

It started as a rescue mission -
and it looked like a trap

Star Trek - Lotus Fleet

CHAOS THEORY

The Second Voyage of the USS McKenzie



STAR TREK - LOTUS FLEET

USS MCKENZIE

Season 1 - Episode 2: "Chaos Theory"

Novelization by Crist

Cover by Kheren

Cast

Captain Sean Kirkpatrick – Captain U.S.S. McKenzie, Played by Sean Kirkpatrick

Lt. Ray Lewis – Helmsmen, Played by Raimond Lewis

Lt. Daniel Crist – Tactical/Security Officer, Played by Crist

Doctor Julian Carter – Medical Officer, Played by Julian Carter

Lt. Alistair Cobb – Science Officer, Played by Reafis

Lt. BarileNarti – Engineering Officer, Played by BarileNarti

The USS McKenzie currently docked at Starbase 10, prepped for departure. The airlock doors opened revealing the captain. He stood with his right hand on the archway and pats the ship. "Back again", he said under his breath as he walked through and heads towards a turbolift.

"Bridge", he states to the computer and the turbolift moves up two decks and near the bridge. The doors opened and he stepped out into the corridor, making his way around the corner. He entered the bridge and taped his com-badge saying, "All senior officers report to the bridge."

A few remaining maintenance crew members exited, leaving the captain by himself. He took his seat in the center chair and brought up some information on their mission, on his PADD, while awaiting the arrival of the senior officers.

=Outside the Bridge=

Ray Lewis stood in front of the doors to the bridge, taking a few deep breaths. Besides him was a member of the maintenance crew, who worked on a panel, the corridor was empty. This was Ray's first assignment and he could hardly hide his excitement. He had been looking forward to this moment for almost all his life. Ray took a last breath and mumbled with a smirk on his face:

"One small step for man..." Ray said.

The doors in front of him opened and he entered the bridge. The captain sat in his chair, a PADD in his hand. Ray straightened up.

"Helm Officer Lewis reporting for duty, Sir."

He hesitated for a second, then walked to the helm controls and sat down. The chair was surprisingly comfortable.

"Welcome to the bridge, lieutenant." The captain said looking up from his PADD at Lewis, as he took his seat at the Helm.

=Lt. Crist's Quarters=

Crist was awoken by the computer at 0700 hours. He sat up and hit his head on the bottom of the top bunk bed.

"Ouch." Crist spoke in pain.

He looked around and then remembered where he was. He got out of the bunk, opened a locker and pulled out a towel.

"Time to get a shower." Crist spoke to himself.

He stepped out of his quarters in his boxers, and proceeded to the showers.

"Hope no one minds I'm walking around like this."

Once there he hit the panel to give a chime, and no answer.

"Guess it's not in use."

He walked in, it was empty, and walked in the sonic shower. After he was done, he walked back to his quarters.

"Maybe I should have brought my uniform with me to the showers."

When he walked into his quarter, he threw the towel on his bed and grabbed his uniform. Once it was on, he made his way to the Mess Hall for some breakfast. As he walked through the doors, of the Mess Hall, he looked around hoping to see someone he knew. Unfortunately, he didn't see any of his friends from the day before, so he walked up to the replicator and ordered.

"2 eggs, scrambled, 2 pieces of bacon, crispy, and a glass of orange juice, cold."

The computer then responded, "Pork bacon or Canadian bacon." He then said in an agonizing tone.

"O, not again, pork."

The meal then materialized, he took his plate and cup to an empty table. Once he was finished it was about 0800 hours, and he thought, 'O, I'm going to be late.'

He got up, placed his dishes in the replicator and hit recycle. He walked out from the Mess Hall and made his way to a turbo lift. Once there he ordered,

"Deck One."

A few seconds later the door open, and he made his way to the bridge. Once at the bridge doors, he looked at the ominous doors and thought to himself, 'Well first day on the job, I can do this.'

He walked though and there was the Captain and Helm Officer. Crist walked around the Captain's chair to face him.

"Sir, Lieutenant Daniel Crist, Chief Security Officer, reporting for duty, permission to take my seat."

"Please do." The captain said as he stood up and walked around to the back of the bridge, to the briefing area and set his PADD on the table.

With the Captains approval, Crist took a seat at his station. He tapped the panel and it lit up, he took a few minutes to check everything on his panel and then he turned and said,

"So how are you two this morning." Crist asked the room.

"This is the bridge, Mr. Crist, not the Mess Hall." The Captain rigidly stated, leaning on the table. He took a deep breath, it had been one of those nights. "I apologize, lieutenant, but the bridge is not the place to fraternize." He said as he brought up information on the console above the table in preparation for the mission briefing and awaited the rest of the senior staff.

Crist jumped a little after being scorned at, "Sorry sir, it won't happen again." He apologized.

=Sickbay=

Carter was up early in sickbay reviewing the new crew's medical logs. After being stuck on SB10 he was eager to get underway and see what was out there.

It only took him a few minutes to review the Captain's records, not much has changed and he was definitely healthy, but the new department heads and their staff was another story. It was a good thing Katherine decided to stay on the McKenzie, she would definitely be a big help since the EMH on this ship was ruder than the one on the Nehalem.

"All senior officers to the bridge." The Captains voice came through over the comm.

'Well, it's about that time,' Carter thought. Carter left his office and proceeded to the bridge. "Kathering, I'm headed to the bridge for a staff meeting, you know what to do.

"Yes sir." Katherine responded.

Carter left sickbay and headed for the nearest turbolift. "Bridge." Moments later he was standing outside the doors of the bridge. With a quick adjustment to his uniform he entered the bridge.

"Morning Captain." Carter said as he surveyed the new faces of the senior staff.

=Jefferies tubes=

Alistair was in a Jefferies Tubes fine tuning the ODN relays to the Bridge Science station, when his com badge flicked unexpectedly to life.

All Senior Officers to the Bridge The Captains voice barked and sounded much louder in the cramped confines of the Jefferies Tubes.

Alistair, engrossed in his work jumped slightly and banged his head on the tube. Rubbing his head, he quickly refitted the ODN Relay cover and exited the tube.

A minute later (After a quick uniform adjust) he walked smartly onto the Bridge.

"Science Officer Cobb, Reporting as ordered Captain" Alistair said, pausing briefly before continuing to his station and sitting down. His hands darted over the Science Station ensuring it was ready and able.

Ray watched the other officers as they entered the bridge. He smiled and gave each of them a short nod. With interest he glanced at the Chief Medical Officer Carter, whom he had not met before. He was astonished about Carter's young age. He guessed him to be no more than 26.

'This really is a young crew', he thought to himself, 'at least the captain seems to be an experienced Starfleet Officer.'

Ray turned around and began checking the helm controls and navigation systems. Everything seemed to be in order, so he relaxed and waited for the Captain's orders.

After apologizing and the two of the other senior staff entering, Crist hoped to avoid being scorned again, He just simply nodded to both officers, Carter, and Cobb.

=Main Engineering=

Lt. Barile stood with one of his engineering staff looking over the Master Situation Monitor when the comm chimed, the Captain's voice resonated throughout Engineering. Barile handed a PADD to the Ensign and proceeded up the steps to the upper level of Engineering and toward the Bridge. Shaking his head, 'Never enough time in the day.' he thought to himself as he prepared to step onto the Bridge.

The doors opened and he entered, a rush of emotions swept over him, anxiety and excitement being chief among them. He stepped toward the Captain's position and spoke in as steady a tone as he could muster, "Lt. Barile, reporting in sir."

Looking around the bridge the captain noticed that all of the senior staff are accounted for. "Just on time, chief." The captain said to Barile as he tapped the screen above the table, which brought up an image of the USS Theory. "Let's begin our briefing." He said summoning the senior staff to the table.

"We have a search and rescue mission for the USS Theory. She has been out of contact with Starfleet Command for several hours with no explanation near the Klingon border. Our orders are to find her and escort her to the nearest Starbase. **Helm**, you have her last known coordinates, that's where we'll start. **Mr. Crist**, when we approach those coordinates keep your trigger finger itching but hold for my command. **Chief**, keep her purring. The last thing we'll need is engine trouble. **Mr. Cobb** keep an eye out for the Theory as we begin our search, as well as anything that could have blocked her, and possibly our communications. And **Doctor**, prep for casualties, though we're hoping for the best." The captain turned off the display and picked up his PADD from the table. "Dismissed."

The captain walked back around to the center chair and took his seat as the crew took their positions.

Barile nodded to the Captain upon mention of his duties. He made his way to Engineering immediately and assembled his staff for preparations.

"Aye sir." Crist said as he walked to his station, and sat down.

"Sir, all weapons and Defences are green, I'll bring them online once we launch." Crist reported.

"Understood, Mr. Crist." The captain said in acknowledgment.

"Aye Captain" Alistair responded, and after the Captain dismissed the Officers he returned to his station.

"I'll call up the USS Theory's sensor profile and keep a sharp eye on the sensors for any sign of them" He said his gaze flicking back and forth from his station to the Captain, as he tapped in commands.

"I'll watch for anything that could interfere with our communications and sensors, naturally occurring or otherwise" He finished, before swivelling round on his chair and bringing up the USS Theory's entry in the L.C.A.Rs database.

A dozen thoughts and feelings raced through Alistair's mind. 'A mission to the Klingon Border? A missing ship?' Multiple scenarios came to mind, but he forced himself to keep his over-enthusiastic mind under control.

One thought however did remain. Pausing briefly, He turned round in his chair to face the Captain

"Captain, do we know the mission the USS Theory was assigned to near the Klingon Border?" Alistair asked.

The captain looked over at the science station and replied. "The Theory was investigating a series of anomalous subspace readings in the area when all communication was lost. Let's hope nothing got physical."

"Time to head out." He said to the bridge crew. He sat back in his chair and tapped the console at his chair. "USS McKenzie to Star Base Control, requesting permission to leave space dock." He said over the comm. Star Base Control, rings out over the comm system of the bridge. "USS McKenzie this is Star Base Control, permission granted. Proceed to space doors 3, Star Base Control out."

He leaned back in the chair, took a deep breath and paused for a moment. "Helm, take us out." He said, as he motioned toward Lewis with his PADD in hand.

Lewis nodded and activated the impulse engines. "Leaving spacedock, Sir" Ray replied, concentrating on the controls.

The McKenzie's docking clamp was released and the ship rocked slightly as she is disconnected. The ship made it's way to the space doors and exited the Starbase.

As the McKenzie left Starbase 10, Crist said, "Bringing weapons and defenses online, and on standby. I'll charge weapons and bring up the shields on your orders, sir."

"Mr. Lewis, set a course for the last known coordinates of the Theory and engage, maximum warp." The captain said as he sent the coordinates to the conn via his control panel.

"Aye Captain", Ray replied. "Setting course Bearing 30 Mark 15, engaging maximum warp." he said, checking his controls. "It will take us approximately 3 hours, Sir."

Alistair looked over the astrological phenomena on the plotted course.

The Azure Nebula was the only major object. A class 11 Nebula, it hadn't been charted in detail (aside from some rumoured scans taken by an Excelsior class, he remembered).

It wasn't anything that blocks communications though, sensors were inhibited by it though. Cloaked ships or at least Klingon patrols were a definite possibility.

He thought about mentioning the fact he'd watch the sensor readings from the Azure Nebula to the Captain. 'No,' he thought, 'the Captain knows the course. He'll expect me to monitor it.'

Ray watched the other members of the crew wandering around, leaving and returning to the bridge, checking their controls and talking to the captain.

Ray was so excited about his first mission, that he could hardly sit still on his chair. In about two hours they would arrive near the border of the Klingon Empire and Ray was sure that they would get into a fight, as soon as the McKenzie would drop out of warp.

The Klingons had increased the number of patrol ships along their territory and maybe the Theory had been caught by one of the patrols.

As he thought about the mission a female ensign entered the bridge and started working on one of the consoles. Suddenly all his worries were blown away, as his concentration shifted from the console in front of him to the ensign.

'Uhm...Ensign Ramirez... I think that was her name. She's just gorgeous. Long black hair... and those legs. I really should ask her out to the holosuits.' Ray thought, not realizing that he was staring right at her. As Ensign Ramirez left the bridge Ray's eyes were following every step.

=Main Engineering=

Two officers entered Engineering, Ensign Emanuelle Jackson and Lt. J.G. Jessica Jones, they reported to Lt. Barile.

"Excellent, glad you two could make it. Lt. Jones I want you to check the power relays leading to our impulse engines and maneuvering thrusters. See if you can increase the efficiency rating on them by at least 0.04% or more." The Lt. nodded and left to go about her duties.

Lt. Barile then looked to Ensign Jackson quizzically. The Ensign introduced himself "I'm Ensign Emanuelle Jackson, sir. I transferred aboard just before the ship undocked."

"Ah, Ensign Em-Emerwell...Emennnew..." Lt. Barile struggled with the first name of the Ensign.

"Emanuelle, sir."

"Well, Ensign Jackson, I can't seem to wrap my tongue around your first name for some reason. If I do have need to refer to you by your first name I'll just call you 'Skip'."

"Uh...ok...sir" the Ensign said slowly.

"Anyway Ensign Jackson, I want you to run a routine diagnostic on the warp core while I attempt to manage our power consumption a bit better. I don't like being this close to Klingon space and having a ship that puts out such a large energy signature. We'll see if this way we can keep the current speed and power requirements fulfilled while still reducing energy output of the core. That might help our signature a little."

"Yes, sir" Jackson proceeded to a console near the warp core as Lt. Barile moved to a nearby wall station.

=Sickbay=

Carter left the staff meeting and headed to sickbay. He walked through the corridor, the doctor noticed a lot of new young faces, it was like the academy just let out and they all were posted on the McKenzie.

Upon getting back to his office, Carter went straight for the replicator. "Coffee, hot". Within seconds a large cup of Klingon coffee materialized. While sipping his coffee Carter called Lt. Asner into his office for a status report.

"Well sir, supplies are green, the EMH is operational and all the new crews files have been uploaded into our database." Answered Asner.

"Good to hear. Alright listen up. Our mission is to search for a ship that has been out of comm with command. At this point I don't know what the crew complement is, but we need to be ready for any casualties." Carter spoke.

"Yes sir" The Medical staff spoke at once.

"Until then its business as usual. Dismissed" Carter continued.

As Lt. Asner left his office, the doctor sat back in his chair and briefly shut his eyes. He hadn't gotten much sleep since returning to the ship; there was something about his quarters that just didn't seem the same.

=Bridge=

As Crist looked over his systems he thought to himself, 'If we run into Klingons, they may board.'

After thinking about that, he stood up and told the captain, "Sir, I'll be right back, I have duties to perform before we get to the last known position of the Theory."

After saying that he left the bridge, as he stepped into the corridor he tapped his com badge, "All security, report to Cargo bay 1."

He proceeded to the nearest turbo lift and ordered, "Deck 3, Cargo bay 1."

Moments later the lift doors opened, and he stepped out. He looked to his right then his left, to get his bearings, and then proceeded down the corridor. Once at his destination, he took a deep breath and entered the cargo bay. As he stepped thought the crew immediately snapped to attention. Crist said, "At ease."

The crew relaxed and he looked over them, they all were young, wearing yellow uniforms and all with hand phasers.

"Ladies, Gentlemen, we are on a search and rescue mission for a science ship named the Theory. We will be dangerously close to the Klingon border, so stay ready. Now, report to your posts, just hope we don't run into Klingons and have them board us. The last thing I need, is to have the Klingons complaining to me that we kicked their butts off the ship."

The crew laughed. Crist then said, "Dismissed. Shran and Jones, please stay. "

The crew left and all that remained were the two ensigns and the Lieutenant.

"Gentlemen, it's my duty to make the security on this ship the best in Starfleet, and I need to appoint two team leaders to help with that. You gentleman will be those team leaders. The security will be divided into two teams, team Blue, and team Red. Mr. Shran, you will be in charge of team blue."

Crist looks at Shran's skin, "Ah, no offense, it's just team blue will be, ah, the best and that I will call first, and as you have a great record, I want you on that team and lead it."

Shran said, "I'm honored sir."

Crist said, "Team Blue, will be on the day shift. Team Red will be headed by you Mr. Jones, team red will be on duty during the night shift. But if there is a red alert then all team must report to duty, is that clear."

The two ensigns answered, "Yes sir."

Crist said, "Now, I would like to get to know you two a little. Shran, are you related to the Shran of the Imperial Guard that had dealings with Captain Jonathan Archer?"

Shran said, "Yes sir, I was named after my 3rd great grandfather, Thy'lek Shran, he sort of is also my hero."

Crist said, "3rd great grandfather?"

Shran said, "Yes sir, my Great, Great, Great Grandfather."

Crist said, "Ah, I see, and you Mr. Jones, you're not related to Indiana Jones are you?" Laughs a bit.

Jones laughed and said, "No sir, I come from Mars, spend days looking up at Utopia Planitia at night. I'm Will Jones by the way."

Crist said, "O, nice. Well we should all get back to our duties, dismissed."

As the two Ensigns left, Crist thought, 'That went well.'

He left the Cargo Bay and made his way to the Armory, he stepped into the lift and ordered, "Deck 2."

The doors opened and he stepped out and proceeded to the Armory, once there he stepped inside and took a look around. He thought, 'Hmm, over there are the Hand Phasers, and there are the Rifles, O man we have a few isomagnetic disintegrators. Well looks like we have everything in stock, guess I should look the part as well.'

He walked over to a locker and grabbed a belt, and put it on. Then he walked over to a rack, picked up a Hand Phaser and placed it in his belt's holster. He then said,

"Well I'm all ready, should head back to the bridge, we might be close to the Theory's last known location."

He then exited the Armory and headed to the nearest turbo lift, once there he ordered, "Deck 1."

The doors opened and he stepped out and headed to the bridge. Once there he stepped through and faced the Captain and said, "Back sir, I've met my security teams and inspected the Armory, everything is in excellent order, sir. I'll take my station now sir."

He then took a seat at his station and look over his controls once again.

"Right on time Lieutenant. We should be arriving at our first waypoint in a few moments. Helm, confirm--" The captain stopped mid-sentence. He sat still in his chair. "...Captain?" Lt. Lewis asked.

Flashback

"Helm, what is our ETA to the Asterion?" The captain shouts as the ship jolts from an impact. The bridge is lit with red.

"10 minutes, sir!" The helmsman yells back as he himself is tossed in his chair. "We're almost there..."

"Make almost, "am", Mr. North! We may not have 10 minutes!" The captain amends. The ship is hit again and he is tossed from his chair. He gets up off the floor using the arm of the chair as support. "Somebody shoot down those bloody romulans*!"

"That last hit took the cannons offline and shields are down to 15%!" Shouts tactical.

"Put them on screen." Says the captain, still standing next to his chair. He looks intently at the ship pursuing them

on the viewscreen. "Bring us about, Mr. North. Head on." He orders.

"Sir?!" Asks the helm.

"Mr. Tori, prepare to launch the warhead on my mark." The captain says pointing at Tactical Station I. He sits back in his chair as the ship once again jolts. "I'll be damned if they make it to that ship." The McKenzie comes about and faces the enemy. The enemy ship continues closer. "Mark." Says the captain. The warhead detaches from the ship and hurdles towards the oncoming enemy. The warhead makes contact head on into the pursuing ship and explodes causing massive damage to the vessel. The vessel begins to tear apart down the middle with a series of explosions. It continues ever closer to the McKenzie on inertia. As it approaches the hull tears into two pieces. "I think it would be in our best interest to navigate away from the hurdling starship, Mr. North." Says the captain. The McKenzie rotates and flies through the center of the wreckage on impulse.

Flashback Ends

=Bridge=

Captain Kirkpatrick seemed to be in thoughts, not realizing what was going on around him. "Sir? Are you ok, captain?" Ray asked, raising his voice.

"Y-*clears throat*Yes, lieutenant. Can you confirm our ETA?" Said the captain as he shakes his head.

Ray hesitated for a second, than nodded. "Yes Sir, we will arrive on the last known coordinates of the Theory in about 3 minutes. Any further orders, Sir?"

The captain took his hand off his forehead and looked up over at Lewis. "Thank you, lieutenant. Take us out of warp near the coordinates and take us in at full impulse."

Crist turned around in his chair and faced the Captain and said, "Sir, might I suggest we go to yellow alert, before reaching the Theory's last known location."

"Yes, yellow alert!" He said sitting up in his chair as the bridge lighting turned yellow. "Mr Cobb, keep active scans as we make our approach. Report everything you see." He said as he turned to the science station. He tapped his com-badge. "Bridge to sickbay. I'm not sure what we'll find doctor, but we're coming up on our first waypoint."

Crist said, while tapping his panel, "Yes sir, Raising shield, weapons and armor generators on standby."

"Dropping out of warp and heading towards the coordinates at maximum impulse." Ray stated and glanced at the screen. "Let's see who's waiting for us."

=Main Engineering=

Lt. Barile had just completed calibration tests on a new warp core power distribution configuration when he noticed a fluctuation in a conduit on deck 1.

"Lt. Jones, I'm going check up on this fluctuation in the power grid on deck 1. After that I'll proceed directly to the bridge and monitor things from there. You take care of the cave here while I'm gone."

He picked up his Engineering Kit and stepped out into the hallway. Lt. Barile proceeded to the turbolift and was shortly at his destination. Entering a maintenance code Barile removed the hatch from the Jefferies tube and crawled into the small space. He moved about 4 meters into the tube when he noticed something melted to the

plates ahead, crawling a little further he realized it was only partially melted.

Examining the object closely he soon realized it was a hyperspanner. He grasped the still intact handle and began to pull. The hyperspanner came free with little effort and Lt. Barile set it aside for later examination.

Finishing his calibrations Barile returned to Engineering with the hyperspanner for further examination. He found Ensign Jackson in a state of annoyance. Looking over the Ensign's uniform he saw that it was changing color. The Ensign looked over at Lt. Barile as he walked over, "Ema-Em...Skip...Ensign Skip why is your uniform...red...this can't be a good sign..."

"Sorry sir, I had an incident with a chemical cleaner." Skip said.

Barile sighed slowly then slightly confused, "What chemic-" he stopped in mid sentence.

"Uuuh...sir?" The Ensign walked over to Lt. Barile, waving his hand in front of the officer.

Flashback

Lt. Xoto quickly engaged the emergency containment field around the lower Engineering section until the chemical finished draining. Alarms continued to sound as he rushed to the Chief Engineer who was unconscious and seriously wounded on the upper platform with him. An energy surge had occurred with no warning as the Chief Engineer was running a diagnostic on the warp core. The surge caused a nearby console to explode, the force of which cracked a plasma coolant tube. Lt. Xoto managed to grab the Chief and pull him out of the way but not before plasma coolant had splashed over a portion of his body. As the Chief lay dying on the deck next to him Xoto completed to chemical spill procedure and was able to lower the force field allowing medical personnel into Engineering to help the Chief.

As the engineer's body was carried away Xoto slowly sat down, it began to dawn on him that now he was responsible for the entire ship. He was the Chief now, his co-fathers had warned him there'd be days like this.

Flashback Ends

=Main Engineering=

Barile began to blink as Ensign Jackson started shaking him by the shoulders. "W-why the hell are you shaking me Ensign?"

"Sorry sir, b-but you kind of went away for a bit there. Like you were in a trance."

"Oh, well...thank you Ensign. I might have to head to sickbay, that wasn't what I'd call a normal day dream."

=Bridge=

Focused on his sensor readings from the Azure Nebula, Alistair was almost startled by the sudden sound of the Captains voice.

"Mr Cobb, keep active scans as we make our approach. Report everything you see." The Captain ordered.

"Aye Sir, scanning area now" He replied switching the main sensor array to the last known position of the Theory

He tapped at the controls bringing several Sensor Pallets to bear on the target location using all the data he'd

compiled from the Theorys L.C.A.Rs entry.

Still reading the information coming across the screen he spoke out loud so the bridge crew could hear him

"Sensors show no sign of the Theory itself, also reading no debris or residual traces of weapons fire. I am detecting a possible ion trail, could be a warp trail. There appears to be some particles of plasma in amongst the trail, could mean the Theory had taken some damage"

"I'll continue to scan for the Theory" Cobb finished.

"Interesting, Mr. Cobb. Looks like no one, Mr. Lewis. At least not yet..." The captain said to Ray. "Lay in a course for the these next coordinates," said Sean, "we'll find them."

As the McKenzie came about and began to head for to the next waypoint the ship suddenly shook violently for a manner of seconds and came to a full stop. The captain briefly looked around the bridge and exclaimed, "Report!"

Suddenly the ship shuddered violently and the inertial dampners creaked and lurched to port. Alistair blinked as the readings on his screen suddenly flickered wildly up and down.

"Sir, we appear to be being pulled into a Subspace Sinkhole. Sensors did not detect it til it was active" Alistair shouted to overcome the rocking and creaking of the ship

Quickly recalibrating the sensors Alistair managed to get a reading on the visual sensors

"Sir I have it on Visual"

The view screen came to life, the image of a massive hole in space stared at the crew.

"Sir the Gravitational Shear of the Sinkhole is tremendous and" He stopped as his console began bleeping frantically with a tone he'd only heard previously in Academy Simulations.

"Sir" Alistair said in disbelief " I am detecting several planets ahead of us, we are on a direct collision course for a Class I Gas Super Giant" He finished, before the image of the rapidly approaching Gas Giant filled the View screen....

The McKenzie hurdled towards the Gas Giant. The image of it getting larger and larger on the view screen. "Red alert!" Said the captain as the bridge is flooded with red light. "Now would be a good time to steer, Mr. Lewis!" Shouts the captain. Not responding the captain shouts again, "Mr. Lewis!"

Crist responded, "Aye sir, all phasers are charged, all torpedo tubes are loaded, shields at full strength and the ablative hull armor generators are on standby. Weapons are ready, on your orders sir."

Crist held on to the console for dear life, he barely stayed in his chair as every second he almost slips out.

While the staff on the bridge of the USS McKenzie sprang into action, Ray froze at the sight of the giant gas planet on the viewscreen.

Flashback

"Shields down to 18% captain, we won't be holding out much longer!" the tactical officer shouted over the sound of an exploding console. The bridge was a mess: Most of the consoles were gone, flames leaked out of the science station and cables hung from the ceiling. The helm officer was injured from an explosion and had plasma burns on

his left arm but he insisted on staying at his post.

The captain stared at the gas super giant on the view screen while contacting the engine room.

"Bridge to engineering... Chief I need those damn impulse engines, NOW!"

"I am sorry captain. This warbird did a pretty good job in disabling most of our systems. We're working on the engines, but I don't think, we'll make it in time." the Chief replied.

The helm officer tried to think. There had to be a way out of this mess.

"Lieutenant, could we use the thrusters, to steer the ship sideways, pointing away from the planet?" he asked the Vulcan science officer.

"Of course, Ensign. But where would be the point in that?" the Vulcan said in a calm voice.

"We still have our warp drive, Sir. We could try and activate it." the Ensign answered with a grin on his face.

"Make it so!" the Captain said nodding.

"Sir I have to object." the science officer stated. "We have no shields, hull breaches on deck 3 and 4 and we are losing our hull integrity rapidly. Activating the warp drive in the vicinity of the gas giant, would most certainly tear the ship apart."

"I think we can take the risk, Lieutenant. Everything is better than just sitting around waiting to be sucked into this gas giant." The captain turned around and shouted to the helm officer: "Activate thrusters, Ensign."

Suddenly the starship began to jolt heavily. The captain struggled to stay in his chair while the science station exploded, catapulting sparks and shrapnel over the bridge.

The helm officer didn't lose any time and activated the flight controls in front of him. He hesitated for a second, then he closed his eyes and activated the warp drive.

Flashback ends

"I said steer, Lewis" Captain Kirkpatrick shouted while standing in front of Ray. "Try to focus, Lieutenant!"

Ray shook his head. He activated the impulse engines and tried to pull away from the gas giant.

"Sir, this will be getting bumpy" Ray shouted, while thinking to himself. 'I have a bad feeling about this'

=Corridor=

Barile headed toward sickbay to ask the Doctor about his hallucination. Lt. Barile was slammed into the bulkhead as the ship rocked violently. "Oh, fun." N'Arti said sarcastically to himself as he reversed his course and headed back to Engineering. A red glow filled the ship as Barile made his way to Engineering.

=Sickbay=

The doctor was in his lab working on a delicate genetic recombination experiment when a sudden jerk of the ship threw him from his stool and onto the floor of sickbay.

"Damnit" Carter shouted "Katherine do we know what the hell is going on?"

"Sir, we came out of warp moments ago. My guess is we have reached the last known position of the Theory."

Katherine answered.

"Just great. I was almost at the threshold of the experiment." Carter picked himself up off the floor and headed back to the main room of sickbay. The General Quarters alarm was sounding. Carter knew it was time to head to the bridge and reached for a medkit. "Lt. Asner activate the--"

Flashback

Sparks flew from several consoles in sickbay. The laser scalpel fell from his hands while he was trying to repair damage to one of the crewmen. McNulty touched his comm badge. "Captain if we don't level this ship out we're going to lose the XO. I don't care how we do it, but I'm not going to lose another patient." The doctor resumed the surgery...Damn Romulans the doctor thought.

An ensign walked into sickbay holding a phaser and a medkit. "Sir? We have another triage station setup in cargo bay 2. All of the patients are non-critical but they still need your attention."

Flashback ends

--EMH" Carter continued.

"Sir are you alright?" Asner questioned.

"Of course I am." Carter responded.

"Are you sure?" Nurse Asner asked again. "It was like you kind of blacked out for a moment there."

"Don't worry about me just make sure you do your job" snapped the doctor.

"I'm headed to the bridge." The doctor turned away from the nurse and headed for the nearest turbolift.

=Bridge=

"Sir, this will be getting bumpy." Lewis said as the McKenzie pulled up on full impulse from its path towards the gas giant. The bridge crew swayed in their seats at the force of the turn.

"Bring us to a standard orbit, instead of a crashing one, Mr. Lewis." The captain said as he looked at the binary solar system past the gas giant on the viewscreen. "I want full scans of everything Mr. Cobb. It seems that the rescuer may need rescuing. Perhaps we've followed the Theory right into this mess, let's see if we can't find her here with us."

"Aye Sir" Alistair replied.

He tapped in several commands bringing several sensor pallets to bear on the system that lay before them.

The distorted warp trail from the Theory had dissipated when they'd been dragged into the Sinkhole, so he switched to a more sensitive setting to look for its Impulse wake. A few seconds later and there it was.

"Sir I've located an Impulse wake that corresponds to a Federation design leading to an M class planet" He switched the sensors to scan the planet,

"The planet is barely M class, can't get much more at this range, plus we're still getting interference from the Gas Giant" He continued.

He looked over the sensor screen again and added "And sir, there appears to be more than one Impulse wake here so its possible other ships were dragged in too."

Ray brought the McKenzie to a standard orbit, glanced at the captain and said. "Any further orders, Sir? Shall I set a course for the M class planet?"

=Main Engineering=

Lt. Barile stepped back into Engineering just in time to be tossed into the door frame.

"Whoever is flying the ship had better be doing a really good job of dodging something otherwise they're doing a very bad job of flying" he said as he swayed into the room. "Are we under attack?"

"No, sir. At least I don't think so" Lt. Jones stated as she manned a nearby console ready to begin battle duties.

"Well, you two keep the ship together until I get to the bridge and can coordinate with you. Wait a second. Where's the ensign?"

"He hit his head on the MSD and knocked himself out when we did that first...maneuver. I've already called sickbay" she said matter-of-factly.

Lt. Barile left Engineering shaking his head.

He proceeded immediately to his position as he stepped onto the Bridge. "Sir, what's the situation?"

"Thank you, Mr. Cobb," said the captain, "let's see what's on that planet." He points in the direction of the helm, "Affirmative, Lewis. Bring us into a standard orbit of the M Class planet." The Chief Engineer walked onto the bridge as the captain finishes his sentence and asks the situation, "Well... we've fallen into a bit of quicksand, Chief."

Lt. Barile looks quizzically at the captain "Quicksand?" Realization washes over his face, "ahhhh, we're stuck? I'll have Jones start running some diagnostics to make sure no systems were damaged in that turbulence."

He sat at his station and began coordinating tests to run with Lt. Jones in Engineering.

Sean nods at Barile as he sits at the Engineering console on the bridge to run diagnostics.

=Outside the Bridge=

Before the doctor could reach the bridge his comm. badge chirped.

"Lt Asner to Dr Carter."

"Go ahead Lt" Carter responded quizzically.

"There's a medical emergency in engineering. A crewman has a head injury possibly a concussion."

"Is he conscious?" Carter asked

"I don't know sir, the details are limited." Asner answered.

"I'll head there. Stand by for anymore injury reports. Carter out."

Carter made a u-turn and headed for the turbolift he just exited. "Main Engineering." Within moments the doors opened onto the engineering floor. Engineers were darting from each corner of the room, and in the corner was a crewman laying on the ground with two others by his side. The doctor approached the down ensign.

"Alright give me some space." Carter grumbled "So who can tell me what happened?" Carter knelled down and opened the medkit and retrieved his scanner.

"It seems the ensign hit his head on the MDS and knocked himself out." Lt Jones responded.

"Lt Jones is it?" Carter asked

"Yes, sir" Jones answered.

"About how long has he been unconscious?" Carter asked again.

"About ten minutes." Jones answered.

"Thanks" Carter touched his comm. badge to contact sickbay. "Carter to sickbay."

"This is the EMH, go ahead Doctor."

"I need a transport team to main engineering. There is an ensign with head trauma and I need him on a neural monitor when he arrives."

"I believe I can handle that." The EMH said.

"I wasn't asking, Carter out"

Carter continued to examine the injured crewman until the transport arrived.

=Bridge=

Ray steered the McKenzie towards the M class planet and brought the ship into a standard orbit. He deactivated the engines and glanced at the view screen. Suddenly he saw a flickering on the screen. He hesitated for a moment but in the end he turned around to Captain Kirkpatrick and said, "Sir I think I saw something on the view screen... it was just a flicker, but I have seen similar distortions from cloaked ships. Maybe we should initiate another scan."

The captain said in reply to Lewis' concern, "Hmm, very well. Cobb, run a centralized scan in that vicinity, see if you can't find anything looming there in the dark. And continue scans on the M Class planet for any sign of life or civilization."

"Aye sir, reviewing sensor logs now" Alistair replied.

His console hadn't so much as hinted at the presence of a cloaked ship. He made a note to review its calibration should they later discover a Cloaked ship.

"Sensors didn't detect any of the usual readings a cloaked field would emit, however we did get a 0.1 second spike in particle radiation about 100 kilometers in front of us" He replied. "But that does not correspond to any modern type of cloaking technology that I'm aware of" He finished after a short pause.

"I'll continue to sweep for changes in particle radiation, whilst we remain here" Alistair said, trying to allay the captain's fears.

"Scanning the planet now" He said, switching to the planetary survey sensors. Data flooded his screens with more coming every second, and he applied filters to it to better interpret the data.

"Sir I am detecting the wreckage of a ship on the surface of the planet, hull is comprised of duranium. Scanning for Starfleet Data Recorder" He said.

He switched to the communications frequency that Federation starships used to indicate the presence of a Data

Recorder.

"There, amongst the wreckage." He said, and turned to face the Captain "Sir I have the coordinates for the Data Recorder but there's heavy interference possibly from ruptured plasma conduits so I cannot remotely access it."

He continued "Preliminary scans show the ship to be almost unrecognizable and the wreck is consistent with a high velocity impact. I cannot be 100% sure but it appears to be the Theory" He finished, his voice taking a more sombre tone.

He paused to let the fact sink into the rest of the bridge crew. We'll mourn later he thought and he moved back to his sensor screens to complete his analysis.

"There are several other wrecks on the planet in varying degrees of decay, I am unable to give life readings as something is interfering with the sensors" He finished, a puzzled look on his face.

"Interesting," the Captain said to Cobb, "She has only been out of contact for a manner of hours, not years. Let's hope there are some survivors that can shed more light on this." He turned to Daniel and said, "Gather an away team, Mr. Crist, let's find out what happened. I would suggest taking Mr. Cobb with you."

He taped his control panel, "Bridge to Sickbay, we may have found the Theory, if so, we're hoping for survivors. We'll need you on the away team Doctor."

He stood up looked at the planet below them on the view screen as the Chief Science Officer and Chief of Security left the bridge. He said with crossed arms, "Who knows what we'll find if this really is," he paused, "was, the Theory?"

As the ship entered orbit of the strange planet, Crist looked over at the view screen and stared at the image. Just then, his trance was broken by the captain, as he said,

At the Captains word, Alistair had nodded, left his station to Ensign Cardara and headed down to Transporter Room 2, via the Science Labs.

Crist looked at the captain and said, "Yes sir."

Crist got up and headed out from the bridge. He was about to hit his comm badge, to notify Doctor Carter about who would be on the away team, but before he could, suddenly one of his security officers come over the comm, it was Lt. JG Shran.

"Sir, there's something here I think you should see, in the Armory."

Crist tapped his comm badge and said, "I'll be right there, Shran."

He taps his badge again to talk to Doctor Carter,

"Crist to Carter, Doctor, I've been put in charge of an away mission to the planet, I would like for you and a medic to come. Get ready and report to Transporter Room 2."

Alistair walked out of the bridge and he turned to him,

"Alistair, get what you need and I'll meet you in Transporter Room 2, I have something that I need to take care of before we head down."

Alistair nodded his head and left. Crist then made his way to the turbo lift and proceeded to Deck 2.

=Armory=

Once on Deck 2 Crist made his way to the Armory and entered. There stood two men, Shran and an unknown ensign. Crist walked up to the two men and said, "Report Shran"

Shran gave Crist a summery, "Well sir, the ensign here was in the Armory to repair a power relay, as he removed the panel, he noticed this scorch mark." Shran continued, "Sir, I ran a scan of it with the tricorder and it was made by an explosive, a very powerful one at that sir."

Crist said, "Hmm, let me take a look."

Crist took the tricorder and scanned the bulkhead and said,

"Your right, the scorches seem to be from a"

Crist became lightheaded and his vision blurred.

Flashback

In his quarters, on deck 2 was a man. He was pacing back and forth, saying,

"Idiots, there all idiots! Who do they think I am! I'll kill them all! Yes, I'll kill them."

The man moved to the door, opened up the door control panel. He began to fiddle with the controls. After a few minutes of his attempts, he managed to get the door open and dropped the force field. He stepped out and was surprised that the foolish captain didn't post guards. He made his way to the Armory and locked the door. He then ransacked the Armory, looking for what he needed, once he found it, he stuck it to the wall. He said while laughing,

"I, Jack Knight, will kill you all!"

He hit the detonator, the bomb exploded and shook the ship violently. The ship that was once at warp, to take Knight to his court-martial, was thrown out of warp, and spun out of control. The helmsman struggled to reach his controls to get the ship under control, but thankfully he hit the console and the ship leveled off. The bridge officers regained their seats and did a damage report, it turns out that the explosion caused hull breaches on decks 1 through 3, on the starboard side of the ship. If it hadn't been for the emergency force fields the ship would have decompressed. It also damaged the starboard warp coil, so the ship couldn't make it past warp 2.5. The explosion killed 9 crew members and injured 11 others. After looking over the damage, the ship limped back to Starbase 10.

Flashback end

"Sir, sir, are you ok," said Shran.

Crist returned to normal and said, "Ah, yes, if there was an explosion on the ship, then there would be a report of it. Shran, I need you on a away mission so get ready and report to Transporter Room 2. Ensign, return to your duties."

Shran nodded and the two left the armory as the ensign went back to work. Crist went to his quarter to look up the report of the accident, and once there he sat down on the tiny stool. He ordered the computer,

"Computer, access ship security files, authorization Crist Alpha-Tango-228."

The computer lit up and the screen appeared, he then said, "Bring up all files that involve explosions within the ship."

The computer brought up a few files, none that looked like what he wanted, but then he noticed the file he wanted, and he opened it. After Crist read the file he said,

"Wow that really happened, what a psycho, how the heck did he become a Starfleet officer. I am sure as heck not going to be that kind of guy, I rather die than do something to damage this beautiful ship. What was he charged with?"

He looks at the file again and sees the charges, "Hmm, endangering animals, smuggling and selling contraband, and starting fights with fellow crewmen. Man, this guy should have never been in Starfleet. Well I should get to transports room 2."

He left his quarters and headed for transporter room 2, once there he looked at his belt and saw that he had a phaser and tricorder. He stepped in and saw Shran waiting, "Shran I thought I was supposed to be the first one here."

The two laughed and they waited for the others.

=Science Lab=

He had to keep his head from throwing up possible scenarios on the upcoming Away Mission. His scans had showed the Theory very badly damaged, there was little chance of survivors but there was always the chance of Escape Pods.

But there was an odd feeling when he looked at the images of the wreck. Not sadness or fear. But intrigue, curiosity. And that wasn't his thoughts...

Stepping into the Science Lab he picked up a Tricorder and took a Phaser from the meager Science Lab Weapons Locker. Not that he expected any hostile action, but from time to time Phasers made pretty nifty Cutting Torches.

He also picked up his own Field Sack, putting it over his shoulders. It contained an Interface Kit, a small Plasma Torch, and a set of Pattern Enhancers. He always liked to be prepared. Smiling to himself, he turned and walked Briskly to Transporter Room 2.

The Doors Hissed open and he Found Lt Crist and Lt JG Shran waiting patiently by the Transporter. Silently pleased he wasn't the last to assemble he spoke up.

"Right, just the Doctor to come?" He queried, adjusting the Sacks straps.

Crist looked over to Alistair and said,

"Yep, hopefully he'll be here shortly. It looks like your all ready, that's good."

The three waited for the last of their party to assemble.

=Sickbay=

Carter had stabilized the injured engineer and prepped to revive him. "Nurse Asner can you prep a hypospray; its time to wake our patient and assess the damage." Within moments of administering the medication the patient opened his eyes.

"W-where am I?" he said with a bit of fear in his tone.

"Your in sickbay" replied the nurse. "Do you remember what happened?"

"No" he replied as his eyes widened with concern. "What happened?"

"You were in an accident" replied Carter. "We will explain everything but i have just a few more questions for you."

At this time Carter had quickly shined a light to note the ensign's pupil reaction. "Computer note that the patient has delayed pupil response to direct light."

"Do you know your name?" the nurse asked.

"Yes" the ensign quickly responded. "My name is..." he blinked and seemed to have gone into deep thought. "My name is..." He was now beginning to show signs of distress.

"Its ok--" the doctor said before being cut off.

"No! Its not ok" he shouted "I cant even remember my own name. Tell me what happened to me."

"You were in an accident. I understand you are scared but you must stay calm." Carter turned to the nurse, who acknowledged his glance and proceeded for another hypospray. "You hit your head and there was some major swelling. Now, majority of the swelling has gone down but there is still some swelling of the left hemisphere which could be causing your memory lapse."

"H-how long until the swelling goes down?"

"I'm not exactly sure. It could take hours or it could be weeks until things are completely normal." The ensign began to panic. "We are going to run some tests--"

"Bridge to sickbay, we may have found the Theory, if so, we are hoping for survivors. We will need you on the away team doctor." interjected the captain.

"Acknowledged sir. I'll meet the away team in transporter room two." The doctor turned back to his patient. "As i was saying, we are going to run some additional tests, but I want you to get some rest." Lt Asner handed the doctor the hypospray. "Know this will help you sleep, and i promise when you wake i will have some answers for you." The doctor administered the sleeping agent and the ensign fell asleep. "Katherine, I want you to keep him under until I return. He's very emotional and i don't want him to hurt himself or anyone else for that matter. While I'm gone i want you to run a neural scan every half hour, we need to establish a baseline for this swelling"

"Acknowledged sir, is there anything else I should do?"

"No, I don't suspect this should take long if there are no survivors." The doctor exited sickbay with his emergency medkit and a phaser; which he almost never carried, but this trip didn't settle to well with him. After entering the turbolift, Carter began to collect his thoughts. "Transporter room two" he commanded.

Upon entering the room Lt's Daniel and Alistair were already waiting on the pad. "Alright gentlemen, let's do this." Carter turned to the transporter chief "Chief, whenever the captain's ready."

"Is the away team ready, Mr. Crist?", the Captain's voice boomed over the comm in transporter room 2. Upon Daniel's confirmation he said, "Good, there's no time like the present gentleman, godspeed. Bring us some good news, would you?" With that the Transporter Chief beamed the away team down to the planet...

As the Transporter Chief activated the transports, Crist could feel his atoms dissolving. The feeling was tingly and as if you were floating on water, it was quite peaceful. Just then he saw the planet and the transport was complete. He looked around and saw that they were outside and it was dusty. He saw everyone was here and said, "Ok everyone, lets start scanning the area for life signs."

He looks over at Shran, "What do you got Shran."

Shran said while scanning, "Sir, these blast marks appear to have been made by a type 2 disrupter."

Crist said, "Hmm, why would there be disruptors here. Alistair, Carter, do you two have anything."

Alistair swept his Tricorder over the ship's hull. They had transported down near one of the docking hatches, a

docking hatch that was horribly scarred now by weapons fire.

"It is definitely weapons fire, varying ages based on the scarring. It is consistent with Type 2 Disruptor impacts but no ones used those for quite some time" He said whilst continuing to scan.

"Still no life signs but something is interfering as I cannot read our life signs either, and" He paused as suddenly images, feelings, sounds and experiences flooded into his mind.

Alistair fell to the ground, and Crist said, "Alistair, Doctor I need help."

Carter quickly ended his scanning sweep and rushed to the side of Alistair running the scanner along his right temple. "There are no signs of trauma...and its not a seizure.

Flashback

"Report" the Theory's Captain yelled over the dim of a ship being subjected to a titanic beating, its structure creaking and groaning and being shaken violently.

"We've emerged from the sinkhole sir, but engines are off line, we were lucky to bounce off the atmosphere of that Gas Giant but we're on a direct collision course for a Class M planet" The conn officer replied, sweating heavily from the monumental effort of trying to keep the ship under control.

"Any word from Engineering?" The Captain said, directing it as his First Officer, who was valiantly hanging on to the railings behind the Captains chair.

"No sir" She replied "Not since you last asked" she added, visibly shuddering at the screams and sounds that had came on the comm when they'd spoken to Engineering.

"Dammit" The captain shouted, slamming his fist down on his chair "We need engines or we're going to hit the ground so hard our ancestors are going to feel it" He barked. "Get down there and get me anything you can give me" He ordered.

The First Officer nodded and darted to the turbolift.

Minutes past and the M class planet loomed ever closer in the view screen, the first flickers of flame beginning to lick the shields of the Theory as it began to enter the atmosphere.

"Sir I have out descent course stabilized with the thrusters but we'll still hit too fast" The Conn Officer stated.

"Then we must hope and pray" The Captain said

The lights flickered once, twice and the second time there was more power to them as they were much brighter.

The Conn Officer turned stunned "Sir we have 1 Impulse Engine online, engaging reverse now"

The ship bucked and screamed again as the engines roared but the ground was still coming towards them too fast, and then impact..

Flashback end

Alistair forced his eyes back open. He was on the ground, The Doctor and Lt Crist looking down at him concerned.

Crist said, "Hey welcome back, are you ok, Doctor do you know what happened to him?"

"Well from what i can tell there was no trauma and anything too seriously be concerned with. Based on your brain patterns" Carter turns to Alistair "it was a case of mild dissociation, or daydreaming. What does concern me is your loss of balance. In most cases of daydreaming subjects maintain their balance and motor functions, but in your case you didn't."

Carter wrapped up his assessment of Alistair. "There is not cause for concern at the moment, however when we

return to the ship i would like to get a full neural work-up. Before you hit the ground, I noticed something on my scanner 500 yards west of this location. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but I think we should check it out. I'm not convinced there are no survivors especially since something is interfering with our scans."

Crist followed up by tapping his comm badge, "Crist to McKenzie, Captain, the Doc picked up something 500 yards from here, we are going to investigate."

He looks over at Alistair, who was still on the ground, "Alistair, are you ok to go?"

Alistair nodded and stood up, and Crist said, "Doc, lead the way."

=Bridge of the McKenzie=

"Understood, keep us apprised Mr. Crist." Responded the captain as he looked at the view screen at the planet below. Off to the side of the planet he notices a very faint, very short flicker in space. "Did anyone else see that this time?" He questioned Lewis and the other bridge crew. "Perhaps we should have payed it more attention before, Lewis. Someone figure out what it is, I have a feeling it's no coincidence." As he finishes his sentence the captain flinches in pain and holds his head with his hand. The rest of the crew followed suit.

Whatever was happening stopped suddenly and they looked around at each other. The captain wiped his nose with his hand and small amount of blood was on his finger. The flicker in space once again came about on the view screen. It intensified and eventually revealed a starship in orbit above the planet alongside them. "Sir... they're hailing us." Lewis said.

=On the Planet Surface=

"Alright gentlemen, let's move out." The doctor lifted his scanner, turned west and headed towards the signal. The terrain was pretty rough on this planet; rocks and boulders were everywhere with little flat land to walk on. The temperature seemed to be rising, so he figured it must be the middle of the day. Because this planet was barely Class M, the air seemed very thin, as if they were at a very high altitude. Noticing this the doctor checked on his teammates.

"Crist, Cobb how's your breathing? The air here is a lot thinner than we're use to. If either of you begin to feel light-headed or experience any other unexplainable feeling I need to know immediately."

By the time they were less than 200 yards away the signal became stronger. The readings were unlike anything in Starfleet records. "Crist, I'm not 100% positive but I believe I have life signs on my scanner."

Carter wiped some sweat from his brow...

Crist said, "Well, let's hope so, hopefully they can tell us what happened here."

Just then Carter collapsed, "Doc, Doc, are you ok."

Flashback

Sweating from the damage to the environmental controls, McNulty entered the makeshift triage center in cargo bay 2. "Nurse, I need a report" McNulty bellowed.

"Sir, we have 13 crewmen here, all with various non-life threatening injuries. Two have broken wrists, one has a concussion, five with minor plasma burns, the remainder have various cuts and contusions."

"Where do we stand in the treatment process?"

"Everyone is stable, but we will need you to perform grafts for the burns and set the broken wrists."

"Excellent. Have those patients escorted to sickbay. I won't perform any procedures in here." McNulty paused for a moment "I want you to keep an eye on the concussions, - don't want any bleeders"

McNulty exited the cargobay and proceeded back to sickbay. As he rounded a corner he tripped over an exposed

conduit, falling face first on to the ground.

Flashback ends

When Carter came to a few minutes later, he had a mouth full of dirt. "What the hell happened"

Crist explained, "You collapsed, just like Alistair. Are you ok?"

Carter nodded

"Ok, let's rest a bit, and then we can continue." Crist said.

The four rested for a few minutes, and then continued on.

The four away team members neared the coordinates that Carter had found. They were only a few yard to the location until explosions began to go off. One of the explosions came extremely close and Crist said, "Damn it, everyone take cover in that ditch."

As Crist pointed out, to their right. They took cover and could hear phaser fire as well as projectile weapons, or bullets flying by.

At Lt Crist's command, Alistair had literally dived into the ditch, turning it into a controlled roll as he landed.

"Those sound like mortars." Crist said about the explosions.

Crist stuck his head up a bit to see who was attacking them. He couldn't see much, as their attackers were hidden behind rocks. He could see however, some sort of large structure up against a rock cliff, in a U shaped canyon. He then ducked back down for cover, and said, "Who the heck are they, are they the Theory's crew. Doc, what do your scans say about them? Alistair, what is that up there, it looks like a ship."

Trying hard to concentrate with the noise and flying grit and dust from mortar impacts, he unfurled his tricorder and began scanning.

The interference was still there but somehow, little breaks in it were giving flickering of readings.

"I'm still having trouble with the interference, but I am getting data in small breaks in it" Cobb paused for a second and continued "I did get brief lifesigns, all I can tell is that they were humanoid"

Crist then began to get light headed and lost consciousness.

Flashback

The ship was a wreck, the security officers managed to help the medical staff as best as they could. Then there were sounds of weapons fire, and then a few of the crew began to collapse from unknown reasons. Security grabbed there phasers and rushed outside, and immediately took cover. The ship looked worse on the outside then the interior, the entire port section had been ripped apart, most likely where the ship hit first. The ship seemed to be inside of a U shaped canyon. The chief security officer died in the crash and all that remanded were raw recruits. They could see the aliens that were attacking but were not sure who they were. One of the security officers yelled,

"Who the hell are they, Jackson don't sit there, fire!"

Jackson sat there in a hole, in a fetal position, crying. He was supposed to be in charge of the security after the chief's death, but he was frozen there, unable to do a thing. After they repelled the attack, they went back into the ship, there they meet with the captain and talked about further defenses for their new fort.

Flashback ends

Crist opened his eyes and looked around, the sound of weapons fire and explosions still went on around them.

Alistair began filtering back through some of the distorted data one fact leaped out at him.

"I have a reading on a damaged Starfleet issue Com badge distress signal, its directly in that Canyon" He finished, gesturing with his free hand the direction.

Crist said, "If there is in fact a Starfleet signal up there, then we must have found the Theory. Guys, I think it's time for something stupid."

With Carter, Cobb, and Shran looking at him, like he had lost his mind, Crist yelled out, "STOP SHOOTING, WE GIVE UP."

After repeating that line a few times, the firing and explosions stopped, and they could hear someone yelling out, "Throw your weapons aside and come out with your hands up."

The away team did as they were told, and they walked up to a group that looked like they were human. One of them said, "They don't look like Ullians,"

And another walked up and said, "They're getting in your head," he punches Crist in the stomach, "we should kill them, right here and now."

With that said, Crist spoke up, "We're not your enemy, we're from Starfleet, from the USS McKenzie. We are here to rescue you, please take us to your captain or whoever is in charge. You can even keep us under heavy guard, if you want."

The group took the away team inside the structure that Crist had seen earlier.

=Bridge of the McKenzie=

The captain stood from his chair. "Put them on screen, I would like to know what is going on here." The view screen changed from an image of the alien ship to the commander of the ship, an Ullian.

"Salutations, captain... While you have little choice in the matter, your inevitable surrender will be most kind, we appreciate your cooperation." The captain looked around at the bridge crew as the Ullian continues, "You have been demonstrated our telepathic strength and we of course could kill you, but we would prefer to keep your minds active." The captain signaled to mute the transmission.

"If anyone has any bright ideas, now would be the time to express them."

Barile chimed in, "I'm not normally one to say...surrender, but it's looking like a pretty good option. We either die now or we give them a chance to make a mistake that gives us a fighting chance."

After Barile suggestion, Lt. JG Jones turned around his chair, to speak up, "Sir, I suggest we attack now, destroy them before they have a chance to follow through with their threat, a preemptive strike sir."

Lt. JG Jones was manning the tactical station while his superior officer, Crist, was on the planet surface.

The captain paced in front of the view screen as he listened to the two suggestions. "Do we pick a rock or a hard place?", he said sitting back down in his chair. "Let's test just how hard their threat is. Mr. Jones...", the captain motioned with his hand, "fire at will."

Jones activated the Ablative Armor Generators, to protect the ship, and opened the ports to fire a full spread of Quantum Torpedoes and fire the Phaser Cannons. His finger was about to hit the fire button, but just then his head started to hurt. It was a minor headache, but he hesitated for a brief moment. Just then he could hear the rest of the crew cry out in pain, and his headache grew. Blood began run from his nose and he looked at the captain with blood in his hand. Jones then fell out of his chair, without firing a shot.

Jones' eyes meet with the captain's as he falls onto the floor near the view screen. A nearby crewmen rushes to Jones' side. "...he's dead." says the crewmen.

As the crew cried out at varying levels of audibility Barile found himself grinding his teeth and clutching the edge of his station as he fought to stay conscious.

"Captain, I suggest plan B" Barile said through clenched teeth.

"I have to agree", responds the captain to Barile holding his hand to his head as he taps his console lowering the armor and hailing the Ullian ship. "Ullian Ship, this is the captain of the USS McKenzie... No further deaths will be warranted; we surrender."

=On the Planet Surface=

The away team was marched into the Survivor Camp. On the way they'd passed their defenses and seen the somewhat crude mortars and dilapidated weapons they were using.

Getting into a firefight and becoming a prisoner was not exactly what Carter had in mind when he beamed to this planet, but from the way the events were playing out capture was better than death. Just before being surrendering, Carter had removed his comm badge and placed it in his boot. It was a bit uncomfortable as they marched to the survivor camp, but he knew it could be useful at some point.

As they entered the ship Carter softly said "My gosh...look at this place." within seconds he was hit in the ribs with the butt of a rifle.

"No talking!" shouted one of the guards. After a quick stumble, he caught his footing and continued to walk towards an unknown destination.

The structure itself was far more corroded and aged than it had any right to be. Alistair flicked his gaze constantly as they were moved deeper into the ship, taking in as many details as possible.

Lighting, he noted was minimal but not Emergency Lighting. Most doors were open and did not appear to have closed for some time. Here and there he heard a distant hiss as a door opened, but it was an aged sound and much more prolonged than the usual crisp, clean hiss.

Eventually the group came to the Brig, which was in a pretty bad state. The Away Team was shoved inside under the point of 2 very unsafe looking Phaser Rifles.

As the guards stepped back from the Brig's Force Field, one guard activated it and cursed violently as the force field fizzled once and flicked out.

One of the guards laughed and gave the wall near the Force Field a not to friendly kick and the force field sparked to life.

At this point, oddly the 3 guards moved out leaving the Away Team to their thoughts.

Alistair sat down on one of the bunks and turned to Lt Crist.

"Well at least we found the survivors and didn't get shot" he sad wryly smiling at him.

Crist answered, "Yeah, now all we need to do is meet with whoever is in charge here."

"Normally I would agree, but I don't think we can count rational communications. If they were Starfleet they would have recognized our uniforms. Something is just NOT making sense." Carter paused for a moment. "Before, one of them mentioned Ullian's. Last I knew there weren't a violent race since their revolution."

Carter slowly removed the comm badge from his boot. "Crist, see if you can do anything with this." Carter tossed the badge to Crist "Maybe we can use it to Short-circuit the force field, it already seems weak."

Crist caught the badge and responded,

"Nice work Doc, I'm no engineer, but I would like to think I could get out of a jam."

He began to fiddle with the comm badge, a few moments later, he said, "Hmm, I don't think this comm badge will do much, I think we should save it so we can contact the ship and get out of here. But your right Doc, it does look

weak, in fact I think if all four of us lean up against it and apply enough force it might damage the field and shut down."

After saying that, they heard the guards coming back, Crist quickly tossed the comm badge back to Carter as he hid it in his boot. Once the guards came into view they asked, "Who is the one in charge?"

Crist replied, "I am"

The guard said with a smile, "Well you wanted to see our leader, so we'll show you our leader"

The guards deactivated the Force Field and Crist stepped out, then they reactivated it by kicking the wall. The guards lead Crist down the corridor to a room, they entered and there stood a man. As Crist was about to say "Hello", one of the guards hit him with the butt of their rifles and pushed him in a chair. Crist then realized that this was an interrogation, a painful one by the looks of it. The leader started, "Who are you?"

Crist replied, "I'm Lt. Daniel Crist, I'm from the USS McKenzie, we've been sent here on a rescue mission. Are you the Crew of the Theory?"

After asking that, the guard punched Crist in the face and said, "Shut up, we're asking the questions."

The leader then followed with sarcastically saying, "You're a rescue team then, well your 60 years late, now, who are you really?"

Crist said, "What do you mean, 60 years late?"

Crist was then hit again, in the stomach. After 10 minutes of nothing but the same questions, a young woman entered the room, she appeared to be a cross from a Bolian and a Human, she whispered to the leader, "Sir, we have something you should see."

He responded, "Fine, take him back to the others."

The guards then picked up Crist and carried him back to the Brig, they threw him in and reactivated the Force Field, then left. The three looked at Crist as he was beaten up pretty bad, with a black eye, bruised ribs and bruised check. Shran asked, "Sir, are you ok, what happened"

Crist replied, "Ouch, well let's say I'm too stubborn."

=Theory Bridge on the Surface=

The leader followed the young woman to the bridge, where he said, "What is it"

A man turned around and said, "Sir, we've picked up some transmissions from orbit." The man put it though, only sound.

"Salutations, captain... While you have little choice in the matter, your inevitable surrender will be most kind, we appreciate your cooperation. You have been demonstrated our telepathic strength and we of course could kill you, but we would prefer to keep your minds active."

The leader turned to the man and said, "Tarn, I wish I could kill him, he's an idiot if he thinks he can kill us with our defenses up. Open a channel to that ..."

The leader was stopped by the woman as she said, "Sir, it looks like there is some movement up there, like a battle, but its hard to tell."

The leader looked questionably, if Tarn wasn't talking to him, then who?

The man then said, "Sir, there is another transmission up there, I'll put it though."

"Ullian Ship, this is the captain of the USS McKenzie... No further deaths will be warranted; we surrender."

The leader then said, "The McKenzie," he looked surprised, "then those prisoners, those, people were telling the truth."

He then left the bridge with two guards and headed to the brig.

=Theory Brig=

Alistair mused on their predicament. Yes they had a com badge, but what good would it do them? If they tried to escape wouldn't that prove they were the enemy and just get them shot by the Theory's "Crew".

He spoke up, "I know this is going to sound ridiculous but we shouldn't escape" He said "If we get out of that door we may make it a few hundred meters but we are very unlikely to escape. We have to get them to realize we're friends and that we want to help them" He finished.

"Doctor" he added " I heard one of the captors mention Ullians, and from my xenobiology classes I recall they were telepathic" He said looking at the Doctor as he tended to Lt Crist's wounds. "Could they be behind these flashbacks?" He asked.

Crist responded, "Before I might have agreed, but now, I say we get the hell out of here, take our chances, and let these people deal with their own problems."

As Crist finished, three of their captors walked in, two were men that they had never seen before, but the third, the one leading them in, was someone Crist knew, it was the leader. The leader walked up to the Force Field as the other two stood behind him. He started by asking, "Who are you people?"

Crist responded once again, "We're Starfleet officers from the USS McKenzie."

The leader then sarcastically but more friendly said, "Well, if that's true, your ship just surrendered to our enemy."

Crist respond with shock, "What!"

The leader seemed to be more calm but still cautious, "Hmm, by the four of your faces you didn't know that, then maybe you're not with the Ullians after all. But I still don't trust you."

After saying that, explosions could be heard from outside, the same mortars that the away teams faced before they surrendered. Crist spoke up, hoping to get the away team and himself out of here, and possible salvaging this mission.

"Then let us help you, maybe we can right the wrongs, we can help repel your attackers and the doc here can help with your injured. We have remained sincere, even with that lovely chat we had earlier, you can keep us under guard, just give us a chance to show you we're on the same side."

The leader thought it over for a moment and gave a nod, "Fine, but you better not try anything."

He lowered the Force Field and the four stepped out of there cell, Crist then turned to face the team.

"Ok doc you and Cobb go with them to their medical bay and help with their injured, while Shran and I will help with the defenses."

The team split up and Crist and Shran followed one of the guards to a room where they were handed there phasers, then they headed outside where the battle was taking place. The two took cover and began to return fire, phasers on stun.

=McKenzie=

The McKenzie crew was shuffled into one of it's cargo bays, stripped of everything but their uniforms. The Ullians, unable to hold the entire crew aboard their own vessel, use the bay as a make-shift brig. As the last crewman entered the doors close behind him, guarded by a group of Ullians outside. The captain corraled most of the crew around him in the center of the bay,

"I am sure this is the last place most of you thought you would be. However, I assure you that we will find a way to overcome this. This is our ship, we have at least that on our side. If any of you feel strange or start to think abnormally, fight it with everything you have. We must keep our senses and stand our ground against any attack they may try to form. I have every bit of confidence in each of you. You are aboard this ship for a reason, and that reason is to uphold your principles stubbornly; and I expect as much. If they wanted it to be, or could, we would all be dead. They are powerful, but we are mighty."

An Ullian guard enters the room and calls for him, "You are wanted, captain. Follow me."

The captain and the Ullian guard exit the cargo bay leaving the crew and headed down the corridor to the bridge where the leader of the rogue Ullian group sat in the captain's chair.

"What an interesting ship you have, captain. I thought the Federation was past the need for such power and weaponry," barked Tarn, "Or perhaps that is how they got to where they are in the first place; through force."

"That's--," the captain starts to respond.

"That was not a question, captain." Said Tarn as the captain flinches in pain. He stood from the center chair and approaches him saying, "I have gotten much information from your engineers and tactical officers. But there are somethings that only you know; I need that information..."

=McKenzie Cargo Bay=

Looking around the cargo bay Lt. Barile began going over various exits and entry points in his head. The schematics of the McKenzie floated across his mind as he tried to come up with a plan of action.

"Ok, everyone, you heard the captain's pep-talk. Now, let's start going over what we know about the ship that can help us. Cargo bay's weren't intended to be brigs so we've got a great chance to escape without a problem. The only issue is what do we do after we get out of here. I know myself and the other engineers can easily make our way through the ship but we need a plan."

Ensign Jackson dry heaved in the corner of the cargo bay, Lt. Barile rubbed his forehead between his antennae slowly. "Can someone check on Skip over there? He's been trying to cough up everything in his digestive tract since they mentally attacked us."

"I'm open to ideas for a plan of attack. We don't know how they're situated with communications, mental or verbal, I don't know. We might have to take them all out quickly and at once though."

A group of security officers gathered around a rough drawing of the McKenzie as Lt. Barile, Lt. Jones and Ensign Jackson filled in details. "There are two exits from this cargo bay that are laughably easy to access. We'll use those to send a few small groups out of the cargo bay and try to retake the ship."

Lt. Barile spoke with authority and confidence, "This is the plan as it stands; Jones leads a team of crewmen to this jeffries tube junction," pointing at a position on the map. "That's the best place to access communications, from there I want you to try and get in contact with the away team if they're still alive. Jackson, I want you to take a team and head to sickbay. Once you get there find a way to subdue them or perhaps nullify their telepathic abilities. Maybe we can release a compound through the ship's environmental systems that will stop them in their tracks."

Lt. Barile stood up looking down over the drawing, he pointed at several security personnel, "You, you, and you two are with me. We're going to the weapons storage area near Engineering and then we're going to rescue our Captain."

Lt. Jones' team made it to the communications array with little trouble and began at once to work on a way to break through the atmospheric interference and contact the landing party.

Jackson's team was less successful. After arriving in sickbay they were unable to find a way to disable the Ullians' telepathic abilities or otherwise subdue them. Jackson re-routed internal sensors to a display in sickbay and located Lt. Barile. Using the nearest information panel he attempted to get his superior officer's attention.

Lt. Barile sat with his team just down the hall from the bridge doors. They were just about to proceed with their plan when one of the crewmen noticed a panel blinking and pointed it out to Lt. Barile.

A message appeared on the panel: Sickbay Clear. Secondary Objective Incapable. Ideas?

"Damn," Barile thought to himself, "we need to at least incapacitate some of these Ullians for our plans to have a shot." The idea struck him like the charge from a corroded EPS conduit. Lt. Barile tapped his comm badge and whispered his orders to Ensign Jackson.

His team proceeded back to Engineering where he began to make the necessary alterations for his plan's success. The panel next to him flashed and Barile quickly opened a channel to Jackson.

"Ok, we're ready here. Did you replicate the inoculations and inoculate your group?" Barile asked quietly.

"Aye, sir" Jackson replied in an equally hushed tone.

"Excellent, then beam the inoculations to everyone and begin releasing the gas." Within moments the sounds of a transport echoed through Engineering and four hyposprays appeared. Each member of his team inoculated themselves as Lt. Barile entered commands into his console. The environmental systems hummed as an invisible gas began to drift through the ship's ventilation systems.

Jackson prepared to beam a canister of the knock-out gas to the Ullian ship but their shields went up just as he was beginning the transport and it failed. The Ullians on the ship had already begun to fall to the ground throughout but not before sending a telepathic message to their crewmates that something was amiss.

"Jackson to Barile, we have a problem."

Barile looked up at the ceiling annoyed and responded, "tell me it's not a big problem." As he finished his sentence phaser fire rocked the ship. He rerouted tactical functions to consoles in Engineering and raised the shields. "Red Alert!"

He jabbed a finger at one of the crewmen with him, "weapons controls are on the port console, lock onto their weapons and fire at will." He turned as Jackson entered Engineering, "Skip, you keep the ship in one piece. I'm going to the bridge."

Barile exited Engineering and proceeded directly to the bridge where he found the captain unconscious. "Barile to sickbay I need a medic on the bridge now!" One of the younger conn officers had already taken his place on the bridge by the time Barile got to the captain's chair another tactical officer took his station moments later. "Re-routing tactical functions back to the bridge. Evasive maneuver Epsilon Seven, continue firing on their weapons. What are their shields at?"

Before the tactical officer could answer the ship vanished from view. "Sir, the ship is gone. Wait! They're behind us." The ship was again pounded by incoming fire.

"Bring us about ensign. Fire when you can get a clear look at them." Barile leaned forward in the captain's chair staring at the view screen.

"It's too late sir, they're gone again. They're using some sort of cloaking technology so I can't track them."

"I have an idea, it's an old one but a good one. Ensign, take us into the upper atmosphere of the planet, just enough to bring some color to our cheeks."

"Sir?" The ensign looked over his shoulder confused.

"Really? You've never heard of the LaForge maneuver? Take us into the atmosphere. Tactical, ready aft torpedoes. I'm done playing with this jackass. When you see something on our tail in the atmosphere fire at will."

Realization dawned on the conn and tactical officers as they glanced at each other with a smirk and went about their orders.

The ship rocked as it delved further into the planet's atmosphere. The Ullian ship had yet to attempt pursuit.

"Shield status?"

"Our shields are at 59% and falling, we can't stay in the atmosphere much longer sir. Still no sign of the Ullians."

"Damn, mind readers, they probably already knew what we were trying to do...pull us out and divert emergency power to the shields. I have a feeling we-." The ship shook violently as phaser fire flashed across the view screen. "Evasive man-!" The helm console exploded, showering the bridge in sparks and killing the ensign instantly.

"Shields are down sir! Weapons offline!"

Barile slouched into the chair as the ship rocked from Ullian phaser fire. "Hail our attackers, tell them we surrender. Lets hope the away team has better luck than we have had to date."

Within moments the Ullians ceased fire and locked a tractor beam onto the ship.

=Theory Sickbay, On the surface=

Alistair walked briskly down to the Sickbay with the Doctor, following one of the "crewman" of the Theory. He'd only had standard starfleet medical training, so he moved to look at the less serious injuries.

Carter entered sickbay and hurried over to a nurse who seemed to be struggling. "Nurse what do we have?"

"Who are you?" exclaimed the confused nurse.

"I'm as Starfleet doctor just trying to provide some assistance." Carter replied.

The nurse was hesitant but decided to accept the help as she continued to scan her patient. "He has multiple fractures, internal bleeding, and a ruptured kidney. If we don't do something fast he will die."

Carter could hear the fear in her voice. This wasn't her first trauma, but the extra fear seemed to indicate she knew the patient. "Do you know this man?"

"Y-yes. He's my brother." She began to sob slightly

"Ok, let's prep for surgery. You guys don't have much for medical equipment so I'm going to have to do this the old fashioned way." If I even remember how he thought to himself.

"I'll leave the more... challenging stuff to the guy who knows it better than I do" Alistair mused to himself as he got to treating a young women with a broken arm.

"So" he said smiling warmly at the women "Whats your role here on the Theory?" he asked.

The women hesitated for a moment before she responded "I learned from my mother about the Science systems, especially how our Bio Neural circuitry works" she replied

"Really?" Alistair said curiously "Can I ask how it is that your crew doesn't suffer the Psychic attacks that we've been suffering since we arrived?" He asked.

Again she hesitated "Well... I guess I can answer because your helping us and you seem to be Starfleet. We were able to use our Bio Neural gel packs to generate an interference field that blocks out their attacks. It sadly has the side affect of playing havoc with sensors" She replied

Alistair's eyes went wide with the revelation. As he finished setting the break, he approached the Security Officer guarding Sickbay.

"I need to speak to Lt Crist, our Away Team leader, now" He said..

The guard hesitated.

"Look if you do it, I think I can save us, help you and get us all home" Alistair pleaded.

The guard hesitated again, but nodded and activated his battered com badge. After a few seconds he spoke.

"Your Lt will hear you now" He said

Alistair smiled "Lt Crist, I have something you may want to hear"

=Outside the Theory=

Crist and Shran took cover as the guard dove next to them. Crist glanced up to inspect the battle. He ducked back down and turned to the guard.

"Go tell your people to split up into two groups and take one of the groups to the left, you can use that nacelle for cover, while the remaining stays here. The group will then attack the enemies right flank."

The guard looked at him with hesitation and Crist spoke again, "I'm not going to escape without my friends, besides we're here to help you."

The guard nodded and left, Crist looked at Shran and said sarcastically, "Alright lets get out of here."

Shran laughed and responded, "So what's the plan sir?"

"Well, from what I can tell the enemies stronger at their right flank so the plan is to make sure they focus all their attention on us while the others move around for a surprise attack on the enemies, hopefully that attack will disrupt the enemy and force them to retreat." Crist said after firing a few shots. "So lets get their attention."

Crist and Shran started to begin to fire more and more, a moment later Crist noticed a group making their way to the damaged broken off nacelle to start their surprise attack. A few moments later after the group at the nacelle saw that the enemy's attention was fully on Crist and the others, they attacked. The Ullains were so surprised that they took heavy casualties and were forced to retreat. Crist looked up and saw the enemy retreating and he ordered, "Hold your fire."

The weapons fire stops and the theory's crew move out from there cover, cheering. Some of the crew walked up to Crist and Shran giving them praise, oddly enough one of them was the same guy who hit Crist as the away team surrendered earlier. Just then, one of the men's communicator beeped and Crist could hear a distorted voice of Cobb.

"Lt Crist, I have something you may want to hear"

Crist then motioned to the man, to tell him to activate his comm. badge.

“Ok Alistair, I’ll be right there.”

Crist and Shran made their way to the theory’s sickbay to meet up with Cobb and Carter. Once there Crist walked up the Cobb and said, “What do you have Alistair.”

Alistair turned to Lt Crist and smiled, "I've spoken to some of the Theory crew and they used the ships Bio Neural gel packs to create the interference field that blocks both the Ullians telepathy and scrambles our sensors"

He paused and then continued, an edge of excitement creeping into his voice.

"If we can get word to the McKenzie we can create a similar field easily and prevent the Ullians from using their powers on the McKenzie"

Alistair finished. He looked at Crist and it was clear that, the idea had pleased him as much as it had improved his own mood.

"What do you think?" he asked.

Crist looked at his team and spoke up, “I think it’s a good idea, but we need to figure out a way to destroy the enemy ship.”

As Crist said that, the leader of the Theory’s crew spoke up. He was in the doorway listening to the conversation between Crist and Cobb.

“Well there’s not much we could do about that, all our weapons are shot, and even if we get one online there’s no way we could target them.” The leader said as the team noticed him. “Well I guess you are here to help, I’m John Raymond, the Unofficial Captain of this lovely ship, thanks for the help, and sorry about all the trouble.”

Crist rubbed his jaw and said, “Yeah whatever.”

Raymond continued, “Besides I don’t think it’s necessary as there seems to be another fight up there, your crew must have retaken your ship back.”

Crist voice brightened up, “I see, lets go to your bridge, maybe we can help them with your interference field tech against the enemy.”

Crist, Cobb, Raymond and Shran then made their way to the Theory’s bridge, once there one of the officers there noticed the captain and she spoke up, “Sir, there is no longer any movement up there, I think the enemy has retaken the ship.”

The hope faded from Crist, Cobb, and Shran faces. Crist then turned to Cobb and said, “Alistair see if you can’t get them on the comm, maybe someone is still left up there that can help us.”

Cobb walked over to a console, sat down, and began to try to contact the McKenzie.

=McKenize=

Jones woke to find 2 crewmen looking over her. During the last attack, she was knocked against a bulkhead and knocked out, while she was in the communication room trying to contact the away team. After the battle the two crewmen were able to wake her up. A few minutes later a panel began to beep, and she answered it fearing who it might be, with her relief she could hear the voice of Cobb, one of the members of the away team.

“Lt. Cobb, I think the Ullians have retaken the ship after a failed attempt by us, I fear me and 2 crewmen are the

only ones that are left to fight them.”

A bang was heard at the door, someone was trying to get in. One of the crewmen worked on a computer and scanned the doorway, it was the Ullians.

Jones said, “Sir, this room is about to be overrun, we need to do this fast.”

Jones and the two crewmen began to work with the instructions from Cobb.

=Theory Bridge, On the Surface=

Alistair had been relieved at the communication from the McKenzie. Less so when it was revealed that they'd retaken the ship but been captured again by the Ullians.

He'd reported the contact with the McKenzie and her situation to Lt Crist and "Captain" Raymond. Hope came back to Crist as he said,

“Good, ok here's the new plan, Alistair, talk Jones through the modifications to the gel packs, while Shran and I work on getting a torpedo launcher online. Once we do that, Jones will activate the field while we fire a torpedo at the same time and destroy the enemy ship, also see if she can get access to the sensors to see if the enemy shields are down and help us with the targeting, with any luck their shields will be down. Raymond, mind if you show us to your aft torpedo launchers, I think I can jury-rig it to be able to fire at least one torpedo.”

Raymond smiled and said, “Now that's a plan, ok this way.”

Raymond, Crist and Shran left the bridge and made their way to aft torpedo room. Once there Crist noticed how bad it was there, it had little if no upkeep. But no matter how it was to be done, it had to be done none the less, so Crist and Shran started their work on the launcher.

Alistair nodded and began talking to Jones about how to set the modifications up.

He explained how she would need to switch all command and control functions over to the backup Isolinear Circuits before she activated the field.

No good setting up the field if the McKenzie then spiraled down into the planet without any means of control, he thought.

Next he explained that she would need to route an EPS tap at a low power frequency into the isolated Bio Neural circuitry. He gave the precise frequency discovered at a terrible cost by the Theory's crew.

After a long and agonizing few minutes the comm clicked to signal that Jones was ready.

Turning round to address the bridge Alistair stated "Jones is ready to activate the field at your command, she doesn't have long the Ullians are trying to cut in with a Plasma Torch."

=Theory Sickbay=

The surgery wasn't perfect, but the patient survived. Carter was oblivious to what was going on outside the OR. Carter cautiously approached one of the Guards in sickbay.

"Do you know what happened to the two Starfleet officers I was with?"

The guard looked at him as if he were living in a time warp. "They have devised a plan to fight the Ullians. They plan to modify the ship you came from to repel the Ullian's telepathic abilities. If all goes well, we should finally eliminate them all...the whole damned race if we get the chance."

Before he had a chance to think the doc blurted out "Enough talking, where are they?"

"They should be somewhere near the front lines-"

"Can you take me there?"

"I'm really not supposed to leave my post...but ok, follow me"

Carter and the guard from sickbay headed towards the last known position of both Crist and Alistair. He had only hoped all was ok...

=McKenzie Bridge=

Tarn, commander of the Ullains, awoke on the bridge of the McKenzie by one of his crew, he stood up and saw another crewman pushing one of the McKenzie's Engineers out the door. He was informed on what had happened and was furious. He thought of what he should do to the crew of the McKenzie, so many ideas read through his head. He then turned to one of his crew,

"I'm going back to the ship, you're in charge, until I figure out what to do with this crew, do what you wish with them, just don't kill them, yet."

Tarn then made his way towards the transporter room and return to his ship.

The Ullain that was left in charge on the McKenzie's Bridge, began to give out his orders,

"Take this human to the sickbay here, I have a feeling that the commander will what the use this human later." Pointing at Captain Kirkpatrick, who was unconscious on the floor, the Ullain then laughed and said, "He couldn't even stand up to the commander's interrogation."

Another Ullain spoke up, "Sir, there seems to be humans in the communications room." The Ullain in charge said, "Send someone down there and ripe them out of there."

=Theory aft Torpedo Room=

About 30 minutes went by as Crist and Shran work hard on the torpedo launcher.

"OUCH." As a part fell on Crist's head. "Man I thought this would be hard but this is crazy. No no Shran, that part goes there and the other goes...ah...here." As he points to two spots. A minute later Cobb came over the comm.

"Jones is ready to activate the field at your command, she doesn't have long the Ullians are trying to cut in with a Plasma Torch"

Crist then taped the communicator that Raymond gave him, "Understood Alistair, I think we're ready here too, stand by." Crist closes the channel and muttered, "Ready to blow us up," He sighs, "Shran head back to the bridge I'll be there shortly."

Shran then left and headed to the bridge. Crist then walked over to a console and began working the controls. He then taped the comm. badge,

"Alistair, tell Jones to activate the field and to send up sensor data, I'm going target the enemy ship manually."

=McKenzie=

Jones was waiting for the order to activate the field when she ask one of the crewmen to look at the sensor scans, and check if the enemy ships shields were down. He worked a panel a few seconds and gave a smile to Jones, their shields were in fact down. Cobb's voice came on again and gave the order to activate the field, the plan was coming together.

=Theory aft Torpedo Room=

Crist working the controls, began inputting the target, there was no way to tell which ship he was targeting for sure, but he believed he recognizes one of the ships as the McKenzie so he targeted the other, and praying that he picked the right one. He then gritted his teeth and hit the button to fire. Crist then dashed out running away fearing what may happen. The torpedo did launch but at a cost, because of the jury-rigging the launcher was destroyed by the kickback and launch of the torpedo, the torpedo room as well as the section it was in was destroyed. Crist dove as the explosion went on behind him. After everything calmed down he got up, wiped the dust and debris off him and headed to the bridge to hear the news.

=Theory Bridge=

Shran got to the Bridge and told everyone that Crist will launch the torpedo in a moment. Just then the torpedo launched and an explosion happened. Everyone was afraid that Crist was killed in the explosion but didn't have time to think about it. Shran and Cobb tracked the torpedo as best they could until it hit its target, and then they read an explosion in orbit. Cobb began trying to contact the McKenzie, but nothing so far. Five minutes went by as everyone feared they got the wrong ship. Just then Crist step through the door asking,

"What happened up there?"

Shran said, "Not sure as of yet sir."

A few more minutes later a voice came over the comm., it was Jones. She reports that the Ullain ship has been destroyed, but the explosion did some damage to the McKenzie as the two ships were so close without shields. She and the two crewmen took care of the Ullains that were outside the door of the Communication room, and will start releasing the rest of the crew to take care of the rest of the Ullains. With that news, the away team and the crew of the Theory let out a sign of relief. Carter entered the Bridge and wondering what was going on.

Crist said, "It's all over, our crew should be mopping up the Ullains with the help of the Theory's field tech."

About an hour later, a voice came over the comm., it was Barile. He reported that most of the Ullains have been killed or captured, the armory is in the hands of the crew as well as all major points of the ship like engineering, the bridge and the transporter rooms. He asked if Crist would like to beam up and Crist agreed.

Crist ordered, "Shran and I will beam back up, Alistair and the Doc will stay to help with the injured, also send down some more medics to help the Doc."

Crist and Shran then beamed up to the ship and were greeted by Barile. Crist, Barile, and Shran then walked out of the Transporter Room and headed to the Armory.

"So what's going on Barile." Crist said.

Barile responded, "Well we mostly retaken the ship there are a few more areas that they still hold though, the Captain is unconscious and is in sickbay, and I'm sorry to say that Lt. Will Jones is dead."

With shock Crist said, "What I thought that he was in the comms room," Crist shook off the shock of his officers death and responded, "Ok, you take care of the repairs and I'll take care of the rest of them."

He gave the orders, knowing that duty comes first. The two officers then parted ways. Crist and Shran entered the Armory and looked at the weapons, only hand phasers and phaser rifles.

"I really should have stocked the Armory before we left." Crist said.

The two picked up a rifle and headed to meet the security teams. Once they met up with them the teams splat up, Crist leading one, Shran leading the other. The plan was to attack the last area under Ullain control at two sides, preventing their escape. The two teams engaged the last of the enemy and the fire fight lasted a few moments until the last of them surrendered. The surviving Ullains were brought to the cargo bay where they were held, where they could be transported back to the Federation, so their people could deal with them. Crist told Shran to take the security teams and do a few more sweeps just to be sure. Crist then headed to the Bridge to begin beaming up the crew of the Theory.

A few hours later, finally all the survivors of the Theory or their decedents were beamed up. The ship was crowded and not much room to move around, but the crew had done what they came here to do, rescue the Theory or at least its crew. Crist then ordered the ship to set a course for the subspace sink hole, since Captain Kirkpatrick was unavailable Crist was in command.

Alistair had been glad they'd recovered the McKenzie. They'd probably never know what had driven the normally placid Ullians to such terrible action.

Part of him didn't want to know, he thought.

Lt Crist, as the de facto Captain of the McKenzie woke him from his silent thoughts.

"Alistair any ideas on how to get through that sink hole without any problems, or do we just go through?" Lt Crist asked.

Alistair thought for a moment and called up the sensor readings taken whilst in combat with the Ullian ship.

"One moment" Alistair said, filtering the data further and running a simulation through the ship's computer.

"We won't be able to escape on impulse, and the gravitational shear prevents warp drive" He stated.

"However, I believe we can use the warp drive to give us a boost that will allow us to coast out of the sink hole, we'll need to accelerate to maximum warp for 1 second just before we hit the gravitational shear". Alistair added, knowing that no one wanted to be stuck here, especially the Theories crew, "It will be rough, but we should make it intact" He finished.

"Ok, let's get out of here." Crist said as Shran and Lewis made their way onto the Bridge, Shran had finished his Security sweeps.

"Shran, take my post." Crist said as he looked towards him. Crist then walked over to the big chair at the center of the room and sat down. He'd be fine in command, but sitting in this chair was a little unsettling, as it's a big symbol of command. The chair was like all the others yet felt so much different and big.

"Ok, Red Alert," Crist opened a ship wide communication. "All hands brace yourselves, we are about to go through the Sub-Space Sink Hole, I repeat all hands brace yourselves." Crist closed the channel. "Ok Ray, go to warp for that second and take us through the sink hole."

The ship entered warp for a second and then dropped out of it, right as the ship met the sink hole. The ship shook violently as the crew hung on to anything they could find. A few minutes later the ship became calm, and Crist asked, "Are we out, are we in normal space?"

Shran responded, "Yes sir, we made it."

Crist let out a sigh of relief, "Ok, let's go home, Ray, set a course for Starbase 10, warp 6."

Lewis nodded to signal that the course had been set.

Crist put up his right hand with his index and middle finger sticking out with the other fingers closed,

"En....." Crist began to speak.

"-gage," Captain Kirkpatrick said from behind the captain's chair as he held his hand to his head. "I'm looking forward to your report, Mr. Crist." he said with a slight flinch as he tilted his head and walked around to the side of the center chair. "I'm glad to see that she's still flying. She is still flying... right?" He said leaning over the side of the chair to Crist and looking around unsure if it's real.

The McKenzie stretched off into the distance and disappeared in a burst of light as she entered warp and headed back to Starbase 10.

=Starbase 10 Space=

A few hours later the ship dropped out of warp, it had arrived at Starbase 10. Kirkpatrick contacted the Starbase and asked for permission to dock. With their approval, the McKenzie docked with the Starbase. After the ship docked Kirkpatrick said to the crew with a smile,

“Good work Gentlemen, your dismissed.”

Crist gave his Captain a smile to show him he was glad he was alright, and left the bridge. Kirkpatrick however stayed on the bridge till he was the last one left.

Crist rubbed his cheek and remembered his bruises and then headed for Sickbay to get them looked at. Once at Sickbay, he had to wait a few minutes, then a medic came for him when they were ready and it only took a few minutes for the medic to heal him. Once that was done, he thanked the medic and headed off to the Airlock.

THE END