

"Evening Costello." Dr. McCoy drawled as he walked into the brig. The young woman with the thick dark ponytail looked up from her work at the computer and smiled.

"It's morning by my shift, Doctor."

"I've been up too long." McCoy mumbled. He had to remind himself that she was of a similar age to his own daughter. Somehow Jimmi always seemed younger to him. He smiled at the pretty young officer and with a slight nod of his head said. "Good day then, Ensign. How is your prisoner?"

"Quiet." Costello said. "That whiskey must be strong stuff. He's barely moved."

"Well, the Admiral is ready for him." McCoy held up his medical kit. "So we have to get him on his feet."

Ensign Costello entered the code to her terminal that unlocked the drawer that held the phasers. Joining McCoy in front of the cell, she entered the code to lower the force field that imprisoned the pirate. Bartell was stretched out on the bunk with one arm over his eyes when the two Starfleet officers came into his cell.

Costello remained near the front of the cell to monitor the situation. As the Doctor approached the prisoner, she called to him. "Get up Bartell. Time to go."

Bartell stirred and twisted away from the harsh voice. While still facing the wall, he mumbled. "Go where?"

"To the ball, Sleeping Beauty." McCoy said as he pressed a hypo spray through the tangled hair to Bartell's neck.

"I think you are mixing your fairy tales, Doctor." Costello couldn't help but grin.

"It's been a long time since I had to worry about keeping fairy tales straight." McCoy stood back and scanned Bartell with his tricorder. Slowly the medicine started to work. Bartell gingerly pushed himself to a sitting position. "How do you feel, Mr. Bartell?"

Bartell's answer was a groan. Costello laughed, "It can't be that bad. You've been asleep for almost twenty hours."

Bartell held his head and kept his eyes closed. His voice was barely above a whisper when he asked. "What now?"

"Admiral Kirk wants you." Costello reached for Bartell's arm. The man groaned again causing McCoy to adjust his medical tricorder. "Come on."

"Just a minute, Costello." McCoy stopped her. From a compartment in the cell, he got a glass of water and put it in Bartell's hand. While the pirate sipped the water, McCoy reloaded his hypo spray from the medical kit and injected Bartell again. "Any better?"

Bartell took a couple of deep breaths sitting a little straighter with each one. Finally he said "It's nothing a few shots of Hiuldre wouldn't cure."

"All right." McCoy nodded to Ensign Costello. "Now we can go."

Kirk and Spock waited in the security level briefing room going over the strategy for the interrogation. Sitting in the chair facing the door, Kirk said "I doubt Brady told Bartell that he was leaving us the database."

"Or the mine." Spock nodded. "Although Mr. Bartell was expecting us. Brady must have told him some of his plans."

"Brady's plans don't concern me too much right now." Kirk said. "It's the Tegra I want to

know about."

"Of course." Spock said.

Dr. McCoy walked into the briefing room followed slowly by Edward Bartell and Ensign Costello. Costello put Bartell the chair across from Admiral Kirk. McCoy sat down next to Spock.

Kirk looked the disheveled pirate in the eye. "Mr. Bartell, I am Admiral James T. Kirk and I want a full account of your activities along the Neutral Zone."

Bartell leaned on the table for support. He avoided his questioner's gaze. "I just happened to be in the area."

"Right." Kirk smiled. "And you just happened to lay a mine field in virtually identical systems on both signs of the Neutral Zone."

"Both sides?" Bartell asked.

"Did you think we did not know about Ulthe-D?" Spock asked.

"Who did you think the Romulans would accuse of mining their space?" McCoy asked.

"Did they?" Bartell laughed softly.

"I wouldn't laugh if I was you, Bartell." Kirk said. "I haven't yet decided if I'll turn you over to the Romulans."

"That's illegal." Bartell protested. "I am a Federation citizen."

"Legally," Spock said. "After you are tried by a Federation court you can be extradited to the Romulans for trial. If you are found guilty and sentenced to prison, you can be tried by the Romulans after that sentence is served."

Bartell stared at the Vulcan. He turned back to Kirk. "He's kidding. Right?"

"You don't know too many Vulcans." McCoy said. "Do you?"

"The decision to extradite has not been made." Kirk said. "And if you want to influence that decision, I suggest you tell us everything. Now."

"There's nothing to tell."

"Who was paying you to mine those systems?" Kirk asked.

"Paying me?"

"Does the name Commander Heren-tre mean anything to you?" Kirk asked

Bartell sat up straight. "Where did you get that name?"

"That's not the only name I have." Kirk said. "But let's take this one name at a time. Who is Heren-tre and how did you meet him?"

"He is a Mirta officer that I met on Kali Guari when I had my ship there for repairs." Bartell said. "Is there a law against that?"

"What is the commander's full name?" Spock asked.

"Rilyn Heren-tre." Bartell said. "If there is any more to his name, I don't know it."

Mr. Spock reached out to the controls of the computer terminal on the table in front of him. "Spock to Chekov."

"Chekov here."

"Rilyn Heren-tre." Spock said. "Advise as soon as you have anything."

"Aye Sir."

"I doubt you'll find him in your Federation databases." Bartell smiled.

"That's not where Mr. Chekov is looking." Kirk returned the smile although it was

anything but friendly. "Now, how was Rilyn Heren-tre involved in your mine field?"

"He wasn't." Bartell said.

"Incorrect." The computer said.

"How would you know?" Bartell asked the computer.

"The computer responds to your neural synaptic reactions." Spock said. "It is most effective in detecting incorrect factual statements."

"Great." Bartell mumbled.

"Rilyn Heren-tre." Kirk repeated.

"He knew my ship had a cloaking device." Bartell said. "The Mirta were very interested in obtaining one. He wanted me to tell him where to get one."

"And that's where the Tegra come in." Kirk said. He watched Bartell's reaction carefully. The pirate's eyes widened momentarily in surprise.

He quickly recovered himself and shrugged. Bartell rubbed his neck but couldn't ease the dry raw feeling in his throat. "I need a drink."

Kirk glanced at McCoy. The Doctor shook his head negatively. "You can have a drink when we are done. Tell me about the Tegra."

Bartell slumped back in his chair. "Ask the Romulans about them."

"I will." Kirk said. "But I am still asking you. Who is Drellam?"

"Drellam is none of your damn business." Bartell growled at Kirk. "How did you get her name?"

"Mr. Brady." Spock said.

Bartell snapped his head around to look at Spock. "That thieving bastard."

"Regardless." Spock shrugged at Bartell's comment. "Mr. Brady left a database with evidence incriminating you in a plan to sell Tegra technology to the Della Mir. He also left one of the Tegra mines without any explosives. We have it on board now."

"That son of a bitch." Bartell's hands closed into tight fists. "When I get a hold of him--"

Admiral Kirk cut him off. "We don't care what you think of Brady, Bartell. I want to know more about the Tegra."

"You already know they developed the mines with the partial cloak." Bartell complained. "I don't know what else you want from me."

"Why the two systems?" Spock asked.

"That was the Mirta's requirement." Bartell said. "They don't really understand the concept."

"Really?" McCoy asked with one eyebrow raised in surprise. "Technology is their business."

"They get the tech." Bartell explained to McCoy slowly as if he was stupid. "But they didn't see the benefits. They don't think it is an effective technology."

"So it was your job to prove it effective." Kirk said. Bartell just shrugged. "And they wanted to see how we reacted compared to the Romulans."

Bartell leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. He supported his head with one hand. In little more than a whisper, he said. "Oh god. My head aches."

"Costello." Kirk said. "Take Mr. Bartell back to his cell."

"Aye Sir." Costello nodded. "Come on, Bartell."

After the security officer had taken the prisoner out, Kirk turned to his first officer.
"Spock, Brady left no direct evidence that Bartell was selling Tegra technology to the Della Mir."

"Really?" Spock's eyebrow arched dramatically. "Then I seem to be in error."

McCoy laughed out loud. Kirk turned towards the doctor. "That's a hell of a hang over he's got, Bones. Or is it just an act?"

"It's no act, Jim." McCoy said. "He's been swimming in that whiskey for days with little if any food. You don't just shake that off."

"The emergency shelter had replicators for food." Spock noted.

"Bartell is a hardcore alcohol addict." McCoy said. "That he did not bother with food is not unusual. He is in the process of drinking himself to death."

"Then how did he maintain command?" Kirk asked.

"He didn't." McCoy shrugged. "Did he?"

"Sulu to Admiral Kirk."

"Kirk here."

"We are entering Starbase Sierra-39 controlled space." Sulu reported.

"Is the Romulan battle cruiser still in orbit?" Kirk asked.

"Aye Sir." Sulu said. "She's there."

"Standard orbit, Mr. Sulu."

"Aye."