu let go of Solga's arm. Sulu spoke quietly. "You are not being recorded. Your shipmates can not overhear our conversation. We are completely alone. What did you mean about your life being in danger?"

"What will you tell your Admiral?" Solga asked.

"I will make a full report." Sulu said. "And I will do everything I can to protect your life. There is no need to tell anyone other than Admiral Kirk the source of the information."

"You can not protect me." Solga said. "I already face interrogation from the Tal Shiar just for having been captured."

There wasn't much Sulu could do about that. So he said, "What can you tell me, Solga?"

"Commander Kcaaf had connections in the Tal Shiar." Solga said. "His brother. That is why it was wise not to question Kcaaf."

"Why does this put your life in danger?" Sulu asked.

"I have no direct knowledge." Solga said. "But I suspect there was a Tal Shiar operative on the Heekrt. I do not know who they were watching. But I believe Kcaaf knew they were there and he was concerned."

"Did he think his own brother was watching him?" Sulu asked.

"It is possible." Solga nodded. "Who would know him better?"

"Was it a Tal Shiar order to cross the Neutral Zone?" Sulu stopped in the hall.

"I don't know." Solga said. Commander Sulu turned them back towards the main brig. "But it is a possibility."

"I get the impression that you don't like the Tal Shiar, Solga." Sulu said.

"I hope the Tal Shiar do not get the same impression." Solga said. Just outside the door to the brig, Solga stopped. "I will not repeat this in a formal interrogation. If your admiral asks me, I do not know."

"I understand. Ready?" He asked. She nodded. Sulu took her arm and walked her into the brig. He shoved her roughly into the cell. "Raise shields, Montaigne."

"Aye sir." Montaigne raised the shields. Sulu handed him the phaser. As he stowed it in the drawer and entered the code to lock it, the security guard asked. "Did you get what you wanted, Commander?"

"No." Sulu growled. "And I am not looking forward to reporting to the Admiral about it."

Sulu walked back down the hall towards the briefing room that Kirk, Spock and McCoy were using to interrogate Subcommander Kelvew. When he walked through the door, Ensign Costello stepped out of his way. Kirk stopped talking and looked at Sulu expectantly.

When Sulu did not report, Kirk asked. "Sulu, did you get an answer to my question?"

"No Sir." Sulu stood at attention. "Subcommander Solga declined to answer."

Kirk waited but Sulu did not continue, or relax, or leave. Finally, Kirk leaned back in his chair and said. "I think we can all use a break. Ensign Costello, take Subcommander Kelvew back to his cell. Keep him isolated."

"Yes Sir." Costello, with phaser in hand, took Kelvew out of the room.

As soon as the door closed, Sulu relaxed and sat down. "Solga is concerned about Tal Shiar involvement. She suspected an operative was on board and that the order to cross the Neutral Zone may have come from them. Kcaaf evidently has family in the Tal Shiar but he was also under surveillance by them. If anyone knows she talked to me, she will be killed."

"So this phase we keep hearing 'unwise to question Kcaaf' is because of his connection to the Tal Shiar?" Kirk asked.

"Yes Sir."

"Why is the Romulan military afraid of their own intelligence?" McCoy asked.

"We know little about them." Spock said. "But our intelligence suggests the Tal Shiar gathers information on the Romulan people as well as political enemies."

"They use this intelligence against their own people?" McCoy said. "That's outrageous!"

"Does Solga have anything else to say?" Kirk asked.

"Only that she will deny everything she told me in any formal interrogation." Sulu said. "Evidently, once these officers get home, they will be questioned by the Tal Shiar about their time with us."

"All right, Sulu." Kirk nodded. Sulu returned to the bridge.

"We should question the rest of the Heekrt officers." Spock said. "Anyone of them could be the undercover operative."

"And how are we going to do that without revealing that Solga talked to Sulu?" McCoy asked.

"Standard questions." Spock said. "Name, rank, station. A record of events on the Heekrt."

"Yes, but junior officers won't expect to be questioned by an admiral." Kirk said. "We'll let Sulu and Chekov handle it. If they get any unusual answers we can follow up."

When the three senior officers left the briefing room, Kirk and Spock returned to the bridge. Dr. McCoy headed for the brig.

Ensign Costello had just finished her report of Kelvew's escape attempt, when Dr. McCoy walked into the security office. She looked up from the computer terminal and asked. "Can I help you, Dr. McCoy?"

"I just thought I'd check on you, Costello." McCoy smiled and sat on the edge of the security desk. "Make sure you got Kelvew back ok."

"I've had no further problem with him, Doctor." Costello shrugged. "I know what I am doing."

"Yes. You handle your assignment well, Ensign." McCoy said to Costello. "Is it my imagination? Or in the two years you've been on Enterprise have you had more than your share of problems with prisoners?"

"It's my size, Doctor." Costello said simply. "Kelvew did not have a plan in mind. He

just saw my size as an opportunity. More than one advisor at the Academy tried to discourage me from going into security, but I can handle it."

"That much is obvious." McCoy said. "Kelvew must be double your body weight."

"That's true, Doctor." Costello nodded. "But we are on my ship. I know the lay out. I have the security codes. And I have the phaser. All he had was size. I may be small, but I'm not stupid."

"I'm glad to hear it, Costello." McCoy got up and left the security office.