

Commander Sulu walked into his cabin and slowly eased himself onto his bunk. He laid down and stretched out. Mistake, Sulu thought. He should have undressed before laying down. The poker game had run late. It was just past twenty three thirty hours and Sulu would be on duty at oh eight hundred.

"Computer." Sulu said in the middle of a yawn. "Any correspondence in my file? Sulu, Commander, Hikaru."

"One letter." The computer responded.

"Play it." Sulu ordered. He turned towards the screen expecting to see Jimmi's smiling face. Instead he saw a silhouette of a male head. Sulu sat straight up.

"Sulu, if you want answers look back at the dust bowl that tried to swallow the Galileo."

"Computer." Sulu asked. "Origin of that file."

"Transmission originated from Nequencia System at oh three hundred twenty six hours this stardate." The computer said.

"Computer, save file to Sulu1." Sulu said. He opened the intraship comline. "Sulu to Admiral Kirk."

"Kirk here."

"Admiral." Sulu said. "I just received a transmission from the pirates."

"What?"

"A very short transmission from the Nequencia System was in my correspondence file, Sir." Sulu said. "The pirate suggested we would find answers on the planet in System G-582 where we landed the Galileo."

"Meet me in briefing room three." Kirk said.

"On my way, Sir."

When Sulu walked into the briefing room, Kirk, Spock, and McCoy were waiting for him. He sat down and asked the computer to play the message again. After it had played, Sulu said. "The transmission was sent from the Nequencia System at 03:26."

"About twenty hours ago." Kirk said.

"Too bad you didn't check your file before going to work this morning." McCoy said. Sulu just shrugged. He always checked it before going to bed.

Admiral Coster walked into the briefing room. Sulu and Spock started to stand, but Coster waved them back into their seats. They replayed the short transmission for him.

"You are sure this is one of the pirates, Sulu?" Kirk asked.

"Yes Sir." Sulu said.

"It's Brady. I recognize the voice." McCoy nodded. "He's the one who turned the mines on the bird of prey. And he relieved the other one of command to do it."

"He's also the one who accurately assessed the damage to the Galileo." Sulu added.

"Why you, Sulu?" Coster asked.

"He had my name, Admiral." Sulu said. "With that he could send a message to my correspondence file and avoid alerting anyone to his position. This Brady character knows how Starfleet works."

"He also avoided answering any questions." Spock observed.

"Do we have any more of an ID on him than just Brady?" Coster asked.

"I believe all we ever heard was Brady." Sulu looked to McCoy.

"I think you're right." McCoy nodded. "I don't recall any kind of first name."

"He obviously did not want us to see his face. Spock, see if you can better identify Mr. Brady." Kirk said. Spock nodded. "This planet is hostile to human life. What answers could Brady be talking about?"

"Perhaps a clue can be found in the record of the conversations between the Galileo and the pirate ship." Coster suggested.

"I don't remember asking the pirates a lot of questions." Sulu said.

"Until the Romulans showed up." McCoy added.

"Right." Sulu nodded. "Bartell said he had seen the Romulans before. I asked him about that but he never did answer my questions."

"The only way to really know is to go look." Kirk said.

"It could be a wild goose chase, Jim." Coster said. "The pirate could be trying to lure you away."

"For what reason, Nick?" Kirk asked.

"I don't know." Coster admitted. "It just seems a little too convenient. What do you suggest I do about the Romulan prisoners while you are off taking a look?"

"I'd suggest you find a reason to keep them here." Kirk said. "Ongoing investigation always sounds good."

"I'll do what I can." Coster said. "You'll make it quick."

"Warp nine all the way." Kirk agreed.

"Muldaur and I will find a way to stall the Romulans until you can report." Coster sighed.

"I'll walk you to the transporter room, Nick." Kirk got up. The two Admirals headed for the door. Kirk stopped in the doorway. "Issue an emergency recall, Spock. I want to get under way as soon as possible."

As the two admirals walked towards the transporter room, Coster said. "I don't like this Jim. Sulu seems just a little too involved. First with the Romulans, now with the pirates."

"He was the pilot, Nick. And he reported each incident as it happened." Kirk said. "What else do you want?"

"I understand you trust him, Jim, and it's not that I don't." Coster said as they walked into the transporter room. "But I'd like to see everything you have from that shuttle flight."

"I'll send you a copy of the logs and the black box recordings." Kirk said. "I don't know what you are looking for, Nick. But you won't find it."

"I hope not, Jim." Coster stepped up onto the pad. "Keep in touch."

Kirk nodded to the young man on duty at the controls. "Energize."

Once all personnel were back on board, Enterprise left Starbase 39-Sierra and jumped to warp nine as soon as they had cleared the Sierra system. The trip that had taken four days at warp six would take only thirty hours at warp nine. Admiral Kirk left the bridge and returned to his cabin to make good use of the time. He sat down at his desk. "Kirk to Uhura."

"Uhura here."

"Put me through to Jimmi on Earth."

"Aye Sir." Uhura said. "Stand by."

Technically personal calls were suppose to be of the lowest priority on a Starship, but rank does have its privileges. Uhura managed to connect him in less than ten minutes. Jimmi appeared on his screen, but she wasn't smiling. This wasn't a scheduled call.

"James T." She asked quickly. "Is everything all right?"

"Fine, Jean Marie." Kirk assured her. "We are all fine."

Jimmi let out the breath she had been holding and smiled at him. "Then to what do I owe the pleasure of this call, Admiral?"

"I understand you finally told your father of your plans to relocate to Starbase Twelve." Kirk said.

"Finally?" Jimmi asked. "How did you know about it?"

"After your last letter, I asked Sulu." Kirk said. "He filled me in."

"He can certainly keep a secret from me." Jimmi complained. "How come he can't keep a secret from you?"

"Why did you feel it necessary to keep it a secret?" Kirk asked. "I don't understand why you continue to keep things from your father. I thought you were past that."

"It's not that it was a big secret, James T." Jimmi said. "I had told Dad about the plan a couple of years ago. It just wasn't a sure thing until now. I am moving in June and the new place will be open in July. Will you come?"

"Of course I'll be there, but I won't let you change the subject so fast." Kirk said. "I think Bones would appreciate if just once you asked his opinion before you rushed into one of your schemes."

"Schemes?" Jimmi asked. "This is a business venture. Which I am quite capable of analyzing myself. And I am hardly rushing. L.J. and I have been working on this 'scheme' as you call it for six years."

"And in those six years how many times did you consider your father's feelings?"

"I've been doing exactly what he wanted for those six years." Jimmi said. "I got my degrees and I took the teaching job. And that made Dad very happy. What else am I suppose to do?"

"Jimmi." Kirk shook his head.

She smiled at him. "When Dad is mad, he calls me Jean Marie. When you are mad, you call me Jimmi. How am I suppose to keep you guys straight?"

"You've managed." Kirk said.

"James T., I like teaching and I'm glad Dad pushed me to get my Phd. and to take the job at U.S.F." Jimmi said. "But I've dreamed of this cafe for a long time and I'm going to try to make it work."

"I can understand that, Jean Marie." Kirk said. "And, believe me, so does your father. But you've got to understand that he needs you to talk to him about it."

"I have talked to him about it." Jimmi insisted.

"No." Kirk said. "You proclaimed your decision."

"I don't know what else you want me to say."

"Tell him what you just told me about teaching." Kirk clarified. "Let him know that at least in hindsight you appreciate his advice."

"Ok, James T." Jimmi nodded. "I hear you. I will talk to him."

"Today."

"Yes Sir." Jimmi laughed. "I'll talk to him today."

"Good girl."

"James T., you realize I am twenty four years old." Jimmi said. Kirk just raised his eyebrow at her. "When do you think you'll start treating me like an adult?"

"Give me another ten years." He smiled.

"I'll hold you to that, Mister." She laughed.

"Time to go." Kirk said. "Be good. Kirk out."

"Bye my other Dad." Jimmi smiled as his face faded from her screen.

Admiral Kirk had a quick sandwich and returned to the bridge. It was the middle of first shift when Spock looked up from his station. "Admiral."

"Spock?"

"Mr. Brady's theatrics of hiding in the shadows in his message to Mr. Sulu was not necessary." Spock brought up the record from the Galileo on the bridge's main view screen. "He was present during the one visual contact between the pirate ship and Galileo."

"The one with the mustache." Sulu said as he watched Brady lean down and whisper in Bartell's ear.

"Yes." Spock nodded. "Matthew Sean Brady. Born in a small village in Ireland. Since he left Earth, he has held a number of unskilled jobs including ordinary crewman on various freighters. He has been held for questioning on more than one occasion and has served six months in a detention center for smuggling."

"Six months isn't much time for smuggling." Kirk said. "I take it he wasn't the brains of the operation."

"The captain is a human named Edward Bartell." Spock continued as if Kirk hadn't spoken. "Born on New Paris colony. He has been incarcerated on more than one occasion for smuggling, theft, and assault. The others I have not been able to identify."

"The woman's name is Lucas." McCoy said. "I didn't catch her first name."

"Mary, I think." Sulu said.

"The others?" Kirk asked. McCoy and Sulu just shrugged. Kirk looked to Spock.

"That's it?"

"There is no Federation record of a ship belonging to either Brady or Bartell." Spock said.

"There are plenty of places in this quadrant to get a ship without a Federation registry." Kirk said. "Keep checking."

"Aye Sir." Spock nodded.