

*Stardate 70538.3*

*Typhon Sector*

“Estimated arrival time of emerging object or objects,” Lt Commander T’Var announced to the *Bellerophon* bridge. “Seven... Six... Five... Four... Three...”

“Be ready for anything,” Captain (Carrie) K’danz ordered.

“Two... One...”

The viewscreen erupted in a bright flash of white, as if the entire face of the wormhole had exploded, overloading the viewscreen and half-blinding anyone even partially looking in that direction.

“What happened?” K’danz shouted. “Status report!” In her gut, she feared the flash of light was deliberate, preventing her crew and the other starship crews from reacting quickly to whatever had emerged from the wormhole. She waited for phaser fire or some other unknown weapon to start striking her starship’s shields.

“Sensors indicate the wormhole has collapsed,” T’Var reported, the first of the crew to recover her vision thanks to the Vulcan inner eyelid. “I am registering a single large artificial structure in its place.”

The viewscreen was still displaying nothing but white, frustrating Captain K’danz. “Can we get visual to work?” she asked.

“Resetting the main viewscreen,” stated Commander Xin Zhadesh from ops. The Efrosian manipulated a few controls on his console and the main viewer went black for a split-second, then filled with static before quickly resolving to an image of space outside the starship. As stated by T’Var, the swirling red wormhole was gone. In its place, the view was dominated by an enormous grey and blue mushroom-shaped structure. The entire bridge crew stared in wonder.

“Is that...?” Commander Tom Paris asked, his voice caught in his throat.

“The structure appears to be *Starbase 719*,” confirmed T’Var.

Space, the Final Frontier...

## Star Trek: Fifth Fleet

### “There’s No Place Like Home” By PJK

#### A Typhon Sector Crisis Story

The crew of the *Bellerophon* stared in disbelief at the image displayed on the viewscreen. Though it was obvious sections had been patched over or hastily repaired with mismatching technology, what now existed before the three Fifth Fleet starships was undoubtedly a Federation Ournal-class spacedock-type starbase.

Decrease magnification,” Captain K’danz ordered. Lt Commander Walter Hickam complied, and the image shrunk, the entirety of the starbase now visible on screen. While it appeared the station had somehow received repairs, there existed visible damage that had not been present when the station was thought to have exploded the previous year. Among the most significant of the new damage was a large opening through the spacedock section, allowing the *Bellerophon* crew to see inside the spacedock, where an unfamiliar starship was apparently moored near the hub.

“Captain, does that ship inside the station look to you like the same one we saw in that telemetry footage?” Paris asked.

“The angle is completely different, so it’s hard to tell, but I suppose it could be,” K’danz half-agreed. “Commander T’Var, are you reading any life signs aboard the station?” There was a definite tone of hope in her voice.

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Aboard Starbase Typhon-Bravo, the crew in ops were just as dumbfounded as the *Bellerophon* crew had been.

“Did we just see an entire starbase emerge from a wormhole intact?” Vice Admiral Kalin Kale asked.

“Is that even possible?” Lt Commander B’Elanna Torres asked in turn.

“Apparently it is,” Lieutenant Evelyn Amano remarked in answer.

“What happened? Where has the station been for the last year?” Kale continued to question. “And more importantly, is there anyone still alive aboard?”

“Admiral,” Lieutenant Asley Tyrrell called out. “We’re being hailed by the *Bellerophon*.”

“On screen,” Kale ordered, stepping up on his office porch and looking directly at the main viewer above the consoles across the space. A second later the bridge of the Intrepid-class starship *Bellerophon* appeared, centered on Captain K’danz sitting in the right-hand command seat. “What have you got, Carrie?”

“My science officer has done a full scan of the starbase,” K’danz replied. “She is registering nine hundred and ninety six individual life signs.”

“How can that be possible?” Kale asked with obvious confusion. “There were only seven hundred and eighty people aboard when the station was destroyed... I mean, went missing!”

“I’m not sure, Admiral. However, we have tried hailing the station, and so has both the *Sarek* and *Corsair*, and we are receiving no response. Commander Zhadesh isn’t even detecting any open carrier wave frequencies on the normal Starfleet bands.”

Do you think we should beam an away team aboard to assess the situation?” Kale asked.

“I don’t know if that would be a good idea, Admiral,” K’danz replied. “I don’t know if you can see it from where you’re at, but there’s a gaping hole in the spacedock section through which we can see an unfamiliar starship docked, perhaps the very same one that destroyed our probe in the telemetry footage. On top of that, the station’s shields are raised. We may have to simply sit here and wait for whoever is aboard that station to make the first move.”

“I concur,” Kale replied. “I’ll alert Starfleet Command and the rest of the Fifth Fleet. I understand the *Dauntless* is not very far away at present. I’m sure Admiral Fil and Fleet Captain Koester are going to want to be informed about what is happening here.”

“In the meantime, our three ships will continue to monitor the situation and alert you if anything changes,” K’danz agreed. “*Bellerophon*, out.”

The viewer blinked to the image of the emblem of Starfleet Command before going black. Torres then stepped closer to Kale and quietly asked, “What do you think, Admiral? Could everyone we left behind somehow have survived?”

“We can hope, Commander,” Kale replied. “Right now it’s all we have.” Kale then turned to enter his office where he planned to transmit several subspace communiqués.

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Over the next several hours, two more fleet starships dropped out of warp in the vicinity of *Starbases Typhon-Bravo* and *719*; the Leviathan-class *USS Besiege* under the command of Captain William MacLeod and the fleet flagship *USS Dauntless* under the command of Fleet Captain Peter J. Koester, the latter whose wife Michelle Petersen was one of the starbase crew believed killed when *719* disappeared and was presumed destroyed. Koester had almost cracked several warp coils in his starship’s engines pushing her beyond her limits to reach the Typhon Sector as soon as possible.

The commanders of the five ships present and Fifth Fleet commander Admiral Penji Fil were in conference with Admiral Kale via subspace, discussing what could or should be done to make contact with the people aboard *719* whoever they were, when Kale was interrupted by Lt Commander Torres.

“Admiral, we’re being hailed.”

“By who?” the admiral asked, wondering if still more Fifth Fleet starships had arrived in the sector in response to his earlier advisory.

“The hail is coming from *Starbase 719*,” Torres replied, a look of shock on her face. The color drained from Kale’s own face and he swallowed nervously.

“Attention Fifth Fleet units,” Kale then said, addressing the six faces displayed on the ops main viewscreen. “We are currently receiving a transmission from *719*. I will keep you advised on what is going on as soon as I can. *Typhon-Bravo*, out.” He then touched a control on the master systems display and the main viewer blanked out. “This is Federation *Starbase Typhon-Bravo*, Admiral Kalin Kale speaking. *Starbase 719* please respond.”

The main viewscreen blinked to a new image, a woman with auburn hair extending past her shoulders and wearing a gold-colored uniform very similar to the one Kale’s mother had worn while in command of the *USS Sverdlov* back in the 2260’s. Before the woman could speak, the mouths of everyone in ops dropped open in shock.

“This is Captain Cathryn Pearson in command of *Starbase 719*,” she announced. “You don’t know how good it is to see you again, Kalin!”

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A short time later, Captain Konstantin Harkonnen and Vice Admiral Kalin Kale were in the transporter room aboard the *USS Dauntless*, where they were joined by the starship’s commanding officer, Fleet Captain Peter J. Koester, and the overall commander of the Federation Fifth Fleet, Vice Admiral Penji Fil of Catulla.

“I still don’t understand why we cannot simply dock inside the station?” Harkonnen was saying as Koester and Fil entered the room. “Requiring us to beam aboard sounds suspicious to me.” Harkonnen had been expressing his cynicism since first being informed his wife was still alive and aboard the miraculously restored starbase. Rather than being overjoyed, as most expected, he regarded the station’s reappearance with reservation, as if believing it was a trick intended to bypass the defenses of the fleet’s senior officers by falsely putting them at ease.

“Because we have been informed the spacedock is currently inaccessible, Captain,” Kale replied as he stepped up onto the transporter platform, turning to face the transporter chief standing behind the control console. “And besides, if this IS a trap, if the people aboard *719* are actually trans-dimensional aliens intent on invading our universe, do you really want to dock your ship inside the station where it could easily be disabled or destroyed?”

“I suppose not,” the Russian man replied as he begrudgingly stepped up on the platform behind Fil.

“Make sure you maintain transporter lock on us at all times, Chief,” Koester advised the transporter operator. Chief Blackman acknowledged, then indicated the system was ready. Koester looked at his fellow officers and took a deep breath. “Here’s hoping everything is as it seems and on the level,” he said, prompting nods from the others. He then looked back at Blackman and ordered, “Energize, Chief.”

“Energizing,” Blackman stated as he ran his fingers down the controls and the transporter hummed to life, the four men dematerializing in a sparkle of blue light.

Several seconds later, the four men materialized on the similar platform at the far end of *Starbase Ops* aboard *719*. As the system returned to stand-by mode, all four stared in silence at the other people manning the consoles and watch stations. Each in turn stared silently back at the new arrivals. All the starbase crew wore uniforms similar to what Pearson had been seen wearing during her subspace communication with *Starbase Typhon-Bravo*, akin to the Starfleet uniform of the 2260’s and sharing the same three primary color designations, yet slightly different in style than what the history texts showed. The silence was broken by a shouted name.

“Peter!”

Commander Michelle Petersen, wearing a red miniskirt-style uniform and standing behind the security console, suddenly ran forward, arms spread, and enveloped Fleet Captain Koester in a hug as he stepped down off the platform.

Harkonnen watched what was happening for a second or two before looking back at the group gathered at the far end of the space. He did not see the woman he was looking for right away until a door on the upper level swished open and Captain Cathryn Pearson stepped out.

“Kitty Cat?”

The woman looked down and, upon seeing Harkonnen, her lips spread in a wide smile.

“Kitty Cat!” Harkonnen shouted.

“Konstantin!” Pearson responded, sliding down the rails of the closest stairs and rushing into her husband’s arms, the pair spinning as they embraced each other beside the master systems display.

“I get the feeling Captain Harkonnen no longer believes this is a trap,” Kale remarked to Admiral Fil, prompting a smile from the Catullan before they too joined the reunion.

“Welcome back,” Fil remarked to everyone in ops. “It has been a strange and interesting year since you and the entire starbase disappeared, and we all have a lot of catching up to...”

“A year?!?” Pearson remarked with shock, finally letting go of her husband and sharing a look with Commander Petersen. “What do you mean, ‘a year,’ Penji? It’s only been a few months since the incident!”

“Captain K’danz’s science officer theorized that time was passing at different rates on each side of the wormhole,” Admiral Kale explained. “We need to have a formal debriefing as soon as possible so we can figure out exactly what happened here!”

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A short time later, the four fleet officers were in *Starbase 719*’s briefing room on the upper level of Ops with Captain Pearson, Commander Petersen, and one of the station’s yeoman acting as a sort of court reporter, recording the ongoing discussion. Their first priority was comparing a manifest of personnel listed as ‘Missing, presumed Killed’ that had been compiled by one of the yeoman aboard the *Dauntless* and comparing it with a list of the starbase personnel currently aboard the station. There was a difference of almost a hundred names, beside which Koester would enter a checkmark indicating their service records required updating and the next of kin of those still missing needed to be contacted.

“What about Five?” Koester finally asked. When neither Pearson nor Petersen appeared to understand Koester’s question, he clarified, “Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Wyatt Cerilli from the *USS Dauntless*. My former-Borg crew member. He disappeared when our engineering crews were aboard the station trying to help jettison the reactors and never beamed back, and we thought he might have somehow been trapped aboard.” Looks of understanding dawned in the women’s expressions.

“Yes, Lieutenant Cerilli made the transition during the incident, though not with the station,” Petersen explained rather vaguely.

“Well, what exactly happened?” Harkonnen asked. “What was this ‘incident’ to which you refer, and where did the starship currently moored in the spacedock come from? Who built it? And why is it there?”

Pearson gestured to the yeoman to stop the recording, then dismissed her. Once the briefing room door had swished shut behind her, Pearson turned to Kale and said, “I think it best this not be entered into the official record.”

“Why?” Kale asked. “What’s going on Cathryn?”

Pearson shared a look with Commander Petersen before finally saying, “We were in a strange situation. A once in a thousand lifetimes event. And I’m afraid what we did may have broken a few Starfleet regulations, not to mention the Prime Directive.”

Now it was Kale and Harkonnen’s turn to share a look. Finally Kale said, “Perhaps if you told us what happened, off the record, we could figure out exactly how to write up the incident report without too much accusation or blame?”

Pearson took a deep breath, slowly releasing it, before saying, “I suspect we’ll all feel much more comfortable debriefing this over a drink.”

“I’ll second that!” Harkonnen agreed.

“Fine,” Kale said. “Got any of the real stuff around here?”

“I know just the place,” Pearson said with a grin.

*To Be Continued...*