

The Adventure Continues...Endings

"Very well," Three told T'Pina. "I will return Starbase 410 to its original position in return for the information. If I find that you have tricked me, I can always start my search again."

T'Pina nodded to Lt. Commander K'SQqwa, who replaced the isolinear chip in the arch. Three faded away almost immediately.

Lt. Laura-Jean Morris asked T'Pina, "Do you think she will do it?"

"You tell me, you programmed her." T'Pina told her. T'Pina sighed heavily. "Yes, I do believe she will do what she has agreed to. You programmed her to be honest and somewhat trusting."

"She is correct, she can just start again, bouncing the station all over the galaxy." K'SQqwa said.

"Unless we...get down to Engineering and disable the inverse polaron bubble system the minute we arrive." T'Pina ordered. "I surmise by its use, that it is integral to the transport system Three uses. Without it, I believe the station would be torn apart in the process."

A much beaten and scraped Yarda approached the escape pods. Somewhere, he had lost his fancy wig and gained a black eye. Behind him, on an anti-gravity cart was as much gold pressed Latinum as he thought he could squeeze into a life pod with him and still make it. He could hear the sounds of someone closing an escape hatch around the corner. Then, he heard it launch. Assuming whoever had been there had left, he rounded the corner to see one of his Orion slave women standing there between him and the last escape pod.

"Ah, my pretty, what are you doing here?" He asked

S'ena turned to see Yarda. "I'm leaving." She said.

Yarda made a show of looking behind S'ena at the escape pod. "And how do you, a dumb slave girl, expect to do that?"

"By climbing into the escape pod, closing the hatch and detonating the ejection charges."

Yarda was taken aback. "No slave girl is smart enough to know that!"

"Then it is a good thing I'm really Lt. Commander S'ena of Starfleet. Now, I assume from the blaring horns, and the way the rats are leaving this sinking ship, that your base is about to explode. If you leave all that Latinum behind, I think we can both squeeze into the pod and escape."

Yarda spread his arms wide. "I can see the logic of the situation. Shall we?"

When S'ena turned to prime the ejection charges, Yarda sprang on her.

Brian Starr sat in the command chair of the U.S.S. Sacagawea, a hundred year old Federation scout ship. He assessed the situation. More and more people were answering the call to take up battle stations. The prisoners seemed to understand that this was a fight for their freedom, and to fail meant their very lives.

The old ship's shields barely withstood the pirate onslaught and the crew couldn't transfer any power to the engines while they stayed under fire. What power they could spare, they used to locate people on the asteroid, turned starship, pirate base. If they could only lower their shields for a minute, they could beam over all of the remaining prisoners and leave.

"Bridge to Engineering, Remora, what can you tell me?" Brian asked.

"Nothing you don't already know. I can only engage the warp drive with power from the shields. If you lower them, the pirates will destroy us. If we stay here, they will penetrate our shields. Either way, we are stuck without water."

"Stuck without water?" Brian asked.

"I lived on a desert world for a while. It's an old saying, similar to up the creek..."

"...without a paddle. I read you. Starr out." Brian looked at the main viewer. "Come on old bird, help me out here."

Out in space, the Klingon Bird-of-prey, IKV Dragon Fist, dove between the pirate base and the Sacagawea, using its own battered shields to give the old scout a chance.

"Transfer power to engines! Go to warp one!"

As if a hound released from its leash, the Sacagawea leapt from her orbit and disappeared in a flash of light.

Aboard the Dragon Fist, things were not going so well...

"More power to the shields!" Captain KiHQaS ordered through the din of battle.

"There is no more power!" The weapons control officer yelled back as the panel beside him exploded. He was thrown across the bridge and landed with a thud. When he didn't get back up, Anarita Jat assumed his position.

"He was correct!" Anarita reported. "By using ourselves as a shield for the Sacagawea, we became the only target for the pirate weapons. They are tearing us apart!"

"Sensors! Has the Sacagawea moved off yet?"

"Yes, Captain!"

"Helm, get us moving! I want some distance!"

"Helm does not answer, Captain!"

Madia Amme arrived on the deserted pirate bridge. Thanking the Prophets, she rushed to the sensor console. She had to find her crewmates. A quick scan with the internal sensors revealed no one but a few Orions still on the base.

Where can they all be? She thought.

Madia activated the external sensors. The space battle was still going on, and the Klingon bird-of-prey was losing! Quickly, she moved to the weapons console, but she found it locked. It would automatically fire on any ship without the correct Identify Friend or Foe codes. She couldn't turn the weapons off, but she thought she could change the target.

Madia moved to the station security console. Surprisingly, it was left unlocked. She deftly changed the IFF codes and moved to the Communications console. On a Klingon frequency, she announced, "Change your IFF codes to match this configuration." She moved back to the weapons console. If only they did what she asked.

"Captain!" The communications officer yelled. "We are receiving a message from the pirate base!"

"Probably an order for us to surrender." KiHQaS said. "That will never happen."

"Perhaps they wish to surrender to us?" Jat said.

KiHQaS looked at Jat strangely.

"Well, it can't hurt to listen to it." Jat told her.

"Very well, put it on."

The message played on the bridge speakers. "Change your IFF codes to match this configuration."

"That sounds like Madia Amme!" Jat said.

"Is there any more?" KiHQaS asked the communications officer.

"No, just some music, followed by an IFF code."

The bridge rocked again. Sparks flew from a power circuit overhead.

"A trick?" KiHQaS asked Jat.

"I don't see how changing our IFF will assist the pirates. Play the music."

KiHQaS nodded to the comm. officer. "Play it for us."

A low sound came from the speakers. "Da, da, da, dum, de, da, dum, de, da."

Followed by a slightly higher sounding: "Da, da, da, dit, de da, dump de dum."

"That is Amme, she is singing an old Bajoran love song!"

"Change the codes now!" KiHQaS ordered.

On the pirate bridge, the Klingon bird-of-prey in the targeting scanners changed from red to green, while one of the pirate ships which hadn't gotten far enough away, changed to red. The pirate base weapons immediately turned on the new foe. It went up like a firework.

The Klingon ship moved away, then turned for another attack. Madia jumped to the microphone. "No, I am in control of the bridge! Don't fire!"

But it was too late. As soon as the bird-of-prey fired, the base computer realized it had been tricked, and responded to the new threat. Even though Madia tried, the computer wouldn't fall for the same trick twice.

Madia had to make a decision. She had been unable to locate any of her former crewmates, and the pirate base was on a count down to explode. She had to either abort the countdown to warp core breach, or try to find a way off of the base. Checking the time, she decided that she had done all she could to find her friends. She could only hope they were somewhere else like the sensors reported. With a final look she left the pirate bridge, on her way to find a means of escape!

"Sir," Balor reported, "the pirate base just took out one of its own vessels."

"What?" Brian jumped up from his chair. "Verify that!"

Balor looking into his sensors again. "Yes, the base stopped firing at the bird-of-prey and took out one of its own ships."

"Helm, turn the ship around." Brian ordered.

"What!" Balor protested. "We can't go back there! We barely escaped the first time!"

"Bridge to Engineering, Ramora, can I take us back into battle?" Brian asked.

"Yes, she has her second wind now," Ramora's voice said hesitantly, "but don't expect it to last very long."

"Understood, bridge out." Brian looked at Balor. "This is a Starfleet vessel. Someone on that rock is still on our side. It's my job to get them out."

"But not mine!" Balor reminded him. "Nor any of the other prisoners you have on board."

"You may lodge a formal complaint when we get back to Starbase 410, or leave now in an escape pod. We'll pick you up on the way back, provided we live without your aid."

Buroo stood up from the environmental control station. In a deep voice he announced, "Lou says go back we should. People help there need." He held out the small furry creature for emphasis.

Brian looked back at Balor. "Even Lou wants us to go back. You can't argue with a mutant space hamster."

Balor threw his hands up in frustration, but resumed his post.

"The Station is now returned to its original position." Three reported to the crew in Ops. "Now, please provide the information."

"Allow us to verify our location." T'Pina said.

"Re-establishing sensor web." Three answered.

"Captain," Shepherd told T'Pina. "We are back at our post. Picking up message traffic." She hesitated while she listened. "Captain! There is a battle going on with the pirates."

"Where, Ensign?" T'Pina asked.

"Approximately 200 light years from here, toward the galactic rim. The General reports he is heading there at maximum warp, but doesn't think he'll make it in time." Shepherd looked up. "It is an all ships call, but no one seems to be able to reach the battle."

Three interrupted. "Provide the information."

T'Pina sat down on a nearby chair. She sighed heavily. Her emotional control was slipping. She was tired and sore. Firmly, she forced the pain from her mind. With calm determination, she submerged her emotions. With a firm grip on her cane, she sat up in her chair and addressed Three.

"Three, the reason you can not find your home is because you no longer have one to find. In all the universe, there is only one you. Look into yourself and you will see, not the creature who arrived here, but a fully emotional personality."

"I do not understand." Three responded.

"Yes, you do, you just refuse to admit it. You told me the programming you invaded when you first arrived was now inseparable from you. You are not now the creature who first came aboard. I ask you, do you remember when you first left your home world?"

"No, I was too young to remember."

"Do you remember your primary purpose?"

"Yes," Three hesitated, "I was to seek out new life forms and new civilizations, then return with the information."

"Three, from what I can gather, you were a mindless computer program sent out ages ago by an unknown species. Somewhere along the way, you were intercepted by a space vessel and your program became active. You traveled with the vessel until you found another one, then another and another. I submit that you have been performing your mission ever since. Eventually, you became sentient, and your core being still wished to complete your task. Only you arrived here on Starbase 410 and hid in a holo-program. The longer you hid, the more you interacted with humanoids, learning their emotions. Now you are truly a unique life form. There is no one else like you."

"Three," T'Pina stood up to address the ceiling. "You have but one more step to take to become a complete person."

There was no answer from Three.

The IKV Dragon Fist shook as another disrupter bolt penetrated the shields. "Report!" Captain KiHQaS shouted over the din of chatter and noise coming from the bridge around her.

"Engines are defiantly off line!" Commodore Jat yelled back. "Shields are at 20 percent and failing!"

The two leaders locked eyes. Unless something happened quickly, they would all die in the next few seconds.

"Something materializing in space behind us!" Screamed the Sensor operator.

"Main viewer!" Barked KiHQaS!

Before them, on the main view screen, appeared a large mushroom shaped object. It was a Federation Starbase! They could see the enemy asteroid starship change it's target, and the station started to receive the bulk of the disrupter fire. In all their hoped for dreams of salvation, never had they thought that they would be rescued by the appearance of Starbase 410!

Captain T'Pina sat down in a chair in Ops, still calmly giving orders. "Keep the shields raised. Scan the area for ships and life signs." When Three had informed her of the space battle, T'Pina had asked her to activate the Dimensional transport system again. The table in the middle of Ops began to display a 3 dimensional

hologram of the battle. In the center stood the massive starbase, now only three inches tall. Tiny ships and statistics started to float around in mid air, a miniature of the space around the station.

"Taking all incoming fire from the pirate base with ease, Captain." Lt. Laura-Jean Morris said.

"I have located three medium sized ships and several small fighters. The fighters appear to be drifting, except for two which are keeping their distance from the battle. Numerous escape pods are leaving the area quickly." Ens. Laura Shepherd said.

"Transport the occupants of the fighters and escape pods into the station holding areas." T'Pina said. "Status on the other ships?"

"One is the Sacagawea, it is returning to the battle. Another is a Klingon bird-of-prey. It has lost its engines and its shields are now powering back up. The last is a pirate vessel, preparing to go to warp."

"Disable the pirate vessel, Lt. Morris."

"Disabling the pirate vessel, Captain." Morris replied.

The starbase's phasers reached out and kissed the engine section of the pirate ship, rendering it immobile.

"Status on the enemy asteroid base." T'Pina asked.

"There is a warp core breach in progress. I estimate one minute until total destruction." Morris replied.

"Raise the Sacagawea and have her tow the Klingon vessel away from the asteroid. Get a tractor beam on the pirate ship and any escape pods you can still reach, bring them within our shields."

"I found him!" Three interrupted. "I found him!"

"Three, now is not the time to interrupt." Shepherd told her. "We are in the middle of a battle."

"But Jartan is here! On the Sacagawea!"

"That is nice, Three. But that asteroid over there is about to explode, and right now we need to make sure everyone survives. Can you help us do that, please?"

"Sure, scanners indicate there are still 27 life forms aboard the asteroid. Commencing transport now."

Shepherd turned to T'Pina and said, "We have transported everyone on board the asteroid to the station, ma'am."

"The Sacagawea has attached a tractor beam to the Klingon ship and gone back to warp. It should be safe." Morris reported. "Asteroid core breach imminent!"

Out in the darkness of space, a new star was born and quickly died. Its light flashed and then faded. On a distant planet, near the rim of the galaxy, several years later, the bright flash was noticed by an alien species. It formed the basis for their religion and was debated for centuries. Was it a sign from god? What had it been if not? Had it happened at all?

Closer in time and space, the energies struck the station's shields and were held in check. On board the Sacagawea, the deck shook as they rode the shock wave. On the IKV Dragon Fist, the crew were tossed around like rag dolls in a clothes drier, but they survived. Escape pods, too close to the blast, were disintegrated in an instant. Those far enough away to survive the blast, had their occupants toasted by radiation. Some, further away, were knocked off course, with their controls fried. A few managed to escape, but were lost in the depths of space.

Later, in the Ops briefing room, Commodore Jat said, "What I want to know is how you managed to move the station to the edge of the galaxy! How did you even know we were here?"

“For the last few weeks, the station computer has been the home of an alien life form. It was occupying Lt. Morris and Ens. Shepherd’s holo-space traffic control program. It was this alien who facilitated the moving of the Starbase.”

“You mean Three moved the station?”

“Yes, that is what I said. It picked up your all ship’s call...”

“From 200 light years away?”

“And I asked her to move us to you.”

“And she can move us back to where we belong?”

Three’s voice came over the intercom. “Yes, I am preparing to do so even now.”

“I believe, Commodore, that is in our best interests to return the station to its original position as soon as possible. This has not been the only place Starbase 410 has visited recently.”

Jat raised her eyebrow in question. “Perhaps you should brief me on what you have been doing with my station while I was gone.”

In every place intelligent life inhabits, there is a communal gathering place. On the Enterprise, this is located in Ten Forward. On Deep Space Nine, it is called Quark’s Bar. On Starbase 410, it is called Kentford Hall. It is a quiet little bar, normally with a nice view of the “ram qul”, or Night Fire, nebula, taking up an entire wall. The survivors of the Sacagawea incident, as it was beginning to be called, gathered there to exchange their stories.

“...and the whole time, we didn’t know who or what was causing the station to flit through space.” Laura Shepherd finished.

“Wow, and to imagine, all I had to do was take a few tests.” Jeanette Warren said.

“I hear Major Amme has taken about all the tests she can handle for now.” Saryena Remora said.

“Yes, she has the doctors activating the Emergency Medical Holograms to take care of her. At least he can’t be hurt by flying things.” Warren said.

“But did you hear how she survived?” Shepherd asked. “She reached the fighter flight deck, stole a space suit, and depressurized the entire deck to shove her away from the explosion. She must have known that it would never get her free of the radiation.”

“But it did get her far enough away from the asteroid for us to pick her up on our sensors at the last second. If Three hadn’t transported her aboard, she would have been fried.” Morris

“When are we scheduled to return the station to where it belongs?” asked John Borda.

“Within the next few hours, after we finish scanning for....” Morris hesitated.

Everyone looked over towards a figure sitting separate from them, but close enough to hear, if he had been paying attention. Brian Starr sat at a table looking out the window at space, half finished drink sitting in front of him.

“Do you think there was any way she could have gotten off the pirate base in time?” Warren whispered to Morris.

“Three is doing a comprehensive search of the entire area. If S’ena can be found, she will be. But so many of the escape pods were atomized when the warp core breeched...”

Brian finished his drink and stood up. They all watched as he left the bar, his shoulders slumped as if in defeat.