

Starbase 719
Typhon Sector
Stardate 69526.9

Vice Admiral Kalin Kale emerged from the doors of his office in Ops upper level and headed down the stairs immediately in front of him toward the master systems display at the center of the room. Standing at the display console was the Ournel-class starbase's commander Captain Cathryn Elisabeth Pearson, while manning their own nearby consoles were other members of the senior staff, including security chief Commander Michelle Petersen and operations chief Lt Commander B'Elanna Torres.

"Good morning, ladies," Kale greeted as he joined the trio at the console. "I'm preparing my weekly update for transmittal back to Admiral Janeway on Earth. Status?"

"Good morning, Kalin," Pearson returned the greeting. "We have two starships scheduled to dock today for crew rotation and consumables re-supply, another shipment of supplies intended for the Elehu colony going out aboard the *Graceful Flyer*, and of course we're still preparing for the visit by the Tholian Ambassador next week."

"I meant to ask when we held the first briefing regarding this visit," Kale said, looking over at the padd Pearson was holding. "How is the Ambassador getting aboard? Are we beaming him aboard or do we have to alter the environmental conditions all the way from the spacedock to the visitor and meeting quarters where he'll be staying for the several days he is aboard the station?"

Pearson glanced over at her operations chief, expecting a response, but Torres' concentration was on her own console. The half-Klingon woman appeared to be distracted until she realized everyone around her had stopped talking. She looked up at Pearson, noticing all eyes upon herself.

"The Tholian Ambassador," Pearson prompted. "Is he beaming aboard or do we have to create hellish conditions from the hub all the way to the Ambassador's quarters in the Admin section?"

Still sounding a little distracted, Torres replied, "The Tholians insisted their ambassador's ship had to dock within the station, but Captain Harkonnen finally convinced them it would be easier and more comfortable for the ambassador if we simply brought the consular ship into spacedock for safety and beamed the Ambassador and any assistants he has directly into the quarters we are still renovating to provide their normal environmental conditions."

"I'm glad the Ambassador has not insisted on a large formal gathering upon his arrival," Kale remarked. "The pitch of Tholian voices has always grated on my nerves." He then said to Torres, "You seem a bit distracted, Commander. Is something wrong?"

"Not wrong, exactly," Torres replied, returning her attention to one of the monitors. "I've been detecting unexplained power spikes in the station's fusion reactors all morning. I'm trying to determine their cause."

"Is it something we should be worried about?" Pearson asked, turning her attention on the operations officer.

"No. If the power build-up continues at its current rate, it will take approximately five days to reach critical levels. I'm sure my technicians can determine the cause and correct the issue long before then."

"In the meantime, let's continue to get ready for the Ambassador's visit," Kale announced before heading toward one of the nearby turbolifts.

Space, the Final Frontier...

Star Trek: Starbase 719

"An Ordinary Week" By PJK

Part 1 of the Typhon Sector Crisis

Three days later, Admiral Kale was in a meeting in his office with his aide, Commander Galen DuLac.

“The Tholian Ambassador is arriving in four days, Commander,” Kale was saying. “I need status updates for the modifications to the Tholian’s living quarters and where the diplomatic parties will be meeting. Likewise, I need the official events of all three days the Tholians will be aboard the station scheduled down to the minute, and make sure you plan in extra time between scheduled events in case something runs a little long. You know how the Tholians are regarding punctuality.”

“Aye, m’Lord,” DuLac, an Avalonian native replied in his typical accent as he typed notes into a padd. Meanwhile, Kale referred to a checklist displayed on his monitor screen, making sure everything was one by one turning to green to indicate completion. His brow furrowed slightly as he came to one entry.

“I haven’t gotten word from Captain Pearson regarding the anomalous power reading Commander Torres had detected a few days back. Has she told you anything in that regard?”

“Nay, m’Lord,” DuLac replied, looking up at Kale.

Admiral Kale sighed, then said, “Have Captain Pearson and Commander Torres report to me ASAP on the status of those power readings. I can’t afford to wait until the last moment to find out if we have some sort of problem that could interfere with the Ambassador’s visit.”

“Aye, m’Lord,” DuLac responded before heading out to his own desk in the reception area. Several minutes later, both Cathryn Pearson and B’Elanna Torres were standing in front of the admiral’s desk, the latter looking both annoyed and worried.

“Cathryn, I’ve been waiting to hear the resolution of the power reading issue Commander Torres raised the other day.”

“There has been no resolution as yet, Kalin,” Pearson replied, looking toward Torres.

“Commander?”

“I’m continuing to monitor the slow energy build-up in the fusion reactors,” Torres stated, her tone of voice indicating she preferred to be working on the issue instead of standing in the admiral’s office explaining the status of the problem once again. “My staff and I are still no closer to determining the cause of the build-up than when I first detected the abnormal condition three days ago. I just cannot understand why it’s happening!” Torres’ voice raised in both pitch and volume as she inadvertently let a little of her Klingon emotions show. “It shouldn’t be happening! I’ve traced every circuit, every flow-path, every distribution node! I can’t even explain where the power is coming from! We shut down fusion reactor four yesterday and the power levels are continuing to rise at the same rate!”

“Do we have a deuterium leak of some kind that has gone undetected?” Kale asked. “My engineering expertise is a little rusty, but if deuterium is entering the reaction chamber by some alternate flow path, that might explain...”

“Negative,” Torres replied. “Lieutenant Jones traced the piping systems and the cryogenic monitoring subroutines and verified the injection valves and everything associated with the deuterium transfer system was operating normally. And deuterium levels have only decreased by the expected amount for the number of fusion reactors we have been running at their normal power settings. No, something else is happening. It’s like the reactors are somehow pulling power out of the ether!”

Kale looked at Pearson as he asked his next question. “If the engineering staff cannot figure out what is happening with these power levels, how is this going to affect the Tholian Ambassador’s visit to the station?”

“The Ambassador is not due to arrive for another four days,” Pearson said. “I recommend we give B’Elanna and her staff another twenty-four hours to determine what is going on and repair it before we start considering any change of plans for the Ambassador’s visit.”

“Commander?” Kale remarked, once again looking at the half-Klingon engineer. “Hypothetically, if you are unable to bring this issue under control in the next twenty four hours, what would be your recommendation?”

“Considering the luck we have had in locating and locking down the problem in the last three days, I’m not optimistic another day will make much of a difference. But if we cannot correct this by 1200 hours tomorrow, my recommendation would be to jettison all four main fusion reactors. Of course, if we do that, the entire station will be running completely on batteries.”

“How long will those last?” Kale asked.

“If we’re lucky, and we can shut down all non-essential equipment and power usage - transporter systems, primary turbolifts, replicators, etcetera - the batteries will last somewhere between twenty four and forty eight hours.”

“That’s not a lot of time,” Kale remarked.

“No, Admiral, it’s not,” Torres remarked matter-of-factly. “It’s approximately the amount of time it would take to completely evacuate the station, assuming there were enough ships on hand to take everyone aboard. Which is why I suggest you call in as many ships as possible to stand by and prepare to evacuate. In the meantime, I have work to do.”

Without waiting for dismissal, Torres turned around and exited the admiral’s office, leaving Kale and Pearson to look at one another in mild shock.

“Orders, Kalin?” Pearson finally asked.

“This has become more serious than I realized,” Kale said. “I recommend you implement the ‘Retract’ protocol, and make sure it applies to all ships in range of the station, both Starfleet and civilian, whether they are associated with the Typhon Sector or not.”

“Yes, Kalin,” Pearson acknowledged before departing the office herself. Kale then activated the intercom on his desktop.

“Galen, contact both the Federation Diplomatic Corps and the Tholian consulate and inform them that I must postpone their ambassador’s visit to *Starbase 719* indefinitely.”

“Lord?” DuLac’s confused voice replied.

“Just do it, Galen,” Kale ordered before deactivating the intercom. He then got up from his chair and, with a worried expression, gazed out the large window into the depths of space beyond.

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Stardate 69535.7

On the bridge of the Federation starship *USS Dauntless*, Fleet Captain Peter J. Koester - the starship’s commanding officer - had just finished reviewing an engineering status report and was accepting a mug of coffee from his yeoman when Lieutenant (JG) Wyatt ‘Five’ Cerilli called for his attention.

“Captain, we’re receiving a priority one message from *Home Plate*,” the operations officer stated.

Koester paused mid-sip, the steam swirling around itself in the air in front of the fleet captain’s face, as his expression changed to one of mild concern. “On screen, Lieutenant,” he ordered. Five complied, and the main viewer was immediately filled by the face of Captain Cathryn Pearson, the aft portion of *Starbase Ops* visible in the background where several crew members – including Koester’s wife – could be seen appearing very busy at the various consoles. “Good morning, Cathryn. To what do we owe the pleasure of your communication?” Koester asked.

“Fleet Captain Koester, Admiral Kale has ordered all Fifth Fleet vessels to return to the vicinity of *Starbase 719*. The code word is Retract. I say again, code word Retract.”

“Not again,” Koester mumbled to himself, unheard by the rest of his crew.

“Have the *Dauntless* rendezvous with the rest of the fleet in the immediate vicinity of *Starbase 719* no later than stardate 69538,” Pearson continued. “This is a priority one emergency transmission. *Starbase 719*, out.”

Without allowing any time for questions, Pearson’s transmission cut off, the main viewer returning to the view of stars in the sector the Sovereign-class starship had been operating with one of their allied Morain patrol ships.

“What does this mean, Captain?” Tanzia Gera, the joined Trill ship’s counselor sitting in the seat to Koester’s left, asked with concern.

“The last time *Home Plate* initiated the Retract protocol, the Kairn had attacked the station,” Koester replied, a myriad of thoughts flashing through his consciousness. “We haven’t had any indication the Kairn are being aggressive lately, so this likely means something bad is happening aboard the station itself. According to the

latest communiqués, Admiral Kale was supposed to be hosting the Tholian Ambassador in the next couple of days. I hope this isn't somehow related to that." Koester then turned his attention to his helmsman and ordered, "Mister Peck, plot a course back to *Home Plate*. Maximum warp!" As the Bolian helmsman acknowledged, Koester then said to the officer at ops, "Mister Cerilli, have the senior staff assemble in the briefing lounge in one hour. Hopefully we'll have some more details to share by then, but either way everyone should be aware of our change in orders."

Once both officers at the conn and ops had acknowledged their new orders, and the *Dauntless* slowly maneuvered around before entering warp with a flash and clap of thunder.

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Stardate 69535.8
Sector Typhon-C

Captain Charles Hunter of the *ATS Cassandra* looked at the message his ship had just received from the Federation Starfleet sector command base with confusion.

"We're a civilian owned and operated cargo ship," he remarked to himself. He then looked at his first mate, Jose Carte, sitting at the *Cassandra's* helm and said, "We haven't been drafted that I'm aware of. Are we required to respond to a Starfleet recall order?"

"If I recall properly, when we signed the agreement to operate within the Typhon operating area, it included a provision that under certain protocols, we were to respond as if we were a Starfleet vessel. The Retract protocol appears to be one of those situations," the first mate replied with a wry smile. "In simpler language, Captain... We've been drafted."

"Dammit!" Hunter cursed. "We're less than twelve hours from dropping off this shipment of tamen sasheer at Kos'Karii! Jose, if we were to continue our delivery and THEN return to *Starbase 719*, what would our ETA be?"

Carte made the calculations on his console, then looked at Hunter with a disappointed expression. "We would arrive in the vicinity of the starbase no earlier than stardate 69539.4, and that's only if we push the engines to their extremes, Captain. And since I haven't had the opportunity to pull the warp coils for inspection in the last year and a half due to our delivery schedule out here, I can't guarantee the engines would continually operate at those sustained speeds without breaking down." He used his hands to simulate an explosion.

"Dammit!" Hunter cursed for the second time. "Fine. Turn us around and bring us back to the base." Hunter slouched in his chair as he said to himself, "But if the sasheer spoils before we can deliver it, I will be charging Starfleet for any losses we incur! Whatever the reason for this recall, it better be good!"

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Stardate 69536.6
The Typhon Sector

The Intrepid-class starship *USS Bellerophon* dropped out of warp three hundred and fifty thousand kilometers away from *Starbase 719*. On the bridge of the vessel, Captain K'danz was relieved to see the intact shape of the Ournal-class starbase in the distance as she opened a hailing frequency.

"Starbase Ops, this is the *Bellerophon* on final approach. Request clearance to enter spacedock and moor?"

"*Bellerophon*, your request is denied," replied the familiar voice of station security chief Commander Michelle Petersen, much to K'danz's shock. "Approach within ten thousand kilometers of the station and maintain station keeping until further notice. Starbase Ops, out."

"What's going on?" Commander Tom Paris, the starship's first officer, asked with a tone of concern. He had just exited the turbolift and had caught most of the exchange between his captain and the starbase.

"I'm not sure, Tom," K'danz remarked as she started noticing several other vessels in position as her starship closed on the station. "Look at all the other ships at station keeping. Something is going on aboard the station, but either they are unable to provide an explanation over open subspace frequencies for security purposes or they themselves are not sure what is happening."

Paris, whose wife B'Elanna was the starbase's chief of operations and whose young daughter Miral lived aboard the frontier station with her mother while his own duties required his presence elsewhere, looked at the ever-growing image of the starbase on the main viewer with unease.

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Aboard the starbase, Ops was controlled chaos.

"I'm reading another overload in the turbolift network in sections R-2 and C-1," Torres reported. "Repair crews are responding."

"Recall them!" Captain Pearson ordered. "Have your engineering staff concentrate on getting the fusion reactors back under control. I don't care if half the turbolifts in the communications sections don't work right now."

Admiral Kale, who had been monitoring the situation at the master systems display, turned to the base commander and said, "We're running out of time, Cathryn. We need to make a decision very quickly. Do we begin evacuating or not?"

"Considering most of the secondary systems are already either off-line or experiencing overloads, I think it would be a good idea if we relocate the station's civilian population to the botanical garden," Pearson suggested. "It's the largest open space capable of supporting a shirt-sleeve environment aboard the base, and if all the non-essential personnel are together in one place, it will be easier getting everyone off the station if we have to give the order to evacuate."

"I concur," Kale said. "Make it so."

Pearson then turned to Colonel Sean McIntyre – commander of the Starfleet Marine Corps battalion assigned to the base – and ordered, "Mack, initiate yellow alert. Order all civilian and non-essential personnel to muster in the botanical garden within the next hour. Inform the section heads that we are considering an evacuation of the base, but not to make that information public yet. I don't want to cause a panic of any kind."

"Aye, Captain," the Marine colonel replied, immediately activating the yellow alert status, then moving purposefully toward the turbolift as he tapped the combadge on his chest. "Mack to Major Markell. Deploy Alpha Company to oversee the relocation of all non-essential personnel to the botanical garden. We have one hour to make sure everyone is present and accounted for."

"Aye, Colonel. Consider it done," McIntyre's second in command replied just as the turbolift doors swished shut.

Do we have enough ships to evacuate the entire station crew?" Pearson asked, wondering aloud. "We have somewhere in the vicinity of twenty-thousand beings aboard this station!"

"Every available ship in the AOR is on its way here right now," Kale assured. "The Morain are sending a few ships. Heck, I even heard from Bel-Terra! They're dispatching every available ship they can to help out."

"B'Elanna, any progress on getting the reactors back under control?" Pearson asked, now that emergency procedures had been initiated.

"I've got a dozen engineers working on each of the four reactors, and nothing they're doing is changing anything. All four reactors are nearly on the verge of blowing this station to pieces."

"How long have we got?" Kale asked, wondering how quickly a full evacuation of the starbase could be accomplished.

"No more than thirty-six hours, Admiral. Probably less," Torres replied.

"Have we tried shutting the reactors down? I mean all of them?" Kale asked, hopeful that switching to batteries might alleviate the problems they were experiencing.

Torres looked at Kale, an expression verging on annoyance tingeing her features, as she replied, "Admiral, we shut down all four main reactors almost four hours ago!"

“And we’re still experiencing power surges?!” Kale asked incredulously.

“We’re still reading increasing power levels in each reactor! I have no clue where the power is coming from, no less what is causing this! I can’t even begin to speculate!”

“Captain Pearson, Admiral Kale,” interrupted Commander Petersen from the security console. “The *Dauntless* and *Sarek* have just dropped out of warp and are maneuvering into their stand-by positions. We’re being hailed by the flagship.”

Pearson exchanged a look with Kale as she said, “Peter probably wants to know what’s going on just like everyone else.” As Kale nodded, Pearson directed her next remark to Petersen. “On screen, Michelle.”

The main viewer above the forward section of Ops lit up, showing the bridge of the Sovereign-class starship. As expected, Fleet Captain Koester was standing in the middle of his bridge, but directly next to him stood the overall commander of the Fifth Fleet, Vice Admiral Penji Fil.

“Cathryn, what’s going on over there?” Fil immediately asked.

“Several days ago, Commander Torres started monitoring an unexplained energy build-up in the station’s fusion reactors,” Pearson replied. “She and her staff have been unable to determine the cause of the build-up or rectify the problem. If it continues at its current pace, we risk the reactors blowing up the station within the next twenty-four to thirty-six hours.”

“Have you tried shutting the reactors down and running on batteries until you can fix the problem?” Fleet Captain Koester asked.

“We shut the reactors down several hours ago, but as impossible as it sounds, we’re still indicating increasing power levels,” Pearson reported. “Commander Torres can’t explain where the power is even coming from.”

“What do you need of us?” Fil asked. “You called just about every space ship in the Fleet AOR here. Your skies are getting pretty crowded.”

“We have over twenty thousand beings aboard this station, Penji,” Pearson replied. “If we need to evacuate because we can’t get this under control, we have to do it as quickly as possible.”

“Understood,” Koester remarked. “I’ll make sure every transporter in the sector is standing by for your order to evacuate. In the meantime, does your engineer require any additional help? I can send Mister Bloom and some of his staff over if you need them.”

“B’Elanna?” Pearson asked, looking at the half-Klingon woman.

“I don’t know how much help a few more sets of hands will be, but it probably wouldn’t hurt either,” she replied. “Maybe a fresh set of eyes will see something we’ve missed?”

“Consider it done,” Koester remarked.

Aboard the *Dauntless*, Koester looked at the officer sitting behind the engineering console and said, “Jeff, put together as many of your off-duty engineers as you can spare and prepare to beam over to the starbase.” As Commander Jeff Bloom acknowledged and stood up from his post, Koester mulled over an idea that had just occurred to him. He then looked down at the young officer with several Borg implants visible on his face and neck sitting behind the ops console and said, “Mister Cerilli, perhaps your innate ability to interface with machinery may be of some assistance. Join Commander Bloom’s engineering team and see if you can lend them a hand.”

“Or a nanoprobe tubule, Captain?” Lieutenant Cerilli asked as he got up from his watch station and joined Bloom at the turbolift door, quickly replaced by another crew member at ops.

“You think they’ll be able to get this under control, Peter?” Fil asked.

“I hope so, Admiral. I don’t think there has ever been a full scale evacuation of a starbase of this size in the history of Starfleet. If they can’t fix this, people are going to die!”

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Several hours later, the engineering team from the *Dauntless* – including Five – were analyzing the readings coming from the reactor monitors, trying to determine where the excess energy the reactors were continuing to produce was coming from.

“Commander Bloom,” Five said, drawing the emotional Vulcan engineer’s attention. Bloom moved over to where Cerilli was standing, one of his Borg tubules connected to an LCARS interface at the local control of fusion reactor one.

“What is it, Lieutenant?” Bloom asked. “Have you determined a way to safely shut down the reactors?”

“Negative, Commander,” Cerilli replied, to Bloom’s disappointment. “But I am detecting highly unusual readings coming from all four reactors.”

“Lieutenant, we’ve got four shut-down reactors that are putting out ninety-eight percent of max rated output,” Bloom said with a tone of frustration. “What could be more unusual than that?”

“I’m detecting subspace anomalies associated with each of the reactors. It could be the source of the energy build-up.”

“What sort of subspace anomaly?” Bloom asked. “Is this similar to the subspace shockwave that destroyed several star systems in the Romulan Empire after Hobus went supernova?”

“Negative, Commander,” Five replied. “I have never before encountered readings of this type...”

Cerilli’s sentence was cut off by the sound of a klaxon as the lights within the space suddenly shifted to red.

“Ops to all engineering crews! Evacuate the reactor compartments ASAP!”

Bloom looked at Cerilli, who was already detaching his interface from the console and retracting his tubule back into his wrist, as he tapped his combadge. “Bloom to Starbase Ops. What’s going on?”

“The power readings have spiked,” the voice of Lt Commander Torres replied. “Captain Pearson is ready to order the ejection of all four fusion reactors.”

A sense of shock overcame Bloom momentarily before his Starfleet training kicked in. He started gesturing toward the compartment opening where emergency isolation doors would soon be descending.

“You heard the order!” he shouted toward the mixture of starbase personnel and his own engineering team. “Evacuate the reactor compartment! Move! Move! Move!”

The dozen engineers grabbed whatever tools and diagnostic equipment they could easily carry and headed toward the egress, where flashing lights were indicating the isolation doors would soon close. Bloom himself started moving toward the door when he realized one of his team had not yet left the console. It looked, in fact, like he was about to re-attach himself to the interface.

“Lieutenant!” Bloom yelled back at Cerilli. “What are you doing? You heard the order!”

“But Commander...!” Cerilli started to say. “If I can determine what is causing these subspace readings...”

“You can trace the readings from the data recordings in Ops. Let’s get out of here!”

Cerilli appeared to hesitate a moment, the tubule in his wrist starting to reappear, until a new alarm sounded and the isolation door slowly started to lower into place. The former Borg drone then joined Bloom, and the two *Dauntless* officers rushed out of the compartment, Bloom pausing by the lowering door to assure himself no one else was left behind.

Once the door had lowered in place and sealed, Bloom again tapped his combadge. “Bloom to Starbase Ops. Fusion Reactor Compartment One is evacuated and sealed.”

A few kilometers above the fusion reactors, in Ops, Torres and one of her assistants were monitoring the ongoing evolution. Red indicators on the engineering console shifted color to green as each of the four fusion reactor compartments were sealed off from the rest of the station. When the final indicator turned green, the engineer looked up at Pearson and reported, “All fusion reactors are isolated. All vessels in the vicinity have been warned to keep the area within five thousand kilometers around the station clear until the reactors are free and clear of the hull. Standing by to eject the reactors.”

Pearson shared a concerned look with Admiral Kale.

“You realize, once you give this order, you have less than twenty-four hours to get every being off this station before the batteries are drained,” the Centauri man remarked.

"I understand that, Kalin," Pearson replied. "But what other choice do we have at this point?" Pearson's expression changed to one of determination as she looked back at Torres and said, "Commander, eject the fusion reactors."

"Ejecting reactors," Torres confirmed, then pressed the control on her console. Everyone gathered in Ops expected to hear the muffled sound of numerous explosive bolts firing in sequence to propel the malfunctioning reactors away from their housings. After several seconds of near-silence, Pearson finally asked, "What happened? Have the reactors been ejected?"

Torres consulted her console to be sure, then looked at the captain with a pained expression. "The reactor ejection system has malfunctioned. The ejection bolts are frozen and won't function."

"Manual override!" Pearson ordered.

"Ops to Reactor One," Torres said into the intercom.

"Reactor One. Bloom," came the quick reply.

"Commander, our remote ejection system has malfunctioned. We need you to perform a manual ejection of the fusion reactor!" Torres ordered.

Down on the reactor level, Bloom sprang into action. "There are four manual interlocks that need to be released," he said to his mixture of *Dauntless* and starbase engineers. "Cerilli, man interlock two. Petricelli, interlock three. Ti'Shallia, interlock four. Stand by for my instructions!"

Each of the engineers – two from the *Dauntless*, two assigned to the starbase – made their way to their assigned manual interlock. Each entered the code that allowed access to the control, which caused a small console to tilt out from the bulkhead of the semi-circular corridor half-surrounding the fusion reactor compartment, exposing a keypad, several isolinear chip ports, and a three-position drum handle.

"Bloom to engineering teams. Enter manual override code two-six-six-seven." Each engineer did as instructed. "Now shift the isolinear chip from slot one into open slot four." Again, each engineer did as told. "Now pull out the drum handle, shift to manual override position three, and push the drum back into place to initialize the system." All four engineers complied with the instructions. "Okay, team," Bloom added. "On my mark... Activate the manual eject system... Three... two... one... Mark!"

All four officers tapped the control pad, but rather than the expected clunk of the ejection system activating and pushing the reactor away from the station, the control panels on all four manual interlocks shifted to red and an alarm sounded throughout the compartment.

"Manual override interlocks are not functioning, Commander!" Five said to Bloom over his combadge.

"I can see that," Bloom replied. "The ejection system is completely locked up. It would take disassembling half the station to get these fusion reactors out now!"

"What do we do now, Commander?" Ti'Shallia, a female Andorian station officer, asked.

"We get very busy trying to get everyone off the station safely," Bloom replied.

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In Ops, Torres' expression was a mixture of shock and disbelief. "Manual interlocks to eject the reactors have failed, Captain," she reported. "Power levels are continuing to rise at a steady pace."

"How long until they blow apart?" Pearson asked.

"I can keep the station in one piece for another twenty-four hours, Captain," Torres replied. "Beyond that, no guarantee."

Pearson looked at Kale, hoping her former commanding officer and present sector coordinator would be able to pull a rabbit out of his hat as he had done several times while in command of the *Sarek* many years prior. "Any suggestions, Kalin?"

Kale slowly shook his head as he said, "At this point, I think you only have one option left. And you know what it is."

Releasing a sigh of frustration, Pearson nodded in agreement. She then touched a control on the master systems display which activated the station-wide intercom.

“All hands, this is Captain Pearson,” she announced. “We have an emergency situation. Evacuate the station. Repeat, evacuate the station...!”

To Be Continued...