

Shipyard log, stardate 60281.2:

Commander K'danz, Executive Officer, starship USS Dauntless, recording;

As repairs to the Dauntless continue to progress, Captain Koester has started acting rather strangely and secretive in recent weeks.

Today he has requested that Dar and I meet with him in holodeck two, in dress uniform, at 1400 hours, but will not tell us why?

K'danz, out.

Space, the Final Frontier...

These are the voyages of the starship *Dauntless*!

Star Trek: Dauntless

“Shipyard – Part 4” By PJK

April 2383

Commander (Carrie) K'danz and her husband, the half-Klingon Chief Engineer Dar, both dressed in their grey-breasted white dress uniforms, stepped out of the turbolift and walked toward the doors of holodeck two.

Four months into their starship's overhaul, most of the *Dauntless*' saucer section had already been repaired and refurbished, and deck eight looked much as it had before the Zaqri terrorist attack that had almost destroyed the starship, with the addition of what could only be termed as 'new starship smell.' As the couple neared the holodeck, K'danz was surprised to find the crew's recently reassigned Command Master Chief, Pono Kyman, loitering near the heavy double doors, dressed in his own grey-jacketed enlisted dress uniform, uncomfortably tugging at the jacket's high collar.

“You too, COB?” K'danz asked as she and Dar approached.

“Yes, Ma'am,” the El'Aurian man replied with a nod. “Any idea what this is all about?”

“Not a clue,” admitted K'danz. “All I know is Dar and I were requested to report here at 1400 hours by the Skipper. Is anyone else here?”

“Lt Commander Winters already entered the holodeck about ten minutes ago. He wouldn't tell me if he knew what was happening, but his attitude suggested he knows more than we do.”

“When doesn't Phillip's attitude suggest he knows more than we do about what is going on around here?” K'danz asked just as the turbolift down the corridor opened again and a woman with fire-red hair and brown spots framing each side of her face came rushing out. Counselor Tanzia Gera rushed down the passageway toward the holodeck, suddenly stopping in surprise when she noticed K'danz, Dar and Kyman standing near the holodeck door.

“Was I supposed to be in dress uniform?” Gera asked timidly, looking down at the royal-blue dress hugging the curves of her body before looking back up at the others.

“Truthfully, Counselor, I'm not even sure why we're wearing dress uniforms,” replied K'danz.

“You'll find out soon enough,” another voice said from behind the group. K'danz turned to see Captain Peter Koester, also wearing his dress uniform, escorting Rear Admiral Kathryn Janeway down the corridor. K'danz, Dar, Gera and Kyman all instinctively snapped to attention until Janeway smiled a warm smile and said, “As you were. This is not an occasion for such formality.”

“With all due respect, Admiral, what kind of occasion is it?” K'danz asked, an edge in her voice. Janeway turned and looked at her escort.

“You haven't told your crew?” she asked Koester.

“I told those that had a need to know. As for the rest,” the captain said, throwing a quick glance toward K'danz before grinning, “I like surprises. Now, shall we enter?”

K'danz, Dar and Kyman exchanged puzzled looks before shrugging and moving into place behind Koester and Janeway. Koester placed his hand on the control panel beside the holodeck door, causing the LCARS interface to light up.

“Program complete,” the familiar female computer voice announced. “Enter when ready.” And with a mechanical hum, the heavy holodeck doors parted.

The six Starfleet personnel entered the holodeck, which was programmed to look like an Edwardian-era English manor house. Within the manor's courtyard were set up several rows of seats separated by an aisle leading to a flower-covered trellis. Several people were already seated in some of the chairs closest to the front, including several of the *Dauntless* crew seated on the right side of the aisle. As K'danz and Gera looked around at the holographically projected scene around them, the doors behind them slid open again and several other Starfleet officers the *Dauntless* XO did not recognize walked in, taking seats on the left side of the aisle. One of the newcomers walked over to Captain Koester, offering her hand before saying, "Everything is ready, Peter. She looks beautiful." The captain just smiled.

"Shall we take seats?" Admiral Janeway asked, gesturing toward the chairs on the right side among several of the *Dauntless* crew as Koester gestured to Lt Commander Phillip Winters and the two stepped up toward the trellis.

"Computer," Winters said aloud as he took position next to the captain. "Activate the ERH."

Again K'danz exchanged puzzled glances with Dar and Kyman, as none of them had ever heard of a holographic program called an ERH. Almost immediately, a humanoid figure appeared within the trellis. Dressed in the robes and miter of a medieval Bishop, the Every-being's Religious Hologram, a new addition to the program files aboard the starship *Dauntless* and designed to act as the vessel's chaplain no matter what the user's religious beliefs, looked serenely at the still-growing crowd. Once it seemed that everyone who would be coming was present, including Chief Science Officer Alasdair Wallace, Bajoran Chief Medical Officer Rasa Palin and Federation Ambassador-at-Large Penji Fil, and the crowd quieted down, the Bishop nodded and the courtyard was filled with the sound of a pipe organ. Everyone in the courtyard stood and looked back toward the still-visible holodeck doors. A moment later, the doors parted, and Fleet Space Cadet 2nd class Gem Koester, the captain's teenage daughter, stepped in, dressed in a formal gown similar in color to the one worn by Counselor Gera.

Several steps behind Gem, resplendent in a striking white gown with a veil covering her face, entered Commander Michelle Petersen, Chief of Security aboard the starship *USS Christa McAuliffe* and Captain Koester's fiancée for the past several years. Commander K'danz suddenly understood the reason for the gathering, wondering instead why the captain had chosen to keep it a secret.

Petersen finally reached the trellis where Koester, Winters and the ERH all stood, Gem taking a position to Michelle's left. The Bishop smiled gently at the couple gathered in front of him and after pausing momentarily, started to speak.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join this man and this woman in blessed matrimony. If there is anyone here today who knows of a reason why these two should not be joined, let them speak now or forever hold their peace."

Captain Koester suddenly turned around to glare at the gathered guests in a mock gesture of challenge. It seemed for a second like Winters was about to open his mouth, until Michelle shot him one of her own patented glares. Winters raised his hands in mock surrender as the Bishop continued the ceremony.

After several minutes, the Bishop concluded the ceremony, saying, "I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride." Both the captain and Michelle smiled as they turned toward each other, Koester lifting his bride's veil and leaning down slightly as their lips met. As the guests gathered in the courtyard stood and offered applause, the sound of the ship's intercom whistled, and the voice of operations officer Robert Lockley filled the manor house.

"Attention all hands. The crew of the starship *Dauntless* would like to welcome aboard Captain and Mrs. Peter Koester. Congratulations to the happy couple!"

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The next morning, Captain Koester and his wife stood in transporter room two with Commanders K'danz and Wallace and Lt Commanders Dar and Winters.

"So where will you be going?" K'danz asked as an ensign placed the newly married couple's luggage on the transport platform and then took station behind the control console.

"We're finally getting to do something we've been talking about for a long time," Michelle responded.

"Spend more than an hour together alone?" Wallace joked with a grin.

"Well, yeah," said the bride with a look of mild frustration. "But we've planned something a little more romantic as well. A two week cruise aboard a luxury liner on Pacifica."

"Ooh, nice," K'danz said enviously with a glance toward her half-Klingon husband.

"The ship is yours until I get back, Exec," Captain Koester told his First Officer. "Keep the overhaul on schedule. Kick the ShipSup in the butt every now and then if you have to. I expect to launch on time, even if the

crew has to pull *Dauntless* out of drydock with their bare hands. In the meantime, Counselor Gera and Gunny O'Laughlin will be keeping an eye on Gem while Michelle and I are gone. We'll be back on stardate 60235."

"Alasdair and I will have everything well in hand until you return," K'danz said, referring to the starship's newly appointed Second Officer, Commander Wallace. "Enjoy your honeymoon."

"Don't drown," Wallace added in his typical Scottish burr as Koester and his new wife ascended the transport platform before giving the Chief Science Officer another glare. The captain's expression quickly turned into a smile as he looked up toward the transporter operator.

"Everything ready, Ensign?"

"Coordinates have been entered. The transport ship *Portland* is standing by," the young ensign replied.

"Very well. Energize."

A hum filled the room, and in a matter of seconds, Koester, his new bride and their luggage faded in the sparkle of the transporter beam.

To Be Continued...