

"Mr. Chekov." Ensign Mirek smiled when she looked over at him. It was late into first shift on Excelsior. "I've got it."

"Thorio-phosgene?" Chekov asked from the command chair. He got up and joined her at the science station.

"Yes Sir." Mirek smiled at her monitor. Chekov leaned over her shoulder. "I've overlain the image of the ship just before the explosion on the after image. It's actually two images. One on each wing. According to the configuration on file, there is no storage suitable for gases of any kind in the wings."

"Smugglers generally make their own suitable storage." Chekov said. "And we already know he made other modifications to his ship. Good work, Mirek."

"Thank you, Sir."

When Chekov walked into the Captain's ready room, Sulu opened his eyes and straightened up in his chair. "Mirek identified thorio-phosgene in that after image."

"Nerve gas." Sulu nodded. "We better find out where he got it and who was waiting for delivery."

"He stopped at Aldebaran III for maintenance." Chekov said. "Somehow I doubt he'd take the chance of it being discovered."

"So he probably got it at Aldebaran or after." Sulu said. "That narrows things a little. Perhaps the Donnars sisters could alert us to any unscheduled stops."

"They seem taken with Mr. Lenin." Chekov observed. "They may not be willing to share information that may harm him."

"If they don't know about the smuggling." Sulu shrugged. "Why would they think we were exploring anything other than the origin of the bomb?"

"If?" Chekov asked. "Do you think the Donnars are involved?"

"Not really." Sulu said. "But we can't rule anything out at this point."

"Why don't you go home to your family?" Chekov suggested. "This can wait until morning. Or I could talk to the sisters."

"I was just resting my eyes, Pavel." Sulu said.

"Jimmi is still concerned." Chekov said. "And since your visit will be cut short, I am sure she would appreciate the time."

"Is she paying you now?" Sulu asked. Chekov just laughed. "All right, I'll go back to my quarters. See if the Donnars know anything and let me know."

Commander Chekov walked into the gym that the Verset children had taken over. The scene was chaotic but jovial. The children had adapted Harry's toys and the ship's sports equipment to their own games. Leko Donnar was in a middle of a line of hand holding children that was snaking around the room while singing a song. Harry Sulu was also in that line. Omar sat on one of the benches with one of the youngest in her lap.

"Ms. Donnar." Chekov walked up to Omar. "May I have a word with you and your sister?"

"Of course, Commander." She put the little girl on her feet. "Hella, go ask Leko to come

here please."

The little girl ran off to do as she was told. Chekov waited until Leko joined them. She sat on the bench next to Omar. "If I may..." Chekov said and sat next to the sisters. "I understand the Aces stopped at Aldebaran for maintenance and supplies."

"Yes." Omar said. "We were there for three days."

"It was a welcome break for the children." Leko added.

"They could run and play outside." Omar said.

"During these three days, were you on the ship?" Chekov asked. "Or living elsewhere?"

"Mickey arranged to rent a small house." Leko smiled. "It was wonderful. For us and for the children."

"Did Mr. Lenin stay with you?"

"No. He said there wasn't enough room." Omar said. "But we understood, he wanted a break from the children."

"He stayed with friends there." Leko said.

"Do you think that is when the bomb was put on the ship?" Omar asked.

"Because we left it alone? Unguarded?" Leko asked.

"Perhaps." Chekov shrugged. "But it was not your job to guard the ship. Mr. Lenin must have felt the security was adequate to leave the ship unmanned. Did you meet any of Lenin's friends on the planet?"

"No." Leko answered.

"We did see him with two people." Omar turned to her sister. "In the plaza. Remember?"

"Yes. We called to him." Leko said. "But he did not hear or see us. And we had the children with us, so our attention was already stretched."

Harry came running up to the adults and said, "Uncle Pavel."

"Hello Harry." Chekov smiled at the four year old. "Where's your mother?"

"Sleeping until suppertime." Harry leaned against Chekov's leg. "Is it suppertime yet?"

"Soon. If you will let me finish my conversation, I will walk you home in a minute. Go back to your game until I call you." Harry nodded and ran off. Chekov turned back to the Donnar sisters. "Were these two people with Lenin Aldebarans?"

"I believe so." Omar said. "They were humanoids."

"Their manner of dress was Aldebaran." Leko nodded.

"Would you recognize them?"

"I don't know." Leko shrugged.

"They were not close and it was only a glimpse." Omar said. "But they seemed friendly. They would not want to hurt Mickey."

"When you came back on the ship, did you notice anything different?" Chekov asked.

"Different?" Omar asked. She turned to Leko. "I don't think so. Did you?"

"Only that Mickey did not want us to let the children near his cargo." Leko said. "We had been using the open area near the wings as a play area."

"That's right. He had several new containers in that area." Omar nodded. "But the bomb was in the engine room."

"Do you know what the cargo was?" Chekov asked. When both sisters just shook their heads, Chekov nodded and stood up. "If you can think of anything else unusual that happened while you were on the planet, please let me know."

"Of course." They said in one voice.

"Come on, Harry." Chekov called. Calling goodbye to his friends, Harry ran to Chekov. "I'll take you home. I need to talk to your father anyway."

When Captain Sulu walked into his cabin, he found the lights low and music playing softly. Jimmi was sleeping in the center of their bed. She stirred when he came in. "Harry?"

"Go back to sleep." Hikaru whispered.

"What time is it?"

"About sixteen thirty." Sulu sat on the edge of the bed. "I'm sorry I woke you."

"I have to get up anyway." Jimmi stretched and sat up. She rubbed her eyes. "I have to go get Harry. I'm glad you managed to get home early."

"I can't believe how tired I was from just a half day." Hikaru admitted. "Pat warned me not to push too hard too fast. I, of course, had to find out for myself."

"I'm sure that by tomorrow you will be as good as new." Jimmi caressed his cheek. He smiled at her.

"You could just as easily pick Harry up in half an hour." Hikaru laid his hand on her swollen belly. He could not detect the baby within. He moved his hand to her breast.

She kissed him. "Honestly Harry, I don't understand how you can want to make love to me when I look like..." She searched for the right word. "This!"

"You look beautiful to me, Jeanie." He laughed and kissed her again.

"Right." Jimmi pushed him away and said. "I'll be right back." She climbed off the bed and hurried towards the bathroom.

Hikaru had just taken off his uniform jacket when the door signal chimed. "Computer, raise lights to normal intensity. Come in."

"I found this young man in the gym." Chekov said as he and Harry walked into the captain's cabin. "He wants his dinner."

"I think we can take care of that as soon as your mom is ready." Hikaru picked Harry up and hugged him. The captain put his son down and turned to Chekov. "Did you come across any new information in the gym?"

"Lenin took on cargo on Aldebaran." Chekov reported. Sulu sat down at his desk. Chekov pulled up one of the other chairs. "He warned the Donnars to keep the children away from it."

"Hi Pavel." Jimmi smiled at him when she came back into the room. "Don't you two see enough of each other on the bridge?"

"Mommy." Harry was pulling on her long blouse before Chekov had a chance to answer her. "I'm hungry."

"We'll eat in a few minutes." Jimmi assured Harry. The little boy turned away from the

adults and retrieved a computer game to play. He sat on the floor near his parent's bed and selected a 3-D puzzle. Jimmi turned to Hikaru and asked. "Are you staying or going back to work?"

"Is that it?" Sulu asked Chekov.

"That's all that is usable." Chekov said. "Leko and Omar saw Lenin with two Aldebarans, but they could not identify them."

"And they had no idea he was smuggling?"

"None."

"Mr. Lenin was smuggling?" Jimmi asked. "He seemed so nice."

"The Donnar sisters agree with you." Chekov observed, smiling at Jimmi. "I wonder if he has that effect on all women."

"Leko and Omar are just out of school." Jimmi said. "And this trip is the first time they've left their home town. They are a bit naive."

"So what is your excuse for being taken in?" Hikaru asked.

"He said nice things about my husband." Jimmi said to Hikaru with just a hint of a smile. "I guess I shouldn't believe anything he says."

"We will be at Starbase 12 at approximately oh nine thirty." Chekov ignored the amused look that passed between husband and wife. "Do you want to question Lenin in the morning or just turn over the information to the investigator on the base?"

"Maybe it's time to use a little of that goodwill." Sulu said to Chekov. "We'll talk to him together at the beginning of first shift."

"All right." Chekov nodded. "Then I'll leave you to your dinner. Goodnight."

"Goodnight Pav." Jimmi smiled as Pavel left. She signaled Mr. Banks to bring the family dinner and started setting the table.

"When did you speak to Lenin?" Hikaru asked.

"Just before lunch. Harry, go wash your hands." Jimmi said. Harry continued playing his computer puzzle. "All he said was that he was grateful that you stood up for him on the Breen ship."

"You didn't mention this at lunch." Hikaru said. Jimmi shrugged. Sulu watched his son for a moment. "Hikaru. Now."

"Ok." Harry said without looking up from his game. He continued playing.

"Any reason why you are keeping this from me?"

Jimmi stopped what she was doing and stared at him. "I didn't know the subject was open for discussion."

"What's that suppose to mean?" Hikaru asked.

"Hikaru Leonard Sulu!" Jimmi turned to her son. "You will be sorry if you make me say it again. Now!"

"I'm going." Harry reluctantly turned off his game and slowly headed for the bathroom.

Jimmi watched him go then turned back to her husband. "You have not been inclined to discuss what happened on that ship. That doesn't make any sense to me, but I've been told to leave it alone. Now you are giving me a hard time because that's what I've done."

"I am not trying to give you a hard time." Hikaru looked her directly in the eye. "I am just

surprised that you hadn't mentioned it."

The door signal chimed. Jimmi stepped into the door's sensor range. The door slid open to let Mr. Banks come in. He deposited the tray on the table and left. Harry reappeared and took his place at the table. Harry immediately started telling jokes. It wasn't until after Harry had settled down to sleep that Jimmi and Hikaru could really talk again.

Captain Sulu sat at his desk checking in with Lt. Lee on the bridge when Jimmi came out of Harry's room. She started picking up his toys and stowing them in the travel case. When he was done with Lee, he watched Jimmi.

"Shouldn't Harry do that?" Hikaru asked. She sat on the floor to pick up his connecting blocks. "They are his toys."

"If we are leaving in the morning, they have to be packed." Jimmi shrugged and tossed a handful of the small blocks into the case. "And I'd rather not fight with him in the morning about it."

"He has to learn."

"He's only four."

"Can you do that later?" He asked.

Jimmi looked up at him and sighed. "Every day it gets just a little harder to get up and down from the floor. This will only take a couple of minutes."

He sat down on the floor next to her. "Then let me help you." He retrieved a few blocks from under the bed. Jimmi smiled at him. "Jeanie, I don't want you to feel you can't talk to me. I thought we were making some progress in my ready room yesterday."

"You still haven't told me what happened on the Breen ship." Jimmi said. "And everyone, including Mr. Lenin, assumes I know."

"I would prefer if you stayed away from Lenin." Hikaru said. "He's trouble."

"I don't care about him." Jimmi said. She picked up a few more blocks and avoided looking at him as she added. "But I feel like I am still walking on eggshells around you. I'm not sure what I can or can't say."

"Say whatever you feel. You always have before."

"Why won't you tell me what happened?" Now she looked him in the eye.

"What do you want me to say?" Hikaru took one of her hands in his. "Do you want to hear what questions they asked? Do you want to know the methods they used to exact truthful answers?"

"I'm not sure if I want to leave that to my imagination or not." Jimmi admitted. "But I do want to know how you felt."

"Angry, helpless, afraid." He said softly. "I was determined not to let them see it. My training helped there. I guess I didn't want you to see it either and I wasn't prepared for the fear in your eyes."

"Sorry." Jimmi looked away from him and concentrated on the small blocks. She said. "I guess I better learn to hide that fear if this experiment is going to continue."

"No, don't hide it from me." Hikaru said. Touching her face, he brought her attention back to him. "I thought you had decided families don't belong on starships."

"It's hard. I never really thought about this possibility when we started." Jimmi said.

"But I still want to be with you when ever I can and I want Harry to be with you."

"I wouldn't be surprised if the experiment is re-evaluated after this incident." Hikaru put the last of the blocks in the case and closed it. He stood up and reached down to give his wife a hand up.

She stood in front of him, still holding his hands and sighed, "I blew it."

"No." Hikaru assured her. "But the opponents of the experiment in the surgeon general's office sighted just this kind of problem. Someone from the SGO may ask you some questions."

"You mean someone other than Dad." Jimmi said with a frown.

"I don't know." He smiled and stroked her belly. "Whoever it is just take it in stride."

"What does that mean?" She asked as his hands wrapped around her to caress her back. "It sounds like Starfleet code."

"It is." Hikaru kissed her then explained. "It means answer truthfully without worrying how your answers will be interpreted."

"You seem to be working up to something here, Captain." Jimmi smiled and rested her hands on his shoulders. "You must be feeling better."

"I am tired. So I don't plan to stay up late." He kissed her again. "And this is our last night together for quite awhile. I'd like to take my time and enjoy myself. You didn't have other plans, did you?"

"Can't think of a thing."

Captain Sulu met Commander Chekov in the dining hall for an early breakfast. It was nearly empty since first shift was not due to report for another hour and a half. They finished breakfast and enjoyed a second cup of coffee and talked over strategy.

"Do you think the Breen knew about the smuggling?" Chekov asked.

"I don't know." Sulu said. "Their politics are confusing. Retnec said the Ianis family was powerful but they must be on the rebellion's side of the civil war or the marriage wouldn't have been so important."

"The Ambassador is obviously trying to put an end to the war." Chekov agreed. "But the rest of his family does not necessarily agree. Perhaps Layg Ianis bought the thorio-phosgene and when his uncle found out, he had the ship destroyed."

"Lenin did not want to meet up with Layg again." Sulu said. "I don't think they were doing business together. Lenin may have other contacts in the Breen empire, but I think his partner on New Freedom is more likely to be involved with the smuggling."

"This Dahl character is linked with many names on New Freedom." Chekov sipped his coffee. "Most of which are also wanted all over Federation space."

"Any details?"

"The official records are sketchy." Chekov said. "But last night Rand and Ensign DuBois spent some time linking with the more informal internal nets on New Freedom. It did not take long for them to bypass the security codes of the message logs."

"What did they come up with?"

"Dahl has money and power." Chekov said. "Most of the messages are anonymous. Some are afraid of him. Some ask for his help. He apparently backs many businesses on the station."

"Let's see what Lenin knows about him." Sulu finished his coffee.

When the captain and first officer walked into the recovery room in sick bay, Mickey Lenin was sitting up on his bed with his legs dangling over the side. Dr. Patrick was scanning him.

"You look better, Mr. Lenin." Sulu said.

"Almost as good as new." Lenin smiled. "Heh, Doc?"

"Yes." Patrick said. "There is no medical reason for Mr. Lenin to remain in sick bay, Captain."

"Good." Sulu said. "We will arrive at Starbase Twelve in less than two hours. You will be handed over to their custody, Mr. Lenin."

"Custody?" Lenin asked. "I am being arrested? What's the charge?"

"Smuggling." Chekov said. "Thorio-phosgene."

"I was taking a group of children to their parents." Lenin said. "That's all. I am sure the Donnar sisters will vouch for me in that regard."

"Perhaps." Chekov said. "But they also told me you took on cargo at Aldebaran Three. Cargo you warned them to stay away from."

"I was just picking up something for a friend." Lenin said. "I had no idea what was in those containers."

"Ricardo Dahl?" Sulu asked.

"Yeah." Lenin nodded readily. "Ric knew I was in the area. He asked me to pick it up."

"He knew you were in the area because you are partners." Chekov said. "And you are asking us to believe that you don't know what your partner is doing?"

"I had some serious damage to my ship last year and no way to pay for repairs." Lenin said. "Ric loaned me the money for the repairs. In exchange he took a part ownership in the ship. I was paying him back as quickly as I could."

"Thorio-phosgene is a rare commodity." Chekov said. "And quite valuable. Is that how you were paying him back?"

"I picked up some cargo for him." Lenin insisted. "That's all."

"Where were you to deliver it?" Chekov asked. Lenin shrugged. "You were planning to carry around this dangerous substance without any idea of where you would deliver it?"

"Ric knew my scheduled flight plan." Lenin said. "He would have sent me a destination eventually."

"I find that hard to believe." Sulu said. "Ricardo Dahl is an apparently cautious man. Surely he would want this nerve gas in transit for as short a time as possible. Especially since he knew the Breen were after you."

"How would he know that?" Lenin asked.

"Didn't he ask who damaged your ship before bailing you out?" The captain asked.

Lenin took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Finally he looked at Sulu and asked. "Shouldn't I be talking to a lawyer about now?"

First Officer

"That can be arranged on the base." Chekov nodded.