

Infiltration

Two security officers walked up to Lieutenant John Tommas and escorted him off the bridge via the turbolift.

Burke walked up to his command chair and sat down. "Helm, continue course for Utopia Planitia. Warp five."

Ensign Julie Tompson at the helm nodded her head and keyed the sequence into the computer. "Aye sir, Course set."

Burke smiled "Engage." His smile quickly faded as reality set in. A man almost committed suicide right in front of him and the entire bridge crew. Maybe it was time to sign on a ship's counselor.

Dougless approached Burke's chair. "I think I'll go down to the brig and have a talk with John. There are some questions I have for him."

Burke nodded his approval. "Please find out what he was talking about. Find out what he meant when he said he could still see the Jem'Hadar, and the people screaming."

"Aye captain." Dougless said and exited the bridge to have a talk with his friend. The lift ride to deck eight felt like an eternity. When the lift came to a stop, Steve exited and walked down the hallway towards the brig. His mind was swarming with questions. Questions he hoped John could answer. Why did he mention the Jem'Hadar? Did they do something to him? He stopped walking and headed to the side of the corridor where a LCARS information access area was. "Computer, display Starfleet Personnel file for Lieutenant John Tommas."

The computer made a few beeping noises and searched for the requested file. "File not found."

Dougless looked at the display in surprise. "What? You've got to be kidding me. Computer confirm that there is no record of Lieutenant John Tommas."

The computer beeped again. "Confirmed."

Steve shook his head, maybe his file hasn't caught up with the Fresno yet, he thought trying to find a possible explanation of why the file wasn't there. If only he could believe the conclusion he came to. Steve closed the link and continued his journey down to the brig.

The doors to the brig opened. As Steve entered, the ensign on duty stood up. "What can I do for you sir?"

Steve walked up to the ensign. "I'm here to talk with Lieutenant Tommas."

"Sir, Lieutenant Tommas isn't here. All of the cells are vacant." The ensign replied.

"Excuse me?" Steve said in disbelief. "Captain Burke ordered security to bring him down here." He looked toward the ceiling. "Computer, what is the current location of Lieutenant John Tommas?"

"Working." The female voice said in a cold tone. "There is no record of Lieutenant John Tommas on file."

Steve looked to the ensign and then exited the brig. He walked to the end of the corridor and entered a turbolift. "Bridge." The lift started to move upward. Where are you my friend, where did you go? Steve thought.

The lift stopped at the bridge. Commander Dougless exited the lift and walked up to Commander R'Jor who was sitting in the command chair. "Where is Captain Burke?"

"The captain's in his ready room." Answered Kim.

In the ready room, Captain Burke was sitting at his desk reading over some files on a terminal in front of him. The door chimed. Burke switched the desktop terminal off and said "Enter." Commander Dougless entered the room and walked up to Burke's desk. "Steve, how is Lieutenant Tommas doing?"

"I don't know how to tell you this." Steve took in a deep breath and continued. "Lieutenant Tommas is missing."

Burke sat forward. "What?"

"The computer doesn't even have any records of him."

"Let's go check out his quarters." Burke said as he stood up. They exited the room and headed to the turbolift.

A few moments later they were standing in front of Lieutenant Tommas's quarters. Burke reached for the door chime and pressed it. "I doubt it will..." His sentence was cut off when the door opened to reveal John Tommas.

"What can I do for you sir?" The lieutenant asked.

Burke looked over to Steve with a puzzled look on his face. Steve returned the look. "What's going on here?"

"I thought I ordered you taken to the brig." Burke said looking to Tommas for an explanation.

"We were headed to the brig when they disappeared. They were there one moment and gone the next." Lieutenant Tommas explained. "Then I felt a phaser beam strike me..." He stopped suddenly. A strange panic came over him and his face filled with fear. "No, don't let them take me. Stop them please!" He pointed down the hallway. It was as if he saw someone standing there.

"Who?" Steve inquired. "Who don't you want to get you?"

"The Jem'Hadar! They're standing right there."

Burke looked to Steve. "Looks like you have some work to do. I'll leave you to talk with him."

Steve walked into John's quarters. Once inside, he led John over to a couch and sat down.

"Let's start at the beginning. You talked about the Jem'Hadar."

John nodded his head slowly. "Yes, they were everywhere. They were in charge of the place. Of course they took orders from the Vorta, but they were everywhere."

"Where were you?" Steve asked.

"It was some kind of holding place." John replied. "If you didn't comply with their demands, they would kill you."

Steve stood up and walked around the room.

"I disobeyed them once and was thrown into a dark place." John paused, he put his head into his hands and began crying. "I was alone for what seemed to be over a month. I didn't have contact with anyone, I was by myself."

"It sounds like you're describing Solitary Confinement." Steve sat back down on the couch. "John, tell me about the screams."

John looked up to his friend. "They never ended. I heard them all day and all night. When the Jem'Hadar kill, they don't care about it. That's what they were programmed to do."

Some of the pieces of the puzzle were starting to fall into place and Steve was going to try and make more sense of it. "Were you in some kind of prison camp?"

Anger filled John's voice when he answered. "The Dominion call them Internment Camps."

Steve started to frown for a moment, he was very sorry for his friend. "Was it Camp 371? The one that Commander Worf and Doctor Bashir, from Deep Space Nine, went to?"

John shook his head and laughed. "No, I was in Internment Camp 447, prisoner Omega five one. Camp 447 was much different than 371, it was stricter, meaner,tough. Camp 371 would be paradise compared to Camp 447.

"Who was your counselor when you returned to the Federation?" Steve asked, clearly they didn't do a good job of helping John.

"Starfleet never sent me to a counselor." John sighed. "When I got back I was put on active duty. I never received any help."

Steve was shocked, he couldn't imagine the amount of stress John must have been going through. "I had no idea. What can I do for you?"

John looked to his friend. "There's nothing you can do for me. It's too late." John reached down to his side, pulled out a phaser and pointed it at his head. "The stress is too much, this is the only way to end the pain."

Steve tried to help like he did on the bridge, but failed in the attempt. Soon Lieutenant John Tommas was dead. As his body fell to the floor, all of his memories reached out and caught hold of Steve. The memories implanted themselves into Steve's mind. He screamed out in pain until they were fully grafted and became a part of him. Steve tapped his commbadge. "Commander Dougless to Captain Burke."

Burke's voice came through the badge. "This is Burke."

Steve looked down to his dead comrad and friend. "Lieutenant Tommas is dead sir." His voice was shaking with sadness.

"Understood." Burke said with a sigh. He never liked it when people died under his command. It was always difficult looking their loved ones in the eyes and telling them that someone close to them had died under his watch.

A few days passed, the Fresno was orbiting Mars, it was docked at the Utopia Planitia Fleet Yards. At an airlock, Captain Burke awaited the arrival of Fleet Admiral Alynna Necheyev. He had never been fond of Necheyev. John couldn't remember any Starfleet captain that did like her.

The airlock opened allowing several maintenance engineers to enter. Admiral Necheyev was the last to walk onboard. "Captain Burke."

Burke walked up to the admiral and greeted her. "Welcome aboard the Fresno admiral."

Necheyev smiled back to Burke. "Thank you captain." They started to walk down the corridor and headed for the bridge.

In the ready room, Burke sat down at his desk and invited Necheyev to sit across from him. "Tell me admiral, why has the Fresno been ordered to Utopia Planitia for repairs?"

Necheyev leaned back in her chair. "We would normally send you to the Davis Fleet Yards, but Davis has their hands full with the Enterprise at the moment."

Burke nodded "I understand. So, what brings you to the Fresno?"

"Starfleet has ordered me to begin an official investigation concerning Lieutenant Tommas's suicide" answered the admiral.

"Alright, do you want quarters assigned to you?" Burke asked politely hoping she wouldn't accept. Unfortunately things didn't always go his way.

"yes, I'd appreciate it if you would."

Burke tapped his commbadge. "Burke to Dobson, please arrange quarters for Admiral Necheyev."

"Aye sir."

Burke turned back to Necheyev. "Is there anything else admiral?"

"Yes, have you contacted Lieutenant Tommas's family yet?" Necheyev asked.

Burke shook his head. "No sir, we didn't have time to stop at Betazed."

Necheyev nodded her head. "You don't need to go to Betazed, his parents are visiting Utopia Planitia this week."

"Then I'll go meet with them immediatly." He stood up to head for the door.

Necheyev shook her head. "That's alright. I'll inform them after I complete the investigation."

Down in Main Engineering, Commander Mark Justan had his hands full. He was placed in charge of the repair work. The Cardassians had taken a lot out of the Fresno, but the crew did manage to gather very valuable information on the Dominion bases near the border.

"Okay people" he said to his staff "The people from Utopia will be here in a few moments. We're suppose to give them all the access to the ship they want. I know you'd rather be doing the repair job, I can't blame you. After the last time they were here, I had to personally fix a few major mistakes. If you have any problems with any of them, have that person come and talk to me."

Admiral Necheyev turned the corner and entered Engineering just as Justan finished his orders. She walked up to him. "Commander may I have a word with you?"

Mark nodded to her, he looked to his staff. "Dismissed." They left the area to begin the repair work. Mark led Necheyev to his office. "Please have a seat admiral."

Necheyev sat down near a computer console. "I assume you know what recently happened aboard ship?"

Mark nodded his head, "Yes, Lieutenant Tommas's suicide." He stared down to the floor for a minute and then looked back to Necheyev. "He was a good officer."

"I'm sure he was." Necheyev said "How long had he been posted to Engineering?"

Mark checked his computer. "Let's see here." He tried to access John's file but had no success. "That's strange."

"What's wrong commander?" Necheyev asked.

"Lieutenant Tommas's file is missing. It's been deleted from the LCARS Database."

Necheyev made a few notes on a PADD "Can you remember the day he started working in Engineering?"

Mark looked up from the terminal. "I think he was posted to the Beta Shift on Combat Date 52013.6. Roughly a month ago." He paused "Admiral, didn't you hear me earlier when I said his file appears to have been deleted from the database?"

"I'm sure it will come up." Necheyev said, clearly not caring what was going on. "Did Lieutenant Tommas ever act strange around anyone or thing?"

Mark shook his head "No sir. He hardly ever missed a duty shift and was always on time."

Necheyev finished making notes on the PADD and stood up. "I think that should do it for now, thank you commander." She exited the office.

In Sickbay, Doctor Taylor was taking some scans of Commander Dougless. "How long has your head been hurting like this Steve?"

Steve shrugged his shoulders. "Ever since Lieutenant Tommas committed suicide."

Taylor made a few more scans and went to add them to the computer. "Let's compare these with your earlier scans." A few moments passed "I can't find your personnel file. It's been completely erased from the computer."

"What happened to it?" Steve asked worried about what was happening.

Taylor was confused. "I'm not sure. I can't give you anything for the headache until I have your file. I'm taking you off duty until I can help you. I would suggest you go back to your quarters and get some rest."

"Thanks doctor." Steve said as he exited Sickbay.

Admiral Necheyev was walking down a corridor, she stopped when she arrived at Commander Dougless's quarters. She pushed a button that would alert the occupant. The doors opened and Necheyev entered the room.

"Where are you?"

"I'm back here" came a reply from inside the room.

Necheyev continued into the room until she found Steven sitting in a chair. "Did you do it?"

Steve nodded. "Yes, the files have been deleted."

"Show respect when you talk to me!" Necheyev yelled.

Steve looked down to the floor. "I'm sorry Founder, I meant no disrespect."

The Necheyev Changling nodded, "None taken. You know now that you've done your job. I don't need you anymore."

She pulled out a phaser and handed it to Steve. "Here you go."

"Founder, are you certain I have to do this?"

The Necheyev Changling nodded her head "Yes."

"But I'm not even Betazoid." He protested.

"That's right, you're a Vorta." The Changling replied. "You are to follow my orders, now do it."

The Vorta pretending to be Steven Dougless started to raise the phaser, but hesitated. "Listen to me. If they take scans of my corpse, they'll figure out that I'm not Steven Dougless."

The Necheyev Changling shook her head "You were constructed for this purpose. The majority of your genetic make-up is in fact Betazoid in origin. Trust me, there won't be any problems."

"Alright." The Vorta/Betazoid hybrid knew he couldn't win. The Founders were always right. He fired the phaser and his body was vaporized.

The Necheyev Changling exited the quarters and headed towards her own quarters. She needed to regenerate.

On the bridge, Burke was listening to Commander Dobson informing him what the security sensors just reported. "A phaser was just fired in Commander Dougless's cabin. Lifeform scans report negative."

"Doctor Taylor, report to Commander Dougless's quarters. Commander Dobson will meet you en route." Burke said motioning to Dobson to exit the bridge.

Twenty minutes passed. Burke hated waiting when something strange was occurring on his ship. He wanted answers and he wanted those answers right away.

Finally a commline opened. "We've found the remains of Comander Dougless. Doctor Taylor has taken them to Sickbay."

The next day, the Necheyev Changling was ready to leave the Fresno. Captain Burke escorted her to the transporter room where she would disembark.

"I hope you were able to get all the answers you needed for your investigation admiral." Burke said to the Changling.

"Yes I believe I did. Tell me, did Utopia Planitia complete the repair work on schedule?"

Burke nodded his head. "Yes they did." He paused "Give my best to the families of Lieutenant Tommas and Commander Dougless."

"I will." The Necheyev Changling said as she stepped onto the transporter pad. "Energize."

The transporter operator activated the transporter controls and the Necheyev Changling beamed off the Fresno back to Utopia Planitia.

Burke let out a sigh of relief as he watched her go. He exited the transporter room and headed to the bridge. Little did he know that three Starfleet officers were in Dominion Internment Camp 447 waiting to be rescued.

Internment Camp 447

Admiral Necheyev, Lieutenant Tommas, and Commander Dougless sat in their assigned Barrick. They had been there for over six months.

"We're never going to get out of here. This is where I'm going to die." Lieutenant Tommas said.

Commander Dougless shook his head. "Calm down. You don't want to get thrown into solitary for another month do you?"

John calmed down a little "No, I don't want to go through that experience ever again. They almost killed me last time."

"I don't know about you, but these Alpha Jem'Hadar need to be taught a lesson in treating their prisoners." Necheyev said, looking to her cellmates.

They were Starfleet and had been through so many challenges in their careers. All they had to survive on was hope.

To Be Continued...

