



STAR TREK  
**RE**EMERGENCE

Hugo Calvin

**Part IV**

# STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

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## Chapter 51

“Thrusters on full,” Ensign Ester said, pushing her hands forward on the navigational console. “Moving in after the *Excelsior*.”

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Within seconds, the bridge crew could already feel a quiet rumble as the ship moved into the Draloos V atmosphere. “*Hull stress and temperature are up minimally,*” Thorn said. “*No damage to the ship.*”

From the back of the bridge, welcome or not, Lieutenant Commander LeCroy gave out a loud sigh of disapproval. “*Ahem...*” he grunted.

“Yes, what is it Lieutenant Commander?” Seth asked.

“Captain, if you intend on entering the planet’s atmosphere like an *idiot* that is Santiago, then may I recommend that you switch on the *Aegis*-mode. Like

the *Excelsior*, the *Dragonfly* is not designed for atmospheric entry or planetary landing of any kind. If something goes wrong, it's a crash-landing from there.”

Seth gritted his teeth slightly. He might have confined LeCroy to his quarters for his disrespectful language, but this was hardly the time. If LeCroy had a point, Seth wanted to know what it was. Seth turned to him and raised a brow.

LeCroy explained further. “My point *is*, captain, the contracted mode of the ship and the added armor will reduce the stress on the hull, protect us from the heat,

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and make it easier for us to maneuver while we are down there.”

Seth tried to keep an objective mind. *Fine*, he thought. “Do what he says,” Seth ordered to Lieutenant Commander Thorn.

“*Aye.*” The bridge dimmed further, lit only by the mix of red and blue lights of the computer consoles from all over the bridge. Though technically not on red alert, the new defensive mode of the ship automatically had it activated. Presumably, if the bridge crew had

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reason to take a highly defensive posture, there was good reason to put the crew on highest alert.

LeCroy grimaced slightly and made his way towards the turbolift doors. “Naturally, I’ll be in engineering if anyone needs me,” he said, “...*ready to start pulling rabbits out of a hat when we get into trouble...*”

“How are you holding up, Ensign?” Seth asked.

“A...a little nervous, sir. I have less experience navigating a *starship* through an atmosphere than I do normal space. Believe it or not, compared to the chaotic winds of the atmosphere, *space is easy.*”

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“How much ‘less’ experience are you talking about?”

“With a starship? Umm...*none.*”

Seth tried to smile encouragingly. “You’ll do fine. I just need you to concentrate. The first order of business will be to transport any injured officers aboard the *Excelsior* over here to our sickbay, no matter how weak the signal. I need *you* to stay within transporter range the entire time we’re down there. Make it easy for our transporter operators by keeping close and not making your movements too erratic, got it?”

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“Aye, sir. And the second...?” Actually, Ester and the entire bridge already knew, and she felt silly having asked the question.

Seth sat back in his chair, and sighed. “Lieutenant Commander Thorn,” he said. “*Arm weapons.*”

## Chapter 52

As a whole, the Annecta consciousness on Draloos V winced in pain as it felt the death of the *Excelsior* colony. They did not think that the assault on their ship would end so badly; they had grossly underestimated

the resilience of Captain Santiago and his crew. They had only synthesized six humanoids, and the four that were sent to the *Excelsior* were all killed. They should have made many more, but they were just as guilty as any other intelligent species of three-dimensions: *they could not predict the future.*

Synthesizing the humanoids was also energy-intensive. They could not simply create a legion on command. At least, not without a lot more time. They had two left over from the initial assault, and several more humanoids were in the works. They would be

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completed soon to try and fend off the human attack. But the Annecta was concerned that this may not be enough, or that they wouldn't be done in time. And now it looked like they had to deal with Captain Seth, too.

The Annecta could almost *feel* the two ships torching the skies as they moved closer and closer towards them. They knew what was coming. The enormous planetary consciousness felt something that it had never felt before.

It felt *fear*.

## Chapter 53

Once more Dr. Min found himself in the holodeck, testing his latest compound. From laboratory to holodeck to laboratory again, Min found himself

completely exhausted. Fortunately, compound EM-9653D proved to be his most promising antiviral candidate. Min couldn't find a way to *prevent* the infection; EM-9653D could only interfere with the mechanism of the virus *after* the patient contracted the virus to prevent it from replicating. Min only hoped that there wouldn't be any unexpected lethal side effects, or that would render it completely useless. It didn't look like this was the case in his earlier studies, but even in the 25<sup>th</sup> century, not everything about the human body could be predicted with accuracy.

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“Computer, run simulation again on infected human patients using compound EM-9653D, a hundred milligrams daily delivered orally. Split the active cohort into groups infected with the airborne virus and the wildtype, and run them against a placebo. Accelerate time to twelve weeks and record plasma virus levels in each patient. Record any side effects.”

“Acknowledged,” the computer said.

Min watched again as rows and rows of holographic patients blurred in fast motion. Dr. Min carefully read

the results with a hopeful eye. Patients in the active cohort achieved an *undetectable* level of virus in their blood and tissues. He couldn't believe it. Side effects seemed very manageable: stomach ache, a little fatigue, some nausea and vomiting. Certainly nothing that raised any red flags.

“Computer, are there any significant differences in the effectiveness of the drug against the airborne virus and the wildtype virus?”

“The difference is negligible.”

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“Now accelerate time index by five years. Continue as normal, cutting off treatment after six full months.”

“Acknowledged.”

“Any signs of infection or malignancies throughout that time period?”

“Negative.”

“Any signs of neuropathy, neurological disorder, or abnormalities in cardiac function?”

“Negative.”

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“Any other side effect or abnormality beyond what is currently listed?”

“Gastrointestinal discomfort occurred in a larger percentage of patients and in greater severity after the twelve weeks of treatment,” the computer responded.

*Stomach cramps. I think they can live with that, Min thought. Bottom line: it worked. It WORKED!* Even a scientist on Vulcan would find *some* excitement in this. “Computer, begin large-scale replication of compound EM-9653D in the laboratory replicators, *immediately.*”

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“Unable to comply...compound EM-9653D has not been fully characterized for replication. A minimum of two-hundred milligrams of the compound in greater than 97 per cent purity is required for full characterization and analysis.”

*SHIT!* A frown immediately grew on Min’s face. He only had a handful of milligrams at his disposal, something he picked up at a medical conference that just happened to be applicable for this disease. And running theoretical experiments on holographic human patients wasn’t at all the same as having a fully

characterized compound for mass replication. *Guess we have to do this the old-fashioned way*, he thought. He punched his combadge. “Dr. Min to sickbay.”

“This is Dr. Alexandria reporting, I’ve got my hands full with patients from the *Excelsior* right now. What is it, Doctor?”

“Do you know if we happen to have a chemist on board?”

## Chapter 54

“Sir, the *Excelsior* has steadied herself,” Ester said. “Her thrusters are engaged, and...well, *she’s right-side up again.*”

“Good,” Captain Seth responded.

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“She’s six-thousand feet above the planet surface, and falling.”

“Captain, transporter rooms are reporting that they can’t initiate any transports off the *Excelsior*,” Thorn said. “Her shields are up.”

Seth had a frustrated and perplexed look.

“They’re probably trying to minimize damage to their ship as they burn through the atmosphere,” the science officer said.

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“Or perhaps trying to be cautious of any counter-attack from the Annecta,” Counselor Jenovia added.

“Hail them, Lieutenant Commander,” Seth quickly ordered.

*“They’re not responding,”* Thorn replied.

*“Again.”*

Thorn just shook his head. *Alan, just answer the damn hail,* Seth thought. “Thorn, will you please fire a warning shot across their bow?”

“*Gladly,*” he replied, perhaps a little too enthusiastically. Any chance for him to fire the new phasers. “*It worked,*” he said. “*They want to talk.*”

The image of the *Excelsior* bridge flickered on the main viewscreen, but what they saw shocked Seth and the entire bridge crew. The *Excelsior*'s bridge was smoky and dark, and the crew that occupied the bridge was exceptionally scarce. Captain Santiago sat in his chair, leaning forward with his head drooped down and facing the floor. With such a minimal bridge crew, he looked as if he operated the *Excelsior* entirely on his

own. He raised his head slightly, and stared forth with dark and burning eyes. “*This your way of knocking on my window?*”

“Alan...*your ship...*”

“You know what I need to do, Darren.”

“Alan, I need you to lower your shields for the moment. We want to transport your injured over here. Our sensors show you have critically wounded officers there. We have sickbay and medical teams ready to take them in.”

“I can’t risk any of those *things* transporting over here. The last time they boarded my ship they just about blew it up,” he said sharply.

“Somehow I don’t think the shields will stop them. We had an experience here on the *Dragonfly* when they were able to jump *through* a force field. And whatever mechanism they are using to transport is different than our transporter beams. Our sensors show that you have a *lot* of injured crewmen.” And dead crewmen, too, but somehow Seth just couldn’t bring himself to say it.

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Santiago grunted. “You don’t know the half of it; we have a lot more than you realize. We’ve lost all of our senior medical personnel,” he said. “*Among many others...*” Santiago sadly looked around the main bridge as he said it.

“You’ll have to take a chance with this one,” Seth told him. “We’ll try to be as quick as we ca-”

Santiago cut him off.

Seth swallowed. It didn’t take a genius to know that his long-time friend was pissed. Seth could only sympathize over what he had lost in the brutal attack by

the Annecta. Whenever Santiago was on the losing side of anything, he had the habit of being exceptionally quiet as he re-grouped his thoughts. What worried Seth now was that Santiago might be putting himself on a complete *kamikaze*-mission to destroy his enemy. He had seen this before in him. This wasn't about the protection of the human colony anymore.

As Seth sat back down in the captain's chair, he remembered that he had noticed something subtle and very disturbing over his last conversation with Santiago, something that he couldn't shake. It was when

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Santiago had mentioned what they had lost in the attack, and how he looked over to his first officer's seat when he said it.

*Commander Ariele was missing from the main bridge.*

## Chapter 55

“We’re getting incoming reports from all transporter rooms,” Counselor Jenovia reported. “We’ve transported most of the injured crew directly to our sickbay. We managed *two-hundred sixty* injured

officers and civilians. And that doesn't include the eighty-five who are already dead.”

Seth shuddered. *What did the Annecta do to them?*

“Our sickbay is at full capacity and our medical teams have their hands full. All Medical Holographic Nurses have been activated and are in use,” Ensign Ester added.

“Good,” Seth replied. “Now let's get this show on the road.”

*“They're three-thousand feet above the planet surface. Their hull temperature is stabilizing as they*

*slow their descend into the lower atmosphere,”* Thorn said. *“As is ours.”*

“They’re moving towards the central continent near the equator of the planet. The same area we visited last time.”

*“...One-thousand feet...”* Thorn said. *“...They’re charging their phasers banks.”*

“Captain,” Counselor Jenovia whispered, gesturing towards the main viewscreen. “The *Excelsior...*”

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The entire bridge crew of the *Dragonfly* could see the *Excelsior* laying waste to the rich life that occupied the ecosystem of the planet. The forest erupted in a blaze of fire that stretched out for miles. They could see the wildlife vaporize, and the atmosphere darkened with the heavy smoke. This was one time when a crisp and vivid viewscreen did not invoke a sense of awe or beauty.

The sky above the surface rained photon torpedoes. If a ship ever had a face of anger, it was the *Excelsior*. She fired her phasers at maximum intensity,

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burning deeper and deeper into the ground, determined to breach the barrier that protected the Annecta aliens. Santiago was going to get through at all costs.

But all of a sudden, the *Excelsior* stopped.

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Both crews waited for the heavy smoke to dissipate so they could see the damage that the *Excelsior* had done. While the forest was cleared and the ground dug up by the phaser fire, the barrier was only moderately penetrated. It would take significantly more firepower to breach it and expose the Annecta aliens.

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*“Incoming hail from the Excelsior,”* Thorn announced.

“On-screen,” Seth ordered.

“...I think they knew we were coming, Darren,”  
Santiago said.

“Maybe so.”

“We’re forced to use our standard weapons to try to break through the barrier. My Chief Engineer wasn’t able to complete the entirety of the weapon before the assault, which we needed to punch through this

thing. Only Dr. Centress' part of the weapon, the *toxin*, will be effective."

"Our analysis shows that the barrier has thickened by as much as forty-percent since we were last down there. The composition is different, too. We really can't say any more about it unless we go down there in the flesh – but the bottom line is that the Annecta are determined to keep us out."

"Well, we can't stop here."

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“We’ll try to help out. Some of our weapons have a higher explosive yield than standard phasers or photon torpedoes.”

“I’m counting on it,” Santiago said coldly. Once again, Santiago cut off communication.

Seth turned to his Chief of Security, standing high at the top of the bridge arch. “Lieutenant Commander Thorn, target the exposed area of the barrier and hit it hard with a barrage of quantum torpedoes. Let’s see what our next-generation of weapons can do.” He sat

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back down in the captain's chair, and readied himself for the attack.

*"Target locked,"* Thorn said.

*This is it,* Seth thought. He raised his right hand, and gave Thorn the signal. *"...FIRE."*

## Chapter 56

The *Dragonfly* zoomed in towards the planet surface and blasted their quantum torpedoes with grace and power. The first round of the torpedoes, brightly lit like flares of magnesium, pounded the barrier with little

mercy. Explosions erupted all over, but the crew could not tell from the visual spectacle alone if their attack was effective. “What’s the status?” Seth awaited eagerly.

*“The area has weakened by another fifteen-percent, but we’re still far away from completely breaching it,”* Thorn explained.

*What the hell was this barrier made of?* Seth was unaware of anything in the biological realm that was able to withstand the destructive power of photon or quantum torpedoes. “Alright, come about for a second

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attack using another barrage of quantum torpedoes,” Seth ordered. “*And hit them like you really mean it, Lieutenant Commander.*”

“*Aye...*” Thorn replied, almost feeling shame for failing to break through it the first time.

A second round of explosions set off at the exposed area of the barrier. “It’s...it’s working...” Ensign Ester started. “The barrier is starting to buckle. *A crack is forming!*”

“Will Captain Santiago and the *Excelsior* be able to punch the toxin through?” Seth demanded.

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“Not yet...”

*Come on, damn it...just get through it already.* “Prepare to come about for a *third* round...”

Suddenly, alarms blasted from all directions that put Lieutenant Commander Thorn and the bridge crew on full alert. Thorn’s intricate mechanical fingers danced on the console in front of him. “*Sir, six intruders are detected throughout the ship,*” Thorn interrupted. “*The Annecta humanoids are back.*”

Seth cursed under his breath. *They know what’s coming,* he thought. *They’re desperate to fight back.*

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*“I’m detecting them aboard the Excelsior, as well,”*

Thorn continued. *“Another six.”*

Seth shuddered as he realized that with a skeleton crew like the one he saw there was no way that the *Excelsior* would survive another assault. But first thing was first: *he had to deal with protecting his own crew.* “What is the location of the humanoids?”

*“Three are heading towards Holodeck 5 where Dr. Min is located. The remaining three are heading towards Engineering.”*

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With near perfect timing, the comm system buzzed. “*Err...Captain? This is Lieutenant Commander LeCroy...*”

“Yes, I know, Chief,” Seth said with a tremor. “*We have intruders.*”

## Chapter 57

*DAMN.*

*I suppose it's my turn to deal with this, Seth* thought. His stomach turned. From what he could tell from the damage on the *Excelsior*, these guys were

nastier than the most bloodthirsty Klingon. “We need to move quickly,” he said. “Lieutenant Commander Thorn, I need you to head to engineering and keep the ship together.”

*“I have security teams already in place and should be dealing with the situation now. But I will be heading there personally...”* Thorn said reassuringly.

“Good,” Seth said. He then braced himself for his next, seemingly suicidal, decision. *“I will go down to help Dr. Min.”*

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Thorn scoffed at the idea. After all, the captain's safety was *his* responsibility. But he knew that he was needed in Engineering and he couldn't be in two places at once. *“Allow me to at least assign a few of my best security officers to accompany you. We need both you and Dr. Min to stay alive.”* Two officers stepped forward from the background. They were the new alpha security team, dressed in specialized uniforms and dark helmets, equipped with the latest in Starfleet weaponry and defense. They wore those unusual-looking multi-functional ‘bracelets’ on their forearms

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that Seth had seen earlier in the holodeck. In fact, one of them was likely to be Ensign Lo. Every new Federation ship was assigned a team such as this to deal with threats of the most vicious kind, and this threat certainly qualified.

Seth didn't think they would come in handy this soon, but now would surely be the time to use every available resource against the Annecta humanoids. "Very well, then. Don't you want to take any yourself?" he asked, readying himself with a phaser rifle for his confrontation.

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*“I don’t need them...”* Thorn confidently replied. Barely finishing his last word, Thorn vanished into thin air.

*Damn, Seth thought. He’s good.*

## Chapter 58

Min hurriedly tried to set up a suitable laboratory in the holodeck. Holographic beakers and Erlenmeyer flasks filled the room, and Dr. Min brought in a variety of chemicals and solvents to complete the synthesis of

the desired compound. But he was not a chemist by training; he would not be able to synthesize the needed two-hundred milligrams of the compound in the time allowed. The little bit that he had was from a different system in the Beta Quadrant. *Perhaps we rely too much on replicators these days,* Min thought. Fortunately, EM9653D required only a couple of steps from a compound that the replicator could synthesize in near-unlimited quantities.

Someone came through the holodeck doors. *I thought I had asked to be alone,* Min thought. But when he

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looked up, he was completely shocked by what he saw. *It was a trio of the hideous Annecta humanoids.*

*Oh no...*Min thought.

They marched in with purpose and proceeded to destroy everything around them. *They're trying to destroy the laboratory,* Min realized. *They want to destroy my work.* But that didn't make any sense. Everything in the room was holographic. Anything that was destroyed in the holodeck could be reconstituted on command, with

perhaps the exception of the actual chemicals that he brought in.

But the Annecta humanoids quickly learned that this was not a real laboratory; they knew in part because, spatially, it didn't make any sense. Min's laboratory seemed to stretch on forever, but the humanoids knew that the space in the room itself had to be finite. Rather than continue to break everything with pure might, the humanoids proceeded to throw something in all four directions, and from the point of view of Dr. Min, stuck to nothing but air. But Dr. Min understood exactly

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what was going on from the positioning of all four projectiles: *they had placed organic explosives on all four walls of the holodeck.*

Min's heart stopped. *They don't just want to destroy the laboratory...they want me to kill ME!* "Computer," Min yelled, "*EXIT!*"

The doors materialized from thin air and proceeded to open, but an Annecta humanoid quickly transported himself between Dr. Min and the exit, blocking his every attempt to escape. Instead, they themselves walked out of the exit doors. When they closed, a

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viscous liquid seeped between the crack of the door, and solidified.

Min looked at it closely. It was a kind of *adhesive*. Min was trapped!

The doctor tried hard to wield the doors open, but with no avail. The computer couldn't open it either. Meanwhile, the organic explosives that surrounded him looked like they were about to blow.

“*COMPUTER!*” Min yelled. “*INITIATE EMERGENCY TRANSPOR—*“

## Chapter 59

Lieutenant Commander LeCroy stood nervously in Engineering, preparing for his enemies to approach him. They were close. He immediately thought ahead and initiated several steps to protect the warp

core. There would really only be one reason why the Annecta humanoids would want to go to Engineering at all. Clearly, with a complex matter/antimatter system in place, it was easily the most sensitive part of the ship. LeCroy surmised that that *had* to be the intended target of the initial assault on the *Excelsior*.

*They're coming...*he thought. Fear began to strike into his heart. The six security guards that Lieutenant Commander Thorn assigned to protect Engineering stood ready with their phaser rifles, but even they were nervous. *What would everyone think if I just took*

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*off?* LeCroy quietly considered. *Can't...I run the place. What the hell do they expect? I'm an Engineer!*

The humanoids made their appearance. Their first target appeared to directly be the security guards. They were *fast* and they were *strong*. LeCroy could see a humanoid being taken down by some effective moves by a security officer, but just when he was about to make a final shot to the head with his phaser rifle, the humanoid disintegrated on the floor, only to immediately re-materialize behind him. LeCroy

couldn't look to see what happened next, but he could hear the officer scream.

One of the humanoids was down, but he had lost the other two. *That can't be good.* He looked around. He was in a fairly skinny corridor that led to the warp core; it made sense that they would head down here. Then one materialized in front of him.

The humanoid looked squarely at LeCroy. *There was nowhere to run,* LeCroy thought, *and there is no one here to protect me.* LeCroy thought quickly. *“Computer, invert the direction of the*

*artificial gravity!”* LeCroy said. The humanoid, along with everything else, immediately collapsed on the ceiling, but LeCroy more gracefully flipped to land on all four, and stood up again on his two feet, *upside down*. But almost immediately before the alien could recover, LeCroy yelled again, “*COMPUTER, INVERT THE DIRECTION OF THE GRAVITY AGAIN!!*”

The humanoid immediately again collapsed on the floor, banging his head loudly as he did so. He became disorientated from the constant inversion of gravity. LeCroy, on the other hand, stood perfectly

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normal. He was surprisingly nimble for someone with such unusual posture. *He was surprisingly nimble for an engineer, for that matter.*

LeCroy quickly grabbed a handy tool from his belt and plunged it into the back of the alien's skull, before the humanoid had a chance to recover. He stared at the dead alien. "On all of our new ships, gravity plating has been installed in *all* of our walls and ceilings," he explained to it. "Just thought you might like to know."

But before LeCroy could even turn the corner, another humanoid came from out of nowhere and

pounded him the abdomen. LeCroy immediately hit the wall and collapsed to the ground; the wind was completely knocked out of him. He gasped and gasped for air, but found that he was completely unable to breathe. *Wow, it's been a long time since I felt that kind of pain,* he moaned. But something even worse was bothering him. The Annecta humanoid had also slapped something on his chest on his way down, and that something felt increasingly warm with each passing second. He looked down to see what it was, and whispered a French curse.

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*Merd.*

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The explosive, which had a thick ‘mucous’ feel to it, was heating up and swelling on LeCroy’s own chest, and the engineer desperately computed ways in his head to get out of this situation. But he could only think of one way to escape in the next few seconds: *take off the damn uniform.*

In the next instant, almost like he had stepped out from an invisible door, Lieutenant Commander Thorn materialized from behind the unsuspecting Annecta

humanoid, and smashed his head against the wall with the force that only a Breen soldier could exert. The humanoid fell in a daze, but he was not unconscious.

Thorn took the few precious seconds he had to examine the predicament that LeCroy was in. He grabbed the explosive with one hand, and took a sharp blade from his other hand to try and slice it off his uniform. It wasn't as easy as it looked; the material on the new Federation uniforms was tough and resilient. It was designed to handle stresses of all kinds, most notably from sharp objects as knives and Klingon

*bat'leths*. The material actually *strengthened* at the point of stress.

“Here, try this...” LeCroy said, pulling a cutting tool from his belt. He only prayed that he didn't cut through his flesh.

Thorn managed to get the explosive loose from LeCroy's uniform, and he immediately forced it onto the humanoid's forehead before he could get up and fight back. The humanoid twisted and turned to try and escape the inevitable explosion, but Thorn fought hard

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to keep a firm grip. He would make sure that the humanoid got what was coming to him.

LeCroy realized what Thorn was doing. *No, DON'T...* he quietly thought.

And it finally exploded.

LeCroy desperately looked to search for his fellow officer amid the thick smoke; he had to assume that Thorn could not have survived such an explosion. The Annecta humanoid certainly didn't, who laid there with half of his torso and head just gone. But to his surprise, Thorn still indeed was alive, but with one arm cradling

the other. When LeCroy could finally see what had actually happened, his jaw just fell. *The explosion had blown Thorn's left arm.*

It was at that moment that LeCroy realized that he had never heard a Breen scream in pain.

## Chapter 60

Min opened his eyes cautiously. Where was he? He certainly *felt* the explosion on the holodeck, but he wasn't there anymore. He looked up to see the

individual that was standing right before him. It was Captain Seth.

“You’re in Transporter Room 3,” Seth said. “Once I saw that you were trapped in the holodeck with the Annecta humanoids I moved over here to get you out. Looks like I pulled you out just in time.”

Min nodded. He suddenly felt intense pain on his skin. It seemed that he didn’t escape the blasts completely. The side of his face and hands had deep secondary burns, parts of his white coat were charred, and his hair slightly singed. There was even a little

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smoke that rose from parts of his body. Min was on the verge of shock, but his discipline managed to keep him conscious and more-or-less in control.

Seth looked at him with a captain's concern. "...You alright?"

"I...I'm fine. I will tend to my burns later. What were those things? And why were they after me?"

"I think the Annecta know that you are trying to develop a countermeasure to the virus. They wanted to stop you."

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“Well, they almost certainly did...”

“Speaking of which, how is the countermeasure coming now?”

“I’m almost there, captain,” Min replied. “I’ve identified a compound that will work, but it’s just a matter of synthesizing enough of it so the replicator can mass-produce it. But what the Annecta did to my lab will set me back several hours. I have to make it *manually*.”

Seth grunted, and looked at his PADD. “Sensors say that the humanoids are headed to *sickbay*...”

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“We can’t let them get to my office,” Min replied tersely. “I’ve stored most of my research progress there, including some of the actual chemicals and biologics. It will set me back even more if they destroy it.”

“And the *Excelsior* victims are there as well...” Seth thought.

“They’ll slaughter them...”

“We need to get everyone *out*.”

STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

Min immediately punched his combadge. “Dr. Min to Dr. Alexandria.”

“Yes, Doctor, what is it? I’m still bus—”

“Look, I don’t want you to panic, but three very vicious aliens are about to break through the doors of sickbay. I need you to evacuate as many *Excelsior* victims as you can quickly and *discreetly*...”

“Y...yes, sir. *Right away*,” she said nervously.

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

Seth nodded, and glanced over to the two security offices that accompanied him. “Alright then, *let’s move.*”

## Chapter 61

Captain Seth, Dr. Min, and the security team marched in through the doors of sickbay, battle-ready. But they would be greeted with *chaos*. It appeared that not all of the *Excelsior* victims could be evacuated in time, and

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

the physicians and nurses were completely helpless against their enemy. They stood with their backs against the walls, keeping their distance with the aliens. *The Annecta humanoids were destroying everything.* Seth felt a growing anger over what the humanoids were doing to his ship. First the holodeck, and now sickbay. Seth could only hope that Thorn had engineering under control.

Min stepped forward. He immediately noticed that the holographic nurses helping out the physicians had all been de-activated. “Computer, re-activate all

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

Medical Holographic Nurses,” Min said. Six holograms in full medical uniform materialized throughout sickbay, and they certainly caught the attention of the Annecta humanoids. Seth looked at Min curiously as to the reasoning of his decision.

*“It will help distract them,”* Min explained.

*Good idea,* Seth thought.

In fact, one of the humanoids already fell for the trick and tried to thrust his hand into the nurse’s chest, only to find that his hand went *through* it. Min must have turned off tactile sensation in the holograms, since

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objects appeared to be able to pass right through them. The nurse blurred in red, yellow, and blue as the computer struggled to keep the image of Medical Holographic Nurse intact. The humanoid stood confused.

Ceasing the moment, Ensign Lo came literally came flying *through* the hologram with his right arm coiled, simultaneously spinning his baton and ready to come down hard on the humanoid's face. He swung it with a force that would have crushed a Klingon's skull. That, combined with the added pain stimulus of his weapon,

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caused the humanoid to fall back in a complete daze. Ensign Lo maneuvered quickly with a series of sharp and powerful jabs that would continue to disorient and disable the humanoid. Lo then tried to land a finishing blow before he even had the chance to recover.

But the humanoid was prepared. He grabbed Lo's arm before he could strike, and crushed the baton in his hand, and *continued to crush the bones in his arm*. Ensign Lo screamed through his helmet as he stood helpless in the Annecta's grip. Lo countered

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

valiantly with jabs from his other arm, but the Annecta would not let go.

Seth rushed over to help him and fired at a vulnerable area on the neck of the Annecta, at extremely close range. The humanoid let Ensign Lo go and stumbled back, and Seth immediately swung his rifle across his head.

Something then reached out and grabbed Seth by the neck, completely catching him by surprise. Seth was thrust up high on the wall, lifting his feet above the floor. The grip tightened slowly, like there was *anger*

in the grip. Seth was completely caught off guard, finding it increasingly difficult to breathe with each passing second. His vision blurred from the lack of oxygen.

*I...I NEED HELP...* Seth quietly thought. But Seth's other security officer was preoccupied with protecting the *Excelsior* patients from the alien humanoids.

Seth struggled hard to get free, digging his fingers deeper and deeper into the tissue of the arm that held him. But the arm felt different from normal tissue. It

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

was cold to the touch. Seth had assumed it was one of the other the humanoids who had grabbed him, but it wasn't.

It was the android.

## Chapter 62

The grip of the android's hand tightened around Seth's neck. All Seth could think about was how *stupid* he was for letting the android grab him in the first place. He should have been much more careful. In his

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

dazed state, it took a moment for Seth to realize that it wasn't BX-12 who was threatening him. It was the Annecta colony in the cargo bay who has been controlling him. Whenever BX-12 turned its head to the side, Seth could see the Annecta spider on the back of its head, with its 'legs' burrowing deeply into the android's synthetic brain.

From what he remembered from the victim, Jerad, it didn't take much force from the humanoids to break someone's neck. LeCroy said that the strength of the android was *three times* that of a human. *Squeeze only*

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*a little harder and my vertebrae will be shattered,* Seth thought.

*Was it possible that the android was hesitating?*

It almost didn't matter; however weakly the android was holding him, Seth just couldn't breathe. He began to feel his consciousness slip away. The look on the android's face gave only a look of '*...Why?*' The android stared deeply and slammed Seth even harder against the wall. '*WHY?!!*' it seemed to demand.

With his last breath, Seth wanted to say that he was sorry. He was sorry that it had come to this. Santiago

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

had his finger on the button that would annihilate their kind, while the android had his hand around Seth's throat. But Seth had no choice. *Santiago was right...as long as the human population was in danger, he needed to defend them. I know it was the human population that wronged you first...*

But just when Seth was about to black out, he could see someone in a red uniform sneak up from behind the android. Seth's vision was blurred and he couldn't see who he or she was, but whoever it was, he or she swung something hard on the side of the android's head. He

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let go of Seth, causing him to fall to the ground. Seth collapsed and choked, his lungs involuntarily trying to force in all of the available oxygen. When he caught enough of a breath, Seth quickly got up and threw his shoulder into the android, causing him to collapse onto the ground. Seth grabbed his hand phaser and fired at the Annecta spider on the back of its head.

After breathing a sigh of relief, Seth looked around to see who it was who hit the android in the first place. When he made out who it was, he couldn't believe his eyes.

STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

It was Commander Ariele.

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“*Commander...*” Seth gasped.

Seth had assumed that Ariele had been killed in the initial attack aboard the *Excelsior*, since she never appeared on the bridge whenever he talked to Santiago. The *Dragonfly* must have transported her over as one of the injured crewmen. She stood there with heavy burns on the entire right side of her face and hands, and her hair was disheveled. But for the most part, *she was alright.*

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“I think it’s about time you found yourself a first officer to start covering you,” Ariele said.

Seth got up and dusted himself off. “Happen to know anyone good for the job?” he asked her.

Ariele responded with a partial smile. “Of course not. But I’ll let you know when I see one.”

The two looked over to one last humanoid who was wreaking havoc in Min’s office. All of the patients and doctors who remained tried to keep their distance from him. Seth and Min had to stop him quickly before any explosives were placed anywhere, because once they

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were activated, it seemed like there was no way to stop them.

“Captain,” Min said from afar, looking closely at his medical tricorder. “The Annecta humanoids...their underlying physiology...is *human*.”

The captain looked somewhat confused. “So?”

“They may have muted pain receptors, *but...*” Min quickly sneaked up from behind the unsuspecting humanoid, and made a sharp pinch to its neck muscle. The humanoid jerked his head, and then *collapsed*. Everyone just stared, but immediately

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recognized what had just happened. Min had used the Vulcan nerve pinch against him.

“What?” Min asked everyone. “I’ve been doing that since grade school.”

Seth stood amused by the cleverness of his doctor. “Come on,” he started. “Let’s all get back to the bridge.”

## Chapter 63

Captain Seth, Commander Ariele, and Dr. Min all entered the main bridge of the *Dragonfly*. Lieutenant Commander LeCroy and Thorn were there as well, but Thorn's left arm was heavily bandaged. Seth would ask

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him about his injury later; he was just extremely glad to see that he was alive. In fact, despite several moderate injuries, he was glad to see that *everyone* aboard his ship was still alive. His crew was still intact; a captain couldn't ask for anything more.

But the mood on the bridge once again turned somber. "Captain," Ensign Ester cried, pointing straight ahead. "*Look...*"

Something was very wrong with the *Excelsior*. Seth knew that six alien humanoids had transported over there, but they really wouldn't have needed more than

two or three to overwhelm the ship. Santiago lost most of his security team in the initial assault. And now, it looked like they lost all navigational control as well.

The *Excelsior* started its downward trajectory, inevitably and uncontrollably. She was being pulled very fast by the planet's relatively strong gravity. Heavy smoke seeped from various points of the saucer section as she continued to fall. In only a matter of seconds – what seemed like an eternity to Seth – the *Excelsior* made a thunderous crash. A cloud of dust particles flew in the face of the *Dragonfly* and

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momentarily hid everything from view, but when it cleared, what they saw shocked them.

The *Excelsior* did not explode. She had fallen directly *into* the crack in the barrier...*but not through it*. The intense friction on all sides of the ship was the only force keeping it up and preventing it from falling right through. “Sir,” Ester said. “The *Excelsior*’s *wedged* in the crack that we made...”

“*Major damage has been sustained on the outer hull of the ship,*” Thorn explained. “*Main power is off-line, life support is minimal, and engines are non-*

*functional. Captain Santiago won't be able to get himself out."*

“Can we get her out with a tractor beam?”

“I wouldn't recommend it,” LeCroy said, from the back of the bridge. “The *Excelsior's* in a fragile position. Their warp nacelles are about to snap off. Any shearing or tearing on our part could lead to unforeseeable consequences. The *Excelsior's* also much heavier than we are, and she could pull us right in if we're not careful.”

*“The saucer section is still intact and faced-down. He might still be able to fire the weapon directly onto the Annecta colony,”* Thorn said.

“Let me just add that if he detonates the weapon, the shockwave, even if very mild, could cause him to un-wedge. *He’ll fall,*” LeCroy said, staring into the darkness of the hole on the viewscreen. “...*Into whatever awaits him in the bowels of the planet.*”

Ariele almost tripped forward. “*Captain...*” she whispered.

Seth spoke the inevitable truth. “...He’ll die.”

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“If he’s not dead already...” noted Jenovia. “There are life signs on the *Excelsior*...but they’re *weak*...”

The crew could hear the comm system beeping. “Sir,” Ensign Ester said. “We’re getting a recorded emergency transmission from the Medical Administrator on Draloos IV.”

Seth was a little surprised. He had hoped that it was from Santiago. *Why was the Administration calling him now?* If there was anything important he had to say, Seth wanted to know *now*. “On-screen...” he murmured.

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“Captain Seth, I hope you receive this message in time. I have something urgent to report to you. It may be too early to say for certain, but it appears that the infection is fading. At first, the incidence of infection from the airborne virus was increasing exponentially...we were running out of room at our hospitals to quarantine them, and I was afraid that a worldwide pandemic was imminent. But all of a sudden, we stopped getting reports of new infections. Not only that, but those already infected began showing signs of receding symptoms. We’re still

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waiting to hear back from the lab for confirmation, but from the looks of it...*the virus has become inert.*”

“A ‘self-destruct’ mechanism in the virus?” Seth asked Min.

Min shrugged. “It’s *possible...*”

*The Annecta are withdrawing their attack, Seth thought. Made sense. Beat an aggressor mercilessly and put a blade to its neck, and even a tiger will plead for mercy. What was important was that they could cease their attack. Everyone could. We can stop this madness.*

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“Open a hailing frequency to the *Excelsior*,” Seth quickly instructed. “If Alan’s still alive, I need to talk to him *now*.”

Thorn just stared at him. “*I don’t think he’ll want to talk to you*,” he said.

Seth sharpened. “What the hell makes you say that?”

“*He’s just fired the weapon.*”

## Chapter 64

Seth and the bridge crew watched as a bright light from the center of the planet seep through the crack, and radiated in all directions. A mild shockwave sent a gentle rumble through the *Dragonfly*. “Captain, the

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Annecta life signs are fading *fast*,” the science officer noted. “The planet colony is shrinking...”

“It looks like the toxin is a great deal more potent than I originally assumed. It’s more than affecting their ability to network...it’s affecting their physiology as well,” Dr. Min reported. Seth could see on the right viewscreen the life signs of the colony just flicker away.

“*They’re dying...*” Jenovia said.

Seth could do nothing but watch and come to terms with everything that was happening. *I am party to genocide...*Seth quietly thought to himself. “Doctor...”

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Min just shook his head with regret.

“Annecta life signs...are *gone*,” the science officer reported.

*There was no need for this*, Seth thought. *They were about to yield*. “Lieutenant Commander Thorn,” he said. “Please note in the official log that...”

Another rumble echoed from the crack. The *Excelsior* was slipping into the ground.

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“Captain,” Ester yelled. “*Santiago’s hanging on by a thread...*”

*It was over, Seth thought. All of it.* There was nothing more to debate, and there was no more fighting to be done. The Annecta were dead and the human population on Draloos IV was safe from further danger. *What he needed to do now was get his friend out.* “We’ve lost enough lives today. Can we get everyone else who is alive off of the ship?”

“We can transport everybody...” Ester started. “...*Except for one.*”

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Seth looked at her. “Santiago?”

“Yes, sir. He’s activated some kind of localized interfering beacon that’s messing with our transporter locking system.”

“*WHAT?! A beacon?*” Seth barked. *What the hell was he doing? Only Alan would do such a thing*, he thought. Seth had to think. He quickly moved over to Thorn’s console at the top of the bridge and instinctively punched in a series of commands.

Thorn looked over to him. “*What are you doing?*”

## Chapter 65

Seth materialized in mid-air of the bridge of the *Excelsior* now *facing downward*, and nearly fell through the front broken viewscreen. But ever so fortunately, the viewscreen was sturdy enough to hold

him and prevent him from falling through. It occurred to Seth that it might have been smarter to use the surrogate android technology, but there was just no time to set everything up. The entire bridge of the *Excelsior* was dark and broken, and littered with dead crewmen. The smoke made Seth choke.

This was Seth's last chance to save Santiago. He could see him crouched by the base of the captain's seat in the center of the bridge. Seth had maybe two or three minutes before the *Excelsior* would crash, perhaps

even less. He immediately rushed over to help his friend, but that meant *climbing* the side of the bridge.

“*ALAN!*” Seth screamed. “*Alan, it’s time to go.*”

Santiago was crouched over the captain’s chair. Blood ran down the side of his face and from his mouth, his front teeth were chipped, and he was barely conscious. He choked on the blood from his mouth. “What are you doing here? *Get off my bridge...*” he muttered.

“It’s over...The Annecta are gone...”

Santiago almost breathed a sigh of relief.

“There’s nothing more to do here. It’s time to go home.”

Santiago just shook his head. “The captain always goes down with his ship,” he said. “Don’t you know that? But like they taught us in *Red Squad*...if you’re going to go down, at least go down with a suit and tie and with your head held up high...”

Santiago was talking nonsense. “Damn it, Alan...” Seth desperately looked for the device that emitted the interfering beacon. But he couldn’t find it

anywhere. Santiago might have instructed the computer to do it. Worse, he could have encrypted it with a password.

Santiago only sat there, dazed from his sustained injuries.

“Fine, then we go down together,” Seth said finally.

Santiago looked at him. “What?”

“We either go back together or we go down together. That’s the way it’s always been...*why the hell should it change now?*”

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“Don’t be an idiot,” he shot back. “You still have a future. What exactly do I have to go back to? The only thing Admiral Kim will have me doing is scrubbing conduits on dying starships...”

Seth looked hard to figure out how he could force him out.

“You’re right, you know,” Santiago added. “The race we had was stupid. *Everything* we did in the Academy was. I proved nothing by winning anything. You’re the better captain to have led your crew out of harm’s way on this mission. There is nothing left for me.”

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“We both know what your intentions were. You *saved* the people of Draloos IV...” Seth said emphatically. “*Where I would have failed...*” he admitted.

“And look where it got me...?” Santiago muttered. “*A broken ship...a dead crew...*”

The ship rumbled as the *Excelsior* inched closer to her death. They were running out of time.

“I still have many members of your crew aboard the *Dragonfly*. They all want you back. *Commander Ariele wants you back.*”

“*She’s...alive?*” Santiago said, seemingly to have perked up from the comment. But that sense fled quickly. “Please do me a favor: take care of her for me. She’s one of the most loyal officers I’ve known.”

Seth had never heard Santiago admit to anything the entire time that he had known him. “You can tell her yourself. Look, let’s just get you home. *Deactivate your interfering beacon,*” he ordered. Seth grabbed him by the arm and wrapped it around his shoulder, and dragged him over to the computer console. This was much harder given the orientation of the ship.

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“Al-alright, *fine...*” Weak and injured, Santiago leaned over, and punched in a set of commands on a computer console that flickered on and off. But it wasn’t to deactivate the beacon. It was to return his friend to the *Dragonfly*.

Seth turned as soon as he felt the cold chill of the transporter beam run through him and realized what was happening. But there was nothing that he could do. “*WAIT!*” he yelled.

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“Maybe they’ll finally get around to making an *Excelsior-A...*” Santiago murmured to himself. “Until next time, Darren...”

Seth materialized back aboard the bridge of the *Dragonfly*. He immediately turned to his Chief of Security. Thorn immediately knew what he was asking, but he just shook his head. Captain Seth could only stand there at the front of the bridge, and watch the *Excelsior* fall apart. The right nacelle finally snapped off, giving way to the intense stress it had been enduring for so long, hitting the other and causing a

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cascade of explosions that sent the saucer section grinding through the remainder of the crack and into the bowels of the planet. There was a loud crash, and that was it, from what the crew of the *Dragonfly* could tell.

The *Excelsior* was gone.

## Chapter 66

Captain Seth sat quietly in his quarters, letting Lieutenant Commander Thorn take control of the bridge for a while. The *Dragonfly* had now returned to orbit, with LeCroy and his engineering team taking

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charge of repairs around the ship. Seth only sat there on his couch, staring out into the blackness of space, replaying in his mind the events that had just unfolded. *What could he have done differently? How might he have saved Santiago? How might this whole situation have been averted in the first place?* There were no easy answers any of those questions.

The door chimed. Seth heard it, but did nothing. He couldn't bear to talk about this right now. But the chime was persistent; it rang again and again. Seth grudgingly looked to the screen on the side of the door,

which showed it to be Counselor Jenovia. He let out a disgusted sigh. The last thing Captain Seth wanted to discuss was his *feelings*.

“Come in,” he said tersely. The doors opened and she walked in, somewhat cautiously. “Yes, what can I do for you Counselor? I’m rather busy.” That was a lie.

“I only wanted to give you my condolences about your friend, Santiago. I know that he was your friend, and a fine captain. I very much wish things had turned out differently.”

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“That’s very kind of you, Counselor. But I’m fine.” He took another sip of his bright blue drink, which the Counselor could see was Romulan ale. Not exactly the healthiest drink at a time like this.

“I think you already know why I am here, so I’ll spare you the questions that beat around the bush...”

“I’d appreciate that, Counselor...”

“Look, captain,” she started again. “I know the mission didn’t turn out—“

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“This mission was a *disaster*,” Seth shot back. “There’s no other way to put it.”

“Yes, it was. But that doesn’t mean the outcome couldn’t have been *worse*.”

“We may have saved the human population...but at what cost? What part of how Santiago or I dealt with the situation could be considered ‘heroic’?” Seth demanded of her. “*This* is how we deal with threats? *We bully our enemies into submission?*”

Jenovia only blinked as she tried to fully absorb what Seth was saying to her.

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“I’m endeavoring to understand how this is worthy of an *evolved* and *rational* species,” he said.

“*Evolved? Rational?*” Jenovia scoffed. “You are anything but. The reptilian part of the mind is more powerful than you think. Every species is subject to its own instinct...and there is no instinct more powerful and more universal than *survival*. None of us would be here talking about it if that weren’t true. It’s a truth we all have to accept about ourselves.”

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“It’s unfortunate that the scientists didn’t do away with that when they were once trying to genetically-enhance the *human*...”

“It is part of who you are, Captain. Santiago was only more honest about that than you. And don’t forget that the Annecta were fighting for their survival, too. *They* are at fault as much as we are. At least you are able to recognize your shortcomings, which I have to say most species simply don’t do. Perhaps it is that alone that makes you ‘evolved.’”

Seth only stared, still distracted and distraught.

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The Counselor could feel Seth's pain and frustration, which on the surface seemed like it was about his command choices during the mission, but was truthfully more about the loss of his friend. Only time would allow him to sort this through. She walked up him, turned his head, and kissed him on the side of his mouth. "I can't tell you how Admiral Kim or Admiral Roth will judge you on this mission...if they choose to keep you or and give you a different assignment. I don't know if even *you* will want to stay. But I sincerely hope that you do, Captain Darren Seth. You

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have a future here, captain, I can *feel* it,” she half-joked. She kissed again in the same place, and stepped out of his quarters.

## Chapter 67

Dr. Min looked sympathetically at all that remained of the Annecta species, which stood before him in the large containment field in the cargo bay. He had not forgotten about them. There were still close to a

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million of them in there, which still looked very daunting and intimidating. But they seemed quieter now, with less activity buzzing between them. Without needing the android to communicate with him, Min could tell that they were defeated.

“Dr. Min?” Seth asked, as he walked in through the cargo bay doors. “You asked to see me?”

“Yes, captain. Thank you for coming. I wanted to ask you what you intend to do with...um, *them*.”

“The last of the Annecta...” Seth said. He wasn’t even sure.

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“The effects of my gene-silencing procedures should be wearing off shortly.”

The captain made an initial expression of concern, but decided that the Annecta would unlikely be able to mount any sort of attack in this condition.

“Captain, I can’t express how utterly disappointed I am with the outcome of the mission,” Min added. “It should never have come to this.”

“I know,” Seth promptly replied.

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“As allies, we could have learned so much from them. At least, medically-speaking.”

“You mean like the ‘transport’ gene?”

“Absolutely. That among many others. But in regards to that particular gene, I know the genetic sequence now, but the gene works in synchrony with a huge variety of other genes. Blocking it is one thing; trying to insert it into a genome to get the desired effect is another.”

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“It’s doubtful that we’ll have another shot with them. Not after what the human colony did to them, and now certainly not after what *we’ve* done.”

“Their technologies could have helped us with ideas for new medicines, ideas that we could *never* have thought of...” Min said regrettably.

“Do you think there are enough specimens here for them to recover fully on their home world?”

Min thought for a moment. “Given their impressive growth rate that we’ve witnessed so far, the number of Annecta we see here should be enough for them to

recover, *eventually*. But it's hard to say what the real consequences are. There could have been 'specialized' sub-species of Annecta that served specific functions within their consciousness, those of which may not be so easy to recover."

All of a sudden, the Annecta in the containment field disappeared, presumably back to the planet surface.

"Are you sure that the remaining Annecta will 'remember' what happened to them?" Seth asked.

"Count on it," Min replied.

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Seth let out a sigh. “Then today,” he started, “we’ve made a new enemy.”

## Chapter 68

*“Captain’s Log, Stardate 63845.0: Dr. Min has informed me that the virus on Draloos IV is under control. Now that it has evolved to a less virulent strain and we understand its mode of transmission, the*

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prevalence is falling worldwide. Dr. Min has also informed me that he has already replicated mass quantities of his antiviral agent, and has proven effective. There is no evidence of new viruses, or any more biological weapons. The major political leaders involved in the fraud have all been arrested and will face severe charges in the coming months. We are now headed back to Sector 001, and I'm glad to say that we'll soon be back to Earth in the coming days."

The captain sat at his desk in his Ready Room, still staring at stars but at least more rested than he had been

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before. It had been at least a whole day now since his conversation with Counselor Jenovia. Admittedly, he now felt awkward around her; but he greatly respected her intelligence and her wisdom, perhaps even more so now. Once again, the door chimed. After an exhausting meeting with Jenovia already, he was in no mood to talk to anyone else. But he tried not to be so selfish; perhaps it was someone else who needed to talk to him. He turned his head to look at the screen: it was Commander Ariele. “Come in,” he said.

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She walked into the room. The skin on the right side of her head and her hand still looked very raw from her injuries, but she was healing. “Captain, I just wanted to tell you that most of the crew of the *Excelsior* has been reassigned.”

“That’s good to hear,” Seth said. “We both did wrong, didn’t we? Santiago and I, I mean.”

“Captain, it’s not my place...”

“It’s OK, I could use an honest voice right now. I had a talk with Admiral Kim. He acknowledges that the leaders of Draloos IV have committed

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wrongdoing. Faced with the facts, the Admiral says that he is pleased that the human colony is okay. But of course, he is *not* pleased about having nearly killed off a newly discovered species.”

“You were faced with an impossible decision. No captain, no matter his or her experience, could have made that decision lightly.”

“Well...at the end of the day, my decision resulted in the destruction of the *Excelsior*. It resulted in the death of a captain, of...*a friend*,” he said. For some reason, he had an unusually hard time saying that word about

him. “The remaining leaders of Draloos IV involved with the fraud have been thrown into prison. The Federation Council has decided to temporarily increase aid to the human colony until they can fully be evacuated. They will be offered some refuge on other, more habitable Federation worlds, and I expect that many will take it. But as home, Draloos IV is gone.”

“And Draloos V?”

“As far as I know, that planet will be left alone.”

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“Captain, you and Santiago *saved* the lives of a billion people on Draloos IV. I know what you’ve lost in this mission...but you can’t dismiss that.”

“I know.” Seth sighed once more as he thought about Santiago. “The son of a bitch wouldn’t even let me save him.”

Ariele knew all too well that Santiago would have easily let his pride get the better of him. But in a way, Seth was guilty of that, too. “I know that you wanted to,” she said, “especially after he once saved *you*.”

STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

“Admiral Kim may have agreed with my decisions, but he made it very clear that the manner in which I carried the mission was unacceptable,” Seth said, trying to change the subject. “I will still command the *Dragonfly*, but only after a six month mandatory leave of absence. I’ve been temporarily relieved of my command. I will be spending my days on Earth to ‘contemplate my actions and begin thinking about my future in Starfleet,’ as he put it.”

“*Six months?*”

STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

“In the meantime, the *Dragonfly* will be led by another, more senior captain.”

“Captain,” she began. She was hesitating slightly. “The reason that I came here...I...I had a request to make of you. When the time comes and you return to the *Dragonfly*, I ask that I be allowed to serve as your first officer.”

Seth looked at her with some surprise. He didn't think that she would want to have anything to do with him. “Commander...”

## STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

“I know you joked about it earlier, but I considered it carefully and under the circumstances, I think it would be appropriate,” she said. “*Please*, captain. I have already cleared it with Admiral Kim and your original first-officer. I think he was a little uncomfortable being the first officer of a much younger captain, so it didn’t take a lot of convincing. I only need your permission, that is, if you would want me as one.”

Seth thought for a moment. She had already proven herself as a sensible and intelligent first officer. But it was more than that. Seth sensed that she really needed

this. After all, they now shared the memory of a common friend and fellow officer. And in this loss, perhaps she was looking for a friend. It probably was not at all appropriate to begin a captain-first-officer relationship like this. But in the end, maybe Seth needed a friend, too.

He gave her a nod, and smiled. “*Granted.*”

## Chapter 69

The captain entered the laboratory where BX-12 was being built to meet Lieutenant Commander LeCroy and Dr. Min. To his surprise, he found the android sitting in a chair, reading something aloud on a large

STAR TREK: REEMERGENCE BY HUGO CALVIN

PADD. LeCroy was sitting right across from him, talking to him. Dr. Min was also there, monitoring its vital signs and occasionally chiming in on the conversation that BX-12 and the Chief were having. It felt different there than before; the air had a certain lightness to it now.

“Captain...” the Chief said in surprise. He stood up nervously from his chair, as if the captain had walked in on a bad moment.

“At ease, Chief.”

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“...BX-12 already had some residual activity even though the Annecta had separated from him. We decided that it was best to complete the transcribing process and leave him activated. I know you said that you wanted to know when we were ready to activate him, but...”

“No worries, Chief. I’m not here to hassle you.”

“Right now we’re teaching him how to read. We’ve already imprinted him with strong reading abilities, but at the moment his knowledge and abilities are fresh and jumbled together. It’s going to take some time for the

brain to sort everything out. To him, it must feel like waking up from an amnesic episode, almost like everything is a distant memory. ”

“So he’s no danger to the ship or crew?”

“Not at the moment, no. The Annecta only affected the motor and sensory parts of his brain, and now that they’ve left, it doesn’t look like there’s any residual damage or unusual manipulation. He has a human sense of empathy, or at least our idea of an ‘ethical’ program, so he currently has no desire to hurt anybody. He’s actually very curious.”

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“Most of his bodily functions are automated by external equipment,” said Dr. Min. “We should be able to finish all of his components in a few months. All of the mechanical scaffolds will be replaced with artificial muscle and bone. At the last stage, we will add skin and hair. He’ll be able to choose and mold his own facial features.”

The android looked up to the captain with a child-like gaze. “Who are you?”

“I am Darren Seth. I’m the captain of this starship. And you are...?” Seth wasn’t entirely sure

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that he should have called him by his experimental name. He looked at the Chief. So did the android.

“It’s OK. We still go by the name that was given to him by the Institute, BX-12. At some point, he will be able to choose his own name.”

The android nodded. “You are...Starfleet?”

“Yes, I am.”

He looked at the Chief. “Can I be Starfleet too?”

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The captain chuckled a little. “Maybe, if you really want to. And you work at it.” Seth turned to the Chief. “He speaks English already?”

“He speaks six languages, actually. But he doesn’t ‘remember’ all of them yet. He’s still understanding who he is, and getting a feel for his body and his environment. So he’ll be behaving like a child for some time.”

It was a little unnerving actually to see a child-like demeanor come from such a frightful figure, particularly with the experience that he had with him

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while connected to the aliens. After all, this was the same android that nearly killed him. Seth would have to wait until he was completed before he would likely have a normal conversation with him.

“At the moment, he’s fascinated by stories of Data.”

“Oh?” The captain seemed a little surprised by that, but soon realized that he shouldn’t have been.

“I want to be named Data!” the android barked.

“You *can’t* be named Data,” LeCroy told him.

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BX-12 frowned a little, but turned his attention away only a second later. “Would you like to read with us?” he asked Seth.

“Um, perhaps another time.”

“After we’ve completed his physical profile and some basic training he’ll be returning to the Daystrom Institute for closer supervision. He’ll have better intellectual and emotional guidance than we can provide here.”

“Are you sure that’s the right environment for him? It’s still a laboratory.”

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“He’ll have more than his fair share of tests and experiments, but the Institute promises to be humane about it. They understand, that for all intents and purposes, this is essentially a human being and must be treated as so.”

“You’ll miss him, I’m sure. I suppose, you’re almost like a father to him,” Seth said. Those words felt just a little uncomfortable coming out of his mouth. “How do you feel about that?”

“There have been enough of us involved with BX-12 that many of us could be considered his ‘fathers.’ The

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hundreds of scientists at the Institute, Dr. Min, and even the Annecta.”

“That doesn’t make your role any less important,” Seth added.

LeCroy knew full well of his importance in the project but didn’t want to overstate it. Seth was pleased to see some humbleness in this matter, but in this case, a little pride was warranted. “Where he goes from there will be up to him,” LeCroy said.

“Maybe he’ll choose to come back here. He has his whole future ahead of him.”

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“Alright BX, what did Data say after that,” the Chief asked the android. BX-12 looked back intently at his PADD.

“He said...’To...HELL...with...our...orders....’” He seemed perplexed by what he had just read, and didn’t know how to react or what to say.

And then Seth saw something he never seen before in his life. The android started laughing.

## Chapter 70

Seth took one last stroll around the holodecks. He could see that the poker program was running in Holodeck 4. Counselor Jenovia must have been up to her gambling ways again. He entered through the doors

into the bright lights and walked up to her table, and noticed that there was someone else from his senior staff playing with her. It was Lieutenant Commander Thorn.

Seth took a seat near the table beside the Counselor. It looked like Dr. Min had helped Thorn to restore much of his arm that he had lost earlier. “I see the Counselor suckered you into this, too, didn’t she?”

*“She didn’t sucker me into anything,”* he said in Breen. Seth looked over at his pile of chips and bars of latinum. He was dominating the entire table. Everyone

else, including a Reman male, a young Andorian woman, and a member of Species 8472, all had extremely frustrated looks on their faces. Everyone, of course, except for Jenovia.

Seth then looked over at Jenovia's pile. She was down to just a few medium-sized piles of chips, but she was happy. Not because of her chip position, but because she felt that she had finally met her match in the game.

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“Incredible....Not a single *tell*,” she said. “No face, no expression, no nervous twitches....not even a pulse. Did you know that the Breen have no blood?”

“Of course you can’t tell. He is completely covered, head to toe,” the captain added. “Maybe you could tell something if you saw a little skin on him.”

“*No chance in Breen hell*,” Thorn countered.

“You see? I can’t even use his voice! *It’s just a robotic blur!*” Captain Seth just sat there, laughing. “Does he even breathe?” Jenovia demanded. She looked extremely closely at him. It

was true. Thorn stared directly at her without so much as a finger twitch. He was an absolute statue. In fact, while sitting still, he barely looked like he was alive.

“*Your move,*” he said coldly, in his usual robotic language.

Captain Seth stared at the board: Six of Hearts, Five of Diamonds, Nine of Spades, and the Queen of Hearts.

Jenovia stared hard into the beam of light that radiated from his mask and shuffled a handful of chips effortlessly with her right hand. “You only have a 19.6

per cent chance of making your flush,” she said confidently. “You won’t make it. *I’m all-in.*”

Thorn stared back at her, then at Seth, then back at Jenovia. “*Well then, it’s a good thing I have a straight, in addition to my flush draw.*” He very casually flipped his cards: a Seven and an Eight of Hearts.

Counselor Jenovia had Queens and Sixes. The River was a dead card, and Thorn had won the hand and all of Jenovia’s remaining chips. She couldn’t help but be impressed with the Breen soldier. “Well, you got

me. What can I say? I was out-played,” she said with a smile.

“*Captain Seth,*” Thorn began, turning his attention away from the game. He stood up, and extended his hand. “*Though the events that unfolded did not turn out exactly as you had intended, you made a difficult choice that I know few commanding officers would have made. I may be one of the few that thinks this, but...you did well.*”

Seth was gracious for Thorn’s surprising words, particularly after the vicious test that he had put him

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through in the holodeck earlier. Although the Admirals may not have approved his decisions, it was nice to know that his own crewmembers did. He accepted his hand, which may have had a cold metallic touch but was welcoming nonetheless, and replied to him, “Thank you, Lieutenant.”

*“I will expect you to pass my combat test when you return,”* he said. The only problem was that the universal translator couldn’t portray sarcasm, so Seth couldn’t tell at all if he was joking.

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In any case, Seth felt a little inspired by Thorn and his apparent triumph over the counselor in the poker game. Jenovia didn't seem quite so invincible anymore. "Alright, deal me in," he said. "I need to borrow another two bars of gold-pressed latinum from you, Counselor. I hope you have plenty more."

Jenovia smiled with delight.

## **Chapter 71**

Captain Seth continued to pack his things in his quarters. He was thankful that he brought very little when he first boarded the ship, including just a few clothes and some books. He hated to move stuff

around. As he was folding his sleepwear, he heard the door chime. It was young Ensign Ester.

“Please, come in.” She walked in rather gingerly, her head to the ground and her arms folded in front of her. She was silent. “Is...there something wrong, Ensign?”

She proceeded to step in slowly. But now that she was under the light, Seth could see that her eyes had welled with tears. She must have heard the news of his leave of absence, but maybe it was being a little presumptuous to assume that that was the reason.

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“I...I heard that you won’t be with us for some time...”

“I will be on mandatory leave. But I will only be gone for six months.”

She still stood there silent, but now looked even more unsure of what to say, or how to act. Seth knew he needed to break the silence, before it got overly awkward. “You know, ensign, while I’m gone I’m going to need someone to take care of my fish...”

“Captain...” She ran to hug him. He was taken a little aback. It felt a little unusual for an ensign to be so

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emotionally forward with her captain, but he could sense that she was just a genuinely emotional person who knew that she would miss her captain, even if they had only been on one mission together. *Nothing wrong with that*, he thought. As awkward as it seemed, he returned her gesture.

“I’m sorry... I’ve always been like this...”

“Don’t let that side of you get brushed aside. Counselor Jenovia would actually encourage you to hold onto it.”

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“...You should have seen me when I left my mom for the Academy...”

“Well, she must be proud of you now,” he told her. “I promise I will be back. Just promise me you’ll fix the scratch on the hull you made earlier,” he joked.

Ester giggled one last time. “So...” she responded, wiping her tears away. “How many fish a day do I have to feed this hideous thing?”

## Chapter 72

The *Dragonfly* was finally back in Sector 001 where Captain Seth would depart for his mandatory leave. He had nearly cleared out his Ready Room, which didn't have a whole lot in it to begin with, thank

goodness. He really had only a few PADDs and some books, just enough to fit his small bag that he had on his shoulder. Seth thought that he might enjoy one last drink before he had to leave, and set his bag down to the ground.

“Green tea, hot,” Seth commanded. He gingerly sipped the tea, and as it hit his tongue he couldn’t help be once again impressed by the computer’s version of the drink. The flavor of real green tea was not at all easy to replicate.

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The door chimed as he took his second sip. It was Admiral Roth. “Come in.”

Seth set his tea down as soon as the Admiral walked in. “At ease, Captain.”

“I assume that Admiral Kim informed you of his decision with me and the *Dragonfly*,” Seth initiated.

“Yes, he did. I won’t give you the same lecture that Admiral Kim did. I’ll just say that I thought he was lenient. I’m not sure that I would have been in his place.”

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“Yes, sir.”

“You are lucky that you weren’t demoted, or court marshaled, or ejected from Starfleet. Genocide is an extremely serious offense. *It’s not the way we do things in Starfleet.*”

“Yes, sir...”

“And Alan...I don’t even know how to begin with him...” he said. “You know I considered you both to be outstanding officers. The Federation Council thought that both of you were too young to be put in command of your own vessels. But I pushed for it. I

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put my name on the line, and now I have lost face in front of the Council.”

“...I’m sorry, sir.”

“Well, that aside...” he began, “I read the report. It could not have been an easy decision to make.”

“No, sir, it wasn’t. I wasn’t even sure that I could go through with it.”

“All things considered, the outcome could have been a lot worse,” the Admiral admitted. “The human population was at least saved from disaster.”

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“I wish that made things easier,” Seth said. He paced around the room. “You know, when I was serving aboard the *U.S.S. Chicago*, I had to make risky command decisions before. And whenever the outcome was favorable, I patted myself on the back for it, and attributed its success to my boldness. Worse, I was promoted on every occasion. I think the worst part of this whole thing is that it made me realize that in many instances where I’ve made those command decisions, *I got lucky.*”

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“A risk is still a risk. You will win some, and *you will lose some*. There is no way to be sure of the outcome of all of your decisions, otherwise, it wouldn’t be a risk. It is your job as captain to carefully weigh the benefit with that risk.”

“Yes, sir, I understand.”

“What will you do now? I understand that you’ll be spending time on Earth. Six months, I hear.”

“Yes, I’ll be taking a leave of absence in Tokyo,” Seth told him. “I have old friends there that I haven’t seen in a long time. They helped me through a tough

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time when I was young, and they're willing to help me now."

"Well, whatever you need to do, do it. You'll have a lot of time to think things through, I'm sure."

"Thank you, sir. I wanted you to know, Admiral...I *want* this assignment. *I want to be captain of this ship,*" Seth said. Never so sure was Seth about anything in his life. "I won't disappoint you again."

"Neither Admiral Kim nor I would have given you a glimmer of a second chance if we didn't feel you wanted it, trust me," the Admiral said. He started to

turn towards the door. “Oh, and while you’re on Earth, don’t miss out on the inauguration of some of the newest ships to be launched. I think you’ll be surprised to see what’s in store.”

Seth smiled. “I won’t,” he promised. He extended his hand to shake the Admiral’s hand one final time.

“Good luck, captain. I’ll see you in six months.”

Admiral Roth left the Ready Room, leaving Seth all to himself. He lifted his bag, and took one last look around. He realized that he almost forgot the small model of the *U.S.S. Chicago* that he had left on the side

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table. It still looked rather lonely there all by itself. Seth realized that he wouldn't be able to add another until he was finished with his current assignment, and even then it wouldn't be until he got a new command that he could get a model of the ship to put in a Ready Room. Seth was considering how he was going to be able to fit the *Chicago* model in his bag, since despite being a model, it was still rather large. He could always just carry the thing in his hands. But then he considered that it would not be completely

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inappropriate to leave it there. After all, he would be back.

He swiped the model with his finger for dust, and walked out of the Ready Room.

***THE END***