

Wargames

---Deck 43, Corridor 55C, ISD Challenge---

The two figures moved through the shadows as fast as silence could allow. They were on a mission and they were not to be seen performing it. A short stop, a quick glance and three further steps and they were where they wanted to go. While one of the two manipulated something along the doorlock the other stood by looking around. Then, with a muted hiss, the door opened and the two figures slipped into the room beyond.

-“And what exactly are we doing here, Commander?” one of the figures asked the other after the door had slit close.

-“Shut it, Sergeyli!”, came the hissed reply. Clark looked around the main record room of the Challenge. As he had expected nobody was here. Well expected wasn't right. John had known that the usual clerk sitting here wouldn't be here...

---9 Hours earlier, NCO Mess, ISD Challenge---

-“So in what unit are you working? I can't remember seeing you here before...”, Sergeant Natasha Morris asked the guy in the well used engineer's overall sitting next to her at the bar.

-“Third Maintenance group, we're the guys who prep up those TIEs before they leave the ship.” he signaled to the bartender for another shot of Brandy. “You want one, too?” the man asked Morris.

-“Yeah, surething, sweety!” was the enthusiastic reply.

---Main Record Storage, Deck 43, Corridor 55C, ISD Challenge---

After he had checked the rest of the room Clark turned to his accomplice.

-“Now we can talk Sergeyli.”, John told the LCM who was still standing next to the door. “Though I wonder what it is that's still not clear to you.”

-“It's just, err, hmm... What are we doing here exactly?”, without seeing John's frown he continued, “I mean isn't it against the statutes to brake into a restricted area just to win a squadron competition...”

-“First, were not breaking in, second it's not about us winning something, but for the whole squadron to win something.”, a smile, “And if we happen to change the current highscores for those training missions in a way that we two will also get a highscore bonus from Colonel Styles then it's nothing to worry about...”

-“But if we aren't breaking in why haven't we gone here normally?”, Sergeyli paused to think, “And what happened to the guy that's supposed to be on station here?”

---5 hours earlier, NCO Mess, ISD Challenge---

-"...and that's how I came to be an IT specialist much to my father's chagrin.", with a quick gulp the last of her eleventh Brandy ran down her throat. The story of her life had been full of her making jokes and of the nice engineer making funny remarks and looking cute. All in all it was quite a laugh, and Tasha didn't notice that the stranger wasn't drinking very much.

-“That was quite a story!” the man said with a soft smile, followed by a look to the messes chronometer. “When did you say your next shift starts? In four hours right?” he asked Natasha, who wasn't fast enough anymore to compute the time difference in her head.

-“Let's have another drink and then go!” she suggested instead, laying her hand on the man's thigh.

Another wink of the hand and nearly magically the two shot glasses filled again. The two toasted each other and the engineer drowned his third Brandy of the evening.

-“You wouldn't mind bringing me to my quarters?”, Tasha Morris asked playing with the tip of her long blond hair.

-“I surely don't!”, the man replied and together they left the Messroom. Fifteen minutes later they slowly reached the right corridor. Tasha needed all her alcohol induced courage to kiss the stranger, and he followed her into the two person quarter. Ten minutes later the man emerged from the room. Of course Sergeant Morris had started sleeping the moment her back had touched the mattress. The engineer checked his Chronometer. Just five minutes later the Sergeant's roommate arrived and was surprised to find a man in the overall of a medical officer standing in front of her room's door.

-“There is no problem, Ma'am.”, the man said with a smile. “It's just that Sergeant Morris experienced slight problem and she will not be able to do her shift today. A replacement is already arranged, so please don't try to bother her.”

That sounded logical, and after a handshake the man was back alone in the corridor. With a sigh, Commander Clark turned left towards the next Turbolift. Just a couple of hours left to get changed, loose that horrible makeup and start the last preparations for the 'Job'...

---Main Record Storage, Deck 43, Corridor 55C, ISD Challenge---

-“Of course we haven't gone here normally because there's no way any IT officer would allow us to manipulate the Database.”, Clark looked at Sergeyli angrily. “And it's not braking in because we're technically allowed to be here...” He pulled up a chair and sat down in front of the interface he was working on. “And don't worry about that nice IT officer that's supposed to be here, I just arranged for her to be a little late today... Now stop asking stupid question and get going to program that algorithm I prepared for you.”

---Sergeant Morris Quarter, Deck 37, Corridor 12A, ISD Challenge---

'BEEP BEEP BEEP', went the communicator in Natasha's overall pocket. She didn't react beyond deactivating the device with one hand, and then tried to start to get a clear thought in between that Jackhammer that was pounding her brain. What had happened last night? Where was she? And how by the nine hells had she come to get a Jackhammer implanted into the base of her skull? The first question she solved was the middle one. She could definitely remember that she had been in the Mess for a couple of drinks. And that directly led to the answer for the third question. She must have had more than a dozen shots of whatever they served down there. But how had she even arrived in her quarters?

A couple of seconds more of trying to concentrate and then it dawned to her. There had been a guy, some engineer, rather cute if she remembered right. That got her attention. With all the willpower she could muster she opened one eye and then the other. Good only Marina was lying in the other bunk. But before she could close her hurting eyes they stopped on the chronometer. She was already one and a half hour late for her shift. With a jolt she sat up, much to her sorrow, as the pain behind her eyes exploded. Half a minute later it was a little better. With her eyes closed she slowly manoeuvred towards the shower.

Half an hour and a couple of painkillers later she had redressed into a new uniform and was quickly marching towards Main Record Storage.

---Main Record Storage, Deck 43, Corridor 55C, ISD Challenge---

-"You done, yet Sergeyli?", John asked his fellow squad member.

-"Just a sec..., yeah, done.", came the reply. "Can we go now?"

-"Surething we can!"

And thus the two men left the room, careful to leave everything as it has been before. A minute later they waited at the next turbolift. When it arrived a blond woman stepped out. And started to march towards the Record room. After a couple of steps she stopped and turned her head trying to distinguish the figures in the lift with her eyes, whose dark circles were barely covered by makeup.

-"Don't I know you?" she asked. But the same second the lift door closed and she would never know the answer. When Tasha opened the door to the room she was glad. Nobody had been here. With a sigh she sat down and was for once glad that only a dozen or so people a day disturbed her.

John T. Clark, #11690