

Commander Chekov walked onto the bridge of Excelsior a few minutes before change of shift. Lt. Commander Lamar Dole sat in the command chair. He was going over a report on a data padd. He handed the padd to the waiting ensign and stood when Commander Chekov walked down to the center seat.

"Status, Mr. Dole." Chekov said.

"All repairs are complete, Mr. Chekov." Dole reported. "All personnel are present and accounted for. Passengers are also on board. All systems are green for departure."

"Very well." Chekov said. The rest of first shift started showing up and relieving the bridge's third shift. "You are relieved, Mr. Dole."

"Thank you, Sir." Dole nodded and left the bridge.

Commander Chekov did not bother with the command station. Captain Sulu would be on the bridge momentarily. He walked over to the science station. Lt. Amir was manning the second station. Lt. Lee and Lt. Gonzoles manned the two forward stations. They quickly took their stations through the preflight check list.

"Warp drive interface?" Gonzoles asked Lee.

"On line. Impulse power shows ready." Lee answered never taking her eyes off her board. Navigation and helm were so closely interfaced that the officers needed to know the other station's status. "Navigational computer?"

"On line. Aligned to standard galactic coordinate system, no deviation." Gonzoles told Lee.

Once he had finished the standard preflight diagnostic of the science station, Chekov glanced over at the forward stations and said, "Report, Lt. Gonzoles."

"All navigational systems show green, Mr. Chekov." Gonzoles said.

"Helm is on line and answering." Lee reported.

"Communications systems on line." Rand reported from the main communication station. "All decks reporting ready for departure."

Captain Sulu came out of the turbo lift and went directly to the command chair. Chekov turned his chair towards the center of the bridge. "All personnel present and accounted for, Captain. All systems are green for departure."

A young ensign handed the Captain a data padd as the first officer reported. Sulu read the report. When Chekov finished, Sulu looked over at him. "You left the passengers out."

"I assumed you knew they were on board, Captain." Chekov said with a straight face. Chekov knew Sulu had spent the last hour getting his wife and young son settled in his cabin for their short visit.

Captain Sulu grinned to himself as he pressed his thumb to the data padd and handed it back to the young man that waited next to his command chair. He said, "Rand."

"We are cleared to use departure pattern Delta Four, Captain." Lt Commander Rand responded.

"Delta Four, Lee." Sulu said. "Half impulse until we clear the system."

"Aye Sir." Lt. Lee said as she nudged the big ship out of it's orbit. "Delta Four."

=====

Two days out of Star Base 12, the Excelsior was on course for a scientific colony on the water planet Gema Six. At the end of first shift, Sulu retired to his ready room as usual. A few minutes later, Chekov decided to join him. With Sulu's family on board, the two old friends had not had much time to catch up with each other.

Captain Sulu looked up from his desk when Commander Chekov came into the ready room. Chekov glanced at Sulu's baseball paraphernalia arranged on the wall. The antique wooden bat and Sulu's high school glove were familiar sights. The only other personal item in the office was a picture of Jimmi and Harry on the corner of Sulu's desk.

Chekov slowly walked over to the desk and sat in the chair across from the captain. "I think my office needs... something."

"Don't tell Jimmi." Sulu advised. "She will have an entire list of suggestions. And you won't hear the end of it."

"Perhaps her input would be welcome." Chekov shrugged. "It would give her something to do while she's on board."

"Enlist her help at your own risk." Sulu said.

"I absolve you of all responsibility." Chekov laughed briefly. He sighed. "It is odd not to be on Enterprise. The last time I left her, things did not work out so well."

"I remember." Sulu nodded. He handed a data padd across the desk to his new first officer. "There are a few science colonies that we need to visit for their annual review. I generally find this is a good time."

Chekov picked up the data padd and inspected the file. "Looks routine enough."

"It is." Sulu nodded. "Have you had a chance to familiarize yourself with your staff yet?"

"I am getting there." Chekov said. "There has been quite a bit of turnover in the science departments."

"You know how unreliable these scientific types are." Sulu said with a grin.

"Hah!" Chekov laughed. "Do you remember our first shore leave together? I couldn't help thinking about that today."

"Rigel II." Sulu nodded. "Wasn't that when Dr. McCoy stumbled on that place with the very friendly show girls?"

"Yes." Chekov laughed. "And that was the first time we talked about working together as a command team. I think we were drunk."

"We certainly were." Sulu nodded, smiling at the memory. "But we're not drunk now. This is real."

"Good thing I did not take the Haridian waitress up on her offer." Chekov's cheeks still burned when he thought of Dr. McCoy's sarcastic explanation of the situation.

"Who knows where I'd be now."

"In her harem." Sulu chuckled. "That is if a waitress could afford to own more than one man. It was lucky for you that Dr. McCoy knew what she was offering."

"I thought I knew." Chekov shook his head. "I was barely twenty-one and I thought I knew everything."

"Yellow alert." The voice of Lt. Gonzoles seemed to fill the ship. "Captain to the bridge."

Chekov and Sulu got up and left the ready room for the Excelsior's bridge. Lt. Gonzoles was standing in front of the command chair. Chekov immediately went to the primary science station. The tactical displays, warning lights, and databases lit up the seemingly random array of his station. He quickly sorted out the information he needed and adjusted the sensors to pin point the origin of the distress call.

"Report." Sulu said as he joined Gonzoles.

"Distress signal, Captain." Gonzoles said. "At least part of one. Shields are up and we've changed course to intercept the signal's point of origin. Long range sensors have registered a momentary energy surge in that area. Present speed warp six."

"Play back the distress signal, Lt. Mengal." Sulu said to the communications officer. Gonzoles relieved Ensign Majan at the navigation station while Mengal complied with his orders.

"Emergency! Emergency!" A female voice called frantically. "We have been attacked. Our pilot is dead. Rasa Donnar are hurt. Can anybody hear us?"

"That's all Captain." Mengal said. "They do not respond to our signal."

"Chekov?" Sulu turned to the science station.

"At present speed, we will reach the point of origin in two hours forty three minutes." Chekov said. "It is not a densely populated area. The closest system is Korristel. A binary star system with twelve planets."

"Any idea what kind of ship?" Sulu asked.

"No Sir." Chekov checked his readouts again. "No Federation ID code was attached to the signal. No identification of any kind. Not a military ship."

"Agreed." Sulu finally sat down in the command chair. "That was not a military distress call. Increase speed to warp eight, Mr. Sareth."

"Aye Sir. Warp eight." Lt. Sareth acknowledged from the helm station. "New ETA fifty two minutes."

"What about the energy surge?" The Captain asked.

"It was only a nano second." Chekov said as he checked the sensor logs. "More of a ghost than anything else."

"Possibilities?"

"Not enough information. Could be just about anything. The trail of a ship that has just jumped to warp." Chekov speculated. "Or a weapon detonating. Or even the echo of a warp core breach."

"All sensors at maximum." Sulu ordered. He caught Chekov's eye and added. "I thought you knew everything."

"No Sir." Commander Chekov adjusted the sensor controls. He turned to the new

ensign who was manning the second science station. She was an attractive young woman with blond hair and blue eyes. More importantly, she had graduated from the Academy with the highest science honors of anyone in the last five classes. "Ensign Mirek, monitor long range sensors."

"Aye Sir." She nodded.

After forty five minutes, Ensign Mirek alerted Chekov. "I have a ship on sensors five degrees from the distress call's point of origin"

Chekov adjusted his controls to analyze the readings. "It is a transport. Mercury class, civilian configuration. Multiple life signs. The ship is heavily damaged."

"Do they answer a hail, Mr. Mengal?" Sulu asked.

"No Captain." Mengal reported. "I can't be sure they are even receiving our signal."

"Their sensor array is damaged." Chekov said. "Communications may be off line. I am not reading any shields. The hull is compromised in the engine compartment."

"Massive radiation leak from the engines." Mirek reported. "The hole in the hull may have actually saved the passengers. It gave the radiation some place else to go."

"Mirek, run an analysis of that radiation." Chekov said.

"Problem?" Sulu asked.

"It does not look right." Chekov said. "I would not recommend beaming aboard her just yet, Captain."

"According to the distress signal there are wounded on board." Sulu said. "Can you ascertain the condition and number of the passengers?"

"Twenty three separate life signs." Chekov said. "Humanoid. Three have significantly lowered bio-energy readings."

By touching a pad on the arm of his chair, Sulu opened his priority com channel. "Bridge to sick bay."

"Patrick here."

"Doctor." Sulu said. "We are answering a distress call. Prepare for survivors to be beamed directly to sick bay. Twenty three. Conditions unknown."

"Aye Captain." Patrick answered. "We're ready when you are."

Jimmi sat on the exam table in Excelsior's sick bay. She smiled at Dr. Patrick. "Sounds like you are going to have some customers. Harry and I better get out of your way."

"No rush." The doctor smiled as he helped her down. "The baby is fine. You are fine. Everything is right on schedule."

"Come on, Harry." Jimmi called. Her four year old son came running to her. The sick bay crew was busy readying for the incoming patients but Dr. Patrick calmly walked Jimmi and Harry towards the door. He steered them clear of the elliptic stripe in sick bay's carpet that marked the area for emergency medical transports.

When they heard the familiar sound of the transporter, Dr. Patrick and Jimmi

stopped to watch the mass beam in. The group was all of one species except for one man who lay unconscious on the floor. Most of them appeared to be children. They were humanoid with light brown skin and dark brown hair. Jimmi thought their faces were oddly proportioned with high cheek bones and long jaw lines.

Doctors, nurses and med techs immediately rushed in and started triage. Three of the group were unconscious. They were quickly moved to examination tables. The younger ones were confused and crying. Anyone not dealing with the medical emergencies tried to comfort the children. Jimmi leaned down to two girls who were about Harry's size. Their dark brown hair was worn in identical pig tails.

"It's ok." Jimmi spoke softly and smiled hoping to calm the children. "You are safe now."

"Want to see my playground?" Harry asked them. The girls had just stared at Jimmi but both smiled at Harry and nodded.

It was into this confusion that Captain Sulu walked only moments later. Nurses and med techs were organizing the children and checking them for immediate medical problems. Dr. Patrick was studying the readings on an unconscious adult woman of the unknown species. Dr. Vannereli was working on the human man who was with the group.

"What have you got, Doctor?" Sulu asked.

"I've got an unconscious human male who is responding slowly to pavlova radiation therapy." Patrick reported without looking up from his medical scan. "I can only assume these other two were also effected by the same energy burst, but until I know a little more about their physiology I am only taking emergency measures with them. Dr. Ghali is examining the two oldest Bifrags for information right now."

"And the rest of these children?" Sulu asked. "Where are they from? Where were they going?"

"I haven't gotten that far Captain." Patrick said.

Sulu turned towards Dr. Ghali who was scanning two young adults sitting on the same exam table. They appeared to be siblings. Male and female, but almost identical in appearance.

"I am Captain Sulu." He said to the two. "You are on the Federation Starship Excelsior. I need to know who you are and what happened on your ship."

"We are Dennell and Dulla Verset." They answered in one voice.

Captain Sulu smiled. "Which is which?"

"Dennell." The young male placed his hand on his own chest. "We don't know what happened."

"Thank you Captain for rescuing us." Dulla said. "Rasa Donnar were both on the bridge with Captain Lenin when it happened. We found them."

"We thought they were dead." Dennell said. "But Rasa Omar Donnar moved and groaned, so we knew she was alive. Rasa Leko Donnar and the Captain showed no signs of life."

"You sent the distress call?" Sulu asked.

"You heard it?" Dulla asked. Sulu nodded. She looked at her brother. "See Dennell! It was not so hard."

"Where were you going?" Sulu asked.

"To a colony on Methre Three." Dennell said. "Our parents have sent for us."

"And the others?" Sulu asked.

Dulla and Dennell cocked their head to one side at the exact same angle, as if they were connected. Dulla said. "Our parents have sent for all of us. It is to be our new home. We would not leave anyone behind."

"You are all of the same family?" Sulu asked.

"Yes." Dulla and Dennell replied together.

Dulla explained further. "Our parents were sent to Methre Three and left us with the Rasa Donnar. Now that the colony is functioning properly, the company has authorized families to come."

"That explains some of these DNA readings." Dr. Ghali noted. "You are all brothers and sisters?"

"How many?" Sulu asked, looking around at the children.

"Only twenty." Dennell shrugged.

"Only?" Sulu smiled. "I see."

"Multiple births." Jimmi said. The Captain turned to her as if he had just noticed her presence. Jimmi shrugged. Maybe she should have kept quiet, but it was too late now. "Look at them. They are all twins or triplets."

"Yes." Dr. Patrick said. "Even the adult women appear to be twins. Is this normal for your species?"

Dulla and Dennell exchanged confused looks. They turned back to the captain and answered with one voice. "Of course."

"Dr. Patrick." Dr. Ghali handed a diagnostic padd to the Excelsior's CMO. "I recommend chlromydride treatment for the two adult women."

Patrick took the padd and studied her findings. He nodded and handed the padd back to her. "Agreed. Keep me apprised of their condition."

"How long before we can talk to the pilot or either of the women?" Sulu asked Dr. Patrick.

"All three have been exposed to triceron radiation spikes." With Dr. Ghali's new information, Patrick could now report more accurately. "The treatments have to be administered slowly so that we can change doses as the patients respond. I'd give them three or four hours."

"Triceron? Interesting." Sulu started towards the door. "Keep me posted."

"Captain?" Patrick asked. "What about the children?"

"Once we ascertain what has happened here, we will get them on their way." Sulu said. "Until then make them comfortable."

After Captain Sulu had left the sick bay, Dr. Patrick looked at Jimmi and said. "Twenty kids on a starship. What am I suppose to do with them?"

"For starters, Harry has invited these two young ladies to see his playground in the

gym." Jimmi said. "It's a good safe place for kids to play."

"Great." Pat said. "They are all yours."

"Wait a minute, Pat." Jimmi said. "All of them? How about a little help for a pregnant lady?"

"Guilt?" Pat grinned at her. "My mother used to use guilt on me."

"Is it working?" Jimmi laughed.

"Ok." Dr. Patrick nodded and called over two of his med techs. "Carter, Loh. Give Ms. Sulu a hand with these kids."

"Aye aye Doctor." Doreen Loh answered. She and Jack Carter started rounding up the Versat children.

Captain Sulu returned to the bridge. Excelsior had three bridge science stations. Commander Chekov stood behind Ensign Mirek at the second station looking over her shoulder. He straightened up when Captain Sulu approached.

"What have you got, Pavel?"

"The radiation was caused by a triceron explosive." Chekov said. "The exact derivative is not one we've run across before. The ship was not fired upon. It was sabotaged."

"Who would want to blow up a ship of children?" Sulu asked.

"Triceron has been used by Klingons and Cardassians." Ensign Mirek said. "But it is readily available outside Federation controlled space."

"Children?" Chekov asked.

"Yes." Sulu nodded. "Twenty of them. One family."

"Twenty?!" Mirek turned to her captain wide eyed. Sulu and Chekov both looked at the young woman and laughed. Her cheeks reddened. She bit her lip and turned her attention back to her readouts.

"The parents must be one happy couple." Chekov joked. "Assuming there are only two of them."

"It may be more than two." Sulu said. "All the children are either twins or triplets. And the two adult women are also twins. We'll know more when they are conscious. They were exposed to triceron radiation spikes, along with the pilot, a human man."

"The pilot and two women were in the engine room when the bomb exploded?" Chekov asked with surprise.

"No." Sulu said. "According to the oldest set of twins, Dulla and Dennell, the three adults were on the bridge. Your analysis shows the explosion in the engine room?"

"Yes." Chekov nodded. "Perhaps there was a smaller explosion on the bridge. Or the radiation as somehow vented to the bridge."

"It would be helpful if we knew the exact layout of the ship." Sulu said.

"We have the standard configuration of a civilian Mercury class transport on file," Chekov said. "But there is no way to know what changes the pilot has made. I still would not recommend beaming over."

"Mr. Chekov." Sulu smiled. "You are no fun."

"Mirek, break down those radiation readings by location. Standard Grayson's grid. See if you can identify more than one source." Chekov ordered. "Be sure to account for any drifting since the explosion."

"Aye sir." Mirek nodded and turned immediately to her task.

Sulu turned back towards the command chair. Chekov followed. "Dr. Patrick called their species Bifrags. Ever heard of them?"

"No." Chekov shook his head. "Where were they going?"

"A colony. They called it Methre Three." Sulu said. "Their parents were evidently sent with the advanced team. Now they have sent for their families."

"Just how old are these children?" Chekov asked.

"It's just like going down a set of steps." Sulu said using his hand to illustrate. "From young adult down to Harry's age. I left them in Dr. Patrick's capable hands."

"I'm sure he was thrilled." Chekov said. "Has the Doctor said when we will be able to question the pilot?"

"It will be a couple of hours." Sulu said. "However I'd like to have as much information as possible when we talk to him."

"Of course." Chekov nodded. "I will run a check on the pilot and see if I can find any information on the Bifrags and their colony."

In the gym, Jimmi had enlisted the help of the assistant cook, Eddie Pascal, to organize the care of the Versat family. The youngest six found Harry's playground a welcome distraction and Harry was thrilled to have other children to share it with. The three sets of triplets who were in early adolescence made use of the balls and equipment available. Dulla and Dennell and the triplet girls who were just a couple of years younger than them helped keep the younger ones busy.

"Ms. Sulu." Eddie Pascal walked up to Jimmi who was sitting on the bench with Tawy, Turi, and Tauman. The teenage triplet girls' chatter quieted at his approach. "Should I bring some food and drinks here? Or should we try moving this crew to the mess hall?"

"Eddie, if you could set something up here I think that would be the best idea. Then they could play and eat as they want." Jimmi said. "Let's try finger food. Fruit, vegetables, cheese, bread of some kind. And something sweet like cookies and cake. I'm sure they'll all find something."

"But nothing messy." Eddie winked and went on his way.

"Ms. Sulu." Turi asked tentatively. "The Rasa Donnar? They will be ok?"

"Yes Turi." Jimmi smiled. "Dr. Patrick will take care of them. You call them both Rasa Donnar."

"Yes." The three girls answer together.

"They both have the same name?" Jimmi asked. "Or is it something that the universal translator is missing?"

"Our parents engaged Omar and Leko Donnar to be Rasa ." Tawy said. "So they

would not worry when they had to go to the new colony."

"So Rasa is a job?" Jimmi asked.

"It is teacher and caretaker." Tauman said. "To act as a member of our family."

"And to make decisions that our parents don't trust Dulla and Dennell to make."

Tawy laughed.

"I understand." Jimmi nodded.

When Dr. Patrick informed him the pilot was awake, Captain Sulu returned to sick bay. This time Commander Chekov accompanied him. The pilot was sitting up, leaning against the inclined head of the sick bay recovery bed. He was in his late thirties with long sandy hair and hazel eyes. Dr. Ghali was checking his vitals.

"Are you sure, Doc?" The pilot asked with a smile and reached for her free hand.

"I really feel I need your personal attention."

"You seem just fine to me, Mr. Lenin." She pulled her hand free to make an entry on her diagnostic padd. "Besides, you have company. He's all yours, Captain."

"Thank you Doctor." Sulu nodded.

"No, thank you." Ghali smiled and left the recovery room.

"I am Captain Sulu." He turned to the man laying in bed. "This is my first officer, Commander Chekov."

"Michael Lenin. Call me Mickey, everyone does." The pilot smiled warmly.

When the two officers did not immediately respond, Lenin continued. "So Captain, it would seem I owe you my life and my thanks for coming to our rescue. If there is ever anything I can do for you..."

"You could answer a few questions, Captain Lenin." Sulu said.

"Of course." Lenin nodded although his smile dimmed slightly.

"What happened to your ship?" Sulu asked.

"I'm not sure." Lenin rubbed his chin. "We were on course and in open space. My sensors read clear. We were not infringing on anyone's territory that I know of. Then all of a sudden I have an explosion in the engine room. Don't know where it came from."

"It was a triceron explosive." Chekov said. "It was planted on the matter/antimatter integrator control valve. Odd that you would not have noticed something like that during the preflight checklist."

"That is odd." Lenin agreed readily.

"You were on the bridge during the explosion?" Sulu asked.

"Yes." Lenin nodded. "The Rasa were grilling me about a delay in our schedule."

"Both of them?" Sulu asked.

"These Bifrags do just about everything with their birth partners." Lenin explained. "From job sharing to dating. Makes for some interesting conversations."

"I see."

"Where is their home planet?" Chekov asked.

"In the Pentarus system. Fourth planet. They call it Polym." Lenin said. "Other side of the Pelloris field. Know it?"

"That trip must have taken six weeks." Chekov said.

"About that." Lenin nodded. "And that old ship seems awfully small with all those kids in it."

"In that entire time you were not in your engine room?" Chekov asked skeptically. "How do you explain not seeing the bomb?"

"I don't know." Lenin shrugged. "Maybe it was beamed in. I was not using shields for most of the trip. Conserving energy. It could have been beamed in while I was sleeping."

"No." Chekov checked the information on his padd. "It was attached to the valve. Someone would have had to beam in, plant it, and beam out again. Which would have shown up on your computer logs."

"You've checked my logs?" Lenin asked slowly.

"Standard procedure." Chekov said. "We downloaded all official ship's logs, maintenance records, and manifests."

"Then you know we stopped for supplies and maintenance check at Aldebaran III." Lenin said. "That was five days ago. Must have happened there."

"A possibility." Chekov said. "I have requested records of the work done and the workers who had access to your ship. The ship yards there require your ok to release those records."

"Ok by me. I'll have them release whatever you need." Lenin smiled. He shifted uneasily in his bed when he asked Chekov. "You didn't download my private logs?"

"Should we?" Sulu asked.

"No." Lenin laughed and turned his attention back to the captain. "I just wanted to know if I should be embarrassed or not. I can start to ramble on long trips. Helps keep me sane."

"How is it the bridge was effected by the radiation if the explosion was in engine room?" Chekov came back to the heart of the matter.

"My own design revision." Lenin readily explained. "Since I am on my own much of the time, I installed a direct access tube from the bridge to the engine room. It's come in handy on occasion. How bad is the damage?"

"We have not boarded her yet." Captain Sulu said.

"As far as we can tell, your entire warp drive system has been compromised." Chekov added. "I would not try to salvage it. We have been able to established a containment field in the engine room and have flushed the radiation from the rest of the ship. Your life support system is back on line."

"Now what?" Lenin asked. "Where will you drop us off?"

"We're not going anywhere just yet." Sulu said. "But when we do, we'll take you to Starbase Twelve."

"Twelve." Lenin smiled to himself. "I used to know a nice little bar there, but it's been awhile. I wonder if it's still there."

"We will keep you informed on the progress of our investigation." Captain Sulu said on his way out of the recovery room. Dr. Patrick was in the diagnostic treatment center scanning one of the Bifrag women. Sulu stopped and waited until Patrick walked away from the sleeping woman. "How are your twin patients Doctor?"

"They are making progress." Pat joined Sulu and Chekov. "But it's slow. Another hour at least."

"Where are the children?" Sulu asked.

"Deck eighteen. The gym." Pat smiled. "It seems Harry invited them to see his playground. Ms. Sulu has taken charge of them."

"Really?"

"Who better?" Chekov laughed.

Captain Sulu just shook his head and walked out of sick bay. Chekov followed. "You did not bring up Captain Lenin's record. I am sure he expects us to check up on him."

"He hasn't been convicted of anything." Sulu said as they walked towards the turbo lift. "Nor is he presently wanted for anything. You don't think he sabotaged his own ship. Do you?"

"No." Chekov said. "But I do find it hard to believe that the Versat family was the target of the attack. Captain Lenin may have some nasty enemies."

"Agreed." Sulu stopped in front of the lift. "Send Gonzoles over to that ship with a team. See if there is anything left of the explosive or detonation device. Put Mirek on it. She seems to know what she's doing. Let's see how she handles an away mission."

"All right." Chekov nodded. The lift door opened. The Captain and First Officer waited while two nurses got off and headed for sick bay. "We should send someone from engineering as well. There is no telling what other design revisions Captain Lenin has made."

"Good idea. Deck eighteen." Sulu ordered the turbo lift on its way. "Lt. Yazdani knows more about small warp driven ships than anyone else on board."

"I will transmit Captain Lenin's release of information to Aldebran III." Chekov said. "The chance of getting our answers from them are slim, but..."

"I'm going to check on Jimmi and the Versat children." Sulu said as the lift stopped on Deck Eighteen. "I'll join you on the bridge shortly."

When Captain Sulu walked into the gym, he was surprised to see rows of sleeping bags lining the far wall. The youngest three sets of twins were sleeping. Two in each bag. Some of the preteens were involved in a spirited card game. Others played computer games that members of the crew had lent to them. And the older ones were sitting around just talking. Jimmi sat on the bench against the wall with Harry in her lap.

As the Captain approached his wife and son, he could hear Jimmi explaining softly. "Because they are on a different schedule than you. For Ressa and Hella it is very late. Remember when you stayed up until twenty two hundred hours? You were very grumpy and did not want to share."

"But it's not late now." Harry insisted.

"Yes it is." Jimmi smiled. "It's bed time for you too."

"But Mom..."

"Listen to your mother, Hikaru." Sulu said as he sat down next to them.

"Daddy!" Harry instantly reached for his father. Sulu picked the boy up and set him on his own lap. The little boy hugged his father. "Is it fixed?"

"Is what fixed, Harry?" Sulu asked.

"Captain Mickey's ship." Harry yawned. "Ressa and Hella have to leave when it's fixed. But they are sleeping."

"No, it's not fixed." Sulu said. Harry rested his head against his father's chest. "It may take awhile. Now, didn't I hear your mother say it was bed time?"

Harry sat up. "I'm not tired."

"Well, I bet Mommy is." Sulu smiled at his wife. He wrapped his arms around Harry and pulled the boy against his chest again. She just sighed and nodded. "And we have to take care of her and the baby."

"Is the baby sleeping, Mommy?"

"Not right now, Honey. But I wish she would." Jimmi sighed. She shifted her attention to her husband. "What do you think of the arrangement?"

"You could have put them in sick bay." The captain said.

"We considered that." Jimmi explained. "But they sleep with their birth partners, that's what they call their twins. The triplets wouldn't fit and I was afraid the little ones would fall out of bed. So we decided to camp out. More or less."

"Creative problem solving." Sulu smiled.

"Is that good?"

"It's one of the primary skills necessary for command officers." Sulu said.

"Ok." Jimmi smiled. She nodded at their son in his lap. Harry was slumped against the Captain's chest. His eyes were barely open. "I better get him in bed."

"Come on. I'll walk you home." Sulu stood up and shifted the almost asleep boy so his head lay on his father's shoulder.

"There is more to this than just a distress call. Isn't there?" Jimmi asked as they rode in the turbo lift.

"There is." Sulu nodded. "But I'm not sure what."

"And the children?" Jimmi asked. The turbo lift doors opened. The Sulu family walked the short distance to the captain's cabin.

"Innocent bystanders." Sulu said. He patted Harry lightly on the back. "I'll put him to bed. You relax."

While the captain undressed the sleeping boy, Jimmi undressed and put on her robe. She sat down and put her feet up. After a few minutes, her husband joined her. She smiled at him and asked. "Did you eat?"

"I'll get something later." he said. "How are you doing?"

"I'm fine. A little tired." Jimmi smiled. Hikaru shifted uneasily on the couch. "You are going back to the bridge. Aren't you?"

"I have to." Hikaru nodded. "I have a team beaming over to that ship right now."

I need to know what they find out."

"Think you'll be home at all tonight?"

"No promises." Sulu said. "But I'll try to get home for a couple hours sleep later."

"Ok." Jimmi sighed.

"I'm sorry." Hikaru leaned closer to her and rested his hand on her tummy. "I'd like to spend the evening with you."

"I know." Jimmi shrugged.

"The transport captain mentioned that he knew a good bar on Starbase Twelve." Sulu said. "Ever met a Captain Mickey Lenin?"

Jimmi thought for a minute then shook her head. "The name is not familiar. But then I don't always get the customers names."

"I've got to go." He kissed her quickly. "Good night."

"Good night, Harry."