

*Captain's log, stardate 46543.6:*

*The crew of the Arcturus-A is just finishing the survey of the planet Beta Julanda II. The survey was made difficult by the fact that over ninety percent of the planet's surface is covered in ice, some places several kilometers thick, with the only exposed ground in the area of the planet's equator. But both my engineers and science teams believe they have discovered vast deposits of dilithium and other rare elements not far below the planet's surface in those exposed areas, making this planet a very important discovery for Starfleet. Follow-on teams from a science vessel expected to arrive in the next few weeks should confirm our findings. In the meantime, the Arcturus is en route to Starbase Deep Space 4 to swap out one of our mission modules. We expect to be in port at least a week.*  
*Johnson, commanding Arcturus, out.*

Vice Admiral Eric W. Johnson was just reading the report prepared by his Chief Science Officer, the Efrosian Bael T'olos Dagon San-Demetos, a smile appearing on his lips.

"Well, Bael, it looks like you were really in your element on Beta Julanda II," the admiral was saying. "This survey report is exceptional!"

"The planet in question is very much like my own homeworld of Delta Efros," Bael explained. "Except, of course, for the unbearably temperate equatorial zone. The temperatures there were barely below two degrees Celsius. Too warm even for what you humans would consider a 'vacation spot.' I prefer my environment a little more comfortably frigid."

Johnson chuckled before saying, "In any event, good job, Bael. Starfleet is going to be very happy once our survey results are confirmed by the crew of the *USS Young*."

"Excuse me, Admiral," Lt Commander Kalin Kale interrupted from ops. "You have a communique coming in from Starfleet."

"Must be more information on the arrival of the *Young* in the sector," Johnson said as he stood up from his seat. "Please transfer it to my ready room, Mister Kale."

A moment later, Johnson was behind his desk in the ready room, activating his monitor. The image of another Starfleet admiral appeared on the screen, except this one was wearing the blue duty uniform of the medical department.

"Admiral Johnson, I'm Rear Admiral Augustus Malik of Starfleet Medical."

Johnson was slightly surprised, not expecting a medical officer to be contacting him. "Admiral," he said. "What can I do for you?"

"I am contacting you today to inform you that Achilles Copeland has completed his physical therapy and re-training, and Starfleet has decided the best place to assign him is back aboard your ship."

At first Johnson was puzzled. "Achilles...?" Then he suddenly realized who Admiral Malik was talking about. "Copeland! You mean A. Carey Copeland! He's coming back to the *Arcturus*?!"

"Yes," Malik said. "There've been a few road bumps during his recovery, but the doctors overseeing Copeland's case agree that returning to his old crew may help him adjust a little better to life in a new century than he has to this point."

"Sounds like a plan," Johnson agreed. "How will the Major meet up with us? We're scheduled to pull in at *Deep Space 4* in about a week for mission module swap-out – getting rid of the specialized equipment we needed for surveying an ice world – and I don't think we have time to go all the way back to Earth just for a crew transfer."

"Don't worry, Admiral Johnson. Starfleet has it all worked out," Malik replied.

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A short time later, Johnson was sitting in the office of his ship's counselor, Dr. Ian Valtirr of Delta IV.

"According to Admiral Malik, the transport carrying Major Copeland out to *Deep Space 4* should arrive just prior to our scheduled departure from the station," Johnson was explaining. "They're cutting it a little close."

"Has Lieutenant Colonel Copeland been informed his 'brother' is returning to the ship?" Valtirr asked.

“Not yet. He’s my next appointment,” Johnson replied. “But Admiral Malik wanted me to make sure my ship’s counselor was prepared for Major Copeland’s return. He said Copeland is a special case that might need keeping an eye on at first. Not sure exactly what he means by that.”

“Actually, it’s Lieutenant Colonel for Carey Copeland as well,” Valtirr stated, studying his commanding officer’s face for any signs of unusual emotion. “The Corps evidently saw fit to promote him once he finished his re-training at Parris Island. I was contacted by Starfleet Medical a few hours ago. They wanted to know my opinion on how you would react to Careys return. They also informed me that while his military re-training went well, the main issue is he hasn’t assimilated to his new time period to the satisfaction of his counselors as well as the rest of the 23<sup>rd</sup> century *Arcturus* crew has. They advised he be watched by me or a member of my staff for at least the first few days or weeks he is aboard to make sure he fits in alright.”

“I’m not sure I’m comfortable with Starfleet Medical going behind my back like that,” Johnson remarked, trying not to take out his displeasure on his counselor. “And having two Copelands, both essentially the same person, and with the same rank on board at the same time is going to create some interesting challenges around here. Do you think you will have everything covered?”

“Eric, I think once Carey Copeland is back aboard the *Arcturus* and among friends, he’s going to be the same person he was before, as if he had never left us.”

“That’s what I’m afraid of,” Johnson remarked with a grin. “Okay, it looks like you have the medical end of things in order. Now let me go see Colonel Copeland and break the news to him.”

“I think you will find that Jim Copeland is well on his way to becoming his own man right now,” Valtirr remarked. “His reaction to Carey Copeland coming back may surprise you, in a good way.”

Space, the Final Frontier...

These are the voyages of the starship *Arcturus*!

## Star Trek: Arcturus

### “Can’t Teach an Old Devil Dog New Tricks” by PJK

“Carey’s coming back to the *Arcturus*!?” Lt Colonel James E. Copeland exclaimed, an unusual excitement showing on the Tamurilian Marine’s boyish features. “How long before he gets here?”

“According to the Admiral from Starfleet Medical, it’ll be about two weeks before the transport carrying him rendezvous with us at *DS4*,” Johnson explained. “However, I need you to keep something important in mind, Colonel.”

“No practical jokes for the first twenty-four hours?” Copeland remarked with a smirk. Even Johnson could not help but smile slightly at the infectious enthusiasm his Starfleet Marine Corps company commander was displaying.

“No. I think you should be aware that one of the primary reasons Starfleet is sending your brother back to the *Arcturus* specifically is because he has shown some difficulty assimilating to life in our new century. And since almost half our present crew went through the same sort of life-altering event – including you – they think it may help Carey adjust better to be among friends and colleagues who have experienced a similar mental trauma.”

“Admiral, I was discovered floating in space several years before the *Arcturus* emerged from its time warp, before anyone knew my former shipmates were still alive,” Colonel Copeland said. “I had to adjust all by myself.” When Copeland noticed the dubious look on Johnson’s face he added, “Okay, admittedly, with the help of the medical staff at Starfleet. But I knew no one. I had no friends to help push me along. I had to deal with my anxieties and my feelings of initial inadequacy all on my own. I didn’t have the crew of the *Arcturus* to fall back on. Carey and I are essentially the same person. If I could do it, do it successfully, and find myself out here again, a productive and respected member of the Corps, so can Carey!”

"I've been thinking about what both Admiral Malik and Counselor Valtirr have said, and it got me to thinking," Johnson remarked. "Maybe what you just said is truer than you know." When Jim Copeland gave the Admiral a confused look, Johnson added, "Perhaps it's the knowledge that the *Arcturus* crew is here in this century with him that is holding him back from accepting all the changes that have occurred?"

Copeland thought about what Johnson had said for a moment, slowly starting to nod. "You may be right, Admiral," he finally said. "I think I can understand that reasoning." Copeland shrugged his shoulders and then said, "Either way, I'll do my best to make sure Carey feels welcome and a part of the team again."

"Thank you, Colonel. That's all I can ask," Johnson replied.

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*Captain's log, stardate 46579.2:*

*The Arcturus is completing its refit at Deep Space 4, having removed one of the pie-shaped wedges of the ship's primary hull that was equipped with specialized survey equipment designed specifically for ice-encrusted planets and re-installing a general-purpose science module. We await the final closeout inspection by the starbase staff and the imminent arrival of a transport vessel coming from Earth with Lieutenant Colonel Carey Copeland aboard. If all goes according to plan, the Arcturus can begin its next mission within thirty-six hours.*

*Johnson, commanding Arcturus, out.*

The transport vessel dropped out of warp a few hundred kilometers away from the Federation starbase. A few minutes later, it moved into position station-keeping a ship-length away from both the starbase and the *USS Arcturus-A*.

In the *Arcturus*' transporter room, Admiral Johnson, Colonel Copeland, the starship's first officer Captain Solak, and Ship's Counselor Valtirr gathered in front of the control console.

"The transport ship reports it is ready to beam the other Colonel Copeland aboard," the transporter chief announced.

"Very well, Chief," Johnson said. "Synchronize systems and energize."

The transporter chief touched various controls on the console, linking the system aboard the *Arcturus* directly with the transport vessel. He then swiped his fingers down the activation controls, and the transport chamber hummed to life, the sparkles above one pad coalescing into the form of a stocky young-looking man with a fresh crew-cut wearing a green Marine Corps uniform and several duffle bags near his feet. He looked around in wonder at the interior of the room.

"Transporter room looks different than I remember," the new arrival remarked.

"Carey!" Jim Copeland called out.

Carey Copeland's eyes settled on the four men standing directly in front of him. A moment later, Jim Copeland came rushing up the steps onto the platform and grabbing his mirror image in a tight hug.

"Jim!" Copeland exclaimed back, returning the hug after a brief moment of discomfort. He then stepped down off the platform and greeted both Johnson and Solak, offering each his hand before he started talking almost a mile a minute about everything he had gone through since leaving the *Arcturus* six months earlier. Johnson noted with some unease that Copeland seemed friendly to almost everyone in the room, but was completely ignoring Counselor Valtirr's presence.

"Can you believe they had me go through Marine OCS training... again... I'm told I completed it in record time! Some of the Drill Instructors said they had never seen anyone run through the Confidence Course as fast as me before! But of course, they're probably used to green recruits or soft college grads whose hardest exercise was walking across campus before I showed up on the Island." Carey then proudly pointed at the rank insignia on his collar as he said, "They even promoted me to Lieutenant Colonel too! We better be careful or no one will be able to tell us apart! I know! One of us should get a scar on his face so the boys can tell which of us is which! So, how soon do I get to see the boys?"

“The boys?” Solak inquired, unsure of what the new arrival was talking about.

“You know. Our Company. The Marines. The Leathernecks!”

Jim Copeland gestured toward the door and all five men started walking. “Why don’t we get you settled into your new quarters first,” he suggested. “I’m sure traveling all the way out here by transport wasn’t exactly the most comfortable way to go.”

“Compared to eighty years in an escape pod, it was like a night in the Ritz,” Carey remarked as everyone stepped out into the corridor.

“Well, don’t worry. I’ll get you integrated into the Company as soon as I can,” Jim Copeland said. “Once you’re settled in, I’m sure being part of a cohesive unit again will help you get your sense of purpose back. I know it did for me.” He then looked at Counselor Valtirr, who to this point had remained silent, only observing what was going on. “Counselor, could you show Carey to his...”

“If it’s all the same, I would rather you escort me to my quarters,” Carey Copeland said, cutting his brother off. “Or if you can’t, maybe Solak can?”

Johnson and Valtirr exchanged subtle looks as Solak said, “I can show the Colonel to his new quarters. Please, Carey, follow me.”

As Carey Copeland and Solak disappeared around a curve in the corridor, the three remaining men looked at one another.

“What do you think?” Johnson asked.

“I suspect the Colonel’s interactions with the counselors during his time at Starfleet Medical may have made him suspect my intentions,” Valtirr said.

“We were never ones to put much faith in head-shrinkers, Counselor,” Jim Copeland said. “Perhaps once I get him working with the other Marines, it will take his mind off your spying.”

“I’m not spying!” Valtirr remarked defensively. “I have to evaluate if Carey is adjusting properly to...” Valtirr paused when he noticed both Johnson and Jim Copeland chuckling.

“Who’s being defensive now, Counselor?” Johnson remarked before turning to head toward the nearest turbolift and return to the bridge. “Carry on, gentlemen. I expect periodic progress reports from you both.”

“Yes, Admiral,” both Copeland and Valtirr replied.

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Solak showed Carey Copeland the way to the quarters assigned to him. Upon reaching the door – which was already labeled with the sign ‘Copeland, A.C. – Lt Col, SFMC’ – they stepped inside.

“I think you made some sort of mistake, Solak,” Copeland remarked, looking around the three-room suite.

“What do you mean, Carey?” the Vulcan asked.

“Are we even still aboard a starship?” Copeland asked, looking through the door into the bedroom area. “I haven’t seen a suite like this outside of a commanding general’s planet-side quarters! This place is huge!”

One of Solak’s eyebrows lifted briefly before he replied, “Please keep in mind, we’re not aboard the old *Arcturus* anymore. 24<sup>th</sup> century starships are generally larger, more spacious, and more comfortably appointed. Many starships, including the *Arcturus-A*, even have family members of the crew aboard.”

“Why in hell would they send families out into space?” Copeland remarked.

“Back in our original time period, a five-year mission was considered fairly long,” Solak reminded his companion. “Today’s starship missions are expected to last ten... perhaps even twice that long before a majority of the crew are rotated off. Much too long to expect a member of Starfleet to volunteer to be without at least a semblance of a normal family life.”

“Sounds silly to me,” Copeland remarked before turning his attention on a piece of equipment on the wall near the dining table. “Is that a food slot?”

“That is a replicator. It can create anything you need, from food to drinks to everyday items,” Solak explained. “I’m surprised you were not acquainted with the equipment at OCS.”

“They mainly had us on rations during training,” Copeland stated. “Nothing like a good ready-to-eat lasagna or a tube of peanut butter to get you through a day humping a twenty kilo backpack on a twenty-five kilometer hike!”

Solak moved over to the replicator unit and touched the control panel. The device beeped a musical note and Solak said, "Computer, Idanian spice pudding." The computer beeped again and a moment later a small bowl of tan pudding materialized on the shelf. Solak picked it up and handed it to the Colonel, who sniffed at it suspiciously.

"I'm sure there are numerous items in your quarters you may not be completely familiar with," Solak said. "Let me make sure you know how everything works."

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Shortly after showing Copeland where everything was in his quarters and how to use it all – Copeland was most impressed with the head with its full-sized bathtub, having been used to no more than a sonic shower in what he had considered to be luxurious quarters aboard the original *Arcturus*, while this new ship could generate all the water needed for a hot bath anytime anyone wanted! – Solak excused himself to return to duty on the bridge. Copeland looked around the otherwise empty quarters for a moment with a sneer. "More like a suite on Wrigley's Pleasure Planet," he remarked to himself as he threw his duffle bags onto the bunk in the next room then began to wonder what to do with himself.

Suddenly a thought occurred to him! Stepping over to the computer interface on the bulkhead, he touched the screen and said, "Computer. Is David Maddox aboard this starship?"

"Lieutenant Commander David Maddox is assigned as Chief of Security aboard the *USS Arcturus NCC-1807-A*," the computers female voice replied.

"Great! Can you tell me where he is?"

"Lieutenant Commander Maddox is currently located in his office, deck eleven, forward section 5."

"Great!" Copeland started heading toward the door of his quarters when he suddenly paused. "Uh... How do I get there?"

"Please follow the indicators to the office of the Chief of Security," the computer responded, and as the cabin door opened, Copeland noticed flashing lighted dots along the LCARS panels lining the corridor, leading toward a nearby turbolift.

"Wow! The wonders of modern technology," Copeland remarked, departing his quarters and following the indicators.

A short time later, there was a knock on the door of the security chief's office. Dave Maddox looked up from a padd he was reading about improved security techniques aboard Federation starships and said, "Come."

The door swished open to admit Carey Copeland. A wide smile appeared on the Tamurilian's face.

"Dave!"

"What can I do for you, Colonel?" Maddox asked formally, causing Copeland to frown.

"Since when did you ever call me by my rank, Dave?" Copeland asked.

"Since I came to realize you were little more than a poor copy of my friend," Maddox replied, before quickly adding, "Sir!"

A hurt look appeared on Copeland's face as he said, "Fine way to welcome me back aboard the *Arcturus*."

Maddox leaned closer to his desk, peering at Copeland closely before realizing the man in front of him was not Jim Copeland. "Carey?"

"Who else would I be?" Copeland replied, turning to leave the office.

"Wait!" Maddox called out. "I thought you were Jim Copeland!"

Copeland paused and looked back at Maddox. "I take it you don't get along with him too well?" he asked.

"We get along fine," Maddox replied. "But after that little incident in sickbay six months ago, when I almost shot... well, YOU... because I thought you were a fake and a phony and here to sabotage the ship..." Maddox sighed deeply before adding, "Let's just say I prefer to keep my distance from the other Copeland." There was an extended pause, as neither man knew what to say to start a conversation until finally Maddox said, "Have a seat." Copeland dragged a chair over in front of the desk and sat down in it.

"So how have you been doing since the crew first rescued me and then sent me to Earth for medical help and re-training?" Copeland asked rather pointedly.

"I've had better months," Maddox stated flatly. When Copeland only gave him a confused yet curious expression, the security chief added, "Dealing with a brief mental breakdown trying to comprehend how there were two of you on the ship back then. I was relieved of duty and spent several weeks in the care of our esteemed Counselor

Valtirr. Once I was able to process that the man I had befriended now calling himself Jim Copeland was a clone of the original created for some unknown but diabolical purpose by some unknown but diabolical aliens and that the man we rescued near-death from an escape pod was the officer and friend I had spent years serving with, and that I nearly killed that man believing him to be a spy or saboteur or Romulan agent or some such thing, I started feeling much better.” Maddox looked at Copeland for several seconds before adding, “Thank you, by the way.”

“For what?” Copeland asked.

“For putting me through hell, not once, not twice, but three separate times,” Maddox explained. He lifted his hand and started counting off on his fingers. “First, when you died during that battle with the Orions. Next, when you came back to the *Arcturus* after we all had spent the better part of two years believing you were dead. Finally, when we found you AGAIN and realized the Copeland we all thought was you really wasn’t.”

“Oh... You’re welcome.”

Maddox looked at Copeland. After a few seconds, his eyes took on a more sympathetic expression. “Don’t get me wrong, Carey. I’m glad you’re alive. I really am. It’s just that after everything we as a crew had been through... The time warp; re-training at the Academy; the one-year training cruise aboard the original *Arcturus*... It was just too much lumped too close together for me to process adequately. Or at least that’s what the Counselor tells me.”

Copeland looked around the security office, noting and admiring the collection of 23<sup>rd</sup> century phasers mounted in a frame hanging on one wall. He also noticed one of the slots that should have held a phaser pistol was empty.

“Speaking of... What ever happened to the old *Arcturus*?” he finally asked.

“We spent a year back aboard her after we finished updated training,” Maddox explained. “But Starfleet said she was too old and it wouldn’t be worth trying to refit her to modern standards, so after the training cruise they decommed her and stuck her in a museum in orbit of Arcturus III.”

“So this is a completely new ship?” Copeland asked.

“Prototype. First of her kind. They’re calling her Arcturus-class, but Admiral Johnson has said she’s a pathfinder vessel for an entirely new design of starship – one that is easily reconfigurable for specific missions.”

“I don’t suppose there’s a recreation room on deck seven anymore?” Copeland asked wistfully.

“There’s an arboretum on deck six. Main lounge on deck ten. Plenty of other rec rooms and lounges throughout the ship.”

“I miss the Deck 7 parties,” Copeland said. “Kira and I were in the process of planning another one for right after we finished that mission hunting for the Orion pirates.”

“Yeah, those were some good parties,” Maddox replied, a far-away look in his eyes. He then narrowed his focus on Copeland and asked, “Hey, Carey, could you use a drink?”

“Sure. What have you got?” Copeland answered, his interest suddenly piqued.

“Something better than synthahol!” Maddox replied.

“Synthahol? What’s that?” Copeland asked.

“A vile alcohol substitute created by the Ferengi to help them cheat their customers, from what I understand,” Maddox explained. Copeland was about to ask what a Ferengi was when the security chief added, “Most of the humans in this century have gotten so used to drinking synthahol that they can’t taste the difference anymore. But I know when I’m drinking the real stuff and when I’m not.” Maddox reached into the bottom draw of his desk and lifted out a fancy glass bottle with a pale green liquid inside.

“Is that what I think it is?” Copeland asked, his eyes growing wider.

“The REAL stuff! Aldebaran whiskey. Sixteen years old.” He then called out to the replicator unit in the corner, “Computer, two empty glasses.” Seconds later two Rocks glasses appeared on the shelf. Maddox got up to retrieve the glasses and then dragged his chair around the desk to join Copeland. After pouring the whiskey into each glass, Maddox lifted his, waiting for Copeland to tap his own against it.

“To old friends,” Maddox toasted.

“To absent friends,” Copeland agreed before both men drank their whiskey in a single swallow and Maddox began to pour more.

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The cabin intercom bleeped and a voice said, “Jim Copeland to Carey Copeland.” Several seconds passed before the voice added, “Carey, this is Jim. Are you there?”

The sheets and bed cover laying on the floor next to the bed started to stir and one hand reached out, attempting to pull the coverings down and away without much success.

“Uhhh... whattimeisit?” a muffled voice said from under the covers.

“Carey, it’s 0800 hours!” Jim Copeland’s concerned voice replied. “Watch turn-over was 0600! The way you were talking yesterday, I figured you would be one of the first to be present for muster this morning!”

“Shhhh...” Copeland pleaded as he managed to drag his head out from inside the tangled heap. “Not so loud.”

“You need help getting ready?” Jim Copeland offered.

“No, no! I’ll... (groan) ...I’ll be there soon.” Copeland began to wrestle with his sheets again, finally managing to extricate himself on his hands and knees before coming to a dead halt. “Where is there?”

“Say again?” the other Copeland tried to clarify.

“I’m afraid I’m not entirely familiar with this starship yet. Only parts of deck eleven, section five. We used to muster on the hanger deck aboard the old *Arcturus*. Where is the there I need to be?”

“Still the main hanger bay. Deck ten, aft. See you in a couple of minutes.”

“Few...”

“Say again?”

“Few minutes. I’m... I’m not exactly dressed yet.” Copeland sputtered.

“Fine. I’ll see you whenever you get here. Colonel Copeland, out.”

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Vice Admiral Eric W. Johnson was sitting behind the desk in his ready room, where he was speaking to Lt Colonel Jim Copeland on his desktop monitor.

“Carey did WHAT?” Johnson asked, his emotions halfway between amusement and outrage.

“He showed up in the shuttlebay with a hangover so bad I had to order him to report to Doctor Arcadian in sickbay,” Colonel Copeland explained. “I then contacted Athena while he was en route and asked her if she could give him something that would help prevent nausea but perhaps prolong the headache and sensitivity to loud sounds. Hopefully Carey can learn a lesson from this – hopefully isolated – incident.”

“Well, as long as you seem to have the situation under control, I won’t step in, Colonel,” Johnson said. “I was just wondering how Copeland’s first full day back aboard had gone?”

“I think it could have gone better, but I hold out higher hopes for the future,” the colonel replied. “Colonel Copeland, out.”

As the monitor screen went blank, the door chime sounded. Still shaking his head slightly, Johnson said, “Come.” The doors parted to admit Captain Solak.

“I thought you would be interested in an incident report I just received, Admiral,” the Vulcan stated.

“If it’s about Copeland, I already know,” Johnson replied.

“Actually, this report is in regards to Lieutenant Commander Maddox,” Solak clarified.

“Dave? What about him?”

“The assistant chief of security reported Commander Maddox was somewhat incapacitated when he reported for duty this morning.”

“Incapacitated,” Johnson repeated with concern. “How so?”

“The symptoms described include acetaldehyde accumulation, dehydration, metabolic acidosis, disturbed prostaglandin synthesis, increased cardiac output, vasodilation, and apparent sleep deprivation,” Solak responded.

“I know I started my Starfleet career in the medical field, but in English, please, Solak.”

“I believe the Commander was suffering the effects of what humans call... a hangover,” Solak explained.

“That’s odd,” Johnson said. “Colonel Jim Copeland just informed me Carey Copeland was suffering from the same thing. Do you think there is something aboard the ship, like the Psy-2000 virus, that could be affecting members of the crew?”

Solak’s right eyebrow lifted for a moment before the Vulcan said, “The more likely explanation is that Carey Copeland and Dave Maddox renewed their friendship after I left Carey in his quarters yesterday.”

“Yeah, that’s what I thought too, but I was hoping maybe it was something less concerning, like the Psy-2000 virus loose aboard my starship. Well, after everything each has been through in the last few months, I suppose it wouldn’t hurt to let them blow off a little steam, as long as it doesn’t adversely affect their duties.”

“Would you like me to... keep an eye on them, Admiral?” Solak offered.

“No, Solak,” Johnson said dismissively. “They’re both senior officers. They should know how to take responsibility for themselves!”

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The next morning, the Company First Sergeant stepped into the Company Commander’s office, intending to retrieve a padd with the day’s sick-call list stored on it. He was surprised to find Lt Colonel Copeland already sitting at his desk, working.

“Good morning, Colonel,” the First Sergeant said, snapping to attention in front of the desk. “Early day today?”

“Morning, First Sergeant,” Copeland replied, looking up briefly before returning his attention to the padd in his hand. “What can I do for you today?”

“Just looking for the sick-call list,” the First Sergeant replied.

Copeland started looking around at the myriad of padds piled haphazardly around the desktop as he said, “I just saw that here a minute ago... Now where is it...? I know I saw... Ah! Here it is!”

Copeland handed the small padd to the First Sergeant, who thanked him before activating the padd and glancing at the contents. He then asked, “Anything I can do for you before morning muster, sir? Coffee? Status reports?”

“Doctors said I should stay away from coffee, at least for a few weeks,” Copeland replied. “However, an update on Company status might...”

The office door swished open and another Tamurilian man wearing the green Marine Corps uniform walked in, his concentration on a padd he was holding until he realized there were other people in his office. “Morning, First Sergeant,” Lt Colonel Jim Copeland said before suddenly stopping short when he noticed someone else was sitting at his desk. “Carey, what are you doing here?” Jim Copeland asked.

“Trying to make up for my poor performance yesterday by getting an early start on the day’s business,” Carey Copeland replied.

The First Sergeant kept looking back and forth between the two remarkably similar-looking officers, as if unsure which one was real and which was a hologram or something similar. After several seconds looking like he was attending a tennis match, Jim Copeland finally looked at the senior non-com and said, “Dismissed, First Sergeant!”

“Yes, sir. Thank you, sir,” the First Sergeant said as he quickly exited the office, the door swishing shut behind him. Jim Copeland then turned his attention back on his brother.

“Let me clarify, Carey,” he said now that the two were alone. “What are you doing in my office, behind my desk?”

Carey Copeland looked back at his brother with a wide smile and answered, “I’m reorganizing the Company!”

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That afternoon, Colonel Jim Copeland was sitting in the 10-Forward lounge – ironically named since while the lounge was indeed on deck ten, due to the unique design of the ship it was not located anywhere near the forward bow – nursing a drink and complaining to anyone who would listen. On this occasion, it was the *Arcturus*’ two Centauri crew members, Doctor Athena Arcadian – the starship’s chief medical officer – and Lt Commander Kalin Kale – the chief operations officer.

“Now wait a second, Jim,” Arcadian was saying. “Start from the beginning again. I missed what happened when you walked into your office.”

“I wanted to get my paperwork in order prior to 0600 muster, so I went straight to my office. That’s where I found him!”



“Your brother?” Kale asked, clarifying.

“The one and...,” the colonel started to say when he suddenly realized what he was saying was false. “Anyway, I walk in, and Carey is sitting behind my desk, pads strewn around everywhere, and he’s re-writing the duty rosters! I mean, moving guys from the morning watch to the mid-watch and guys from the evening watch to the morning watch. Completely messing up the watch sections I had spent weeks developing so we don’t wind up having all the corpsmen on one watch and all the communications technicians on another watch. You know what I mean?” Kale nodded in understanding. “He’d changed EVERYTHING! Rosters, contingent reports, training schedules, leave requests, transfer updates. It’s going to take me days to get everything back to where I intended it be!”

“Why would Carey do that?” Arcadian asked. “It doesn’t sound like him to be sabotaging your work.”

“I don’t think he did it maliciously,” Colonel Copeland replied with a defeated sigh. “I think he was just overstepping his bounds.”

“Overstepping...?” Arcadian asked, clearly not on the same page.

“Carey is acting like he’s still the Company Commander of the Marine Contingent aboard the *Arcturus*,” Copeland finally made clear. “Yesterday I tried to explain to him that right now, he’s an officer-in-training with no set duties and no current responsibilities. I thought I was clear to him when he showed up in the hanger bay drunk yesterday morning, but it must not have gotten through. In his mind, he’s a company commander and that’s all he can ever be. I’m afraid it’s eventually going to come to a head between him and I...”

“Excuse me,” a new voice said from over Colonel Copeland’s shoulder. The Marine looked back to see Counselor Valtirr standing there and – surreptitiously – rolled his eyes. “I couldn’t help but overhear your rather animated conversation. Perhaps I can offer a suggestion?”

“What’s your idea, Doc?” Colonel Copeland finally asked.

Valtirr pulled a chair over from one of the nearby tables and sat down between Kale and Copeland. “Your issue is the other Colonel seems to think he’s still in charge of the Marines aboard this starship, right?”

“Yeeeeeeees....?” Copeland agreed, since it was exactly what he had just said before Valtirr interrupted.

“Perhaps if he isn’t involved with your Marines he will understand the fact he isn’t the man in charge more quickly?” Valtirr suggested.

“Not involved with...? If he’s not integrated into the Company, what would Carey do aboard this ship?” Colonel Copeland asked.

“From my understanding, once he completed his medical recovery and took part in several psychological exams, Carey Copeland was sent straight into Marine OCS for his re-training. The technology may change, but a Marine has been a Marine for the last seven hundred years. The *Arcturus* crew had no Marines assigned when we went through the time warp. All the crew that decided to remain in Starfleet after we arrived in the 24<sup>th</sup> century were sent back to the Academy for what was called ‘A well-rounded training update.’ Carey Copeland missed out on that.”

“So what are you suggesting?” Colonel Copeland asked, a look of suspicion growing on his boyish face. “That we kick Carey off the *Arcturus* AGAIN and send him back to Earth to go through the same re-training all of you went through?” Copeland looked closely at Kale and Arcadian to see if he could see any sign the two Centauri agreed with Valtirr’s suggestion.

“No, nothing so dramatic, Colonel,” Valtirr replied. “If you wish, I’ll speak to Admiral Johnson and see if he would authorize Carey Copeland to be assigned to different divisions aboard the ship for two to four weeks at a time to get a better understanding of how things work on a 24<sup>th</sup> century starship.” Valtirr looked at Jim Copeland intently as he added, “And to keep him out of your hair for a time.”

The Colonel was about to protest when he realized there was some logic to what the ship’s counselor was suggesting. Not only would it allow his brother a better opportunity to understand how things on a modern starship worked, but with three separate divisions consisting of six departments aboard the starship, Carey could be out of his hair for upwards of the next six months!

“I like your idea, Doc,” Colonel Copeland finally said. “But I need you to do one thing first.”

“What’s that, Colonel?” Valtirr asked.

“Could either you or Admiral Johnson be the one to tell Carey about his change in duty status? I think it would go over better than if it came from me.”

“Why is that?” Valtirr asked.

“Because I know how I would react to such a change in assignment,” Colonel Copeland replied. “Especially if it came from someone I might consider a rival to my authority.”

\* \* \* \*

The next morning, Admiral Johnson was sitting in his ready room, reading over a personnel record when the door chime sounded. “Come,” he said.

The doors swished open to admit Lt Colonel A. Carey Copeland, who stepped up to the desk and snapped to attention. “Lieutenant Colonel Carey Copeland, reporting as ordered!” He then assumed parade-rest, hands folded behind his back.

“Morning, Carey,” Johnson said. “We wanted to talk to you.”

“We?” Copeland questioned, then for the first time noticed Counselor Valtirr sitting on the couch near the door. Immediately, the Marine officer was on the defensive.

“I know you just arrived aboard the *Arcturus*,” Johnson said, ignoring the tension Copeland was suddenly broadcasting. “But I’m placing you on a special assignment.”

Copeland’s defensiveness just as quickly changed to confusion. “Special assignment?” he asked.

“Yes. Because of the unique circumstances in which you were transported into the 24<sup>th</sup> century, you did not undergo the same regimen of re-training the rest of the old crew participated in.”

“Oh, that’s where you’re wrong, Admiral, sir. I was sent back to Parris Island and underwent OCS training there,” Copeland remarked.

“Yes, I understand you underwent Marine Corps training, but that still leaves ninety percent of the ship unfamiliar to you,” Johnson said with a nod. “Counselor Valtirr and I have been discussing your situation and have come up with a solution we think you will like.”

Again, Copeland’s eyes shot over toward the Deltan man on the couch, and the hairs on the back of his neck stood up in ire.

“Starting today, you are going to be temporarily assigned to different divisions aboard the ship for a period of time, in order to get a better understanding of current procedures and policies and the technology now available to us,” Johnson explained.

“Like replicators?”

“That’s one such technology,” Valtirr agreed. “There is so much more now available to us than there was eighty years ago!”

“Okay, fine, I see your point,” Copeland agreed, his posture slackening a bit. “How long will this ‘special assignment’ last?”

“We estimate two to four weeks,” said Johnson.

“Two to four WEEKS?!?” Copeland remarked with shock. “Sir, I can’t be away from my Marines for that long!”

“Carey,” Valtirr said. “That’s two to four weeks per department. And there are six departments that you...”

Copeland’s eyes went wide and he started to protest, “But what will my Marines do without me? They can’t...!”

“Carey!” Johnson exclaimed, cutting the Tamurilian’s rant off. “They aren’t YOUR Marines. Your brother Jim is their assigned CO. And I’m sure they’ll do fine for the next few months with you around or not. Now, report to Lieutenant Commander Kale. You will be starting with the Operations Department immediately. Commander Kale is on the bridge. He’s expecting you.”

Copeland seemed to be grumbling something under his breath. Whatever it was he said, neither Johnson nor Valtirr heard it clearly.

“I’m sorry, Lieutenant Colonel,” Johnson said, standing up behind his desk. “I’m afraid I didn’t hear that.”

Copeland snapped back to attention, eyes looking unflinchingly at Johnson, as he barked out, “I said maybe it would have been better if my escape pod’s life support systems had failed fifty years ago. ...Sir!” Copeland then spun on his heel and left the ready room. Johnson and Valtirr exchanged worried looks.

\* \* \* \*

A couple of nights later, Kalin Kale was sitting at a table with his friend Athena Arcadian in 10-Forward. The intent had been to eat dinner, but little eating was being done by Kale as he regaled his friend on everything that had been going on since Colonel Copeland had become his 'pet project.'

"Don't get me wrong, Athena. I'm happy that Carey is alive and back aboard the ship! Thinking he was among the dead for the last two years was terrible. But trying to teach him the intricacies of operations manager seems to be an uphill battle. If it doesn't load a photon torpedo or fire a phaser bank, Carey just doesn't seem interested in it. I'm beginning to believe he's just not cut out to be an operations officer."

Well, you know the old saying," Arcadian said between bites of her salad. She, for one, was determined to actually eat her dinner so she would not be famished when she joined her fiancé, Eric Johnson, on the holodeck for an activity later in the evening.

"What old saying?" Kale asked.

"You can't teach an old Devil Dog new tricks," Arcadian said, ending the sentence with a toothy grin. Kale merely shook his head slowly. "I'm sure Carey will do much better once he's rotated to a department more in line with his interests," Arcadian added. "Like security. I'm sure he and Dave will be all over it when..." The doctor paused when she noticed Kale shaking his head in a more serious manner. "What?"

"When Admiral Johnson briefed me on this whole assignment, he and Counselor Valtirr mentioned that Security and the Marines were the two departments Carey was NOT going to be training with."

"Why not?" Arcadian asked.

"What more can he be taught? 'Here, Colonel, the trigger is now on the top of the phaser instead of in front of the handle.'"

Arcadian was about to remark on what Kale had said, pointing out there was much more to security or the Marine Corps than pulling – or pressing – triggers, when the lounge door parted and she noticed Carey Copeland walk in. She could tell it was Carey and not his brother Jim by the fact that he was wearing an operations-gold uniform with Marine rank insignia on the collar instead of the typical Marine duty green or camouflage.

Copeland looked around the lounge for a moment before spotting Arcadian and starting to move in the direction of her table. He was halfway there when he noticed Kalin Kale was also sitting at the table, the operations officer's back to the Colonel until he turned to see who Arcadian was waving at. Copeland suddenly stopped and began looking around the lounge for anyone else he knew or an open table somewhere else.

"Carey, come join us!" Arcadian called out.

"Yes, please," Kale added, trying to put on a friendly face in spite of the mood he had been in. After all, they were all off duty.

"That's alright. I'll find another table," Copeland replied, moving off in another direction and eventually sitting at a table in the corner of the room by himself. Arcadian and Kale exchanged worried looks.

\* \* \* \*

The next afternoon, Dr. Arcadian was working in her office in sickbay when she heard a knock on the doorframe. She looked up and smiled when she noticed it was Carey Copeland.

"Mind if I come in?" Copeland asked, partially leaning through the door.

"Please! Have a seat," Arcadian offered, gesturing toward one of the two chairs in front of her desk. "What brings you here?"

"I just got off watch on the bridge and I needed someone to talk to, if you don't mind," Copeland replied, sitting in the seat.

"Well, I'm not a counselor, but...", the doctor started to say when she was cut off by the Marine.

"I'm not looking for a counselor to talk to! I'm looking for a friend," Copeland exclaimed.

"I'm sorry. That's not how I meant it to sound," Arcadian said. "Of course I'm here to listen."

"I don't know how long I can continue to perform these duties the Admiral has given me," Copeland complained. "I'm a Marine. I'm supposed to be up to date on the tactical situation, the latest weaponry, pilot qualifications, weapons qualifications, training qualifications... Not system power allocation, what shuttle is standing by for launch, tuning long-range sensors, or anything else that Kalin does as a part of his job."

"Yes, but you're more than just a Marine. You're a Starfleet officer as well, and you have to have a basic understanding of every department aboard the ships you serve aboard," Arcadian said. "Do you think I wanted to take

engineering or interstellar navigation classes when the crew was sent back to the Academy? But I need to know the basic information in order to function aboard a starship in case of an emergency! You weren't around when we all had to go through that. You're making up for it now!"

But it's not just the additional re-training," Copeland continued to complain. "It's the constant spying!"

"Wait. What spying?" Arcadian asked, truly confused.

"The head-shrinkers!" Copeland said in way of explanation. When Arcadian still appeared confused, he explained further. "Counselor Valtirr and his underlings. They're following me EVERYWHERE! And it was the counselors at Starfleet Medical when I was back on Earth before that. Always watching. Just waiting for me to screw up!"

"I know the ship's counselor was tasked with checking in on you from time to time to make sure you were adjusting to life aboard a starship again," Arcadian replied.

"They're following me everywhere I go!" Copeland insisted. "Either Valtirr or one of his lackeys is somewhere near anyplace I go, like the lounge last night..."

"Doctor Jurani was simply off duty, just like Kalin and I were when you came into 10-Forward last night," Arcadian assured.

"...Or they're monitoring me through viewscreens and internal sensors," Copeland continued as if Arcadian had not spoken.

"Okay, I hate to say it, but as a friend I feel I must," Arcadian remarked. "Now you're just starting to sound paranoid! Maybe you're not aware, but the combadge you're wearing in your Starfleet emblem..." Copeland looked down at the silver Starfleet delta with the gold oval behind it attached to the left front of his uniform. "...It monitors your location aboard the ship and relays that information to the main computer. But that's only for maintaining the ability to communicate with you at a moment's notice and to locate you in an emergency. Nothing more! The doctors at Starfleet Medical and the counselors aboard this starship are only concerned with your well-being and making sure you adapt properly to your new time period, just like the rest of us have."

"Speaking of doctors..." Copeland said, suddenly changing the subject. "You have close connections with the Admiral. Any idea when I'll be working with the medical department and you as part of my refresher training? I can't stand operations, but I think I would enjoy working with medical."

"Nothing against you, Carey, but I'm not sure how anyone without the proper medical training and certifications would be able to work as part of the medical staff, even temporarily," Arcadian replied, a little taken-aback by the question and the sudden mood shift that proceeded it.

"I have medical qualifications," Copeland protested.

"Really? In what field?" Arcadian asked cynically.

"I'm certified in basic first aid," Copeland replied almost defiantly, then added, "And I watched Whitehorse stich up one of the guys following a battle with some Klingons once."

Arcadian could not help but laugh. Not feeling quite so defense anymore, she said, "I can't make any promises about you being assigned to medical, but I'll see what I can do. Maybe I can whisper a suggestion into someone's ear?"

"That's all I ask, Athena," Copeland remarked hopefully. He then got up and started moving toward the door before pausing and looking back at Arcadian. The doctor looked up at him expectantly. "Athena, how long has it been since the *Arcturus* hosted a good Deck 7 party?"

A smile appeared on Arcadian's face as she replied, "Deck seven on this new ship is mainly the medical facilities and crews' quarters. But I have to admit the last time we had a good Deck 7 party was around the last time we competed in a skatsball championship."

"And when was that?" Copeland asked, excited to hear the name of his favorite sport.

"About eighty years ago," Arcadian replied, to Copeland's regret. "Apparently the sport of skatsball fell out of general interest in the decades we were gone and is only still played by fringe teams on some of the outer colonies. There hasn't been a championship tournament played within Starfleet since 2302. And between the shock of finding out we were trapped in the future, undergoing re-training, spending a year learning all the new procedures and policies while back aboard the old *Arcturus*, and then launching and getting this new ship into service, we just haven't had the time or inclination to organize any crew's parties since the time warp occurred." She looked thoughtful for a few seconds before saying, "Maybe it's about time we have a good party again?"

"That's a great idea! You and I could organize it!" Copeland exclaimed.

“I’ll propose the idea to Eric and see what he says,” Arcadian said, prompting an upset frown to appear on the Tamurilian’s face.

“We never used to ask for permission to throw a party,” he grouched.

“We didn’t need to ask permission in the past because Kira was one of the crew that organized those parties, and the first officer can get away with stuff that! Especially when she used her... let’s say feminine wiles... to help convince Eric.”

“Pheromones can be advantageous sometimes,” Copeland agreed, a far-away look on his face for a moment. Arcadian smiled slightly as she studied the Marine officer’s face. For a brief moment, it seemed the old Cary Copeland was back.

“I’d be happy to work with you to organize a party in 10-Forward if Eric approves,” Arcadian said. “And I can’t see any reason why he wouldn’t.”

“Great! Thanks, Athena,” Copeland said before turning and quickly leaving sickbay. Arcadian was both amazed and somewhat concerned by her friend’s quick mood shifts.

\* \* \* \*

David Maddox was on the phaser range, standing in a circular platform within what appeared to be a darkened room. Around him, various colored target circles appeared and disappeared, some moving slowly across the field of view. Maddox would lift his hand phaser and carefully aim at them before depressing the trigger. Within seconds, nine of the ten targets of the proper color had been hit by the low-power phaser beam, and Maddox returned the phaser to the holster on his left hip just as the heavy doors behind him opened to admit Lt Colonel Carey Copeland.

“Hi Dave. I hope you don’t mind. The computer said I could find you here,” the Tamurilian said.

“Come in, as long as you’re carrying a phaser and not a bottle of Saurian brandy or something like that,” Maddox remarked, partly in jest. Copeland walked in, allowing the door to close behind him, and joined Maddox on the platform. He noticed the security chief was wearing twophasers on his waist.

“Are you still using that old thing?” he asked, pointing at the old 23<sup>rd</sup> century Phaser IV holstered on Maddox’s right hip. The security chief unconsciously reached down and caressed the weapon.

“It’s only there for sentimental value,” Maddox remarked. “Admiral Johnson insists I use modernphasers. This one doesn’t even have a power cell anymore. It’s really supposed to be in that display of weapons down in my office.”

“That explains the empty slot I noticed the other day,” Copeland remarked.

Maddox nodded as he continued, “I keep it in my old holster mainly just for the reassuring weight it provides on my hip.” He held up the modern Phaser II he had been shooting with and remarked, “These things have barely any weight to them. I feel like I’m walking around weaponless when I’m on rounds.”

“One of the things I excelled at during OCS is weapons training,” Copeland said. “By the time I left the Island I could field strip a modern phaser rifle in less than forty-five seconds. And I really admired a new weapon Starfleet R&D was working on down on the testing range. I think they called it an isokinetic cannon. Shoulder-mounted weapon capable of taking down a fighter or shuttlecraft with a single shot in atmosphere. Man, I would have loved to have a chance to fool around with one of those for an hour or so!”

Copeland lifted the hem of his uniform jacket, revealing a holstered hand phaser there. “Care for a challenge?” he asked. A smile spread on Maddox’s face.

“Field stripping a phaser is one thing. Being able to aim one of these without the sights we were used to on the olderphasers is another. Challenge accepted.”

The competition was evenly matched for a time, both competitors hitting on average eight of every ten target lights, until Maddox noticed Copeland was shooting with his left hand. He looked at Copeland suspiciously as he said, “I thought you were right-handed?”

Copeland looked at the hand holding his weapon, as if surprised, then grinned and said, “Hey, you’re right. I am!” He then flipped the phaser into his right hand and promptly hammered Maddox in scoring hits, missing only a single target in the next eighty, while Maddox continued his average of missing one out of every ten. Finally, the security chief holstered his weapon and raised his hands in surrender.

“You’re as good as I remember you being, Carey,” he said.

“Weapons are my forte,” Copeland remarked. He then looked at his friend and asked, “How open are you to changes in procedure?”

“You know I’m adaptable,” Maddox replied, sounding like he had been insulted. “Why?”

“I have some changes to the interaction between the *Arcturus*’ Marines and security department I would like to implement in mind, and I was hoping you might help me make those happen.”

“You think our departments are too complacent at present?” Maddox asked.

“You see exactly where I’m coming from,” Copeland agreed.

\* \* \* \*

“I have a feeling I’m going to regret this,” Eric Johnson was saying. “But fine. You have my permission to organize a party in 10-Forward.” Arcadian was about to express her thanks when Johnson quickly added, “On one condition!”

“What’s that, Eric?”

“We’re currently on our way to meet with a Tamarian delegation to negotiate a treaty in hopes of continuing diplomatic relations with the Children of Tama, and that could prove especially tricky. I have both Mister Fil and Mister Arbelo working on preliminary communications to open negotiations with.”

“Why might it be so tricky?” Arcadian asked.

“Have you ever heard of the Tamarians?” Johnson asked. When the doctor shook her head in the negative, the admiral continued, “Captain Picard of the *Enterprise* was the first to successfully communicate with the Tamarians, and Starfleet wants us to pick up where the *Enterprise* left off. The Tamarians spoken language consists entirely of allegory, referencing mythological and historical people and events from their culture. Penji and Setton are compiling the stories and myths provided by the Children of Tama after first contact at El-Adrel to make communication easier, but it’s still going to take a lot of patience and concentration to successfully complete these negotiations.”

“Understood,” Arcadian agreed. “Carey and I will wait until after this mission is complete. Then you’re going to see a party the likes of which no Starfleet crew has ever envisioned!”

\* \* \* \*

The next morning, following muster, Jim Copeland entered his office intending to complete some necessary paperwork that would certify several of his enlisted Marines as marksmen. He was at first surprised, then quickly annoyed to find his brother Carey once again sitting in the chair behind his desk working on something on the computer monitor screen.

“Aren’t you supposed to be on the bridge?” he asked.

“Don’t worry. Kalin knows I’m down here. He gave me permission,” Carey Copeland replied.

“What are you doing down here?” Jim Copeland asked, figuring he would be a bit more direct.

“I see you re-arranged the duty rosters again,” Carey remarked. “Athena and I are starting to organize a Deck 7 party – except it’s going to be on deck ten. ...Deck 10 party? Whatever... Anyway, I wanted to make sure the guys I was most friendly with will be off duty when we have the party, but I can’t seem to find any of them.”

“Can’t... find any of them?” Jim Copeland asked, clearly confused.

“You know! The usual gang! D’Kethlorr, G’edd, Bobby-Jo, Phobos! All I can find are the guys I shifted over to other departments back in the day – Fingers and Bullwhip.”

“Has no one told you?” Jim Copeland asked, a little concerned.

“Told me what?”

Jim Copeland took a few steps closer to the desk as he explained, “The Marines currently aboard the *Arcturus* aren’t the same ones you served with back in the 23<sup>rd</sup> century. That company was transferred off the *Arcturus* – partially in response to what happened when everyone thought you were killed by the Orions – just prior to the mission that resulted in the ship and crew being propelled forward in time by eighty years. All the... ‘usual gang,’ as you called them, died decades ago!”

A look of shock covered Carey Copeland’s face, which quickly changed to sadness. Jim Copeland wondered if tears were forming in his brother’s eyes until the other Copeland suddenly looked at him with a wide grin and said,

“Well, this still works out! Throwing this party will be a great opportunity for me to get to know my new boys!” His attention quickly returned to the computer monitor and juggling around the duty schedule.

“THEY’RE NOT YOUR BOYS!” Jim Copeland finally blew up. “They’re MY Marines!!”

“What do you mean?” Carey Copeland asked, genuinely confused.

“Carey, you are not the Company Commander...,” Jim Copeland started to respond.

“Oh, I know that! But that’s just a technicality for the moment until...”

“You are not even in their chain of command!” Jim continued on. “You are not officially assigned to this Company. You have no authority here. Your purpose in being aboard the *Arcturus* is to learn what you can about modern technology and procedures, prove you still offer something of value to both Starfleet and the Marine Corps, and eventually – if the Great Bird is willing – move on to a new command of your own. ...Somewhere ELSE!”

“Is that what this is about?” Carey said, getting out of the chair and starting to approach his brother. “Are you afraid I’m going to outshine you or something?”

“Carey, with all due respect, I was put in charge of this company of Marines months before you were even discovered drifting in that asteroid field. This is MY command. You can’t simply waltz in here and start changing watch assignments and choosing which of my Marines goes to a party and which doesn’t and who stands the mid-watch and who stands the afternoon watch and... And stop using my desk and my office!”

Carey moved very close to where Jim was standing, a look of growing anger on his boyish face as he growled, “I’ll have you know I was a Marine Company Commander long before you were whatever skin cell those THINGS used to create you, you ungrateful...”

Jim noticed Carey’s hands clamping into fists, and realized the discussion was quickly moving toward becoming fisticuffs. For a brief moment, he considered letting Carey hit him, if only for the pleasure of the beating that initial attack would allow him to inflict. Jim’s hands flexed into fists for a second, then relaxed. He finally just turned and walked out of the office.

“Hey!” Carey called out after him. “Where are you going?” As the door swished shut behind his ‘brother,’ he called out one final insult. “Coward!”

Still seething, Jim Copeland walked a distance down the corridor, taking deep breaths and slowly releasing them to lower his stress below the point of wanting to punch his fist through the closest LCARS panel. As he turned one last corner, he stopped and leaned against the bulkhead and finally tapped his combadge.

“Jim Copeland to Admiral Johnson.”

“This is the Admiral,” Johnson’s voice quickly replied. “What’s up, Colonel?”

“Admiral, I need to meet with you at your earliest convenience, if you please.”

There was a pause on the comm circuit for several seconds before Johnson’s voice returned. “Very well,” the Admiral said seriously. “My ready room, 1400 hours.”

“Thank you, sir. Copeland, out.”

\* \* \* \*

Later that day, Admiral Johnson was in his ready room with Captain Solak and Counselor Valtirr.

“No, he didn’t say what he wanted to meet me about,” Johnson was saying. “But I assume it has something to do with his brother, which is why I asked both of you to be here for this.”

“Commander Kale has told me Carey Copeland has not been adapting to his duties with the Ops department as easily as he hoped,” Solek commented. “In fact, the Commander informed me during watch turn-over that Carey asked for special liberty during the Alpha shift to go attend to some errands.”

“And Kale let him?” Valtirr questioned.

“Apparently Kalin did not feel he as a Lieutenant Commander really had the authority to tell a Lieutenant Colonel no,” Solek replied.

“I’m going to need to give Kalin some lessons in authority, if he ever hopes to have a command of his own someday,” Johnson remarked. “I wonder if Carey not being on watch like he was supposed to has anything to do with Colonel Copeland’s meeting request?”

Before anyone could answer or offer any supposition, the door chime sounded. “Come,” ordered Johnson.

Lt Colonel Jim Copeland entered the ready room, apparently surprised that people other than the starship’s CO were present.

“Please, Colonel, sit down,” Johnson said, offering the Tamurilian a seat. “What did you want to meet with me about.”

Colonel Copeland again glanced at Solek and Valtirr, unsure if he should discuss what was on his mind in front of them. Johnson noticed the glance and said, “I asked Captain Solak and Counselor Valtirr to be a part of this meeting, since I assumed it has something to do with your brother, Carey.”

“Truthfully, it’s not about him specifically,” Colonel Copeland replied. “I may as well get this off my chest.” He put a padd on Johnson’s desktop and slid it toward the Admiral.

“What’s this?” Johnson asked.

“My request for a transfer, sir.”

“Transfer? Why?” Johnson asked with concern.

“Because it’s the – with all due respect to Captain Solak – logical thing to do.” Colonel Copeland glanced over at Solak, who nodded back in return. “Carey cannot seem to get over the fact he’s not in the position he was when he left the *Arcturus* in that Wasp fighter to capture the Orions. In his mind, he’s still the commander of the contingent of Starfleet Marines assigned to the *USS Arcturus*, and nothing any of us do – reassign him to other departments, ban him from the Marine spaces, tie him up and make him talk to Counselor Valtirr for the next three weeks...” Copeland looked at Valtirr on the couch and added, “No disrespect intended.”

“None taken, Colonel,” Valtirr replied with a smile before Copeland continued.

“...Nothing is going to convince him otherwise. And if I were in his position, I have to admit, I might have done the same. But I didn’t have the *Arcturus* to be sent back to after I was found adrift in the Beta Rigel system, and I’ve had six more years than him to mellow out and mature.”

Johnson slowly started nodding his head, realizing the position the Marine across from him was in.

“You do realize, Colonel, that if I approve this transfer, I can’t guarantee you’re going to be assigned to another Marine company aboard another starship. Marine contingents serving aboard front-line starships during peacetime are rare, and I had to pull some strings – and rank – to get one assigned to the *Arcturus-A*. As a Lieutenant Colonel, you could easily find yourself in some desk job somewhere.”

“Admiral, I need to do this, even if it puts me behind a desk,” Colonel Copeland replied. “I can’t see this working any other way.”

“Very well. But that leaves ME in a bind,” Johnson said as he reached for the padd. “Who do I get to command my Marine contingent.”

“I can make a strong recommendation, Admiral,” Copeland said. “Use your connections and get Carey appointed command.”

“Carey?! Didn’t you just say he has all sorts of problems with authority and overstepping bounds?” Johnson asked.

“Carey may have problems with authority, but he’s a good Marine. And hell, he thinks he’s doing the job already! Why not just let him?”

\* \* \* \*

Carey Copeland was still in the office of the Marine Company Commander, filling out guest lists and menu items for the anticipated party when the intercom activated.

“Lieutenant Colonel Carey Copeland, report to Vice Admiral Johnson’s ready room immediately.”

“He must be wanting to tell me the party plans are approved!” Copeland said to himself, rubbing his hands together in anticipation. He quickly left the company commander’s office and rushed into the nearest turbolift. Within a few minutes, he was on the bridge and standing at the admiral’s ready room door.

“Come,” a voice said from inside after Copeland activated the chime. The doors swished open and the Marine officer stepped inside.

He half-expected either Solek or Valtirr (or both) to once again be inside the room with Johnson. To Copeland’s surprise, only Johnson was present. The Marine stepped in front of the desk and snapped to attention. “Lieutenant Colonel Carey Copeland reporting as ordered, SIR!”

Johnson looked at Copeland, the expression on his face looking displeased. “Do you know why I called for you, Copeland?” he asked.



“To let me know the Deck 7 party... well, Deck 10... Can we still call it a Deck 7 party? I think we should! Well, you wanted to tell me the party is approved?” Copeland replied, rambling.

“No,” Johnson said, causing Copeland’s face to fall. “I’m afraid your party must be postponed indefinitely.”

“But...,” Copeland stuttered, unsure what to say. “But why?!?”

“Your brother Jim has requested a transfer. You’re going to be too busy for the next couple of weeks turning over duties to be concerned with throwing a party.”

“I’m still not sure I understand, Admiral,” Copeland said, the look on his face showing obvious confusion.

“As much as it pains me to do so, I am appointing you the next *Arcturus* Marine Contingent Commander,” Johnson stated. A wide grin quickly spread across Copeland’s face as Johnson explained, “Counselor Valtirr has told me he believes it was probably the fact that the *Arcturus* crew had a defined goal to work toward once we all knew we were stuck for good in the 24<sup>th</sup> century and that helped us all to adapt. He and I spoke and he hopes that being back in your old job as Marine Company Commander among a somewhat familiar crew might provide the same stability for you that we all had.”

“And Jim is alright with this?” Copeland asked.

“Let’s just say he came to me first,” Johnson replied.

The grin reappeared on Copeland’s face and he said, “In that case, I accept, Admiral! It’s great to be back!” Copeland then turned around and headed toward the door saying, “I can’t wait to tell the boys!”

\* \* \* \*

*Captain’s log, stardate 46625.9:*

*Our mission negotiating a treaty with the Tamarians – while difficult at times – has successfully concluded, and as soon as the treaty is ratified, trade with the Tamarians will begin. I must admit I am very pleased with how everything worked out.*

*The Arcturus is now on its way to the Klingon border where we have been assigned to operate with a couple of Klingon warships patrolling the edges of the Korvat system, which recently declared its independence from the Empire. I must admit to some trepidation, as this will be the first time our crew will be working alongside our former adversaries – now our supposed allies. I worry that the wrong thing will be done or said and the Arcturus will be responsible for a whole new war between the Federation and the Empire. I will be watching my crew – including myself – carefully.*

*Johnson, commanding Arcturus, out.*

Jim Copeland was carrying his bags to the main shuttlebay, where a runabout waited to transport him to his next assignment. Walking with him and helping the Colonel carry his belongings was Solak and Athena Arcadian.

“So where are you heading from here?” Arcadian asked as the trio walked down the corridor.

“I’ve received orders to take command of the Starfleet Marine Corps Ceremonial Unit stationed at *Starbase 11*,” the Colonel replied.

“A very prestigious posting at one of Earth’s oldest extrasolar facilities,” Solak remarked, impressed.

“Yes. Almost every officer put in charge of Alpha Company are quickly promoted to Flag Rank. I jumped at the opportunity as soon as it was offered to me,” Jim Copeland replied with his trademark boyish grin as the door to the shuttlebay opened before them. The trio paused near the hatch to the runabout to say their goodbyes, Arcadian hugging the departing Marine before Solak raised his hand and gave Copeland the Vulcan salute.

“Peace and long life, Jim,” the first officer stated.

“Live long and prosper, Solak,” Copeland replied without trying to return the salute most humanoids found difficult. He then turned to grab his belongings and join the pilot inside the runabout when the door to the corridor opened again.

“Wait!” a voice called out, and both Carey Copeland and David Maddox came rushing into the shuttlebay. When they finally reached the runabout, Carey Copeland looked at his brother sternly and said, “You’re trying to leave without saying good-bye!”

“Good-bye?!” Jim Copeland scoffed with a slight laugh. “Carey, I think you will eventually realize the futility of saying good-bye to the *Arcturus*. Even through apparent death and decades of time, look at where we BOTH found ourselves! Back walking the decks of this starship. I’ve given up saying good-bye, to be quite honest.” Jim then reached over and embraced his brother. Carey Copeland returned the embrace. And once the two had let go, Jim added, “As hard as we try to get away, the *Arcturus* keep pulling us back sooner...” Jim looked steadily at Carey as he finally said, “...Or much, much later.” Jim then shook Maddox’s hand, saying, “It was good serving with you again, Dave. Keep an eye on this one.” He nodded in Carey’s direction. “He’s been known to be trouble.”

“I will, Colonel. Safe voyage,” Maddox replied.

As Jim Copeland once again grabbed his belongings, Carey moved closer to him. “Any hard feelings over what happened here? I really didn’t mean to step on your toes.”

“I have to admit, I was annoyed. Partly at you. Mainly at myself for letting you get under my skin like you did. But I have come to realize YOU need the *Arcturus* more than I do at present. Best of luck... Colonel.”

Carey Copeland nodded, then snapped to attention and saluted the departing Marine. Jim Copeland, fighting the emotions welling within him, returned the salute before saying, “Permission to leave the ship?”

“Permission granted, Colonel,” Carey Copeland replied before lowering his salute. “You’re getting off just in time. I hear our next mission has us operating alongside two Klingon warships. I won’t be turning my backs on them anytime soon!”

“Times change, Brother,” Jim Copeland admonished. “You need to change with them, or you’re going to find yourself in a lot of trouble someday.”

“Ehh,” Carey replied. “I’ve made it this far. And besides...” A gleam appeared in Carey’s eye as he said, “Trouble is my middle name.”

“I’m confused,” Maddox said, looking back and forth between the two Copelands. “I thought Carey was your middle name?”

Both Copelands shook their heads slowly in amusement before Jim once again gathered his things and, without further interruption, boarded the runabout. A moment later the atmosphere retaining field activated and the bay door rose. Carey Copeland activated his combadge and connected it to the ship-wide intercom.

“Lieutenant Colonel James Eric Copeland, Starfleet Marine Corps, departing,” he announced to the crew just as the runabout lifted off the deck and moved out through the door. A moment later it passed out well beyond the ends of the warp nacelles and jumped into warp, a brief flash of light all that remained.

**The End**