

"Admiral." Spock said. "We have another problem."

"What now?" Kirk asked. In the last two hours they had problems with every system left on the ship. And each problem was made worse by their lack of familiarity with the technology and language.

"The plasma flow is reaching critical heat levels." Spock told him. "It will overload the ejector system in ten minutes and fifty two seconds."

"You can't cool it down?" Kirk asked.

Spock shook his head. "I have attempted several alternatives and there is no fire suppression system. Our only alternative is to shut down impulse engines."

"Ensign, shut down impulse engines." Kirk said "We'll use the thrusters to keep us on course and drift into the Rings of Frenrah."

"Aye Sir." Gonzoles shut the impulse engines down. "We would have made the rendezvous in forty eight minutes. Without engines that time could double, Sir."

"The temperature in the plasma ejector system is continuing to rise." Spock reported. "Three oh five and rising."

"Why?" Kirk asked. "There should be no more plasma with the engines off."

"The engines are reading as inoperative but there is still hot plasma in the ejector." Spock said studying his readouts. "I believe a valve that should be closed is stuck open. But I am not sure where."

Kirk turned back to Gonzoles. "Any friendly systems around here, Ensign?"

"Um...K467 and K466 are both within range." Gonzoles put the short range scans on the main screen. "Both have class M planets, Admiral. But I would recommend K466.3."

"Why?"

"More water." Gonzoles answered. "The other class M is mostly desert. The third planet in 466 is more tropical if I remember correctly."

"How long ago did you survey out here?" Kirk asked.

"I been out here several times in the last two months." Gonzoles said. "That's one of the reasons Mr. Sulu and I chose this rendezvous."

"Three fifteen." Spock reported. "We are going to have a fire on board soon."

"Set course for 466." Kirk ordered. "Best speed."

"Aye Sir." Gonzoles answered and fired the port thrusters to change their direction.

"Three twenty five." Spock said. "The plasma ejector system is on fire."

"Can we reach it?" Kirk asked.

"Not with out an environment suit." Spock shook his head. "All I can do is monitor."

"If we restart the impulse engines," Kirk suggested. "Would the explosion blow the fire out the ejector."

"A dangerous proposition." Spock said. "With the valve stuck open the fire may spread into the engines themselves causing the ship to explode."

"Damn." Kirk breathed. "ETA?"

"Three minutes." Gonzoles said. "The cloaking device is off line. Aft sensors and scanners are not functioning."

"Spock, transporter?" Kirk asked hopefully.

"On line." Spock responded. "Communications however are out. Klingon/standard

translator is out."

They held their collective breath for the eternity of two and half minutes while the fire crawled up the starboard wing of the Bird of Prey. Finally a very green planet came up on their screen. Gonzoles fired the thrusters one last time to turn them into a high orbit around the planet's equator.

"We are within transporter range of the planet." Spock said. All three officers stood up. Kirk nodded to Spock. "Energizing."

They materialized on the edge of a large river. Gonzoles immediately pulled out her tricorder. The river ran through a lush rain forest that was full of all kinds of animal and insect life. Kirk looked up. Spock pointed in the direction the ship should enter the atmosphere. But instead it exploded still above the atmosphere burning in a bright flash that rivaled the planet's sun.

"Well." Kirk turned his attention to the matter at hand. "What else do you know about this planet, Ensign?"

"When we surveyed here there were signs of early humanoid life. Pre tribal." Gonzoles reported. "Animal life of all shapes and sizes. Large tropic zone. Large temperate zones. Ice at both poles. That's all I remember Sir."

"Good report Ensign." Kirk nodded. Spock also had his tricorder out and was taking readings of the river. "Spock?"

"The water is drinkable." Spock said. "Very pure but with a few minerals that we are not used to in drinking water."

Kirk bent down and scooped up a handful of water and tried it. "Bit of an odd taste. But it's a start. What about food?"

"There is fruit in the trees." Spock said. He started scanning for poisons and hazardous chemicals. Gonzoles scanned for any large animals in the area. The tree tops were full of small primates and all kinds of avian life.

Kirk took out his communicator. "Kirk to Enterprise. Enterprise. Come in." He set his communicator on automatic distress call and put it away.

"Admiral." Gonzoles said tentatively. "How long before we can expect the Enterprise to be looking for us?"

"Hard to say." Kirk said. "If you were in command of Enterprise what would you be doing right now?"

"That depends on how much they know." Gonzoles said. She took a minute to think before continuing. "They may not know anything is wrong yet. C.J. Vacso was not scheduled to come back to the repair station until tomorrow. However with the number of ships we saw scatter out of Kali Guari chances are they know something has happened at the shipyards. That's where I'd start. If it is possible to ascertain that we left the station, I'd proceed to the rendezvous point."

"And the debris from the explosion." Kirk added to her analysis. "Will be like a marker beacon. They could be here any minute now or in a couple of days. All we can do is concentrate on survival and wait."

"Yes Sir."

"Certainly is warm enough." Kirk said taking off the jacket of his business suit.

"Reminds me of home." Gonzoles grinned. She continued more seriously. "If I may suggest, Sir. We should set up a base camp away from the river. Predators will come to the water to drink at night."

"Agreed." Kirk nodded. He realized Spock had wandered off while Kirk and Gonzoles talked. "The forest looks very thick. Spock!"

"Here, Admiral." The Vulcan came out of the lush forest within five feet of them. "Most of the fruit is edible. As is most of the foliage. Ensign Gonzoles is correct. There are many predators in the area."

"Have you found any shelter?" Kirk asked.

Scanning with his tricorder, Spock said. "I believe if we go west we will find a suitable clearing."

"After you." Kirk said.