

Rosita Gonzoles sat in the copilot's seat of the Valhalla. She wore her shiny black hair down, parted on the side instead of her normal braid. It was four inches shorter than it had been that morning and just barely touched her shoulders. She still wasn't used to it. She wore a pair of grey leggings with a flowered tunic that nicely concealed her phaser, communicator, and the most compact tricorder available. Cathy Vasco was in the pilots seat. Her navy business suit was a bit more formal. The trousers were soft and flowing. The tailored jacket lent an air of authority.

"Nervous?" Rosita asked quietly. The Admiral was in the back compartment of the small ship.

"A little." Cathy pushed a strand of her shoulder length blond hair behind her ear and nodded. "But I suppose this is an every day experience to you."

"Everyday?" Gonzoles laughed and shook her head. "I wish. I have been so damn bored for the last couple of years I was ready to leave the service."

"But you didn't." Cathy said. "Why?"

"Stubborn, I guess." Rosita said. She kept reaching up and touching her hair. "Commander Sulu kept telling me to be patient. But I'm more stubborn than patient."

"Ah, Mr. I-know-everything Sulu." Cathy rolled her eyes dramatically. With an exasperated sigh, she asked, "Why does he think he can tell everybody what to do and how to live?"

"I appreciate his advice." Gonzoles said slowly. "But I don't understand the animosity between the two of you or between Mr. Sulu and your brother."

Cathy's frown turned to an amused smile. "Well, with L.J. that's easy. A simple case of jealousy. On both their parts."

"Jimmi McCoy?"

"Yep." Cathy said. "Hasn't he told you about that?"

"We are strictly business." Rosita said. "I didn't even know he had a girlfriend until I saw them together in the Café. And when I tried to ask, no answers."

"Oh I could tell you all about it." Cathy smiled mischievously "Except we are coming up on Kali Guari."

"Tell me later." Gonzoles leaned back in the small cockpit and opened the door to the aft compartment. "Admiral. We're here."

"It's Mr. Kirk from here on ladies." Kirk stood in the doorway. Gonzoles nodded. It was odd to see the Admiral out of uniform. He also wore a business suit. His was grey with a red pinstripe running through it. His turtleneck shirt underneath the jacket was a subtle dark metallic grey. Very conservative.

"We are being hailed." Gonzoles reported.

Cathy answered the hail and requested docking privileges. The dockmaster granted the request and relayed a message to Chief Engineer Sasal to meet them. The docking took only a few minutes. Once they were secured, Kirk went over the plan one last time with Cathy and Rosita.

"Cathy, I appreciate your help." Kirk said as he finished his short speech. "One last thing. We make the connection; you get out as quickly as possible. I don't want you getting caught in any trouble."

"Don't worry about me, Admiral." Cathy smiled and corrected herself. "I mean, Mr.

Kirk."

"Let's go." Kirk said.

Cathy Vasco, Jim Kirk, and Rosey Gonzoles came through the airlock to be greeted by Rim Sasal. He was of the Yortem; a species skilled in engineering and mechanical design. Mr. Sasal was about Kirk's height with a large head and receding hairline. His yellowish beige skin tone gave him a sickly appearance to human eyes.

"Mr. Sasal." Cathy took the lead. "Nice to see you again."

"I had not thought you would be back, Ms. Vasco." He bowed ever so slightly to her. "You did not seem interested in dealing with the Community before."

"As I have explained before, internal company politics keep me from exploring your markets fully." Cathy smiled. "This is my associate, Mr. Kirk. I can deal with him. Perhaps he can deal with you."

"I see." Sasal nodded approvingly. This was an arrangement he could understand. He extended his hand awkwardly towards Kirk. "It is customary? Mr. Kirk."

"Yes." Kirk shook his hand. "All business relationships should begin with a handshake. I hope ours will be mutually profitable, Mr. Sasal."

"I believe it will, Mr. Kirk." Sasal smiled his salesman smile. Then he added more thoughtfully. "I have heard this name before. But I find human naming customs very...exotic. Very interesting."

"It is a common human family name." Kirk shrugged. "My full name is George Samuel Kirk. Have you had much contact with humans? I mean, we're kind of a rare breed out this way."

"I believe Mr. Sasal deals with all the ships that come here from outside the Community." Cathy said. Sasal nodded. "Since you are getting along so well, I will leave you. My mother awaits my return. Goodbye Mr. Sasal. Good luck, Mr. Kirk. You too, Rosey."

"Thank you, Ms. Vasco." Kirk smiled. Cathy returned to her ship and left as quickly as possible. She cleared the shipyards and set course back towards Starbase 68.

"Now Mr. Kirk, what can I interest you in?" Sasal said.

"I need to obtain several freighters. Long distance hauling. Probably need a maintenance contract too." Kirk proceeded along the lines Cathy had suggested. "But first I will need a small ship for personal transportation."

"Let me show you some possibilities." Sasal said leading the way. Kirk walked along with him. Gonzoles followed along behind. Sasal paid her no attention. He had obviously decided she was a subordinate and not worth his time. "I have a nice ship available right now. It can easily be handled by one pilot, but comfortably carries four. She's capable of warp six point eight. State of the art defensive shields."

"Weaponry?" Kirk asked.

"Presently equipped with type one disrupters." Sasal answered. "The interface can be adapted for phasers if you prefer. Here we are."

He led them through a small show bay of ships of various sizes. One or two were little more than escape pods with guidance systems and over powered engines. The majority ranged between the size of a standard shuttlecraft and an expanded runabout. Sasal passed the first three ships and took them inside the fourth. Gonzoles immediately took the pilots seat and studied the

control systems. Sasal looked at Kirk questioningly.

"My pilot." Kirk explained. "Ms. Rose. Very good. Very discreet."

"I understand." Sasal nodded. He ignored Gonzoles and continued showing Kirk the ship's finer points. "As you can see the interior is quite roomy."

"Rose?" Kirk asked.

"Nothing new here, Mr. Kirk." Rosita answered. "The control board is somewhat awkward, but I could fly her with no problems."

"Good." Kirk said. He turned to Sasal, nodded towards the back of the ship, and lowered his voice considerably. "Ms. Vasco suggested in the most subtle way possible that you might be able to meet my special needs in regards to personal transportation."

"What exactly do you require?" Sasal also spoke quietly.

"Well....there are times when I would want to avoid contact with certain authority figures." Kirk said delicately.

"Starfleet?" Sasal asked.

"There's no need to mention any names." Kirk said. He stopped and looked around "Can I assume we are not being recorded, Mr. Sasal?"

"I assure you, Mr. Kirk." Sasal said. "You may speak freely here."

"I have heard rumors that you may have the ability to get me a cloaking device." Kirk smiled.

"The device is illegal in your Federation, isn't it?" Sasal asked.

"Unfortunately." Kirk agreed. He leaned closer to the Yortem. "Of course, I could go to the Romulans, but they would be more inclined to kill me than do business with me."

"I understand the Klingons also use the device." Sasal said noncommittally.

"Yes." Kirk growled. "But I'd rather kill them than do business."

"I see." Sasal studied Kirk. "And how much would you be willing to pay?"

"That depends." Kirk hesitated. He studied Sasal. Raising one eyebrow he suggested. "The faster I could get it, the more I'd be willing to pay."

"Let me see what I can do." Sasal said.

"Good." Kirk smiled. "I have rooms reserved at the Market Exchange Housing Unit. I'll wait to hear from you."

As they walked away from Sasal and his sales pitch, Gonzoles glanced at the Admiral and asked. "George Samuel Kirk?"

"My brother." Kirk winked at her. He then continued in the most casual manner. "If they bother to check Federation databases, they will find him. Spock has temporarily deleted the death certificate from his file."

"Oh." Gonzoles didn't know what else to say. They reached the Market Exchange. Gonzoles turned right. "The hotel is this way, Sir."

The Market Exchange was as crowded as it had been the last time Gonzoles had been there. She and Kirk wound their way through the crowd. An elderly Lirta man bumped into Gonzoles, knocking her against Kirk.

"I am sorry, miss." The white haired man bowed slightly. He looked over at the slightly annoyed Kirk and added "My apologies, Sir, to you and your daughter."

The Lirta man disappeared back into the crowd. Kirk stared at Gonzoles and shook his

head. "Daughter?" he asked incredulously. "I am getting too old for this."

Gonzoles mumbled "Sorry Sir." And continued on her way towards the hotel. Kirk followed, smiling to himself. He was having too much fun to let anything bother him now. Both officers looked for Commander Spock as they went, but did not see him.

"Sir." Gonzoles stopped in her tracks and nodded to their left. Kirk followed her gaze to see two Klingon officers conferring with a Kalan man. Gonzoles turned her back to them, facing Kirk. "The Kalan is named Menha. He was the chief technician I dealt with when I was here on the Congo."

"I don't recognize either of the Klingons." Kirk spoke quietly to her. Here in sector 32, she had very little experience with Klingons. "The shorter one's rank is warrior. The other is a commander."

Gonzoles glanced over her shoulder. "Neither of them looks short to me, Sir."

"I see what you mean." Kirk smiled. The shorter of the two was considerably taller than either human officer. "What is your analysis, Ensign?"

"It is a distinct possibility that the Klingons are selling their cloaking device to the Della Mir. Although why the Klingon Defense Force would be involved, I don't understand." Gonzoles said. "They are strictly military."

"True." Kirk said. "But they had to go through Federation space to get here. That would require the military. And the Defense Force takes its orders from the High Council. Don't be surprised by anything they do."

"But wouldn't secret dealings between the Klingons and the Della Mir be a violation of the treaty?" Gonzoles asked.

"Exactly." Kirk nodded. "But we need proof before we make any accusations. I'd like to know what they are talking about."

"Sir, if I may suggest." Gonzoles said. "The Klingons are not likely to talk to us. However Kalans respond to authority. Menha would be the one to confront."

"All right." Kirk nodded. "We'll wait until they are done then get Menha alone. And Rosey...stop calling me sir."

"Sorry." She smiled self consciously. She had been trying to avoid accidentally calling him Admiral. "I don't know if Menha will recognize me. I only spoke to him twice."

"I'll talk to him." Kirk said. "You just stay in the background. He probably won't even look your way."

"There he goes." Gonzoles nodded towards the retreating Kalan. The Klingons moved off slowly in the other direction. Kirk made his way through the crowd to cut off the middle aged Kalan. Gonzoles followed, keeping an eye towards the Klingons.

"Menha." Kirk blocked his path at the edge of the Market Exchange. "I want a word with you."

"Excuse me Sir." Menha bowed slightly. "Which ship are you with?"

"Not one you are presently working on." Kirk said. "However I presently have dealings with Mr. Sasal. The success of those dealings depends on your conversation with those Klingons."

"Their business is confidential." Menha responded.

"Of course." Kirk nodded. He put his arm around the shorter Kalan's shoulder and

steered him towards a more secluded corner. Gonzoles stationed herself on the edge of the crowd to guard the Admiral's back. "But it is always useful to know the competition. You are repairing a ship for them?"

"Not repairing." Menha said. He glanced around nervously.

"Then what?"

"We are making adjustments." Menha spoke slowly, searching for the correct standard words. "Studying upgrades."

"The Klingon is providing you with a cloaking device?" Kirk asked bluntly.

"Sir, if you have business with Rim Sasal, it would be better to take up this matter with him." Menha said and hurried away before the Admiral could respond. Gonzoles joined Kirk when she saw Menha leave.

"As soon as I mentioned the cloaking device, he ran." Kirk said. "Let's check in at this hotel. Perhaps a message is already waiting for us."

"Yes Sir." Gonzoles nodded. Kirk raised his eyebrow at her use of sir again, but said nothing. Gonzoles blushed and started towards the hotel. The sign read Annam-roh, a well respected Lirta name. The front desk computer did not interface with Starfleet databases and so accepted his word that his DNA scan belonged to a human named George Samuel Kirk.

"Admiral, shouldn't we be looking for Commander Spock?" Gonzoles asked after she had scanned the room for any monitoring devices. She stowed the compact tricorder on her belt and adjusted the tunic to cover it.

"Don't worry about Spock." Kirk said picking up a piece of fruit from a basket on the small dining table. He smelled it cautiously and took a bite. "I told Sasal he could reach me here. Relax, Gonzoles. Have a piece of fruit."

"No thank you, Sir." Gonzoles paced around the room looking at the decorations. "I'm not very good at waiting."

"Haven't you been waiting for the last four years?" Kirk made himself comfortable in an easy chair. "I would think you were well practiced by now."

"Yes Sir. I guess I should be." Gonzoles laughed in spite of herself. She still wasn't quite sure how to take Admiral Kirk. After Commander Von Maltz, the combination of command and humor was engaging and surprising.

Rosita had just managed to stop pacing and settle herself comfortably on the bed, when Kirk's communicator signal sounded. The Admiral dug the small device out of his pocket and answered. "Kirk here."

"Mr. Kirk." Spock's steady deep voice came in loud and clear. "Are you alone?"

"You can speak freely, Mr. Spock." Kirk answered. Gonzoles was instantly up and standing ready.

"Jim, if you will meet me at airlock sixty two I believe we will find what we are looking for." Spock said.

"We're on our way. Kirk out." He glanced over at Gonzoles who was accessing the station directory from the computer terminal. "Well?"

"Five decks up on the outer most ring, port side." Gonzoles reported. "In a limited access security area."

"Let's go." Kirk started towards the door.

"Admiral, what about the security system?" Gonzoles asked.

"We'll think of something." Kirk shrugged. As they reached the door, the message center on the desk chimed. Kirk stopped and answered it. "Yes?"

Rim Sasal appeared on the small screen. "Mr. Kirk, can you meet me to discuss your special requirements?"

"Have you been able to procure what I need, Mr Sasal?" Kirk asked.

"I have made certain contacts that will facilitate the arrangement." Sasal said. "But I prefer to discuss this face to face. Can you meet me in the new ship show room on deck seventeen?"

"I'm on my way." Kirk smiled and terminated the connection. "Gonzoles, meet Spock. Tell him where I am and find out what he's got."

"Admiral..." Gonzoles hesitated. She did not like him going off by himself. It was not strategically sound to split up on an alien station.

"Follow your orders Ensign." Kirk said and left the suite. Gonzoles took a deep breath and went on her way.

She made her way carefully to the outer ring then took a turbo lift up four decks. The lift would not give her access to the fifth deck. She got off the lift and walked along slowly looking for a maintenance ladder or access tube that would get her past security. A Mirta soldier blocked her path.

"What are you doing, human?" The tall green soldier challenged her. Gonzoles wasn't sure why, but he struck her as very young. Perhaps it was the way he clutched his side arm. He seemed nervous.

"I'm a little turned around." Gonzoles smiled her most charming smile. "My ship was docked at airlock 28 or was it 82? I think I'm lost."

"It could not be airlock 82." the soldier relaxed a bit. "That is a security area. Airlock 28 is three decks down on the other side of the station."

"Oh." Gonzoles looked around. "This looked familiar too. Oh well.... Could you tell me which way is the closet lift? I came from back there....I think."

"Continue this way." he said. "There is a lift just around that corner. Go down three decks then around to sector sixteen. You will find it."

"Thanks." She smiled and continued on her way. But he didn't follow her as she would have had she found him in a security area on Starbase 68. At the turbo lift, she stopped to make sure she was still alone. Opening the small tricorder she scanned the hall for any opening in the bulk head. She had to continue on another three meters before she found an unmarked access tube. Gonzoles opened the door and looked inside. It would take her up, but there was no guarantee there was an access panel on the next deck. Still it was her best shot.

Climbing into the tube, Gonzoles pulled the panel closed behind her. She climbed the rungs to the next floor. There was a door on the next level. Gonzoles paused to take out her tricorder and scan for life signs. Gonzoles smiled. One life sign, not of the Community. She opened the hatch to find Spock in the corridor.

"Mr. Spock." Gonzoles climbed out and closed the hatch. "The Admiral had to meet Mr. Sasal. He sent me to find out what you had discovered."

"This way, Ensign." Spock nodded. Air lock 62 was above them. Gonzoles continued to

scan while Spock quickly entered the security code to open the air lock. They climbed the ladder and found themselves coming up in the bridge of a large scout ship. Spock secured the air lock.

Gonzoles looked around the unfamiliar ship. "What kind of ship is this, Sir?"

"You are aboard a B'el class Klingon Bird of Prey, Ensign Gonzoles." Spock said quietly "A most unusual Bird of Prey."

Gonzoles went to the forward most station. Many of the controls were foreign to her. "This is the helm?" She asked. Spock nodded. "I don't understand. Some of these controls are Della Mir. Some are...Klingon?"

"Yes." Spock said "I believe the Kalans are retooling this vessel as a proto type to their own cloaking device."

"We saw two Klingons talking to a Kalan technician at the Market Exchange a short time ago." Gonzoles reported. "The Admiral tried to talk to the Kalan, Menha, but he was not willing to cooperate."

"Only two?" Spock asked. "The normal compliment of this ship is twelve to fifteen officers."

"Which controls are the cloaking device?" Gonzoles asked as she sat down at the helm station and familiarized herself with it.

Spock sat next to her at the navigation station. Gonzoles left her tricorder set on alert for any approaching life signs while they went over the controls and theory behind the cloaking device.

At the same time, Admiral Kirk was strolling into the new ship show room on deck seventeen. Rim Sasal dismissed the crew of Kalans he was talking to as soon as he saw Kirk walk casually into the room. He hurried over to meet his new customer.

"Mr. Kirk, I'm so glad you could meet me." Sasal smiled.

"You're the only game in town, Mr. Sasal." Kirk returned his smile. "So, what do you have for me?"

"I have discussed your requirements with my associates." Sasal started towards the ship he had shown Kirk earlier. They walked along together talking quietly. "They believe it is possible."

"Possible?" Kirk asked. "What does that mean?"

"You must understand. This technology is new to us." Sasal explained as they stopped next to the small scout ship. "We have not put it into a ship this small before. The power requirements are significant."

"You are suggesting I buy a larger ship?" Kirk asked.

"Not at all." Sasal assured him. "However to adjust what we have to this ship may take some time."

"How much time are we talking about?"

"Two kecke." Sasal said. Kirk looked at him blankly. "Not quite three of your ...weeks I believe they are called."

"Three weeks?" Kirk repeated, pretending to think it over. Sasal nodded hopefully. "I can live with that. Ms. Vasco will be returning in a day or two. I will take care of some business with her then return for my new ship in three weeks. Payment on delivery of course."

"Of course." Sasal breathed a sigh of relief. "Perhaps you will leave your pilot with us during the upgrade. Then she could learn the intricacies of the new device."

"That's a good thought." Kirk nodded. "I will speak to Ms. Rose about it."

"I am glad we could come to an agreement, Mr. Kirk." Sasal said steering them toward a cubicle at the back of the show room. "Now if you will just come to my office we can take care of the details and the work can begin. What is it you Humans say? Dot the t's and cross the i's?"

"That's close." Kirk smiled and let himself be led into the cubicle. He agreed to everything Rim Sasal wanted to put in the contract.

Gonzoles came through the airlock and down the ladder to the deck. Spock followed then led the way to the nearest turbo lift. Entering the security clearance code, Spock requested the main deck of the Market Exchange.

"If I may ask, Sir." Gonzoles said. "How did you bypass the security codes?"

"This station is commercially run." Spock said. "The military presence is minimal. Their internal security is a formality, nothing more. Anyone with motivation and computer skills could by pass them."

"Perhaps the strict structure of their society lessens their need for internal security." Gonzoles observed as the turbo lift stopped at the appropriate deck.

"That is a possibility." Spock nodded "Report back to the Admiral. I will be here."

Gonzoles nodded and turned to leave him. She found herself staring directly at Thoren, Rati of the Brotherhood. Startled, Gonzoles backed up. She felt Thoren's gaze start to probe her with surprised recognition. But before Thoren could identify her, she felt his attention pulled from her. She was sure Spock had not spoken yet she heard him tell her to go. Hurrying away, Gonzoles didn't dare to look back until she reached the fountain. When she did look, all she saw was Spock and Thoren staring at each other.

Gonzoles quickly made her way to deck seventeen. She saw Kirk and Sasal talking on the edge of the showroom. Had she known the Admiral better, she would have seen that he was barely tolerating the salesman prattle.

"Mr. Kirk." Gonzoles said urgently. "May I talk to you?"

"Of course. Excuse me, Mr. Sasal." Kirk and Gonzoles walked away from Rim Sasal. "Thank you, Ensign. I don't remember ever being so bored."

"Admiral, Mr. Spock has located a Bird of Prey docked at Airlock 62." Gonzoles spoke quickly and quietly. "It appears that the Kalans are in the process of retooling the ship as a prototype for their own cloaking device. No one was aboard the ship. But after we left the ship, Thoren saw me. I think he recognized me."

"You think?"

"This may sound strange, but I felt him recognizing me. Then I felt Mr. Spock call him and I felt his mind turn away from me." She said.

"No, not strange." Kirk smiled at her. He recalled his first few experiences with telepaths as equally confusing. "Where is Spock now?"

"I left him on the main deck of the Market Exchange." Gonzoles reported. "If I may ask, Admiral, now what?"

"First we find Spock." Kirk said. "According to Rim Sasal, it will take them three weeks to make the adjustments to put the cloaking device in a small ship. Which means it is not yet readily available. If we can sabotage the prototype, the Della Mir might give up on it all together."

"Admiral." Gonzoles asked as they got into the turbo lift and requested the main deck of the Market Exchange. "I know it is a violation of the treaty for the Della Mir to sell new technology to the Klingons without telling us, but is it a violation for them to buy it from the Klingons?"

Before Kirk could answer the turbo lift doors opened. Two Klingon officers were waiting to get on. Gonzoles immediately looked to Kirk. The Admiral just walked past them with deliberate calm. As she followed, Gonzoles was sure she heard one of the Klingons growl. It was the closest she had ever been to a Klingon and it was unnerving.

Once the Klingons had disappeared into the turbo lift, Kirk answered her question. "I don't really care if it violates the treaty. A readily available cloaking device changes the balance of power. That's more important."

"Yes Sir." Gonzoles replied automatically. She took the lead. "Mr. Spock was over this way when I left him."

They found Spock calmly sitting on his bench by the fountain. A young Barchin girl sat next to him. The girl was speaking to Spock urgently as they came up behind the bench. "Sir, it is not wise to so openly challenge Thoren."

"He does not seem open to different points of view, Tassra." Spock agreed. "But I am not in danger."

"I would not be so sure, Mr. Spock." Tassra said. "Thoren will not back down."

"He already has." Spock observed. Tassra just shook her head.

"Mr. Spock." Kirk said from behind him. "If I may have a word."

"Do not concern yourself, Tassra. It is all right." Spock left her sitting there to join Kirk and Gonzoles. "Mr. Kirk, perhaps we should find a more private place to talk."

As they walked along the edge of the Market Exchange, Kirk said "Show me this prototype."

Spock nodded and led the way to the turbo lift. However when he requested the security level, access was denied. Kirk look at Spock expectantly. "Just a minute, Admiral." He tried another access code. It was also denied.

"Problem?" Kirk asked.

"It would appear that station security has tightened." Spock said. He requested the level just below the one they wanted. As the turbo lift carried them up several decks, Spock continued to try to bypass the security system to no avail.

"Really?" Kirk smiled. "Is there another way to get to this ship?"

"There is a maintenance conduit." Gonzoles suggested. Kirk nodded. Using her tricorder to once again locate the unmarked access panel, Gonzoles led the way. She opened the panel and stepped onto the ladder and started up.

"They are obviously on to us." Kirk whispered to Spock. "I don't think we have time to wait around for Cathy Vasco to return. We may have to leave this station fast."

"In a cloaked ship?" Spock asked as he stepped onto the ladder. Gonzoles was already at

the next level.

"Who are they going to complain to?" Kirk smiled. "The Klingons?"

Spock started up the ladder. Kirk was just about to follow when some one yelled.

"Stop!"

Kirk looked down the corridor to see four Della Mir soldiers and one Klingon coming his way. He glanced up at Spock and urged. "Go!"

Spock and Gonzoles followed orders even though they could hear the scuffle going on below them. Kirk kept them busy long enough that the two Starfleet officers were out of the conduit before the Mirta soldiers could look for them. Luckily the security codes had not been changed on the air lock. Within seconds they were on the bridge of the Bird of Prey.

"Prepare to disembark." Spock ordered.

"Aye Sir." Gonzoles took the helm station and started checking all flight modes. While she worked, she asked. "What about the Admiral?"

Spock accessed a science station and pulled up plans of the station. "The Mirta soldiers would take him either to security or operations."

"Assuming they did not kill him." Gonzoles said. "Station shields just went up Sir. We're not going anywhere."

"That is not a problem." Spock said studying his scans. "Finding the Admiral, may be."

"Switch to DNA scan." Gonzoles advised.

"Differences in DNA are minute, Ensign. And the scan time consuming." Spock said "Unless you know exactly what to scan for..."

"Yes Sir." Gonzoles replied. "Everyone I've ever scanned of the Community had the strand K842. A very rare strand in Federation space. Humans don't have it. I'm not sure about Klingons."

"Very good, Ensign." Spock said making the adjustments. "Make ready to disembark quickly on my order."

"Aye."

Kirk had only managed to fight off the Mirta soldiers for a few minutes before one stunned him. The Klingon would have liked him dead but he was out numbers. They took him to the commander in operations. When Kirk came to his senses he was sitting in a chair in a small office facing a large Mirta commander across a rather wide desk. Two armed soldiers stood guard.

"Well." the Commander said when he saw that Kirk was awake. "I'm glad to see you are not hurt. What is your name? And what were you doing in a security area?"

"I was lost." Kirk straightened up. "A simple mistake."

"Don't lie to me Human." He stood up and leaned across his desk. "Your name?"

"Kirk. George Samuel Kirk."

"Your business on this station?" The Commander straightened up.

"I was buying a ship from Rim Sasal." Kirk said. "I think I'll cancel that order."

"Ah, you are the one who wanted the cloaking device." The Commander slowly came around to the front of his desk and leaned against it. "Were you unwilling to pay Sasal's price?"

Are all humans thieves?"

Before Kirk could answer the office door opened and Rati Thoren strode in.

"Commander Vahn-Bre, I have information regarding the heretic."

"Can't this wait, Thoren." Vahn-Bre said with irritation.

"No." Thoren stubbornly stood his ground. "The Vulcan is not only a heretic. He is a Federation spy."

"What?"

"His mind is strong, but he is no match for a Rati of the Brotherhood." Thoren stated.

"And he had accomplices on the station."

"Perhaps this human called Kirk." Vahn-Bre indicated Kirk who Thoren had ignored up to this point.

"Perhaps." Thoren looked Kirk in the eye. Kirk smiled. He could feel the beginnings of a transporter beam in his gut. The last thing he heard before dematerializing was a report over the comline that the shields and weapons were mysteriously off line.

Kirk materialized on the bridge of the Bird of Prey as Spock was ordering "Now Ensign!"

"Aye."

"Report, Mr. Spock." Kirk said taking the command chair.

"Station shields and weapons are off line. We have left the station and are now cloaked." Spock reported.

"Good work, Spock." Kirk said "Your rescue operations were timely."

"The success of the rescue operations have to be attributed to Ensign Gonzoles." Spock said. Kirk turned to him and raised a questioning eyebrow. "It was her knowledge of the Della Mir that made the transport possible."

"Thank you, Ensign." Kirk said "Good work."

"Thank you, Sir." But Gonzoles did not have long to bask in the Admiral's compliments. Suddenly her controls weren't responding. "Admiral, helm is not responding. Warp drive is off line."

"Spock?" Kirk said.

"Analyzing." Spock responded. "The interface is locked up. We are starting to drift."

"Can you stabilize?" Kirk asked moving to the station next to Gonzoles. "Use another interface?"

"I'm not sure." Gonzoles stared at the unfamiliar controls. "The cloaking device is functioning. Maybe we could piggy back the interface?"

"Not on the cloaking device." Spock said. "Use the transporter interface."

"Aye Sir." Gonzoles answered. She tentatively made the adjustments with the unfamiliar controls. "It won't override, Mr. Spock."

Kirk and Spock both tried to access the over ride from their respective stations. After a minute Spock looked up and said, "Try it now, Ensign."

"Helm is sluggish, but answering." She said slowly. "Still no warp drive. Impulse engines are operating at thirty percent of power, Sir."

"Spock, I am reading no weaponry at all on this ship." Kirk left the weapons and communications station to join Spock. "What else is missing?"

"Shields." Spock answered. "Warp drive, tractor beam, emergency power."
"They gutted her." Kirk remarked. "Everything not needed for the cloaking device is gone."

"Apparently." Spock agreed.

"Why would the Della Mir do that Sir?" Gonzoles asked.

"It was more likely the Klingons." Kirk said going back to the command chair. "They didn't want the Della Mir to get any more technology than they paid for."

"Then this was probably the ship that set off the Congo's proximity alert." Gonzoles said.
"The Della Mir took her out for a test flight and had the same problems we are having."

"That is a logical assumption." Spock agreed.

"Admiral." Gonzoles said "The station is launching fighters."

"On screen." Kirk said. "Assuming we still have that."

"Aye Sir." Gonzoles brought the screen to an aft view. Three Mirta fighter ships were headed in their general direction.

"They will be expecting us to head for Federation space." Kirk said more to himself than any one else. "Ensign set course for the rendezvous point. Best speed."

"Aye Sir." Gonzoles responded. "ETA three hours forty minutes."