

Stardate 70704.9
Federation Starbase 719
Typhon Sector

The transporter platform at the far end of Ops hummed to life and Vice Admiral Kalin Kale of Alpha Centauri materialized, alongside a couple of small boxes. He leaned down to pick up one of the boxes as Lieutenant Jinny Erikson rushed over to grab the other two.

“Let me help you, Admiral,” Erikson said. “Where do you want these?”

“Up in my office if you can, Lieutenant. Thank you,” Kale replied. He paused a moment after stepping down off the platform to look around. Several technicians were present in Ops, repairing and upgrading the work consoles or repainting bulkheads that were damaged during the station’s recent six-month-long adventure. And while Kale had of course been aboard *719* several times since its return from the alternate reality, it had always been as a visitor and commander of *Starbase Typhon-Bravo*. Now that the original starbase was beginning to resume some of the duties for which it had been built – including shipping supplies and material to the handful of colony worlds in the Fifth Fleet AOR – it was time for Kale to relinquish *Typhon-Bravo* and resume his duties as Sector Coordinator aboard *719*.

Kale walked up the stairs on one side of Ops leading directly to his outer office door. The doors parted at his approach and he stepped into the reception room. It was obvious his aide, Commander Galen DuLac, had already returned to the larger starbase ahead of the admiral, as a metal shield with crossed swords mounted behind it – a memento of his homeworld of Avalon – hung on the wall directly behind the aide’s chair. Kale passed through the reception room and the second set of doors, finally entering his office for the first time in more than a year.

Placing the box on top of his desk alongside the two that Erikson had carried up, Kale moved around the desk and sat in the seat behind it, turning it to face the large window that looked out into the depths of space beyond the starbase and sighed contentedly.

Space, the Final Frontier...

Star Trek: Fifth Fleet

“The Reformation of the Fleet” By PJK

A Typhon Sector Crisis Story

Vignette D – Starbase 719

A couple of days later, most of the starbase command staff – including Kale and Captain Kathryn E. Pearson – were gathered in the briefing room on the upper level of Ops. Missing from the gathering was Commander B’Elanna Torres, who was still assigned to *Typhon-Bravo* as a duty officer and Captain Konstantin Harkonnen, who in spite of being the Sector Strategic Operations Officer, was aboard the *USS Corsair* assigned to a brief patrol between the Typhon Sector and Panmunjom and back to monitor Kairn activity along the border.

“We’re starting to run into problems,” Pearson was saying. “As systems come back on line, and the repair and temp crew begin to relocate or leave, we are starting to require the personnel that left prior to the incident to resume their duties. Unfortunately, a large number of them – including my Chief Operations Officer – are currently assigned to *Starbase Typhon-Bravo* with required duties there. And we obviously cannot leave the other starbase undermanned any more than we can this one.” Pearson looked directly at Admiral Kale as she added, “To add insult

to injury, I received this special request this morning.” She passed the padd she was holding to the Centauri. He activated the device and read the file displayed on the screen, his eyebrows going up in surprise.

“Commander Torres is requesting a permanent transfer to the new starbase when it is moved to Sector 50111, contingent on Commander Tom Paris receiving a similar transfer?” He looked back at Pearson and asked, “What’s this all about? And does Captain K’danz know she’s potentially losing her first officer?”

“I looked up recent communiques to Starfleet,” Pearson said. “There have been a number of transfers in the last month. Setton Arbelo received orders back to Earth, and Peter is breaking in a new XO aboard the *Dauntless*. And apparently Carrie approved Commander Paris’ request about a month ago. Apparently, the Paris family wants to spend some quality time together in one place for a while. His request is currently at the Bureau of Personnel awaiting determination of the final disposition of *Starbase Typhon-Bravo* before they will approve or disapprove the request.”

“That puts you in a bind,” Kale agreed. “You cannot approve Commander Torres’ request until her husband’s request is approved, but you can’t keep yanking her from assignment to assignment either.” Kale looked at his aide and said, “Galen, send a communique from me to BUPERS. See if we can expedite this situation. After all, we know *Typhon-Bravo* is going to be moved and re-designated. It’s only a matter of when.”

“Aye, m’Lord,” DuLac replied in his Avalonian accent, jotting notes into his own padd.

“Speaking of first officers,” Kale said, turning his attention back on Pearson. “YOU still need one. It was one thing when Val’ri was in command of both this base and the Sector and you were her first officer more or less running the station. But now you’re the station commander and I oversee the sector – which in a twist of irony is actually thirty-four separate sectors making up the Fleet AOR. You need a right-hand person to do a lot of what you did for Val’ri.”

“That was something I was working on before the incident,” Pearson said. “I have someone in mind. I just need to get Starfleet to sign off on him.”

Kale suspected he knew who Pearson was referring to, but hoped he was wrong, since there was no way Starfleet would let the officer in question become first officer of one of the Federation’s most important outposts.

“Regarding duty assignments on the two stations,” Kale said, slightly changing the topic. “I would like to open the rosters to volunteers as to who gets permanently assigned to which starbase. We just need to make sure experience is evenly spread, so not all the junior personnel to the new base while the old hands stay here. But we’re probably going to have to requisition BUPERS for new personnel whichever way it goes.” There were nods of assent from everyone around the table.

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A couple of days later, Pearson was sitting behind her desk, brewing, as she re-read the response she had received from Starfleet Command regarding her choice of first officer. Initially, she had wanted to appoint her husband, Konstantin Harkonnen, as she knew his temperament and abilities - intimately. Additionally, he had performed more than adequately as first officer and occasional acting-commander of the *USS Corsair*. However, the brass back in San Francisco apparently did not approve. The fact that the Admiralty was still holding a grudge regarding the incident that gave the Defiant-class starship its name pissed her off all the more.

Pearson’s clouded thoughts were interrupted by the whistle of the intercom.

“Captain,” said the voice of station security chief Michelle Petersen. “You have a visitor.”

“Please tell whoever it is that I’m indisposed at present,” Pearson replied, not feeling like having to deal with unexpected company.

“I’m sorry, Captain, but the Ambassador insists on meeting with you,” Petersen responded.

‘Ambassador?’ Pearson thought to herself. She could not recall being informed of any official visitors coming to the station, and would never have expected any at present, given the station’s current condition. But she could not simply turn away such a high-ranking official either. Taking a deep breath and slowly releasing it, she finally said, “Fine. Please send the Ambassador up to my office.”

A minute later the door chime sounded. Again, Pearson took a deep breath, then touched a control on her desk to open the door. The woman who stepped into the office was probably the last person Pearson expected in the universe.

“Val’ri!!” Pearson squealed as she jumped out of her chair and rushed over to engulf her former shipmate and commanding officer in a tight hug. As always, Val’ri Raiajh tolerated the intimate contact. “Why didn’t you tell me you were coming??”

“I figured when you were told the Federation Ambassador to Bel-Terra was coming to visit the station, that you would have known that meant me,” Raiajh replied as Pearson led her toward the couch across the office and started pouring her a cup of tea from the nearby samovar.

Pearson suddenly recalled being told by Lieutenant Erikson that a diplomatic vessel was scheduled to arrive within 24 hours the previous afternoon, but had not made the conscious mental connection with Bel-Terra.

“What brings you all the way back here?” Pearson asked her friend. The sudden rise of one eyebrow gave Raiajh a very Vulcan look.

“Are you kidding? When I heard that *Starbase 719* had returned and almost everyone that had been thought killed last year was alive and well, I had to immediately postpone several appointments and events and head out here to see you for myself!” Raiajh replied. “What happened exactly? Where did the station go? There are so many rumors, exaggerations, and conflicting stories, I don’t know what to believe!”

Pearson grabbed herself a cup of tea and sat down on the couch next to Raiajh, then spent the next two hours telling the retired admiral everything that had occurred aboard the station from the morning Commander Torres had first detected the rising power levels in the fusion reactors to the day the alternate *USS Enterprise* returned to their own dimension in a flash of light.

As Pearson finished her tale and helped herself to her third cup of tea from the samovar, Raiajh asked, “How have operations and the repairs to the station been progressing since you returned? I sensed something is bothering you when you hugged me upon my arrival. And your voice sounded agitated when Michelle first announced you had a visitor.”

“I’m sorry about that,” Pearson said, returning to her seat. “The repairs to the station are coming along faster than I expected, actually. No, what’s bothering me is Starfleet won’t allow me to appoint the person I want as my new first officer.”

A knowing smile appeared on Raiajh’s lips before she said, “Let me guess. Konstantin?”

“He’s the most qualified! We work together well! The crew respects him! I don’t want to bring in some total stranger and have to break them in. Especially not with the direction the fleet and AOR will be going in the next several months! Isn’t it time Starfleet forgives and forgets what Konstantin did with the *Corsair* and let me appoint who I want as my XO?”

“Cathryn, have you ever stopped to consider that maybe Starfleet’s concerns are not about what Konstantin did in the past?” Raiajh asked. “After all, they allowed my promotion of him to the rank of captain to stick, even after much of the Admiralty expressed disapproval of my actions. And they have not prevented you from letting him command the *Corsair* when his duties as SOO allow.”

“What other reason could there be?” Pearson asked in frustration.

“I believe Starfleet is concerned with the appearance of a conflict of interest,” Raiajh offered.

“What do you mean?”

“Do you honestly think it is a good idea for a married couple to be both the commander and first officer of a Federation starbase, especially one as important as *719* has become over the last decade? Any decision you make will be questioned and second-guessed. It will be much easier for you if you appointed just about any other Starfleet officer to the position.”

“But YOU had Sylvan on your command staff when you were in command of the station! And Captain K’danz and Commander Dar – both aboard the *Bellerophon* – are married!”

“Yes, Sylvan was on the base command staff, but in charge of the Medical Department, and as such reported to you as first officer. He was not considered Sector Staff, which reported directly to me back then, and reports to Kalin now. And in Carrie’s instance, Dar is her engineer, not her first officer. Starfleet considers there to be enough

separation to help avoid that appearance of a conflict of interest. I'm sure if Dar ever wanted to become a first officer, he would have to transfer to another starship in order to do it."

"I suppose you're right," Pearson said dejectedly, her face looking down at the cooling cup of tea in her hands. "But I still need an XO. Who do I choose? I really don't want the Bureau of Personnel to step in and force someone I don't know or don't think I could work with into that role."

"Tell me, Cathryn, what did you do for the year you were trapped in the alternate reality? Certainly you didn't let all command decisions fall on your shoulders the entire time?" Raijah asked.

"Actually, from our point of view, it was closer to six months we were in the alternate reality," Pearson remarked. "Commander Kyman and some of the other science officers in the fleet have hypothesized that time passes slower on the other side of the barrier than in our own reality, which is why their present is the mid-23rd century while ours is the late-24th. But no, I appointed Michelle as my acting first officer for the duration because I trusted her and I knew I couldn't do it all on my own."

"Well there you are," Raijah said with a smile. "I think you were concentrating so much on wanting Konstantin as your first officer, it blinded you to other qualified candidates right in front of you."

"But if I promote Michelle to the position, who will I get for security chief?" Pearson asked.

"Finding a qualified security chief is a piece of cake compared to finding a first officer you can trust, someone with the right qualifications and that you can be sure your crew will respect," Raijah advised. "I think you know what you need to do, Cathryn."

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Stardate 70730.6

A small crowd of starbase crew members, including Admirals Penji Fil and Kalin Kale and Ambassador Val'ri Raijah, were gathered in the lounge area that overlooked Starbase Ops. Several windows along the outer bulkhead looked out on the depths of deep space, and a large purple nebula could be seen in the distance.

Near the windows stood Captain Cathryn Pearson and her husband, Captain Konstantin Harkonnen. They were talking with a man wearing the gold-colored uniform of the security division and the insignia of a Lieutenant Commander, getting to know the newly arrived security chief. The conversation was interrupted by the sound of one of the nearby lifts as it activated and carried two people to upper level.

A moment later, Commander Michelle Petersen – wearing a brand-new command red uniform – appeared on the upper level in the company of her own husband, Fleet Captain Peter J. Koester of the starship *Dauntless*. Petersen looked nervous when she saw all the people gathered in the lounge, but Koester could not look any prouder of his wife. He escorted her forward, her arm draped in the crook of his left elbow, up to where Pearson, Harkonnen, and her replacement were standing.

"Congratulations, Commander," Harkonnen said, shaking Petersen's hand as she released her husband's arm. "I'm sure you will make an excellent first officer for the station."

"Thank you, Captain," Petersen replied before she looked at Pearson. "Let's get this over with, Cathryn. Before I change my mind."

"Too late," Pearson said with a grin. She then grabbed a padd that had been sitting on one of the nearby lounge chairs and, activating it, started to read from it.

"To all whom these presents come, greetings. Be it known that Michelle Petersen – Commander, Starfleet – having proven herself qualified for the position, and having my full faith and confidence, is hereby appointed as Executive Officer, Federation *Starbase 719*, located in the Typhon Sector, Federation Fifth Fleet Area of Responsibility. Effective this stardate of 70730.6. Signed, Cathryn Elisabeth Pearson, Captain, Commanding Officer – *Starbase 719*." Pearson deactivated the padd and handed it to Petersen before offering her hand. "Congratulations, Commander!"

"Thank you, Captain. I hope to uphold the confidence you have shown in me," Petersen said. Then as people in the crowd started calling out, "Speech! Speech!" she turned around to address the audience in attendance.

“I’m not much of a public speaker. I never thought there would ever be a day I would be wearing a red uniform. But I hope to fulfill every expectation our crew... out family... has of me and contribute further to the mission and success of the Federation Fifth Fleet. Thank you all!”

As another round of applause erupted, Commander Galen DuLac announced, “Thither art refreshments available in the briefing room. Please help yourselves.”

“Congratulations, Hun,” Koester said, approaching his wife. “I knew I married you for some reason.”

Petersen wacked the Fleet Captain in the stomach with the back of her hand before saying, “Watch it, Hon! It would be awful if the *Dauntless* was denied permission to dock the next time you plan on taking some R&R aboard the station!”

To Be Continued...