

Season 1 - Episode 1: "Cabal"

Novelization by Crist

Main Cast

Captain Sean Kirkpatrick – Captain U.S.S. McKenzie
Lieutenant Helanwe – Engineering Officer U.S.S. McKenzie
Lieutenant Julian Carter – Medical Officer U.S.S. McKenzie
Lieutenant Namor Saavik – Tactical Officer U.S.S. McKenzie
Lieutenant Charles Zim – Helm Officer U.S.S. McKenzie

Guest Characters

Admiral Redshirt – Lotus Fleet Executive Officer, Human
Commander Thopor – Captain, Vulcan
Lieutenant Anthony Griffin – Chief Medical Officer, Human
Lieutenant Bryan Lee – Chief Tactical Officer, Human
Lieutenant K'Rrauw – Chief Science Officer, Caitian
Lieutenant Talak Rahl – Chief Engineering Officer, Human/Vulcan
Lieutenant Christopher Stevens – Chief Helm Officer, Human

The fresh captain walks aboard the ship, pausing as he enters. He looks behind him, stares for a moment and then proceeds to the turbolift near the airlock. Most of the crew are aboard and ready to go with the remainder currently boarding. The captain passes a couple of crewmen heading around the corner, who upon seeing him, stand at attention.

"Ease crewmen, no need to stall your business." The captain enters the turbolift as the crewmen walk hastily past. "Deck 1," the computer chirps and zooms towards the bridge. The turbolift doors swoosh open and he steps into the corridor making his way around and onto the bridge.

"Captain on the bridge!" yells out an alert ensign as the captain enters through the doors.

"As you were," he says stopping just inside at the situation table in the aft. Tapping his combadge he summons the senior officers for a mission briefing, "This is the captain, all senior officers to the bridge".

As the last one enters the bridge, the captain stands over the table and looks at the officers standing around him. He taps the screen next to him and displays the route of the patrol.

"The McKenzie will be going on a standard five day patrol of the neutral zone for it's shakedown cruise. If everything goes well this should be a by-the-book flight. Mr. Dix, as a precaution keep our weapons fully

operational."

"Aye sir," the McKenzie chief tactical officer, Mr. Dix replies.

"Mr. Helanwe, we will be going to warp as soon as we leave spacedock so have her ready."

"I'll finish up making the final adjustments to the structural integrity field, but I must warn you during the shakedown we'll most likely have to do a few modifications to the field in order to keep the ship from gaining too much stress meaning we'll have to come out of warp into impulse for an hour or so while we make the key changes. But it should get us at least to warp 6 without causing us too much problems, any higher and we'll have to most likely fine tune the emitters," the chief engineer says.

"Understood chief," the captain calmly replies.

"Doctor, make sure all medical preparations and supplies are ready to go should we need you. Mr. Warren be our third eye and look out for any anomalous readings. And Mr. Zim, prepare to take us out in less then 3 hours as the crew finishes her preparations.

"Hooah Sir! I will program our patrol route into the Nav system and be standing by to depart on your command sir," the eager senior helm officer exclaimed.

"With that, you are all dismissed," said the captain in closing.

Helanwe stood in attention, saluted, and than exited the bridge towards main engineering. He had to get that structural field to full function ASAP. Upon arrival in main engineering he turned towards his three crewman and ordered them to their stations.

"Alright lads, this here structural intergrity field is rather important, without it...we fall to pieces, we got three hours to get it running as efficiently as possible, lets move!" He said orchestrating the engineering team and they began working vigorously on all aspects of the structural field.

The emitters were the last part of the assembly to be modified and with that the structural integrity field was up to par. Helanwe and his team were tired from the intense concentration, but it was under timed circumstances that they seemed to work best. He turned towards his team...

"Alright, lets do the final routine maintenance check before we head off starbase. Record any differentials and make a formal report. I'll head up to deck 4 to make the final checks on the phasers charging coils as well as the torp launcher. We'll wanna make sure those are fully functional for our friend Mr. Dix. I'll be back in about 45 minutes." He said leaving the room and then walking towards the turbo lift where he proceeded to Deck 4.

"There's an incoming message for you captain, audio only. It's from Commander Thopor of the Umpqua," a lieutenant checking something at the CONN says as the senior officers leave the bridge.

"Thopor? I'll take it in my quarters." The captain stated.

"Yes sir, putting it through.." The lieutenant replies.

The captain heads off the bridge and into his quarters just down the corridor. Being a small ship, the captain's quarter's doubled as his ready room. He sits down in a chair at is desk and taps a button on the console with the waiting message; it plays:

"Captain, I would like to wish you and your crew good tidings on your shakedown.. live long and prosper."

FLASHBACK

Many years before...

Starfleet Academy Grounds

A fourth year cadet walks down a paved sidewalk outside in the afternoon sun, holding numerous PADDs on his

way to class. He drops one of the PADDs he is holding and stops to pick it up.
"I'm gonna be late," he says out loud to himself.

He continues to fidget with his class materials and eventually gets them sorted out before bumping into another obviously late cadet in a hurry, knocking what he was holding onto the ground.

"Watch where you're going!" He says very annoyed.

"Sorry!" The other cadet quickly says, hurrying past him.

He kneels down and starts to pick up his stuff when he sees something out of the corner of his eye. He turns his head and notices a group of year two cadets hazing a fairly new year one vulcan cadet.

He stands up, leaving his things on the ground and runs over towards the group.

"Hey, you! Leave him alone you petaQmey!" He shouts en route. The small group is startled and flees in multiple directions fearing exposure.

"You'd think they would learn by now..." He says as he approaches the vulcan and extends his hand to help him up off the ground. "I haven't seen you around before, what's your name?"

"My name is Thopor, thank you for your help," the vulcan says taking the other cadet's hand and then standing up.

"No problem, Thopor. I'm Sean." Sean helps Thopor pick up his belongings scattered around the lawn and then walks back towards the pavement and picks up his own things.

The rest of that year they became close friends and continued to keep in contact as Sean graduated and went into Starfleet Medical Academy and then later postings aboard separate starships.

Current Day...

"Computer, remaining time until scheduled departure of the McKenzie." The Captain says as he sits back in the chair reminiscing about his days at the academy.

"Time left until scheduled departure of the U.S.S. McKenzie: one hour and thirty-two minutes." The computer chimes and states.

The Captain leaves his quarters to check on the status of the crew's progress.

Transporter Room 2, USS McKenzie

Benjamin James rushes off the transporter pad with a sense of urgency about him. He knows that he is late.

"Dang, I knew that I shouldn't have gone out with those Andorians!" He mutters to himself. He hustles out into the hallway and notices a crewman entering the turbo lift. "Hold up! I'm coming." shouts James. Just making the lift he shrugs and smiles acknowledging to his new crewmate. "Whew! What a morning," he says as the crewman nods in agreement. "Engineering," states James.

As the turbo lift moves Ben stands tapping his foot impatiently.

"I could hardly believe when the orders came through. My first assignment and it's a defiant-class starship! What a grandiose way to begin a career. The ship's captain's reputation precedes him. The entire crew is top notch. I just hope my late arrival sits well with Mr. Helanwe. I've heard he is a demanding CO. A fair man and an exceptionally good engineer. I hope I can make an impression on him. Settled down take a deep breath!" He thinks to himself as the turbo lift begins to slow.

The doors swoosh open and Benjamin steps off and across the hallway to main engineering. The doors close behind him leaving him in silence. He can't help to wonder what an amazing adventure might lay ahead of him. He enters main engineering and notices three crewmen working attentively. It appeared to him that they were running diagnostics. "Well, the time is now." He tells himself. James makes eye contact with the group and moves toward

them to introduce himself.

The first one to notice the new crewman was Botjahe. Looking up from his post he nodded in recognition of the new crewman. He walked towards him and shook his hand and began speaking in a muffled voice due to his breathing apparatus.

"We weren't aware that we'd be receiving an extra set of hands. Last minute addition i suppose? Let me ring up the commander." Botjahe pressed his communicator and signaled Helanwe that he had another crewman waiting for orders. Helanwe stated that he'd be there right away. Botjahe then pointed to the rest of the various lifeforms and stated their names. "The Human is Milo Vigor, he's from one of them terran colonies. The Arcadian is Krillogue; he may be quiet but his intelligence level goes through the roof, and I'm botjahe, a Zaranite. Glad to have you on board crewman, we'll need the extra hands."

At that moment Helanwe walked through the archway to main engineering. His features were more than present as his grey skin and grey eyes reflected the bright fluxing of the warp core. He could see a distinctive reaction the crewman's face, but he could not decipher its meaning.

"Hello newcomer, welcome aboard the defiant-class starship the U.S.S. McKenzie. It seems we weren't expecting you to join us as we believed only 4 engineering crewman would be assigned for the base shakedown voyage. However, having you aboard will make our job much easier. We can make the pleasantries after departure, but for now I need you to head to deck 2 and make sure that the ship's targeting sensors are fully functional, in a ship like this we're gonna be doing some firing routines during the voyage and we don't want any embarrassing mishaps. As soon as your done with that I'll need you to head to the warp coils for a visual check followed by a full diagnostic of the impulse engines while your there." Helanwe said as he nodded and proceeded to walk back towards his quarters to finish the required departure reports.

He says stopped under the archway, "Oh and when your done, meet me in my quarters, I'd like to get acquainted since we're gonna be working together for a bit. Knowing my crewmen is essential. That is all." He then left Main Engineering.

If nothing else Helanwe was impressive. Ben had not been much of a cadet. His grades were not the best. He excelled in things that Captains and Commanders probably wouldn't. He realize his ticket to space and adventure would be um the back door so to speak. He had studied the Mckenzie extensively at the academy, knowing that most would not want to be on a floating tank. Most graduates were smarter or had a pedigree. Ben was just ben. But he knew this ship.

Then as Lieutenant Helanwe spoke to Ben he realized how passionate that he felt about this same ship that no one wanted. He realized that he was not the unwanted. He realized that he was the needed. Not an add-on or a replacement. This crew needed him. As he looked in those gray eyes everything became clear.

Ben said his seeya's to the main engineering crew and headed to deck 2. The targeting sensors seemed to be working fine. Yet, after running a third diagnostic, an update was needed for the transporting side.

"Botjahe please check with Star Base 10 and have them send us new codes there seems to be the problem. It is probably because we are docked." Ben asked. All weapons targeting checked out although he had never seen the range/targeting ability this ship had.

Smith moved through corridors, passed by many new crewmates nodding and such. He moved to deck 3 in order to visually inspect the warp coils. There seemed to be no plasma leak in any of the spots he checked.

Finally, Ben moved to the bowels of the ship to inspect the impulse engines. The fusion reactor and plasma drive

proved worthy after extensive tests. A full diagnostic was not done as time was not available.

"Krillogue, check the log on this diagnostic in 43 minutes, forward results to me or Mr. Helanwe. If you need me. Comm me. I am headed to *gulp* Helanwe quarters," He nervously said.

Ben anxiously walks to Helanwe's door. The Chief Engineer's door chimes and as Ben waits for the Mr. Helanwe to answer, he pinches himself to remind himself how lucky he is. He can't help to wonder if someone higher had placed him here.

"OK. I am going to be cool and calm when he answers." Ben says as he grabs his leg to stop the twitch. "I know this ship. I know this ship. I know this ship," He says as he fidgets. "This is my chance! Most of the professors said that I would always be dry dock. This is my chance to shine. I won't let this slip away. At this point, my career is finally in my hands; no bureaucrat can stand in my way now. It is me. It is us."

Flashback

1st year Academy

"Mr. James! What are you thinking? We have been over this 10 times! Do you realize that I have other special students! I want you to recite to me one last time the history of human warp drive technology," States Dr. Usa Primmol.

"Professor, we have a situation. I need to speak with cadet James," A commodore abruptly enters and interrupts James as he started to reply.

The commodore approached Ben and gave him the news that his father had been killed during a freak accident involving a rescue mission near DS9 with the Romulans. Ben's heart fluttered as he remembered playing hypercatch and long hikes with his father.

"Why my pop?" He asked himself.

Ben returns to reality.

"Come in." Helanwe says turned towards the door as it opens. He saw it was the Ensign James that he spoke too earlier. He sets down the padd he was holding and grabs another.

"Oh, its you, come in ensign, come in!" Helanwe flushed James into the room and sat him down. He observed that the new ensign seemed rather nervous and anxious much like most other humanoids. Helanwe always seemed to wonder why humans felt such a way, usually they were quite skilled in their fields yet their confidence level was either extremely high or low, hardly ever in between. He had hoped he'd help break that habit, at least while he could.

"Its funny you should walk in at just this moment. I was just looking at your file. I'm still expecting that report, but lets go through your transcript together. Hmm..." Helanwe says as sits down across from James and flipped through the first couple files on the padd. "Says here that you got mediocre grades and your teachers were either apathetic to your presence in class or unimpressed. Why? From your transcripts you don't seem to be very ambitious yet here you are on this ship. Why do you wish to fly on the U.S.S. McKenzie? This ship is not going to be as easy as flying a galaxy-class starship or one of those diplomatic vessels. This is a top-notch military escort vessle and I need proof that you can deal with every single possible problem on this ship no matter what the circumstance. This shakedown cruise will decide whether or not this ship is for you. Botjahe, Milo, and Krillogue are all under the same circumstances and unless you folks are able to prove your worth, Starbase 10 has asked me to send you back. I have faith in you...but the real question is, are you up to the challenge?"

Ben looks into Helanwe and blinks. He realizes that for the first time his real bluff has been called.

"Sir. I am here for this ship. I am here for you. I am here for the Federation," He states. "I understand my history

precedes me," He replies as he sighs. "I want you to know that this ship is my only priority. I will never let you down. I am not of royal blood. As we speak, I worry about the core engines. I worry that I have missed a diagnostic. I worry that I am not up to snuff. ...If need be I will return to Star Base 10. I sorta figured that would happen anyway. Yet, I want you to know that I would never trade the experience of meeting you and learning a bit from you for anything."

Addressing the Lieutenant, in his mind for possibly the last time, he says, "Sir. I understand your concerns regarding my record. I will most humbly stand down if that is what you want." Smith continues, "Sir, have you ever made a mistake?"

"Have I ever made a mistake?" Helanwe says looking deep into the ensign's eyes. "I've wandered this galaxy for over 100 years...I've seen alpha quadrant and beta quadrant go through wars you can't even imagine. I don't know where I came from or what I am. I don't know if there's anyone else like me in the universe anymore and at the rates these wars are taking place I wouldn't be surprised if my planet had been eliminated by now. My only mistake I made was being selfish and wandering the galaxy watching the male and female life forms suffer to the abomination of war. And now, I have a chance to correct it, to no longer be apathetic and use the very war machines that deal such pain to the innocent to inflict the same terrible malice upon the wielders of such disdain conduct across the quadrant." Helanwe replies, sighs and puts his PADD down on the table.

((OOOC: The following has yet to be converted to a novelization, stand-by for incremental updates to formatting. Separate posts are divided by "____".))

"Like I said earlier, we need the extra pair of hands and from the look of you, you have heart. Ambition can be built upon such a foundation and strength as well as courage should follow. Your welcome to stay aboard the U.S.S. McKenzie on my watch as long as you don't mind hitting up the shuttle bays after this meeting. One of the crewmen stated they were having trouble with the doors opening properly, and I need you to fix it. Botjahe is busy keeping the warp core under constant watch, and Krillogue is the only one patient enough to watch the structural integrity field. And Milo...watch out for him would ya? I'm afraid he's quite clumsy and he'll hurt himself if somebody's not watching him."

Helanwe stands up and walks toward the door

"As far as I see it this meeting is complete. I'm gonna head on over to the captain's ready room to see if he desires anything before the final countdown to launch. I'll see you after take-off most likely."

And with those final words said he walked across the residential area to the main section of Deck 1. He walked towards the ready-room and pressed door pad.

"Good day Captain, Lieutenant Helanwe reporting."

The doors to the captain's ready room open and he nearly runs into Helanwe on his way out. "Lieutenant! I was just going to find you. How is everything coming along?" He waits for his reply and then says, "I would recommend heading to your post, lieutenant, we're about to depart."

He heads across the hallway and onto the bridge. "Captain on deck!" A lieutenant at one of stations yells out. The captain walks over and sits in the center chair. He taps the console to his right. "USS McKenzie to Star Base Control, requesting permission to leave space dock." "USS McKenzie this is Star Base Control, permission granted. Proceed to space doors 2, Star Base Control out."

"All hands, this is the captain, prepare for immediate departure. Condition Blue." The bridge lighting turns to blue. "Helm, rig the ship for departure and proceed with thrusters only. After we have cleared space doors proceed to full

impulse." "Bridge to engineering, conduct all necessary warp preparations and prepare to go to warp after we leave space dock."

Benjamin hustled down the corridor and zipped into main engineering. He walked over to Milo and asked "How are you doing today, Milo? Is there anything that I might be of assistance to you?" Milo looked at Ensign James preplexed. "Sir, could you look at this analysis that I have made? The calculations just don't add up to me."

"Ah, life support system analysis. Sure, let's look this over together. We are heading out any minute now. I don't think we would want to endure a Code Blue." replied James.

And with that the two crewmen went to work.

"Aye Captain thrusters to the door, then full impulse once the doors are cleared." Zim hands deftly press the controls on his console, not revealing the knot in his stomach that he is feeling. Don't hit the doors he says to himself again as he takes a deep breath. He slowly and smoothly backs the ship out of her moorings, and turns her toward the outer doors of the starbase. I sigh in relief as we clear the outer doors and take the McKenzie to full impulse wating for the word to go to warp.

"Everything's going as..." but before Helanwe could finish his statemen the captain was already sitting in his chair at the bridge, laughing to himself the lieutenant walked down the hall towards main engineering. He walked through the door seeing Milo and James working on some diagnostics and smiled gently. "Good...he's connected with Milo" he thought as he turned to see Krillogue and Botjahe standing in attention.

"Alright lets get this hunk of bolts moving. Krillogue, I need you to keep constant analysis of that structural integrity field once we get past warp 4. We'll be approaching maximum integrity with the modifications we made there and we'll need exact specifications from you to tell us whether or not to signal an immediate stop from the captain. Botjahe every little system with a prefix of 'warp' is under your jurisdiction. I want you to watch it like the flourine gas you need to breath with is inside its very frame."

Helanwe than turned back to Milo and James

"Whenever you two get done with whatever your doing, I'd appreciate it if you went up to engineering on deck 2 and watched the rest of the ships systems and see how they're checking out. I'll oversee things down here and if you need anything I can attend to the need right away. Its gonna be a long night boys, best amp yourself up now."

And with that Helanwe stepped up to a computer terminal and pulled up an indicator of hull stress as well as power transfer throughout the ship. He than went to several other computer terminals and summoned up other key systems such as life support, weapon schematics, and sensory systems. Content with the current configuration he sat down

The doctor and Nurse Asner proceeded towards transporter room 2 on SB10. He and the nurse had been running behind since discharging the last patient of the Nehalem.

As they entered the transporter room a napping chief snapped to attention.

"Ah ah...I apologize sir. The wife and I have a new born baby and we hardly get sleep anymore--"

"Speak no more chief. Your secret wont leave this room." the doctor replies. "We need a transport to the McKenzie, there heading out in a few moments and we're running behind."

"No problem doc, step right up"

The transporter chief slid his hands across the controls and within moments the doctor and nurse were in the transporter room aboard the McKenzie.

"Welcome aboard doc." The transporter room chief looked familiar but the doctor couldn't quite place him.

"Thank you. Can you direct me to sickbay and the senior officers quarters."

"Well Sir, sickbay is on deck 2. As for your quarters, I'm not sure where they would be."

"Thank you."

The doctor turned to Nurse Asner and said "Let's head to sickbay and we'll figure the rest out from there."

Both medical personnel exited the transporter room and headed for the nearest turbolift.

The space doors crawl open and the McKenzie approaches. "Approaching space doors, captain." "On screen." The screen turns on and displays the space doors slowly opening. The McKenzie exits the star base and enters into starry filled space. "We are clear of Star Base 10, sir. Going to full impulse." "Helm, set a course for the neutral zone and then set the patrol route we went over at the briefing once we arrive at the border, I'm sending it to your station." The captain taps the console to his right, sending helm the coordinates. "Course laid in, sir." "Engage."

The McKenzie goes to warp stretching off into space and disappearing with a burst of light in the distance. Several hours pass at warp en route to the neutral zone, the captain leans back in his chair. "Incoming encrypted transmission from Star Base 10, sir, it's Admiral Redshirt." "Looks like they miss us already lieutenant. I'll take it in my ready room." The captain leaves the bridge and enters his quarters. He sits at his desk and presses a button on the console receiving the transmission from Star Base 10. An image of Admiral Redshirt appears on the screen.

"Admiral! I wasn't expecting you." "There isn't time for formalities, I'm sending updates to your mission. This is for your eyes only, captain. Do you understand?" "Yes, sir." "Godspeed." The transmission ends abruptly and the captain goes over the updates on his console. After a minute or two he says to himself, "This should be some shakedown cruise."

The captain reenters the bridge. "Mr. Zim change our heading to the following coordinates." He leans over the console by the center chair and punches in the new route, sending it to Zim's console.

"Aye Captain new course laid in." The hair on the back of Zim's neck stood up. This wasn't just any old patrol change, Zim could tell by the look on the Captains face, and Zim thought to himself "Once more into the breach dear friends, once more."

It had been several hours since Ensign James and Milo had responded to Lt. Helanwe "Yes, Sir."

They had moved up to deck 2 of engineering as the ship went to warp. Milo was monitoring the life support systems and James took charge of all the other auxiliary systems.

James thought to himself. "This should be no sweat. It's just a simple shakedown cruise. Helanwe was right about Milo. He is a bit clumsy but I see a high ceiling for him given the proper environment. Um...right now the environment he is responsible for is the air we are breathing."

After monitoring the computer pannels for as long as he possibly could, Helanwe moved out of main engineering. He was never fond of sitting and watching computer panels, he did that in his stolen shuttlecraft for the past 100 years. He'd much rather be doing something efficient and time consuming with his hands.

"Alright...lets see...what possibly could I be doing on this moment? The computer panels will set off an alarm if anything catastrophic begins to occur and I trust those four will be able to handle the majority of whats going on in there. Think...think..."

Helanwe than began processing all of the things that needed to be done throughout the ship but all the important stuff had already been taken care of. The shuttle bay door had been fixed, structural integrity field modified for the time being, new cadet told his duties, what could possibly be left. It was just than that he remembered something about one of the thrusters on the shuttle craft being faulty.

"Its my lucky day..."

And with that Helanwe took off to deck 3, but realized he forgotten exactly which shuttle it was that was having problems. He decided it would be best to just routinely check them all to prevent any failures, as well as drain time, and to be as perfectly safe as possible. Walking into the main shuttle bay, shuttle bay 3 he was approached by the crewmen on station there.

"Glad to have someone finally fix this here shuttle, we were afraid it wasn't going to be able to be tested during the shakedown cruise." stated the crewman and with this Helanwe let out a great sigh, "Why did I pick the messed up one right away? I'll have to go back and watch computers for the rest of the night after this..." thought Helanwe.

"Alright, I'll have her fixed in no time." and with that Helanwe began working on the shuttlecraft's starboard thruster.

"Captain's Log, supplemental. We've been at warp for days and are just about to near the Romulan Neutral Zone and head for the coordinates I have been given. So far the ship has held up fine, but I'm expecting that she'll need all she's got for the rest of this mission. I can't say that I'm looking forward to entering the neutral zone, but it doesn't look like we have much of a choice. If what I've been told is true, we'll be protecting the lives of two of the most important people in the Federation."

The McKenzie nears the Romulan Neutral Zone and Helm informs the captain. "Yellow Alert." The bridge lighting turns yellow and the captain taps the screen on his control panel. "All Senior Officers to the bridge." He leans in his chair to the right towards the science station. "Keep active scans for anything unusual, lieutenant. I don't like surprises." "Aye, sir." He next addresses the twin tactical stations manned at the fore of the bridge. "Be prepared to bring weapons online." Lieutenant Helenwe enters the bridge from the shuttle bay and the captain addresses him as he heads to his station. "Chief, keep our power signature as low as possible. I don't want to be lit up in the neutral zone." "Helm, take us in and head for those coordinates."

Ensign James was sitting at the terminal in his quarters reviewing some data when the Yellow Alert went into affect. Before he had a chance to think of what might be transpiring his combadge dinged.

On the other end was a nervous crewman Milo. "Ensign, we just went to Yellow."

Smith sighed! He had hoped to grab a few winks. But duty called. "Yes, Milo I heard. I am on my way to main engineering."

With that James exited his quarters headed down the corridor into the hallway that lead to engineering on deck two.

While sitting at his desk in sickbay the doctor decided to enter a log

"Chief Medical Officers log. We've been traveling at warp for the past few days. Nurse Asner and I have managed to get the equipment up to code in sickbay. Nothing eventful has happened as of yet."

"All Senior Officers to the bridge" the intercom interrupts

"I guess i should be careful what i wish for. Computer pause log and file McKenzie CMO alphah2"

Log filed

The doctor leaves sickbay and heads for the bridge.

The Captain says "Helm, take us in and head for those coordinates."

"Aye Captain" Zim says as he wishes he was back with his Reconnaissance platoon waiting for their next mission. I hope this bucket of bolts holds together, and I hope these "shake and bake" academy types are up for this.

"Power emissions down...got it!"

Helanwe had a slight skip in his step when he heard those exciting words. It looks like he wouldn't have to sit pathetically for hours after all. Yellow alert has kicked in and he's ready to work. He waltzed into main engineering and looked at Krillogue and Botjahe.

"What...you've never seen flashing yellow lights before? It means get workin'. Botjahe shutdown all unnecessary systems for the time being, and lower everything else as much as possible. However keep the targeting and weapon systems at 75% and have them ready to shift to full power incase we get ourselves in a skirmish, keep the power flowing to the torpedo tubes as well incase our good friend up in tactical needs to turn them online. Krillogue lower the shield to 50% and have that ready to jump up as well. Life Support should be able to rest at 80% and that should be all we really need to modify. With these modifications our power emissions should decrease substantially, but if we get in a firefight all major systems need to be shot up to full power immediately, or we won't stand a chance, do you understand?"

Krillogue and Botjahe nodded nervously and began working immediately.

"I wonder where James and Milo are. I sure hope Milo didn't break something again..."

* The bridge was dark a greenish yellow light flashed from the ceiling. On the viewscreen a Nova class starship was growing larger, The Captain stood with determined fierce look his dark yellow sharp teeth were showing as he was almost smiling and said

"Fire!".

*The tactical officer presses a few command codes dropping the its cloak, two red pulses shoot out from the vessel toward the Nova ship. The ship shield's light up as the phaser pulse erupts across its nacelles. Both ships drop out of warp the Klingon ship over shot the nova and comes about for another attack run.

USS UMPQUA

"Captain a Battle cruiser just decloaked" Mr lee. all but yelled his announcement,

"Hail them"

"There Charging weapons"

"Raise shields red alert, Stevens evasive maneuvers"

*Phaser blast erupted across aft shields."

"Status Mr Lee?"

"Our shields are holding sir"

"Return Fire"

Mr.Lee charges the weapons and fires

"Sir our weapons had minimal effects, There coming about"

"Lee send out a distress all federation band widths. Try to Disrupt there Sensor's"

"Captain sending out a pulse, they have lost there lock on us I don't know how long we can keep this up"

Torpedoes fly across the bow missing the ship

"Sir, we are being hailed by the USS McKenzie"

"On Screen."

The Captain of the McKenzie Appears

"Captain Sean Kirkpatrick..." *Thopor Stands and takes a few steps toward the viewscreen* "Good to see you my old friend. Care to lend some assistance? As of now we have disrupted there sensors. They are having some difficulty obtaining a lock on us. However, our weapons can't penetrate there shields."

It felt like K'Rrauw whas submerged in ice cold water. A very unpleasant experience for a Caitian. The voices he couldn't make out earlier had became much clearer now.

- Ql'yah doghwl' thag NgoqDe' 'ejyo' Duj Umpqua' (Damn fool, begin the encoded message to the Stafleet vessel Umpqua!).

K'Rrauw wouldn't have imagined that he could feel any colder but was mistaken. It was as someone had stabbed him with a blade with a zero kelvin temperature right through the heart.

- What is this! Klingons?! I must alert someone. But how do I get out of this place?

Suddenly he felt like he was stricken by a bolt of lightening. The sound was deafening and the light made his eyes hurt. He could hear some other voices now.

- Doctor, the pupils are reacting!

- Let us try a 60 millivolt burst!

Another lightning bolt ran through K'Rrauw's brain and he was filled with a warm wave, much like the warm summer storms back home and he opened his eyes to see a nurse shining a light in his left eye.

- Please... stop... it hurts my eyes...

- Doctor, he is back!

More people were entering the sickbay aboard the Umpqua. The ship had been rocked about, thankfully, nobody seemed seriously injured. His team had been working hard for hours and hours on end, what they really needed was a break, not more casualties.

The doctor layed the latest patient on the central biobed before he was tapped on the back. It was his assistant, Ensign Wehnm.

Ensign Wehnm -- "Doctor, the pupils are reacting!"

The doctor turned to face the Caitan officer, who had received injuries in the accident prior to the attack. He was still lying, motionless... but the scans showed signs of improvement.

Dr. Griffin -- "Ok, let's move quickly, before we're flooded with casualties"

Ensign Wehnm initiated another cordical shock, whilst Ensign Trell began another brain scan.

Ensign Trell -- "He's coming round, his vital signs remain stable"

The ship rocked once again, the Caitan had regained consciousness, but others aboard the ship weren't so lucky. The doctor turned to face the doors, whilst 3 crewmen entered, and dropped to the ground.

Dr. Griffin -- "Attend to these men at once!"

(U.S.S. McKenzie - Bridge)

Captain Kirkpatrick sits in the center chair, leaning on the left arm with his hand under his chin. The McKenzie drops out of warp from a starry filled background and sweeps around into the vicinity of the Umpqua and the Klingon

battle cruiser.

"Red alert! Hail the Umpqua!" The bridge lighting flashes and turns red. The McKenzie and the Umpqua face each other in space. Commander Thopor appears on the viewscreen. "Captain Sean Kirkpatrick... Good to see you my old friend. Care to lend some assistance? As of now we have disrupted their sensors. They are having some difficulty obtaining a lock. However, our weapons can't penetrate their shields." "Do what you can on your part Commander, we'll handle the rest. It's good to see you too, if only it was under better circumstances." The transmission ends. "Mr. Zim, attack pattern Zeta-4, keep us aimed at 'em and keep their fire from the Umpqua." "Mr. Saavik, declaw those cats!"

(Klingon Vessel - Bridge)

"It looks like they have received back-up!" A Klingon tactical officer yells out. "Backup?! Ghuy'cha', fire on that Defiant!" The battle cruiser sweeps in and around in an attack pattern, firing upon the McKenzie and drawing their attention away from the Umpqua.

"Aye captain Zeta 4 engaged" Zim reached down and made sure his hand phaser is still in it's holster. The Klingons are known for beaming over to Federation vessels and slaughtering the bridge crews. Zim thought to himself he would take at least twice his number with him before he went if it came to that. He looked around at the bridge crew trying to size up the rest of the crew. The "Old Man" looked like he could handle himself in a tight spot if he needed to. Most Marines have thought the Academy was long on Science and short on fighting and sometimes that was a fatal mistake out here at the tip of the spear.

The Lights darken from yellow to crimson red and Helanwe looks back at Botjahe and Krillogue with a slight smirk.

"That's your cue! Full Power boys! Lets pack some punch in that vessel! Lets push this babies power to the limits."

The two crewmen began furiously punching buttons on various panels as Helanwe watched as power levels rose in weapon and targeting system.

"Get shields up to 100%! Any less and we'll be hampered quite a bit. And where the hell is Milo and that ensign. At yellow alert their supposed to report to their stations."

Right then Milo waltzed through the door tripping over the slight overlap of the floor panels.

"Milo get on that panel over there and monitor the shields. I want announcements of the shield stability at 20 second intervals are we clear?"

"Aye, lieutenant." stated Milo as he rushed from floor to the panel in the corner.

At this point Helanwe walked over to the hull stress and integrity map he pulled up on his personal panel and hit his comm badge.

"Captain Kirkpatrick, we're all set and ready to go here. All primary systems back to full power and ready for duty. We'll notify you if anything goes wrong down here."

As the McKenzie engaged the Klingon battle cruiser the doctor immediately left the bridge. As he entered the turbolift he says to himself here we go again.

"Deck 2" The turbolift chimes and begins to move.

The ride in the turbolift was very short lived. As he walked down the corridor towards sickbay he tapped his comm. badge.

"Doctor to sickbay. Prepare for casualties. We have engaged a Klingon battle cruiser. Activate the EMH..." I sure hope the fleet upgraded all the ships to Mark IV's the doctor thought, "I should be there in two minutes."

As the doctor rushed down the corridor many others were running back and forth to their stations and outfitting themselves with phasers. The doctor looked down and noticed he had not taken his phaser out of the safe in his office. It wasn't standard to carry one at all times, as he was dedicated to the Hippocratic Oath, but taking on Klingons changed the rules significantly; prisoners of war was not in their vocabulary.

USS UMPQUA

The Umpqua rolls over on its belly and goes under the Klingon ship exposing its underside, The Klingon redirects its fire power on to the Umpqua, The ship takes a direct hit to its Dorsal hull

"Sir, one more hit like that and we will lose our dorsal shields. Casualty reports coming in.... there are injured crewman on deck 4 and a hull breach. Containment fields are activated. Repair crews are being dispatched." Lee said

"Stevens Coordinate with the McKenzie an attack pattern keep out dorsal from their sights."

"TALAK WE NEED MORE POWER"

The Umpqua is rocked again by phaser blast.

"Shields are holding but they are taking a beating Sir". Lee announced.

The ship rocked violently and Talak had to grab onto a nearby rail. Others weren't so lucky, and fell over. Not having time to think, Talak felt the ship jolt another time, but this time sparks flew everywhere, forcing him to duck. Losing his balance, Talak tripped and fell over a nearby crewman, who had a purple bruise on his temple. His eyes fixated on his fallen comrade until a message came through from the bridge.

"Talak, we need more power!!!" Thopor's voice came through with interference and static.

Jumping to his feet, Talak ran to a nearby console and started rerouting power from the secondary systems, life support, and non-essential systems. Lowering the gravity to .75 earth gravity, Talak began to find other ways to squeeze every ounce of wattage to go to their shields, weapons, and structural integrity field. Seeing that Deck 4 had hull breaches, Talak gave the order to seal off as many of the breached areas with at least two sets of doors, so that the containment fields could come offline. They needed every spare drop of power that they could get.

Talak yelled at a nearby engineering officer. "Ensign! I want you to go down to the shuttle bays and start transferring power over to the Umpqua. I don't care how you do it, just get that power on the ship now!"

The damage they were doing to the Klingon ship was minimal, Talak had to find some way to optimize their shielding and weapons or the McKenzie would be saving nothing in less than ten minutes.

(U.S.S. Umpqua - Sickbay)

K'Rrauw sat up and jumped off the bed. The nurse looked chocked.

- Sir, get back in to bed. You've just got out of a coma. You need rest!

- Thank you nurrse. But I feel fine. I need to get back on duty and speak with the captain.

K'Rrauw made a hasty exit to the turbolift.

- Computer, bridge.

Arriveing on the bridge he walks up to the junior science offcier, ensign Soni, at the science console and asked him to scan for any unauthorized transmissions to and from the ship. The computer processed the command and scanned for any signals.

- Scan compleate, one unauthorized transmission in progress. Location: Deck 6, deflector control.

K'Rrauw growled.

- We have a Klingon saboteur on board.

He made his way to the captain. Thopor looked as supprised as a Vulcan can look, raising only an eyebrow.

- Captain, I have information that we have someone in defelctor control sending an authorized transmission. I believe that it is a Klingon saboteur.

* The Umpqua viewscreen showed the klingon Vessel in front the Mckenzie was performing Extreme Maneuvers the klingon Vessel was showing signs of the battle. She had Slowed and lost her sensor's. The turbo doors opened and the large caitian entered, Thopor was only slightly aware of KR'raw, there was much more important thing going on. His encouragement and welcoming back to the bridge would have to come a another time, The ship shuddered slightly taking another phaser blast.*

"Captain, I have information that we have someone in deflector control sending an authorized transmission. I believe that it is a Klingon saboteur"

Thopor Turned in his chair

"A Klingon? On the Ship? how?. Mr Lee, Get a security team to Deck 6, Defector control room. KR'raw go with him and see if you can determine what was sent and or received."

Mr. lee exited the bridge with 3 younger officers with him KR'raw followed.

(U.S.S. Umpqua - outside deflector control)

The security officers prepares to storm in just as K'Rrauw joins them.

- Make surrrre you don't kill him. We need to interrriigate him.

As they opens the doors they see crewman Richard Johnson turning around. He sees the security team and throws himself behind a bulkhead and fire a klingon disruptor at them vaporizing ensign T'sul. K'Rrauw just thinks of a solution.

- Computerrr, lock on to crrrewman Johnson and beam him to the brrrig. Activate.

Johnson dematerializes from the delfector controll room.

- He taps his badge. Captain, I've beamed the saboteurrr to the brrrig. It's crrrewman Johnson, sirrr. He has a klingon disrrrupter with him, but won't be able to get thrrough those forrrce fields with it. I'm about to investigate the communications device to access the logs and rrrun a diagnostic of the deflectorr. Maybe he is the one who made the engines fail earlierr? I'll let you know what I find as soon as I have something to rreport. K'Rrauw out.

Thopor Badge dings.

"Captain, I've beamed the saboteurrr to the brrrig. It's crrrewman Johnson, sirrr. He has a klingon disrrrupter with him, but won't be able to get thrrough those forrrce fields with it. I'm about to investigate the communications device to access the logs and rrrun a diagnostic of the deflectorr. Maybe he is the one who made the engines fail earlierr? I'll let you know what I find as soon as I have something to rreport. K'Rrauw out. "

" Good Work K'Rraw take Mr. Lee with you and get a full report."

* The Viewscreen showed a massive explosion on the klingon Ship*

"Sir, the Klingon have taken heavy damage it looks like there going to warp should we follow."

"No... Bring us about and set coarse back towards Earth, Hail the Mckenzie, and thank them, Send them our coordinates and ask them to escort us though the Neutral Zone. Once we clear they can continue with their mission"

K'Rrauw walked up to the device attached to the side of the deflector control console and scanned it. Definatly of Klingon origin with a small cloak. It could have been here a long time without us discovering it. He accessed the memorybanks and noticed that they dated back to long before we left SB10. He started to read them only to discover that they were detailed repports on the ship status, personnel files, details from our mission to Romulus, the sensor data K'Rrauw had collected on our journey through Romulan space. This was very serious.

- I better write a repport to the captain and include all the records from the device.

K'Rrauw transferred all information and sent it to the captain. He then made way to the brig. As he entered he could see the walls inside the holdingcell burned with disruptor fire.

- Ensign, repport.

- Lieutenant, the prisoner has been disarmed before he managed to destroy all too much or hurt himself.

- Good.

K'Rrauw felt the anger build up inside him just looking at the human sitting in the brig. He walked up to the Ensign.

- Please make a full scan of him. I want to know anything that is out of the ordinary. Locate any subspace transponders that might be implanted.

- Scanning... There is one transponder, but the brig's shields block its signal. That's weird...

- What?

- He has four lungs, two livers and two stomachs.

- What? The only species that have that, are Klingons. He must have been surgically altered, scan him for traces of Dermatiraelian Plastiscine.

- The scan shows massive amounts of Dermatiraelian Plastiscine in his system.

- K'Rrauw to sickbay, Lieutenant Griffin, will you please join me in the Brig, I need some help with our prisoner.

K'Rrauw should have suspected that something was not right with crewman Johnson when he was on his way to the computer core back at the starbase. Why would a crewman assigned to the shuttlebay have anything to do with the computer core?

- K'Rrauw to engineering, our prisoner might have manipulated the computer core before we left the starbase. Is there a team available that can do a full diagnostic? I suspect that this can be the answer to all the problems we have had with ship functions since we left. Have them scan for cloaked devices. The one we found in Deflector Control was equipped with a small cloak.

Just then Lieutenant Lee entered the brig.

Bridge, USS McKenzie

"Incoming transmission from the Umpqua, sir." "On screen." "Thank you for your assistance, captain. We could still use an escort through the Neutral Zone and to--" Captain Kirkpatrick interrupts, "Don't mention it, Thopor. We wouldn't leave you in the Neutral Zone by your lonesome. We'll escort you wherever you go until we can be sure there isn't a threat."

The McKenzie is escorting the Umpqua at warp, nearing the edge of the Romulan Neutral Zone border. "Sir, we are clear of the Neutral Zone, setting course for Earth." "Hail the Umpqua." "They're responding." "Onscreen." Commander Thopor appears on the viewscreen. "Well it looks like we have a little trip in front of us, Commander. Why don't you join me for dinner while repair teams are at it. Ambassadors Spock and Picard are welcome to come as well, if they wish."

"Yes, of course" replied the doctor, who immediately departed sickbay with his equipment. The shaking had stopped, the attack had finished, and the casualties had been severe...

"Good thing the McKenzie came when it did" the doctor mumbled to himself.

Arriving at the brig, Doctor Griffin drew his tricorder and approached the cell.

"Yes, he is definitely Klingon" the doctor announced.

The crewman was pacing around the brig, in typical Klingon fashion, clearly angered at his situation.

"This man... rather, Klingon... is fit for questioning Lt. Lee, now if you would excuse me, I have many injured that require attention"

The doctor gathered his equipment together and left for the Infirmary. He was utterly surprised, but did not show it... Crewman Johnson was an active figure on Starbase 10... and it hurt the doctor to think on the subject.

"K'Rrauw to engineering, our prisoner might have manipulated the computer core before we left the starbase. Is there a team available that can do a full diagnostic? I suspect that this can be the answer to all the problems we have had with ship functions since we left. Have them scan for cloaked devices. The one we found in Deflector Control was equipped with a small cloak." said the Chief Science Officer over the comm.

"Understood Lieutenant, I will be sending two repair teams now. Hopefully we can find what he altered and undo all the damage that he has done." said Talak. He was still disorientated from the dog fight that had just ended and now the discovery and apprehension of a saboteur. Wondering how a Klingon managed to get aboard without the ship's sensors knowing or how even the Chief Science Officer had miraculously recovered, Talak was way too tired to figure anything out, and so he just numbly ordered crewmen and ensigns to repair teams. This day was a long one indeed...

* The viewscreen showed the bridge the the Mckenzie, with its captain in chair.*

"Sir I would like to than.... "

Captain Kirkpatrick interrupts, "Don't mention it, Thopor. We wouldn't leave you in the Neutral Zone by your lonesome. We'll escort you wherever you go until we can be sure there isn't a threat."

Thopor always thought Kirpatrick was a little to Ambisous.

"Again Thank you, I have instructed my helm to lay in a coarse for Sol A, earth, He will relay the cordinate to you helm."

After a Short time had passed...

"Sir, We are leaving the Neutral Zone" Mr. Lee announced. " There is also an incoming transmission from the Mckenzie I am putting it on screen.

Again the Viewscreen showed Captain Kirkpatrick.

"Well it looks like we have a little trip in front of us"

"Oh don't worry about us from here we can... Thopor was inturrupted again.. He took a long Sigh...

"Commander. Why don't you join me for dinner while repair teams are at it. Ambassadors Spock and Picard are welcome to come as well, if they wish."

This was a venture he had hoped he would have avoided

"As you wish Sir. We will beam over shortly."

The viewscreen goes back to showing the vast blackness of space.

"Mr. Lee inform My senior officers we will be having dinner on the Mckenzie. I expect them all to be there."

* The Captain exits to his ready room*

Bridge, USS McKenzie

"As you wish Sir. We will beam over shortly." The image of Thopor on the viewscreen is replaced with stars streaking past the ship. He says out loud, "Vulcans.. Never seem to be in the mood for a good meal do they?" A vulcan tactical officer at one of the stations briefly looks back at the captain and raises his eyebrow in response. The Captain looks at him and kindly says, "No offense, ensign." He turns back towards his console and says, "None taken sir." Captain Kirkpatrick smiles and presses a button on the control panel to his left, activating the comm. "All Senior Officers report to the mess hall in one hour... bring your appetites."

Stevens nodded to his crewman replacement to takeover. The crewman hurried over stifly. Stevens stood and stretched after his long, almost seemingly endless, duty shift. He blinked his eyes quickly a few times and rubbed his forehead.

"Captain, Id like to get ready before everything, may I be excused"

Ensign Zim stands and faces the captain, "Sir ensign Zim requests permission to leave the bridge to prepare for dinner?" The captain nods his approval and Zim leaves the bridge to polish his medals and shine his dress boots. Zim sits on his rack looking at the campaign medals and remembering the friends he left behind on alien planets. Zim wipes off his bronze star and his Pike medallion. As he looks at his Pike medal the spot on his side where the dominion dagger entered his side. Man I feel old compared to these kids. I think the captain only has a year or two on me. Well lets see if these dress whites fit. Man they really do tailor these things for each officer. I'm glad I kept my Marine dress boots with the metal plates on the toes and heels. Well lets meet the VIP's at the transporter room.

"Alright, status report"

"No major damage, shields functioning at 95% capacity and structural integrity field is holding." replied Botjahe

"All other major systems are holding as well. We did pretty well lieutenant!" called Krilloque.

"Good, good...it seems like the modifications we made did well in action. We tore into that cruiser too!"

Helanwe began fiddling with his data-pad and going over the readings from the recent battle. He began to wonder what the battle had been like. The U.S.S. McKenzie was only hit maybe once or twice the entire battle. He began to figure that the U.S.S. Umpqua maybe took a majority of the blows dealt by the Klingon Vessel. In a 2 v 1 Scenario where victory is hopeless, taking out one ship is better than complete failure, so he figured that the other ship might be in a bit worse shape.

"All Senior Officers report to the mess hall in one hour... bring your appetites." stated the captain.

"Looks like thats my cue boys, I'll see you in a bit."

And with that Helanwe left to walk towards the cafeteria. He wanted to be there early so he could hear more about the space battle, and what the collateral damager was. Perhaps he and one of the other crewmen from engineering might be able to lend a hand on the Umpqua. But for now he must simply wait and see what the captain has to say, perhaps it'll explain things in a bit more detail.

Thopor exits the captains ready room, dressed for dinner

"Sir, the officers, along with Spock and Picard have been informed. I believe Spock and Picard are waiting in transporter room 1 for you to beam over" Ensign Kelly said

"Understood you have the bridge"

Thopor got in the turbo lift

" Transporter room 1"

A few seconds later the doors open, Spock was dressed in a off white robe it was realitively plain, Picard was in the standard ambassadors uniform. After a short greetng I motioned to the transporter pad and we took our places

"Energize"

* A few seconds later we where standing in the transporter room of the McKenzie*

USS McKenzie, Deck 2, Transport Room 2

Commander Thopor and Ambassadors Spock and Picard are the first to beam over to the McKenzie. They materialize on the transporter pads, Captain Kirkpatrick in formal dress greets them. "Welcome aboard the McKenzie Ambassadors, Commander." He extends his arm out and shakes Ambassador Picard's hand. Commander Thopor and Ambassador Spock bow their heads in greeting and the captain returns the gesture. "As I'm sure you know the defiant class doesn't have a captain's dining room, so we will be using the second mess hall. If you'll follow me.."

The four enter through the first mess hall where a couple of crewmen were having their own dinner and into the second mess hall where the usual stools and tables were replaced with a dining table and chairs as utilitarian as the rest of the ship. Captain Kirkpatrick takes a seat at one of the heads of the table, "Please have a seat, everyone else should be arriving shortly."

Helanwe walked towards into the cafeteria and nodded to Milo who had somehow gotten in there without getting noticed. He walked towards Milo and motioned his arm towards his communicator badge.

"Next time you leave your post like that make sure you notify me. If I had told Krillogue and Botjahe to take a break than poor old James would have to do all the the work in main engineering by himself."

"Oh James is in his quarters, he's not in engineering either...uh...sir!" replied Milo.

"What? Why's he there?"

"Said something about not feeling so good, he looked rather pale too. Told me to come here so I wouldn't press anything I wasn't supposed to." stated Milo.

"Well finish your food and get back to main engineering, Botjahe and Krillogue will fill you in on what you need to do. Now if you'll excuse me..."

"Aye sir!" motioned Milo

Helanwe than walked through the doors to the secondary cafeteria and saw the three newcomers sitting alongside Captain Kirkpatrick at the table. He walked through the archway and than saluted.

"Lieutenant Helanwe reporting."

Zim walks into the secondary mess hall and notices that the "Old man", the captain of the Umpqua, Ambassadors Spock and Picard, have already arrived. Zim snaps to attention clicking the metal plates on the heels of his boots so it sounds like a rifle shot.

"Sir Ensign Zim requests permission to be seated!"

Zim takes a seat opposite Picard discretely gazing at the man who saved the Earth by defeating the Borg and helping Cochrane break the warp barrier. Ambassador Spock is no slouch either having traveled the world with James T. Kirk, negotiating with the Romulans and the Klingons.

Wow Zim thinks to himself this is a lot diffrent than eating field rations on some rock with a brunch of grunts. Well as Mom would say don't get any supper on ya.

The doctor looked at himself in the mirror before leaving his quarters. He didn't really like the dress uniform as it was much tighter and restricting than the normal duty uniform. He adjusted himself the proceeded for the door. Nurse Asner was manning sickbay, so he wasn't worried about any incidental situations that would occur, but he wished he could trade places.

The doctor was never comfortable with dignitaries, as his mouth always seemed to get him in trouble, but an order from his Captain couldn't be avoided.

As the doctor walked into the secondary mess, he noticed most of the senior staff of the McKenzie already present. What was completely shocking was the presence of Ambassador's Spock and Picard. He know this was a dinner with dignitaries, but didn't expect men of their caliber.

As with procedure, the doctor approached Captain Kirkpatrick and the receiving line which included Commander Thopor of the Umpqua and Ambassador's Spock and Picard.

"Good evening Captain."

The dinner was uneventful, but enjoyable. Everyone who attended benefited from the shared experiences and stories of Picard and Spock.

"This is amazing..", Captain Kirkpatrick thought to his himself during the dinner. "I would never have imagined these two to be gracing my ship's corridors."

As the dinner drew to an end, everyone said their good-byes and those from the Umpqua, including Ambassadors Spock and Picard, departed. Sean walked Thopor and Stevens to the transporter room, it was nice to an old friend again. Commander Thopor and Lieutenant Stevens step up onto the transporter pad.

"Peace and long life, Thopor." Sean says in good-bye.

Thopor raises his hand and gives the vulcan salute saying, "Live long and prosper old friend." He then nods at the transporter chief and the two dematerialize from the transporter pad.

Sean stands for a moment in the transporter and then leaves and heads for the bridge. Upon arriving he relieves a Lt. Commander and takes the center chair, still in his formal attire.

"Helm, plot a course back to Star Base 10." Says the captain.

The McKenzie breaks formation heading in a separate direction while the Umpqua continues her course to Earth with the Ambassadors.

"Aye, sir. Course laid in." The helm officer says in the background.

"Engage."

The McKenzie stretches off into the distance and disappears from sight with a flash of light as she goes to warp, unaware of the cabal she has uncovered.