

Ensign William Hyland III placed one of the drinks he was carrying down on the table close to the large forward-facing windows of the 10-Forward lounge aboard the Sovereign-class starship *USS Dauntless*. The young woman who sat there, Ensign Joella Faggio, smiled at Hyland as he sat opposite her.

“Can you believe we’re finally out here?” Faggio said as she sipped her drink, gazing out at the stars which streaked by the vessel as it traveled at warp speed.

“What I’m having trouble believing is that we’re back aboard the *Dauntless*,” Hyland replied, glancing around at the lounge, smiling and nodding toward Ensign John Smith, another recent Academy graduate assigned to the *Dauntless* the same time Hyland and Faggio arrived, as well as Ensign Ka’Dan, the Klingon exchange officer working within the starship’s security division, who simply scowled in return from his seat alone in the far corner.

“How have you been fitting in?” Faggio asked, nodding toward Ka’Dan. She placed her glass back down on the table while Hyland sipped his own drink. “I’ve noticed a few of the engineers are acting like they think I’m still just a cadet.”

Hyland shrugged, then looked at Faggio, with whom the new ensign had formed a romantic relationship shortly after both former cadets had departed the *Dauntless*, their training vessel during their third year of academic study, with a strange look when the latter suddenly stiffened in her chair.

“Mind if we join you?” said a voice from behind Hyland as he felt a hand settle on his shoulder. The young Ensign turned to see Captain Peter Koester, commanding officer of the starship *Dauntless*, standing there with Commander K’danz, Lt Commander Dar and Counselor Tanzania Gera. Immediately the Ensign jumped to his feet.

“Captain on deck!” Hyland said in a near shout.

“At ease, Ensign!” Koester assured, pulling a couple of chairs over from another nearby table and the four senior officers sat down with the two new ensigns. After ordering drinks from Kia Tenn, the Bajoran lounge hostess, they all started to converse.

“How have you been adjusting to joining the crew?” Counselor Gera asked both Faggio and Hyland, causing both to exchange glances.

“To tell you the truth, Counselor, it’s nothing like what the Academy was like,” Hyland finally admitted. “Not even like the training cruise we took on this same starship. Most of the time I still feel like an outsider.” Faggio nodded in agreement.

“Well, you’re still new,” K’danz said. “It took me almost a year before I really felt at ease aboard the *USS Sarek*. You just need to give it time.”

“It doesn’t hurt to have someone to mentor you along either,” Captain Koester suggested. “I know my own life aboard the *Al-Batani* would have been a lot harder without Kate’s help. Probably a lot shorter too.”

When both Hyland and Faggio made confused looks, Dar clarified, “He means Admiral Janeway.”

“You served with Admiral Janeway?” Faggio asked with awe in her voice.

“Well, she wasn’t an admiral back then, of course, but yes,” Koester replied.

“Wow,” both ensigns said softly.

“You’ve told me you and the Admiral have been friends for many years,” Counselor Gera said. “But you never told me how you first met Admiral Janeway, Captain?”

“Yes,” added K’danz. “You’ve never enthralled me that that story either, Skipper.”

“It’s a really long story and not very exciting,” Koester said, grimacing. “You really wouldn’t want to hear it.”

“Yes we would. Please!” Hyland replied, excited at the prospect of hearing about the young Ensign Peter Koester. The captain shrugged, giving up any pretext of not wanting to tell the story, and first ordered another round of drinks for everyone at the table before beginning his tale.

Space, the Final Frontier...

Star Trek: Personal Logs

“Good Samaritan” By PJK

Based upon a segment of the *Star Trek: Voyager* episode “Prey”
Screenplay by Brannon Braga

“As K’danz and Dar already know, I was assigned to the starship *Al-Batani* after graduating the Academy. My first couple of months aboard were generally uneventful, learning my way around the old Excelsior-class starship, at least until my first away team mission, the mission to Ardera. The one that almost ended my career. It was shortly after that mission, after I had been officially cleared of any wrongdoing, that I first met a lieutenant and science officer by the name of Kathryn Janeway.”

Stardate 40786.3 - Earth year 2363

Starship USS Al-Batani NCC-42995, one light year from the Cardassian border.

“Entering standard orbit, Captain.”

Captain Owen Paris looked from the report on the padd his yeoman had delivered to him up toward the main screen, where the planet Tracken II now filled the viewer.

“What’s the latest report from the outpost?” Captain Paris asked.

Ensign Peter Koester, who manned the ops console, looked back toward the command chair and answered, “The Cardassians have been trying to claim this sector for years now. The Tracken Outpost has been reporting periodic attacks by Cardassian forces, their latest attempt to drive them off the planet, for the last several weeks. However, the last report we received was that there have been no attacks in the past two days. But Captain... We have not been able to raise anyone on the outpost since before we entered the system.”

Paris looked over toward the science console where a young woman wearing a blue uniform with her brown hair twirled into a bun sat.

“Life signs?”

“I’m reading sixty five life signs. All human,” Lieutenant Janeway reported. “The outpost manifest lists ninety two assigned to the outpost.”

The captain looked at his First Officer, Commander Jim Buckingham, who was standing by Janeway’s shoulder.

“We’re not going to get any answers sitting up here in orbit. Have a security detail meet me in transporter room one. You have the bridge, Commander.”

As Paris stood up from the command chair and headed toward one of the turbolift doors, he added, “Lieutenant Janeway, Ensign Koester, you’re with me.”

* * * *

The away team materialized with phasers drawn outside the main administration building of the Tracken Outpost. The colony had been established almost a decade before, mining the dilithium that had been discovered on the class-M planet only a light year from the Cardassian border, in a region under dispute for almost twenty years. Within seconds Paris and his crew were surrounded.

“Hold your fire!” Lt Commander Vill, the Bolian security chief of the *Al-Batani* yelled when he realized the men who rushed out of the surrounding buildings were simply the miners and colonists, seemingly very happy to see the Starfleet crew.

“Thank God you’re here,” the Outpost administrator, a human named Gluck, said after introducing himself to Captain Paris and his away team. “You don’t know what we’ve been through! The Cardassians have been attacking every few days, almost like clockwork. The last attack took out our primary power reactor. We have no shields anymore!”

The administrator invited the away team into the main building, followed by many of the miners and colonists, explaining how many losses the colony had taken in the last two months since the Cardassian attacks had begun. He then introduced the away team to his own head of security, Mr. Jay Ambrose.

“The Cardassians appear to be trying to take the facility intact,” Ambrose explained, calling up a diagram of the outpost on a wall-mounted monitor. “If they simply wanted to get rid of us, they could have bombed this outpost out of existence from orbit. No, they’re trying to drive us away. They’ve been sending in infantry units, testing our perimeter. They took out our subspace transmitter during the last attack two nights ago.” He gestured toward the diagram. “We’ve dug a trench system about a dozen meters outside the perimeter fence, been manning it twenty seven hours a day. It’s the only thing standing between us and the Cardys.”

“How are your weapons holding out?” Vill asked.

Ambrose nodded toward Administrator Gluck, who pressed a control on his desk, opening the weapons lockers that lined one of the walls. The lockers contained numerous hand phasers and almost a dozen Type-III phaser rifles, but it was evident at least half the original number of weapons were missing.

"It'll take some time to replace your reactor and transmitter, but we can restock your weapons lockers right away," Captain Paris said, nodding toward his Security Chief. Vill immediately tapped his combadge.

"Away team to *Al-Batani*. Beam down two dozen Type-III phaser rifles and at least forty Type-II hand phasers to these coordinates as soon as possible."

"On its way," Commander Buckingham replied.

Several minutes later, the hum of a transporter filled the administration office and several metallic crates materialized, each filled with dozens of weapons and spare power cells, which Ambrose and his men immediately started stowing in the weapons lockers.

"The *Al-Batani* will stay in orbit for the next few days, until we can replace everything you need and just to make sure everything is secure," Paris told the administrator. Smiling in relief, Gluck thanked Captain Paris before inviting him and his crew to stay for dinner.

"It may not be much, but we would like the company."

Paris looked at Vill, Janeway, Koester and the two security guards, Karl and StClair, then turned back to the Outpost Administrator and nodded.

* * * *

"*Al-Batani* to Captain Paris!" exclaimed the voice of Commander Buckingham through the captain's combadge. The excitement in the first officer's voice surprised Paris, interrupting both the meal and conversation he was having. The captain placed his fork back down on the napkin next to his tray and tapped his communicator.

"This is the Captain. Go ahead."

"Captain, two Cardassian warships have just entered orbit. They're claiming this is Cardassian territory and they demand we leave the sector immediately."

"Remind them this planet has a Federation outpost established on it, Commander, and therefore they are in Federation territory."

"I've already done that, Captain, but..." Suddenly the sound of the *Al-Batani* rattling under a violent weapons strike could be heard through the open comm channel. Paris exchanged looks with Vill before Buckingham's voice returned. "...But they're being quite insistent we leave."

Paris stood up from his seat, quickly ordering, "Commander, beam us aboard immediately."

"No can do with shields raised, sir. And we dare not lower shields even for a second!"

"What's your status up there?"

"We're starting to take some damage up here, Captain. And Lt Purcell reports sensors have detected the second Cardassian vessel has beamed a platoon of thirty soldiers down to the surface."

Paris looked grim for a moment. He hated not being in control, and hated even more the next order he was forced to give.

"Break orbit, Commander. And see if you can try and get those warships to follow you. But as soon as you're out of the system, contact Starfleet and get some reinforcements back here! We just brought down all these weapons. We'll be alright."

There was a moment's hesitation over the comm channel before Buckingham finally replied, "I'm not comfortable leaving you and the away team here like this, Captain." Another blast could be heard in the background along with a report from the ops officer that the shields were down to sixty percent. "Likewise, I don't see as I have much choice. Good luck, Captain. We'll be back as soon as we can. *Al-Batani*, out."

Paris tapped his combadge once more to close the channel, then looked meaningfully at the men and woman around him.

"We have to hold our own here until help arrives."

The captain's sentence was punctuated with an alarm. On the monitor screen, the outpost diagram flashed red.

"Cardassian soldiers approaching," Ambrose announced. He quickly rushed over to the recently restocked weapons lockers and started issuing phasers to his men.

"Count us in too," Captain Paris added. Ambrose nodded with a grim smile.

"You and your crew can man the eastern trench."

Paris nodded, then gestured for his away team to follow him outside, where they quickly hunkered down inside the trench.

“Do you think the Cardassians will attack in our direction?” Ensign Koester asked from where he sat, his back against the dirt of the trench wall while the three security officers peeked over the edge of the ground, scanning the boulder-strewn field of tall grass with their phaser sights and Commander Vill’s tricorder.

“We’ll know soon enough, Ensign,” Captain Paris replied, scanning the horizon with a pair of electronic binoculars he picked up in the outpost administrator’s office.

The next few minutes passed quietly, the only sound being the breathing of the six away team members and the occasional beep of Vill’s tricorder, until the tricorder started alarming incessantly.

“Detecting Cardassian life form readings, bearing 085, range one hundred fifty meters. Hard to tell exactly how many, but at least two dozen.”

Captain Paris stared intently in the direction Vill had indicated, but only mumbled, “Too many rocks and trees in that direction. Perfect cover for them.”

Suddenly the entire away team’s attention was drawn to the sound of phaser fire and explosions coming from the south side of the outpost. Koester stood to head in that direction before one of the security guards grabbed his shoulder, drawing him back down into the trench milliseconds before a pink Cardassian phaser beam sliced through the air right where his head would have been.

“Incoming!” Vill shouted as he started firing his phaser rifle over the edge of the trench just as the whistle of a photon grenade filled the air. The grenade landed several meters short of the trench, exploding as the three *Al-Batani* security guards ducked down. Through ringing ears, Ensign Koester could just barely hear the enraged yells of Cardassian soldiers rushing across the field toward the outpost.

“Open fire!” Vill yelled as he and his two security guards started shooting their phasers at the approaching enemy. In quick succession, Paris, Janeway and Koester also joined the firefight.

It was obvious that the Cardassians had expected much less resistance from the outpost, having spent several weeks wearing down the defenses. It seemed to Captain Paris that the enemy had no clue the Federation facility had been resupplied with weapons and power cells as Cardassian soldier after Cardassian soldier fell before the phaser beams of the outpost defenders. Many were dragged back behind the lines as those still on their feet took up defensive positions behind a number of the larger rocks and trees. Vill took note of two Cardassians hiding behind what looked like a large oak tree, dead from the periodic barrages the outpost had sustained. Aiming his rifle at the pockmarked trunk, he let loose a beam for several seconds until the tree burst into flames. Both Cardassian soldiers who had hidden behind it ran in opposite directions, one immediately falling to the phaser of one of Vill’s guards. The other, his uniform aflame, ran screaming across the field, causing confusion among the Cardassian ranks until he simply fell to the ground, his entire body seemingly engulfed in fire.

In the momentary confusion, several other Cardassians managed to advance to within twenty meters of the trench, ducking behind the rock formations and fallen logs, tossing grenades and firing phasers which caused the away team defenders to duck. One grenade happened to bounce into the trench, causing the six Starfleet officers to react.

“Grenade!” one of the security guards shouted, shoving Koester out of the way prior to jumping on top of it before anyone else could stop him. The grenade exploded underneath his body, flinging it up into the air. Vill fired at the Cardassian who had thrown the grenade before kneeling down to check his man.

“StClair is dead, Captain,” the Security Chief reported before returning to the edge of the trench to fire his phaser at more Cardassians with what seemed like renewed vigor. Within moments, the Cardassian forces started to retreat. Ensign Koester watched in amazement as the soldiers pulled back, then smiled at the second security guard standing next to him as he said, “We did it!”

“Not quite,” said the voice of Mr. Ambrose, the outpost security chief as he suddenly appeared in the *Al-Batani* crew’s trench. Several of their phasers were suddenly pointed in his direction until the away team recognized him. “Our tricorders are detecting the Cardassian forces are setting up a siege line just outside weapons range on the north and west sides of the outpost.”

“Same to our east,” Captain Paris confirmed with a nod as he consulted Vill’s tricorder. “Looks like we’re going to be out here for awhile.”

* * * *

Captain's personal log, stardate 40787.1:

With the exception of the occasional grenade or two lobbed in the direction of our trench system, the Cardassians have quietly hunkered down to surround the outpost. A large, open field between our two forces, which I have begun calling the 'No Man's Land' because it reminds me of the battles during Earth's World War One in the early 20th century, separates our lines from the Cardassians.

Paris, out.

It was late that night when Vill first started hearing the moans.

"What is that?" Lt Karl, the other remaining security officer asked.

"Sounds like someone is hurt," replied Vill. "But I can't tell where it's coming from."

"Sounds like it's out in the middle of No Man's Land," said Lt Janeway.

"Captain Paris to Ambrose," the captain said, tapping his combadge. "We're hearing what sounds like an injured man to our east. Are any of your people out there?"

It took Ambrose a moment for account for his own defenders before he finally replied, "We've got five men and women evacuated to the infirmary, but all our outpost crew are accounted for."

"Same here," replied Paris with a glace toward where the body of Ensign StClair was covered by a blood-soaked blanket before looking back at his own security chief. "It's got to be one of the Cardassians."

As the away team all peaked over the edge of their trench, trying to locate where the sounds were coming from, the moaning seemed to grow louder.

"It must be the Cardy that had been hiding behind the tree I cooked," said Vill, a hint of regret in the Bolian's voice that someone, enemy or not, was suffering as a direct result of one of his own actions.

"What should we do?" Ensign Koester asked.

"We should do something," Vill commented.

Captain Paris looked thoughtful for a moment. Then, as the moans continued across the boulder-strewn field, the captain sighed and said, "Janeway, Koester, I want you to go out there, grab that injured Cardassian, and bring him back to the infirmary. Vill, Karl and I will cover you."

Ensign Koester glanced over at Lt Janeway, feeling like he had just been assigned a suicide mission, though he understood the captain's logic for keeping the two weapons experts in the trench, covering the 'expendable' science and operations officers while they scrambled to wherever the injured Cardassian lay.

"With all due respect, sir, that's crazy!" Janeway replied, her face emotional. "From the sounds of him, I don't think he's going to survive, even if we do manage to bring him back to the outpost."

"MAYBE he won't survive if you get him back here, Lieutenant, but he's DEFINITELY going to die if you don't try," Captain Paris said. "Now go get him. That's an order."

With a sigh, Janeway nodded, then looked at Koester, who likewise nodded. Readying her hand phaser, Janeway indicated for Koester to stand directly next to her, then on the captain's order, Vill and Karl leaned up over the edge of the trench, laying down a cover fire for the two away team members to scramble out of the trench under without being shot at.

The two young officers had crawled almost fifty meters, just barely managing to duck behind an outcropping of rock before the Cardassians started returning fire, phaser beams sending chips of the rock flying as more grenades exploded across the field. The moans of the injured Cardassian turned to screams for a moment as one grenade exploded close to where he was laying.

Hidden behind the rock, the two Starfleet officers ducked down while Janeway consulted the tricorder she pulled from her holster, trying to locate exactly where their quarry was hidden by the tall field grass. As another grenade exploded not far from the pair, kicking dirt onto both, the science officer grinned at the cowering operations officer and said, "Welcome to Starfleet, Ensign."

"To tell you the truth, Lieutenant," Koester said over the noise as the Cardassian barrage resumed, "I don't think I'll be here much longer."

The science officer looked at the young ensign dubiously.

"That's rather fatalistic, Ensign."

Koester found himself grinning in spite of the situation.

"I don't mean I think I'm going to die here. I mean I'm thinking of resigning from Starfleet."

Now Janeway's expression was one of disbelief.

"Why?" she asked.

The ensign sighed, then explained, “My father is an admiral. Even as a cadet I never felt anything I did was good enough for him. I graduated the Academy in the top ten percent of my class; he asks why I wasn’t Class Valedictorian? I’m sure he expected me to be appointed first officer on my first deep-space assignment. And then our mission to Ardera a couple of months ago almost ended my Starfleet career on my very first away mission. Even StClair died to save my life tonight. I’m really thinking I wasn’t cut out for this life, Lieutenant.”

As the Cardassian barrage slowed, Janeway’s expression turned gentle, even sad.

“Trust me, Ensign. I know what it’s like to join Starfleet when your father is an admiral. And believe me; you haven’t cornered the market on screw-ups.”

A look verging on awe covered Koester’s face.

“Your father was Admiral Edward Janeway?” The lieutenant nodded. “I remember my father taking me to his memorial service just before I entered the Academy. They worked together at Starfleet Command a number of years ago. There was a lot of brass at that memorial.”

“My father was well respected in Starfleet. I had a lot to live up to, and I didn’t always make it.”

Now it was Koester’s turn to look dubious.

“What have you ever done wrong that equates with almost killing a planet’s hereditary ruler?”

“How about the time, when I was an ensign about the same age as you are now, and I managed to misalign the positronic relays?”

“What did that do?” Koester asked.

“Knocked out power on six decks. Life support, gravity, doors, turbolifts, everything! Almost killed about one hundred of my crewmates.”

Koester stared at Janeway, mouth agape, before he simply nodded his head and said, “You’re right. Your story tops mine.”

Janeway smiled back at the young ensign. It took them a couple of seconds to realize everything around them was quiet except for the low moans of the injured Cardassian nearby. The barrage had stopped.

“Come on,” Janeway said to Koester with a nod in the direction beyond their boulder. “If we get killed here you won’t need to worry about resigning. But if we make it out of this, I want you to let me help you see a side of Starfleet you haven’t seen yet. Maybe I can change your mind.” Janeway started crawling toward the edge of the boulder, pointing a short distance away near an open stretch of ground. “Our Cardassian in laying about ten meters in that direction. Let’s go get him.”

With a nod, Koester followed behind the lieutenant, both crawling along on their bellies until they reached the injured alien. It appeared that his uniform had taken the brunt of the burning fire, though sections of the plasteel armor had melted on his arms, legs and oversized neck. The Cardassian saw the two Starfleet officers approach at the last second and he started to struggle to raise his weapon before Koester whispered, “We’re here to help.” The Cardassian stopped struggling, too injured to resist, as Janeway started scanning him with her tricorder.

“Severe second and third degree burns to his torso and legs, but no internal injuries,” Janeway said. “If we’re careful, we can move him, as long as his comrades back there will cooperate and not start shooting at us again.”

“Damar, Corat. Rank, Gil, Cardassian Second Order,” the injured Cardassian started to recite as if he were being interrogated, but he put up no struggle as Janeway and Koester each grabbed an arm under his shoulder and started dragging him back toward the trench about seventy meters distant. They had gotten about three-quarters of the way there before the phaser fire started again. Both Koester and Janeway hit the dirt before realizing the phaser beams were coming from the outpost trench where Vill, Karl and Captain Paris were laying down another cover fire, keeping the Cardassians from trying to target the three people out on the field. Moments later they were back over the edge of the trench, where two of the outpost staff waited with a stretcher to take the injured Cardassian soldier inside to the infirmary.

“Good work, Lieutenant, Ensign,” Captain Paris said as all five away team members ducked back down inside the trench, their backs up against the wall closest to No Man’s Land. Both Janeway and Koester took deep breaths, releasing them very slowly before looking at each other with big grins.

* * * *

Hours passed and the *Al-Batani* away team was still hunkered in the trench, taking rotating shifts, three awake and on watch while two tried to sleep. Sometimes the off-watch officers would even head back inside the outpost to catch some shuteye on any available bunks, but generally did not get any sleep from feeling they were too far away from the rest of the away team if the Cardassians were to attack, so normally they simply remained in the trench, wrapped in emergency blankets against the cold Tracken night.

Finally, at noon on the third day, an unexpected though welcome voice came from the captain's combadge.
"Al-Batani to Captain Paris!"

Grins covered all five away team members faces as Paris tapped his communicator, saying, "Paris here. We're really glad to hear you, Commander. What's your status?"

The voice of Commander Buckingham sounded relieved as he replied, "We're back in orbit with Starfleet Task Force Tango. A Cardassian ship just broke orbit after beaming up what we assume was their ground force as soon as we entered the system. Tracken is firmly back in Federation hands."

"Glad to hear that, Commander. Stand by while I inform Administrator Gluck. Away team, out."

* * * *

"And that was how I met Kathryn Janeway," Captain Koester told the crew members who were gathered around him. "Every day after watch, the two of us would get together and go over the new duties I was assigned. Over time she helped me to realize I had found my niche aboard ship. And as time went on, as we became friends, I thought less and less about leaving Starfleet. Eventually I forgot altogether. I still believe it was our time together that may explain why she still has a soft spot for young operations ensigns to this day."

The captain gestured over to Kia Tenn at the bar, who sent another round of synthales to the group's table as Koester continued.

"So what happened to the Cardassian you rescued, Captain?" Ensign Faggio asked.

"One of the task force starships beamed him aboard, where his condition was better treated and he was repatriated at *Terok Nor* after he recovered," the captain explained. "Several weeks later, Kate confided to me that saving that soldier's life was the proudest moment of the entire away mission to her. Several weeks later, when the *Al-Batani* had returned to Earth, the Tracken away team were all given awards for valor for our part in holding the outpost. Eventually each of us went on to our own new assignments... Captain Paris was promoted to Admiral. Kate went on to the *USS Billings* when she was promoted to commander. Vill went on to head the Security School at the Academy. Karl moved on to become Chief of Security aboard the *USS Melbourne*. And I moved on to *Starbase Pennsylvania*... And that Cardassian..."

Koester paused to take a drink from his mug. When it seemed that his concentration had drifted and he would not continue what he was saying, Counselor Gera prompted, "What about the Cardassian, sir?"

"You've heard of a Legate named Damar of course?" Koester asked.

"Of course," replied Dar. "He was the Cardassian who lead the underground movement that eventually helped turn the Cardassian fleet against the Dominion."

"That's right. And nineteen years ago, on a small planet along the Cardassian border, that same Cardassian leader was an infantry soldier leading troops to try and take over a Federation mining outpost. Who would have known...?" Koester took a final sip of his drink before standing up from his seat. "Who would have known what was still ahead of us back then. Just think of what may be ahead for you both," he added to the two young ensigns still sitting at the table. "Well, if you all will excuse me, I must make my evening rounds of the decks before I make sure Gem's in bed like she's supposed to be. Good night all."

K'danz, Dar, Gera, Hyland and Faggio watched the captain walked out of the lounge before the first officer looked back at the two newest crew members and asked, "So how do you feel about being here now?"

"Like I have my whole life ahead of me," Faggio said, grinning at Hyland as her hand enveloped his. "And I'm looking forward to every moment of it."

The End