

Lt. Gonzoles and Ensign Mirek walked into the transporter room. Transporter operator, Chief Sturgill, issued communicators, tricorders, and phasers. Gonzoles was running a final self diagnostic on her tricorder when Lt Yazdani joined them. He was not much taller than Gonzoles and wore his light brown hair so short that it appeared to be little more than a fuzz covering his fair skin.

"Relax, Gonzo. It works." Lt. Yazdani winked at Gonzoles. Sturgill handed the away team equipment to Yazdani.

"I know it works, Yaz. The diagnostic shows no deviation." She calmly closed the tricorder and attached it to her belt. She walked up to the transporter pad. "One day your assumption that everything is in working order will be wrong. And I hope I'm there to see it. Ensign Mirek, this is Lt. Yazdani. Don't listen to him."

Mirek followed Gonzoles onto the transporter. She had been aboard Excelsior less than a week. And she wasn't sure what to say or think. She guided a stray blond hair behind her ear, tucking the end into her regulation braid. "Nice to meet you Lt. Yazdani."

"Ensign." Yazdani smiled at the young woman as he joined them. The ensign was at least eight years younger than him, but she had those pale blue eyes that had been known to drive him crazy. He would have to watch himself around her. "She's right. Don't listen to me. After all I am just an engineer."

"Energize." Gonzoles said. They materialized in the engine room of the small ship. The hull breach was a hole two meters wide. The metal on the jagged edges of the hull bowed outward. "Check the condition of the engines, Yaz."

"Aye." Yaz took his tricorder out and started his examination.

Gonzoles and Mirek examined the explosion sight. Gonzoles touched the scorched side of the valve and adjacent bulkhead. "Looks like it was attached to the valve, but the force of the explosion went out to this bulkhead and the outside hull."

"Yes." Mirek scanned with the valve. "It doesn't make much sense."

"What do you mean?" Gonzoles asked.

"It would not be hard to destroy the control valve and let the matter and anti matter mix freely." Mirek said. "Anyone who knew what they were doing would have put the explosive somewhat higher. About here."

"If that had happened, we wouldn't be here right now." Gonzoles said. "And all those kids would be dead."

"Right." Mirek nodded. "So if you want to blow the ship, why put the explosive fifteen centimeters from the control valve's vulnerable point? And if you want to just blow a hole in the hull, why take the risk of putting the explosive near the valve at all? Why not put a smaller explosive on the hull itself?"

"You've got me." Gonzoles said. "What about detonation?"

"There's very little left." Mirek said almost to herself. She studied the valve and scanned what was left of the hull. She came back to the valve with her tricorder, scanning the scorched area. "This was the hottest spot. The explosion started here. I'm getting some minute readings of vanadium. It could have been part of the detonation device."

"Is it commonly used?" Gonzoles asked.

"No." Mirek shook her head. "But combined with curium it could be used to hold triceron. And that's a start."

"Ok." Gonzoles nodded. "Let's see where Yaz disappeared to."

"If I may ask, Lt. Gonzoles." Mirek said. "What is Lt. Yazdani's problem?"

"Just don't take him seriously." Gonzoles smiled. "He's a very good engineer and a good officer. But he has a memory like an elephant. If you say anything stupid or embarrassing around him, he will remind you of it for the rest of your life."

"All right." Mirek smiled and nodded. "I'll remember to watch what I say around Lt. Yazdani. Thank you Lieutenant."

"So what's the deal, Yaz?" Gonzoles called as they rounded the corner and saw him at the main engine control station.

"He's been running this baby pretty hard. The engines weren't in the best of shape before. And his maintenance logs are sketchy." Yazdani said as the other two joined him. "The explosion sent a shock wave through the antimatter containment field. I'm surprised it did not blow. They were either very lucky or the size of the explosion was very carefully calculated."

"You mean that if it had been just a little more intense the warp core would have gone?" Gonzoles asked.

"Exactly." Yazdani nodded. "It's like someone is trying to show this ship's captain just how easy it would be to destroy his ship."

"Interesting. Unless there's something else?" Gonzoles asked her companions. Neither responded, so she took out her communicator. "Gonzoles to Excelsior. Three to transport."

Once back on Excelsior, the away team reported to the main briefing room. Captain Sulu, Commander Chekov, and Lt. Commander Williams waited for them. It was the first time Mirek had met the chief engineer. His snowy white hair with his smooth ruddy complexion made it hard for her to judge his age.

"What did you find, Lt. Gonzoles?" Captain Sulu asked when they had all settled in their seats.

"Generally what we found confirms what we already knew, Sir." Gonzoles said. "Close examination points to the theory that the explosion may have been a warning."

"A warning?" Chekov asked.

"Yes Sir." Mirek said. "The explosive was detonated fifteen centimeters below the control valve and the force was expelled towards the hull, not the valve."

"Still that should have effected the antimatter containment field and the possibly the reaction chamber." Lt. Commander Williams said.

"It did." Lt. Yazdani said. "But it just gave it a good shake. Nothing was ruptured although the damaged was significant."

"A warning." Sulu nodded. "Interesting. Is that something we could repair Willie?"

"No Captain." Lt. Commander Williams said. "I wouldn't try repairing it at all. He's going to need a complete new warp system. With a ship that size, I'd suggest a new ship."

"Any evidence of a detonation device?" Chekov asked.

"Only traces of vanadium." Mirek said.

"No curium?" Chekov asked.

"No Sir." Mirek answered. "But with the type of device you are suggesting, the curium would have been absorbed before the explosion."

"Chekov?" Sulu asked.

"It is possible to build a detonation device of a combination of vanadium and curium." Chekov explained. "One chamber holds triceron. Another smaller chamber is filled with fluorine gas. The fluorine reacts with the curium, combining to make fluoro-curite."

"Extremely unstable." Sulu said.

"Yes." Chekov nodded. "The fluoro-curite eats away the soft vanadium. Then it mixes with the triceron. That's your explosion and radiation spikes. Unfortunately the only sure way to trace it would be through the purity of the curium."

"Which has been absorbed." Sulu said. Chekov nodded. "Is this a commonly used detonation device?"

"The timing is not precise. There are too many variables." Chekov said. "So it is not the choice of many military operations."

"More likely terrorists or pirates." Sulu said. "Lt. Yazdani, what is the general condition of the ship?"

"Life support is on line." Yazdani reported. "Impulse engines, shields, and weapons are all operational. She could make it to port on her own if necessary."

"Good." Sulu nodded. "Anything else Gonzoles?"

"No Sir." She said.

"Dismissed." Sulu said. As the group started toward the door, Sulu said to Chekov "I believe we have a few more questions for Captain Lenin."

"I can think of a couple." Chekov nodded.

"Perfect as always, Gonzo." Lt. Yazdani said in the hall outside the briefing room. Gonzoles did not say anything but gave him a friendly shove on the shoulder. He followed Commander Williams down the hall laughing to himself.

"Gonzo?" Sulu asked quietly over her shoulder.

"Don't ask." Gonzoles smiled back at him.

After Sulu and Chekov had gotten on the turbo lift, Mirek stared at Gonzoles wide eyed. "Don't ask? You just said don't ask to the Captain."

"Relax Ensign. It wasn't an official inquiry." Gonzoles said. "Your shift is over. I'll see you on the bridge tomorrow."

"Aye Sir."

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Ensign Mirek picked up her dinner tray and surveyed the crowded dining hall. She saw Ensign Fahey and Ensign Abdu. Fahey was tall and lean with dark hair and blue eyes. Mirek had been instantly drawn to his easy manner and slight Irish accent when they first met at the Academy. Abdu was a more recent acquaintance. He was not quite as tall as Fahey with a swarthy complexion. He had curly black hair and full beard with intense brown eyes. Both men had also just been assigned to Excelsior straight out of the Academy.

"Gentlemen." Mirek smiled as she sat down.

"You're late." Fahey said as he finished his dinner.

"My shift ran a little late." Mirek tried to sound casual. "I had to report to the Captain regarding my away mission."

"Away mission?" Abdu and Fahey said together.

"I've spent the last three days just trying to figure out who is who around here." Abdu said.

"And I've heard Captain Sulu doesn't let new ensigns on missions until he is sure of them." Fahey continued. "Lt. Hu told me not to expect anything for a couple of months."

"Then I guess the Captain is sure of me." Mirek said with a smile. She made no attempt to hide her pride.

"Damn." Abdu grinned. "Top of the class again, Mirek."

"Ok, Ellen. So tell us." Fahey said. "What was the mission? How'd it go?"

"It was short." Mirek said. "Lt. Gonzoles was in command. Lt Yazdani was the engineer. We beamed over to the ship to do an onsite inspection of the explosion's detonation point. When we got back we reported to Captain Sulu, Commander Chekov, and Commander Williams."

"But did you find anything?" Abdu asked.

"A chemical detonation device." Mirek ate as she explained. "Only traces left of course. The most interesting thing was that the explosion was devised to blow a hole in the hull, but it was placed close enough to the matter/antimatter integrator control valve to damage the warp drive system."

"But not destroy it?" Fahey asked. "Good trick. I wouldn't take the chance of planting something like that and staying aboard. Do they know where it came from?"

"Not yet." Mirek said. "Did you hear the name of the ship, Billy?"

"No." Fahey said.

"Aces Over Trays." Mirek said.

"Poker player." Billy Fahey nodded. "That reminds me. Franz is hosting a game tonight in his quarters. You playing?"

"Sure." Mirek nodded. "But I thought his bunkmate didn't like poker."

"He's on duty." Fahey said. "You in Raj?"

"I'm there." Abdu smiled.

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"Dr. Patrick." Sulu said as he and Chekov walked into sick bay. "How are your patients?"

"Captain Lenin is on his way to a full recovery. He can be moved to regular quarters in the morning." Dr. Patrick said. "Omar and Leko Donnar are awake and able to talk to you. However, they are still weak. Please take it easy with them."

"I just have a few questions." Sulu said. "I don't plan to interrogate the Donnars."

In the recovery room Captain Lenin sat on the edge of his bed talking to the Donnar

sisters. The two women looked identical to Sulu and Chekov. Their black hair was long and straight. Their large eyes were a deep purple. And they were both laughing at something Captain Lenin had said.

"Good evening Ms. Donnar." Sulu said nodding to each sister. "I am glad to see you are recovering. I am Captain Sulu. This is my first officer, Commander Chekov. We need to ask you a few questions."

"Of course Captain." One of the women said. "I am Omar Donnar. This is my sister, Leko. If we can be of any help Captain."

"What happened just before the explosion?" Sulu asked.

"We were on the bridge." Leko spoke up. "It is not large but there is room for three. We had brought Mickey some hodtuul"

"It had become a habit in the afternoon." Omar said. "A pleasant way to pass the time."

"And it was a break from the children for Omar and me." Leko said. They spoke quickly. Finishing each other's thoughts.

"Hodtuul?" Chekov asked.

"Similar to tea." Captain Lenin said. "But sweeter. Could use a little lemon or maybe some Irish whiskey."

"We had no warning." Omar continued where Leko had stopped. "Everything was fine. Then the explosion knocked us out of our seats. Mickey was yelling that he was going to the engine room. That is all I remember."

"I saw Mickey and Omar fall to the floor before I lost consciousness." Leko added. "Then I woke up here."

"You are taking the children to their parents?" Sulu asked.

"Yes." Omar said. "We were so happy to hear that they were not injured."

"The doctor said we could see them in the morning." Leko said. "He assured us they are being well cared for."

"I looked in on them a little while ago." Sulu said. "The young ones were sleeping. And the older ones were entertaining themselves. Are you planning on staying on this new colony after delivering the children?"

"Yes." Omar nodded. "We will be teachers at the school there."

"As Rasa we are earning our way." Leko added. "It is a new start for us."

"Yes, I see." Sulu nodded thoughtfully.

Mickey Lenin waited impatiently for Sulu to continue. But the Excelsior captain just stood there with his arms crossed in front of his chest. The first officer made no attempt to step in. Finally Lenin smiled and said. "Just like I told you, Captain. No warning."

"So you said." Sulu turned his attention to Captain Lenin. "However since we last talked a team of my best people have been to your ship."

"Oh." Lenin leaned back in his bed becoming serious as he took his attention away from the two women.

"They found traces of vanadium." Chekov said.

"So?"

"It is evidence of a chemically based explosive device." Chekov clarified. "The timing of

the explosion was left to chance but that is all."

"What do you mean?" Lenin asked.

"He means that by all rights your ship should have gone up in a large fire ball." Sulu said.

"But the control valve held. The containment field did not rupture. And while there is a whole in your hull, the emergency structural shields did their job. You are very lucky, Captain."

"Always have been."

"Except that it was not luck. The bomb did exactly what it was suppose to." Chekov said. "It would seem that someone is trying to tell you something."

"Like what?"

"One more ounce of triceron." Chekov said. "Or if it had been placed ten centimeters higher. And we would not be talking now."

"Someone went to a lot of trouble not to kill you." Sulu asked. "Any idea who that might be?"

"I can't imagine."

"Really?" Sulu raised one eye brow. "I know my enemies. I would think in your line of business it would be wise to know yours."

"What enemies?" Lenin smiled innocently. "I'm a transport pilot."

"Perhaps." Sulu said.

"Captain Sulu." Omar Donnar spoke up. "You can't be suggesting that Mickey was the cause of the explosion."

"Or that he intentionally put the children in danger." Leko added.

"I am suggesting that the act was not only deliberate, but carefully planned." Sulu said. "And that the logical target was Captain Lenin."

"From what we know of Captain Lenin's previous trips." Chekov said to the two Bifrag sisters. "He has ample opportunity to make unscrupulous friends and enemies."

The two sisters looked at each other and quietly said one word that the universal translator could not translate. "Nengelous."

Mickey Lenin laughed. "Thank you for your support, Omar, Leko. It would seem they don't believe you Captain."

"Their loyalty aside." Sulu said. "I require some detailed answers from you. The last time you were questioned by Starfleet, it was suggested that you were working for the Breen."

"Suggested, yes." Lenin said. "Proven, no."

"But you do know Layg Ianis." Chekov said. Lenin did not answer. "And he is a member of the Vidtre."

"What is that?" Leko asked.

"It is the intelligence division of the Breen defense forces." Sulu said. "A very efficient division."

"And these Breen." Omar asked. "Are they your enemies?"

"The Federation has no formal relations with the Breen at all." Chekov explained. "They are not inclined to be friends."

"Captain Sulu." Lenin said. "Perhaps we could continue this in private. Omar and Leko still need to rest."

"As you wish." Sulu nodded.

"Bridge to Captain Sulu." the voice of Lt. Lee came over the com line.

Sulu touched the panel by Lenin's recovery bed. The computer recognized him and gave him priority access to the bridge. "Sulu here."

"Captain." Lee said. "We have sensor contact with three ships on a direct course for the transport's coordinates."

"Have you identified them?" Sulu asked.

"I would prefer that you see for yourself Captain." Lee said.

"On my way." Sulu said. "It would seem this will have to wait, Captain Lenin."

"No rush." Mickey Lenin said although Sulu and Chekov had already left sick bay.

"Report." Sulu said as soon as the turbo lift doors opened.

Lt. Lee stood as the captain approached the command chair. "Sir, long range scanners show three ships on an intercept course for the transport Aces Over Trays. They are Kouldel class warships."

"The Breen."

"Most likely." Lee agreed. she stepped down to the helm station and tapped Ensign Jacoby on the shoulder. The young man relinquished the station to her. "But I am surprised they are traveling without a cloak this far from their own space."

Sulu glanced at the communications station. One of the new ensigns was on duty, but Sulu couldn't remember his name. "Ensign, contact Starfleet Command. I want any records of contact with these three ships since they entered Federation space."

"Aye Sir."

"How long, Pavel?"

"Twenty eight minutes at their present speed." Chekov answered. "Of course that could change since by now they have also scanned us."

"Captain." Ensign DuBois turned from the communications station towards the center of the bridge. "The Breen flag ship Truuk has made friendly contact with every ship and outpost she has passed between here and Breen space. Command has granted safe passage for the diplomatic delegation on course to Della Mir space."

"Della Mir space?" Sulu asked.

"Lt. Behr." Chekov turned to the officer manning the second science station. "Analyze these friendly contacts. Look for any change of course or any other discrepancies from one record to the next."

"Aye Sir." Behr answered. He accessed the communications records and immediately set to work.

"This would not be the shortest route from the Breen homeworld to Della Mir space." Chekov walked down to Sulu.

"Not exactly." Sulu agreed. The captain touched the control pad on the arm of his command chair. "Bridge to sick bay."

"Patrick here."

"Doctor." Sulu said. "Bring Captain Lenin to my ready room."

"Captain." Patrick hesitated. "I would like him to spend one more night in sick bay. If this can wait..."

"I'm afraid not, Pat." Sulu said. "There are three Breen war ships coming this way and I may need him. Have him in my ready room in twenty five minutes. No later."

"Aye." Patrick said. "Sick bay out."

"Lt. Lee." Sulu said. "What is the status of the tractor beam?"

Lee checked her readouts. "Tractor beam is stable. Holding the Aces Over Trays at five hundred meters."

Sulu rubbed his chin. Thinking out loud. "She's pretty big, but the main landing bay could hold her."

"Yes." Chekov nodded. "But I would not recommend it."

"Why not?"

"If the Breen have planted this bomb with such precision," Chekov said. "Why wouldn't they have planted more than one? It would certainly be an ace in the hole when they contacted Captain Lenin."

"You are assuming that Lenin has something that the Breen want."

"It's logical." Chekov said. "As you said, they were very careful not to kill him. I would not want a second bomb aboard this ship when they decide to detonate."

"You can't scan for that?" Sulu asked.

"Not with certainty." Chekov shook his head. "There are many chemical explosives that would not show up as anything out of the ordinary. And there is not time for a hands on search."

"The tractor beam is too tenuous. I'd like to take possession of that ship." Sulu said. "What about extending our shields around it?"

"If we keep her shields up, that would isolate her in the event of an explosion." Chekov nodded. "Then we could bring her in closer and extend our shields around her."

"Lt. Lee, bring the transport ship to three hundred meters." Sulu ordered.

"Three hundred?" She looked over her shoulder to be sure she had heard him correctly. The Captain nodded. "Aye Sir."

"Lt. Lee, you have the bridge. Mr. Chekov, if you will join me in my ready room.." Sulu stood up and strode off the bridge. Chekov followed. Once they were alone, Sulu said, "I'm starving, Pavel. How about you?"

"I have not had time to eat." Chekov admitted.

Sulu wasted no time. He opened the comline. "Captain Sulu to Yeoman Banks."

"Banks here."

"Mr. Banks, bring a couple of sandwiches and coffee to my ready room for myself and Commander Chekov a.s.a.p." Sulu said. "We only have fifteen minutes."

"On my way Sir." The young man answered.

"Privileges of rank?" Chekov smiled as he sat down.

"It comes in handy from time to time." Sulu sat behind his desk. "Tell me what else you learned about Captain Lenin."

"I thought you'd never ask." Chekov said.

"I assumed you'd jump in during the questioning with anything I missed." Sulu leaned

back in his chair. "Lenin was picked up for questioning how many times?"

"Four." Chekov said. "But they never found anything on him. If he was smuggling, he was doing a damn good job of hiding the contraband."

"Why use a ship without a cloaking device?" Sulu asked. "If the Breen were involved as command suspects, the technology is certainly available."

"I don't know." Chekov shrugged.

"You realize Layg Ianis is more than just a member of the Vidtre." Sulu said. "How do we know Lenin knows him?"

"Yes, Ianis is a commander." Chekov said. "However we do not know what his relationship with Lenin is. Command had Ianis under surveillance while he was on Rigel III. Lenin was seen with him but their conversation was not recorded."

"How long ago?"

"Two years." Chekov said.

Yeoman Banks came in with a tray of several different kinds of sandwiches and a full pot of coffee. He placed a plate and cup in front of each officer. "Anything else Sir?"

"Nothing else. Thanks Greg." Sulu smiled helping himself to a sandwich. "This looks great."

"Thank you, Mr. Banks." Chekov added. The young man just nodded and left the room. "It was that meeting with Ianis that got command interested in Captain Lenin."

"Who questioned Lenin?"

"The first time was on Rigel III." Chekov poured himself a cup of coffee. "Then on Starbase 23, Starbase 18, and he was picked up about six months ago by the Lexington in sector 30. I see Mr. Banks knows you well. No sugar."

"Sorry. I'll inform Banks of your sweet tooth." Sulu smiled. "Did you review logs of those interrogations?"

"Yes. On Rigel he claimed to be delivering a package to Ianis. That story checked out. Although Commander O'Conner was skeptical. He also had legitimate business on the two Starbases." Chekov said. "When the Lexington picked him up he claimed to be between jobs. There was nothing to hold him on."

"It's not much to go on." Sulu poured his own coffee. "Have you ever run into the Breen?"

"No. Have you?" Chekov asked. Sulu shook his head. "They don't venture so far from home very often."

"At least that we know of." Sulu added. "Intelligence information is sketchy since they won't allow even a diplomatic delegation in their space."

"Captain Sulu." Ensign DuBois appeared on the small screen on the Captain's desk. "I have a priority transmission from Starfleet Command."

"Put it through Ensign." Sulu said.

"Captain Sulu." Admiral Reese's image replaced Ensign DuBois. He hadn't changed since Sulu had first met him on Enterprise. His hair was still a dark steel grey and his eyes still a piercing blue. "I understand you have Michael Lenin in custody."

"We answered a distress call from his ship, Admiral." Sulu explained. "He is not under

arrest."

"But he is in your possession."

"Yes Sir." Sulu nodded.

"And you are aware of the Breen diplomatic delegation?" Reese asked.

"Yes Sir."

"This is what my grandmother would call a sticky situation, Sulu." Reese said. "The Diplomatic Corp wants us to leave the delegation alone. At all costs. Starfleet Intelligence wants to know what the Breen and Mr. Lenin are doing together. Also at all costs."

"I find myself in agreement with Intelligence, Sir." Sulu said.

"Understandable Captain." Reese nodded. "However, the Breen asked permission to cross our space. It was the first friendly contact we've ever had with them. The Diplomatic Corp is hopeful that it will be a first step towards normal relations."

"I see." Sulu said. "What are your orders, Admiral?"

"I want you to do both." Admiral Reese smiled. "Maintain the diplomatic front and find out what they are up to."

"A tall order, Sir."

"I know." Reese nodded. "But I'm sure you can handle it."

"Admiral." Sulu said. "What if the Breen Captain is not interested in diplomacy?"

"You can defend yourself of course, Captain. But try not to start a war." Admiral Reese said. "And whatever you do, be very sure of your facts. Understand?"

"Yes Sir."

"Good luck, Captain." The Admiral said. "Reese out."

"Wonderful." Chekov had finished his sandwich while Sulu and the Admiral talked. He sipped his coffee. "Now what?"

"We proceed as we started." Sulu shrugged.

Chekov swiveled the computer terminal to face him and input the bridge science station code. "Lt. Behr. Report."

"The Breen have changed course, Mr. Chekov." Behr reported. "Since entering Federation space, the Breen flag ship Truuk and her companions have maintained a heading of 027 mark 16. Today at fourteen thirty hours they reported a heading of 047 mark 16 to automated beacon Sigma Delta V."

"Thank you Lt. Behr. Chekov out."

Before Chekov could comment to Sulu, the door signal sounded. The Captain called out to enter. Dr. Patrick escorted Captain Lenin into the ready room. Lenin looked at the tray of sandwiches and asked. "Are we having a party?"

"Not yet." Sulu said. "Three Breen warships will be here in a few minutes. We'll wait the party for them. Sit down Captain Lenin."

Lenin shrugged and sat in the chair next to Chekov, facing Captain Sulu. Chekov turned towards Lenin. "You have done business with the Breen, Captain Lenin."

"That doesn't sound like a question." Lenin said.

"It was not." Chekov said. "What do you know of Layg Ianis?"

"Not much." Lenin shrugged. "He was in the market for a substantial amount of calcium

hargamite. I acted as middleman. Got it dirt cheap from a mining company on Myrmidon."

"Calcium hargamite?" Chekov asked. "What did he use it for?"

"I don't know." Lenin smiled. "I didn't ask. But I did make a healthy profit on the deal."

"Lenin." Sulu said. "I don't care about your profits. Three Breen war ships changed course to intersect your ship after the explosion. That suggests to me that they want something from you. I want to know what that is."

"I can't imagine."

"I don't have time for this." Sulu stood up and started for the door. Chekov followed.

"I'll ask them. Doctor, keep your patient here until I need him."

"Aye Captain." Patrick said but Sulu and Chekov were already gone.

"Ever play poker, Doctor?" Lenin asked.

"A little." Patrick made himself comfortable in the chair Chekov had vacated. "I assumed that was where you got the name of your ship."

"I won her in a game, that's true." Lenin said. "But it wasn't poker and she had the name already. I'm sure going to miss that ship."

"Is it that badly damaged?"

"I'm not sure." Lenin helped himself to one of the sandwiches left on the plate. "But in any game you've got to know when to cut your losses. And if Layg Ianis is on that ship, I hope that's all I lose."

"What happened between you and Ianis?"

"It was an innocent mistake." Lenin smiled.

"Hmmm." Patrick studied the man. "But I take it the Breen won't see it that way."