

Dr. Evelyn Ping was second in command in Excelsior's medical department. After she made sure the mistake had been corrected, she walked into her boss's office without signaling. Dr. Patrick sat slumped at his desk staring at nothing. To anyone that did not know him, his expression was about as blank as a human expression could be.

Ping did not wait for him to say anything. "What was that all about?"

Dr. Patrick turned his chair towards her. "He knows procedure. How long has Goldberg been on this ship? There was no excuse for it."

"It was a mistake, Pat." Ping said. "A minor one at that. This is not at all like you."

Tim Patrick mentally shook himself. She was right. "I'm sorry Evelyn. I will speak to Toby about it."

Dr. Ping sat down in the chair across his desk from him and studied him. "You want to talk about it?"

Pat smiled. "I'm fine."

Quoting her boss, she said, "Saying you are fine does not make it so."

Pat shook his head slowly and almost laughed. How many times had he said that? To the Captain, to Chekov, to half a dozen command officers? "Ok, maybe fine is the wrong word. But I can handle it."

"You were held prisoner for days. You were treated like a lab animal." Ping said. "Trying to control everything around you is not an unusual reaction."

"Is that what I am doing?" Pat asked softly.

"Seems that way to me." Ping said. "How are you sleeping?"

"Sporadically." He admitted.

"Nightmares?" She asked. He shrugged. She grinned at him and used another one of his favorite phrases, "I will take that to be a yes shrug."

"It was." Pat could not help but laugh at her. It had been a long time since he had been on the receiving end of this kind of conversation. He sighed and said, "I have woken up a couple of times the last two nights. I don't remember the dreams, just the fear and the helplessness."

"And the anger?"

"Yes." Pat said quietly to himself as much as to her. "Anger."

"What did you do about it?" Ping asked.

Again he shrugged. After the nightmares going back to sleep had not been an option. "I put on some music. I took a long hot shower. I came to work early."

"So, how do you think that's working as a strategy for taking care of the problem?" Ping asked with a smile.

"It could be better." Pat said. Dr Ping got up and went to the medicine locker that was hidden in the wall of the office. She opened it and took out a hypospray. She attached the hypo to the medical computer and entered the dosage she wanted.

"Pat, I want you to go home and get some sleep." She said. She walked around the desk and administered the hypo to his neck without asking permission. "Take tomorrow off."

"And that was?" He asked.

"Twenty cc's of mellatronaphria."

"Evelyn!" Pat looked up at her. The only time he could ever look up at her was when he was sitting and she was not. He was well over a foot taller than Dr. Ping. "I'll be out for a week."

"Probably about 24 hours." She laughed. "You better get home or you will fall asleep at

your desk in about twenty minutes. And if that happens, I will assign Goldberg the task of putting you in a bed in sick bay.”

“Ok, ok.” Patrick stood up. “I’m going.”

“Good night Boss.” Ping grinned and walked out of his office. She took a moment send a message to the Captain that his chief medical officer would not be on duty again for at least 24 hours.