

Space, the Final Frontier...

These are the voyages of the starship *Dauntless*!

## Star Trek: Dauntless

### “Shipyard – Part 3” by PJK

March 2383

Stardate 60199.3

Captain Peter J. Koester and his First Officer, Commander K’danz, stood at the large observation window, a number of their off-duty crew surrounding them, watching as the new bridge module of the starship *Dauntless* was maneuvered over the primary hull of the Sovereign-class starship by workbees. As the small construction craft gently pushed the new section into place, to the applause of several of the *Dauntless* crew, Koester looked over at his First Officer.

“You’re sure the Shipyard Supervisor received my memo?” he asked.

“Yes, Skipper. Captain Quinteros assured me they left the manual steering column out of the design this time,” replied K’danz.

“Good. I’d hate to have to return to the shipyard after we launch just to have that thing pulled out again like the last time,” Koester remarked with a grim smile.

“You know,” K’danz said, looking up at her CO, “just because it’s there doesn’t mean you have to use it. I seem to recall our first *Dauntless* having landing legs that were never deployed.”

“Ahh, but why create the temptation?” Koester replied with mild sarcasm just as six workbees all flashed their work lights, indicating the new module was secured to the starship’s hull. Then as all six craft barrel-rolled before heading off to their next assignment, the captain’s yeoman, a young female ensign assigned to Koester when his starship entered the shipyard, walked into the observation lounge, a padd in her hand.

“Latest crew rotation orders, sir,” the yeoman announced as she handed the padd to Koester. The captain thanked her before turning the device on, reading through the various newly arrived orders.

“Good, we’re getting a couple of new science officers, including a fairly senior Vulcan,” Koester said to K’danz. “That means Starfleet is expecting us to resume the duties of exploration again once we leave the shipyard. No more ‘Show the Flag’ patrols.” He continued to skim through the list when suddenly his expression changed, his smile quickly flipping into a frown.

“What’s wrong, Skipper?” K’danz asked, noticing the captain’s change of demeanor.

“We’re losing a few crew members I wasn’t anticipating,” the captain said, handing the padd to the XO. “Have these officers report to my office in the shipyard complex ASAP.”

“Aye, Skipper,” K’danz replied as she glanced at the padd’s screen.

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Thirty minutes later, Captain Koester was reviewing reports on the monitor in his shipyard office when the door chime rang. The captain looked up at the door and sighed before finally saying, “Come.” The doors swished open and two officers stepped in, standing rigidly in front of the captain’s desk.

“Commander Kevin Fry and Lt Commander Alan High, reporting as ordered, sir,” announced the taller of the two men. Fry was the *Dauntless*’ Chief Helm and Second Officer. High, who was dressed in grease and grime coated coveralls the color of his normal gold division uniform shirt, was one of Chief Engineer Dar’s more senior engineers. Both had served aboard the *Dauntless* since her launch in early 2375, eight years earlier.

“Please sit down, gentlemen,” Koester said. “Can I offer either of you a drink?”

“With all due respect, sir, but I need to get back to the bridge module installation as quickly as possible,” replied High, thanking the captain for the offer before adding, “I don’t have any time to socialize today.”

Koester looked at his two officers and friends in silence for a moment, not sure how to say what needed to be said. Fry and High exchanged sidelong glances before Koester finally spoke again.

“In that case, I’ll get right down to business. I’ve got some good news and some bad news for you both. I’ve just received orders transferring both of you off the *Dauntless*.” Both Fry and High looked shocked at the news as Koester stood up and walked around the desk. “Mister High, you are being assigned as Chief Engineer aboard

the *USS LaSalle*, scheduled to launch on stardate 60501. Congratulations.” As Koester offered his hand, a smile replaced the shocked look on the engineer’s face.

“And congratulations to you too, Kevin,” the captain continued, now offering his hand to his Chief Helmsman. “You’ve also been reassigned to the *LaSalle* as well... as their new Executive Officer.”

The look of shock on Fry’s face was almost enough to cause the captain to laugh. Instead, he handed each officer an isolinear chip, then told them, “Your new ship won’t be leaving the building ways for another four months, but they need your wisdom and expertise right now. Your orders are to detach from this command within forty-eight hours. So get cleaned up. I’ll be expecting you to join me and Commander K’danz for dinner tonight, Officer’s Mess.”

“Aye, sir,” both Fry and High responded before exchanging handshakes and congratulations with each other and turning to leave the office. Koester smiled a sad smile as he watched the doors swish shut once again, then started to move back to his chair behind the desk when the intercom beeped.

“Captain, the shipyard commander is here to see you.”

“Send him in, Yeoman,” Koester replied as he settled into his chair. A moment later, Captain Orfil Quinteros stepped in, seating himself across from Koester.

“Your crew is amazing, Captain,” Quinteros stated. “I’ve never seen a hull module installed so efficiently nor so quickly before, not even during my time at Utopia Planitia.”

Koester accepted the compliment on behalf of his crew, noting he would inform Dar of what the ShipSup had said when he saw him at dinner that night before turning the conversation back to the daily status report. As usual, there were minor problems obtaining all the necessary parts and equipment the *Dauntless* would need before she was re-launched, but the overhaul was still on schedule.

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### 1900 Hours

Captain Koester, Commander K’danz and her husband, Chief Engineer Dar, were already gathered at the Officer’s Mess table aboard the *Dauntless* when the door swished aside to admit both Commanders Fry and High, both dressed in their bone-white and grey-chested dress uniforms. Halfway to the table, Fry stopped short, causing High to bump into him from behind, as he noticed the three senior officers were dressed in their normal duty uniforms, the captain actually wearing his informal vest variant.

“Dressing quite formally tonight, Kevin?” the captain asked with a smile.

“We thought this was a full-dress occasion,” the helmsman replied as the newly arrived pair sat down next to K’danz and Dar.

“Not at all,” Koester assured as he signaled to the steward standing near the corner to start serving the meal. “Just a last chance for some friends to enjoy a meal together before saying goodbye. I’d liked for some others to have been able to join us as well, but with all the work going on...”

As dinner and drinks were served, the captain could not help but look at his two departing officers and sigh.

“What’s the matter, Skipper?” Fry asked between sips of his Aldeberan whiskey.

“Just thinking,” Koester answered wistfully. “It won’t quite feel like the *Dauntless* anymore without the two of you here. You’ve both been here since this ship was first launched. I can remember when I first met you both, over a table much like this, when I was interviewing new crew applicants not long before the *Dauntless* left spacedock. We’ve been through a lot together. The Dominion War. The Kairn Incursion. Several Klingon Dinner Parties... Remember the ga’gh?”

“Please, Skipper,” Fry interrupted, one hand on his stomach. “We’re about to eat dinner. Don’t remind me of the time I tried ga’gh.”

As everyone around the table chuckled, the half-Klingon Chief Engineer asked, “Alan, I’ve reviewed the schematics of the Ericsson-class scouts. They’re not very large. What’s to become of the *Scott*?”

High’s recent smile slipped as he was reminded of the experimental Argo-type shuttlecraft he had been helping to develop, test and maintain in addition to his normal engineering duties since first arriving aboard the *Dauntless*. He exchanged a glance with Fry, his new soon-to-be Executive Officer, before saying, “I’m sure the final disposition will be up to the Corps of Engineers R&D Division, but I think the *Montgomery Scott* will probably remain here aboard the *Dauntless*. I’m sure someone else can take over the project.”

Just as High finished speaking, the steward arrived with the first course of the meal. All five officers stopped their conversation to eat as Fry looked over at the captain and asked, “If you don’t mind me asking, Skipper, who will you be moving into my spot as Second Officer?”

Koester paused, fork full of salad halfway between plate and lips, as he realized he had not yet even considered a replacement for either departing officer. The captain looked at his own First Officer sitting next to him before saying, "That's something I'm going to have to take some time to consider."

*To Be Continued...*