

U.S.S Habakkuk, S1 Ep1 – Shakedown

Prologue



Hercules Henry, the new Starfleet captain about to get given his commission stood looking along the promenade, Deep Space Nine was one of the most historical sites in federation history. The site where the dominion first attacked, where the Cardassians occupied Bajor and the site where the emissary used to be stationed.

This was his first time on DS9 and he was really excited, he stood and saw a trill with the science's uniform and the Pips of a lieutenant commander ran over to him, "You must be captain Henry, it is a pleasure to meet you sir" she said with a smile on her face "I am Lieutenant commander Ezri dax, welcome to Deep Space Nine, General Kira is waiting on the operations deck" she motioned for him to walk with her "She is waiting with details about your ship"

"Wonderful. Such a pleasure to meet you, Dax. So, you have an interesting history, or should I say herstory, I have heard."

Hercules paused. "I am a student of etiquette. What is the best way to address a joined Trill with a diverse background?"

"Please sir, just call me Ezri" she said as they walked towards the elevator next to Quark's bar.

"Not at all, I am the ninth host of the dax symbiote" she responded "So how did you get your promotion, if I may ask" she said smiling

Hercules tone went dry. "My former position was as an XO on a strategic and defense patrol vessel in the Gamma Quadrant. We were hunting down some Genzemi weapons dealers who had weaponized a virulent flowering weed. We were ambushed when they transported the blooming weeds aboard ship. We were barely able to contain the spread of the pollen before it took out half the crew, including the captain. I had to take command. We halted the toxin and I worked with the doctor to concoct a cure to treat the rest of us who were effected." Hercules looked at Ezri. "Then we hunted down the Genzemi responsible and captured them."

Ezri's smile left her face, she was expecting something about him being a model officer "Well i am sure you can cope with whatever is thrown at you" she said as she entered the lift.

As they entered Ezri spoke out "Ops" and as the lift left, they could hear someone shout "Quark"

"Who is Quark?"

"It's a long story" Ezri responded. This had put the smile back on her face

The lift arrived in ops and Hercules and Ezri both walked off, they heard shouting coming from the office "I told you i needed the report from the defiant repairs on my desk" she yelled "Dismissed" the doors opened and two men in starfleet operations uniforms walked out.

Hercules looked at Ezri. "Bad time?"

"That is general Kira, she has your comission"

Hercules had heard of the Bajoran officer by reputation. She was purportedly quite the fireball. Now, he would see for himself.

Both officers walked up to the office and the door opened "General, captain Henry is here to see you"

"Thank you Zi, dismissed" Kira responded

"General," Hercules said once Ezri exited.

"Take a seat captain" Kira said as she motioned for him to sit down. "First of all, welcome to Deep space Nine" I the officer there was seats and the desk with a console on it as well as a dirty, old baseball. She held a Padd and pressed some buttons on it "Well i have your ship, USS Habakkuk"

"I am delighted, as you can well imagine." Hercules eyed the baseball. "Pardon me, General. You play baseball?"

"No, it was the stations old captain"

A chirp came over the comm "Brig to Admiral Kira, we have an Arlin Chell"

"On my way, well captain are you ready to meet your chief engineer" she said

"Of course," Hercules said as he stood. "Then, I suppose, I can sign the lease and you can give me the keys.

"I suppose so" she said as she began to walk out of the room.

Hercules laughed at his own joke and followed the general.

BRIG

The captain and General walked into the brig to see some sort of Bolian/Bajoran hybrid species. "Captain Hercules Henry, meet Arlin Chell, your new chief engineer" Hercules looked around.

"We are in the brig. Why? Why is my new chief engineer in the brig?"

"I will let him explain that one" she smiled "The Habakkuk is in docking port three" she walked out of the room.

Chell turned over on the bed in the brig. As he got a look at the Captain standing outside, he rolled off onto the floor before scrambling to attention. "Captain." He waited for a response.

"Explain yourself, crewman."

"Well sir I had a bit of a disagreement with a fellow I met at the bar here." Chell rubbed his jaw a bit. "That ended up getting a bit physical. Should be happy his friends were there to back him up."

"A fight? What are you? Fresh out of the Academy? Is this normal for you?"

"No sir. Only happened because they said Starfleet was a joke. They can mock me all they want, but they can't mock the uniform."

"Hm. I prefer a more polite approach." Hercules surveyed the brig that held Chell. "So, she didn't quite leave directions for how to get you out of here. Let's see how much weight my command codes carry on a Bajoran station." The captain tapped a standard command code into the console next to the brig.

The force field lowered and Arlin walked out towards the captain.

"I think we should get you off this station and onto the Habakkuk before any other incidents, Chief. What do you say?"

"Aye, sir."

Chapter 1



Captain Henry and Chief Petty Officer Chell walked onto the bridge of the new galaxy class refit, the USS Habakkuk. They could see all of their senior staff on the bridge at their stations, the first officer, Commander Feezal a denobulan female was sitting in the captain's chair. "Make sure the EPS grid is calibrated correctly" .At ops was ensign Buchanan, this was his first posting "Yes sir". The commander turned around to look at tactical and saw the captain and shot out of her seat "Captain on the bridge" she said and every officer on the bridge stood at attention.

Ziara bolted out of her chair, her salute crisp and precise. Her attention stance was perfect as was her uniform. She was used to formal settings from her time with Nova Squadron. The Caitian was short, standing only four foot nine inches

high and was thin. She was short by Caitian standards and had been the runt of her litter. Her black stripes on white fur made her resemble a white tiger. She cut her hair short in what was, for a Caitian, a very boyish way. She smiled ever so slightly at finally meeting her new captain.

Lieutenant Th'akyllith looks up from tactical. He snaps to attention eyes on the Captain. His antenna twitch and the CPO Chell's nonchalant attitude. 'Ziara' He thinks. 'I seem to remember that name from the past. I wonder if it is a common name for a Caitian.' His eyes never waver from the captain.

“At ease.” The captain sat in his chair. “Ops. Status report?”

Ziara speed inside, and soon as the Captain said 'at ease' she relaxed enough to let the look of happiness at seeing one of her best friends cross her face. She gave Arlin a wink and a small wave as she sat back down. If she didn't have a report to give in a few moments, she would have dashed over and gave Arlin a flying bear hug.

"DS9 has given us clearance to depart sir" Euan turned around "The warp plasma manifold is out of alignment by point zero five microns, but we can repair that on route"

“I would hope so. Well, crew, we can get to know each other better once we get going. Helm detach all morning clamps. Move us away from the station at one-eighth impulse.”

"Aye, detaching all mooring clamps. Moving us away from the station at one-eighth impulse." Ziara replied crisply. While she liked the accent personally, unlike many Caitian's she preferred her translators not use a purring 'accent' with her speech while on duty. Off duty, well she thought it was sexy, but not appropriate for work when you needed clarity.

Ensign Buchanan pressed some buttons on his console "captain, orders have come through" he tapped a few more buttons "we are to head for Trillious prime on a simple shakedown cruise, once there we will receive orders by the Deep space nine and starfleet command"

“Very good. Helm let’s move out! Warp factor 5.”

Just as the captain said that, the entire bridge went red as the ship rocked. Euan fell out of chair, and the rest of the senior staff rocked and fell over.

"Report!"

The ops ensign stood and sat back in his chair "No damage captain, i don't think it hit us," he tapped his console "from what I can tell they hit the station, we are being hailed by the general sir"

Ziara stayed in her chair as the ship rocked, "Manuvering to safe distance." Ziara reported.

"Hit the station?" Okel thinks. He raises shields and checks tactical readouts to see if enemies are near.

"Tactical, Shields up and scan the area. Who fired? What kind of weapon? How much damage did they do?" Hercules got back into his chair. "Hail DS9!"

"Shields up sir." Okel began to scan the area. "Scanning sir"

"Sir 3 Galor class warships are attacking the station. We were apparently caught in the crossfire and may not be the primary target." Okel pauses and quietly says "They are sloppy with targeting. "

"We have to assist," the captain said. "Lt Rrareth, attack pattern Omega Five. USS Habakkuk to Deep Space Nine, do you need assistance?" Hercules asked over an open Hail

"Attack pattern Omega Five, Aye Aye." Ziara called out as the huge ship suddenly changed course, flipping over Deep Space Nine with an irreverent defiance of standard starship maneuvers. Under her touch the ship moved like a ballet dancer as it hurled back between the arms of Deep Space Nine towards the attacking Galors. She also took a moment to respond to the hail, "Deep Space Nine on screen." She reported as the general appeared.

"Captain" the general said, she was covered in grease and the room had flames coming off the consoles. "We were attacked, we have lost upper pylon two and they have damaged our weapons systems, they are escaping through the wormhole, you can still track them." A crewman shouted from the background "They have taken the orb of contemplation" The general looked at the captain "Go get our orb back, i will have the defiant follow as soon as possible"

Hercules heard the order. One side of him wanted to aid the station. But he knew what the orbs meant to the Bajoran people. The orbs were how their

prophets communicated with them. They were religious artefacts of the utmost importance. "Helm break off our attack. Plot a course for the wormhole. Mr. Doldar, track and lock onto the ship that had the orb. Scan its engine signature before they hit the wormhole, so we don't lose them on the other side." The other side. Captain Henry felt a wave of excitement go through his torso; they were about to enter the Gamma Quadrant.

The general disappeared of screen as the bridge got a call from engineering. "Engineering to bridge, that hit damaged an EPS conduit that links the sensors to the science console, sensors will be unreliable at best"

Chell shrugged his head. "I step on board and then something needs fixing"

Lt. Daphina, a Denobulan science officer was at the sensor station and attempted a scan to find the source of the attack, the results yielded nothing. She reported, "Sir, sensors are having difficulty pin-pointing the source of the attack."

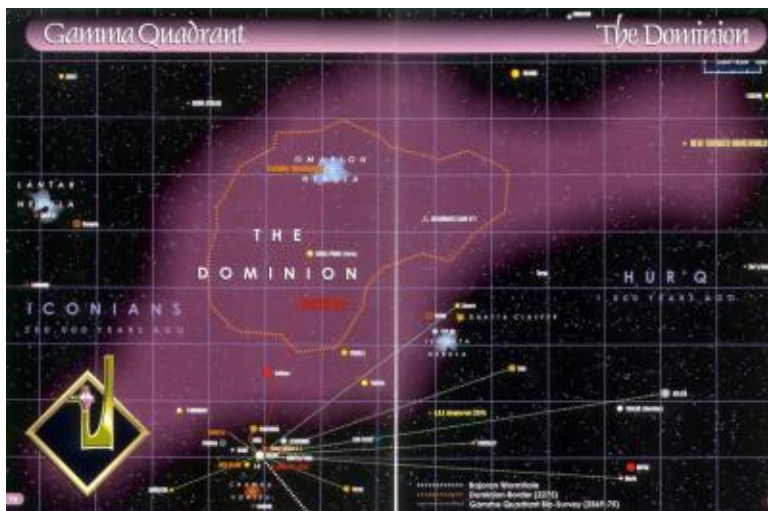
"Breaking off the attack and plotting a course for the wormhole, Aye Aye" Ziara said, her hands flying over the controls as she worked out the best options. She saw one of the options put them right behind the ship that had stolen the orb. The massive ship twisted onto its new course, "We are right on their tails, sir" she announced.

Chapter 2



"Science, can you scan the vessel and determine the location of the orb?" the captain asked.

Okel stands by at the tactical station. So far, he has not shown himself in a good light. He was pretty good when it was away missions but being moved up to tactical has shown him, he may need to put some efforts on changing how he functions in Starfleet. He wonders if he should offer to assist in the repairs of the sensors or maybe in assisting with the sensor sweep. Maybe he should wait to see if the captain wants him to fire on the fleeing ships.



Chell went right to work orders repair teams to work on sensors. After that they opened the plate below the science console and started to bypass systems. "Captain I have bypassed the damaged systems on the sensors. Might not be regulation but it will do 'til we have a moment to stop."

"Okel, scan those ships. Which one has the orb?" the captain asked.

Okel quickly scans the ships. Thankfully things seem to be working.

Hercules was happy to be right on their tail. Now, to catch the culprit that took the orb. "What do you have for me, Okel?"

I've identified the lead ship.

"Target engines and fire!" Captain Henry said with a clenched fist.

Okel swiftly targets engines and fires.

The phasers shot out of the Habakkuk and hit the lead ship's engines and hull. As they did both other Galor class warbirds assumed an attack formation, with one breaking off to attack the ship from behind.

The ship that didn't turn around, started to escort the lead ship off out the way

"Shall I prepare an away team to board the lead ship" Feezal the denobulan first officer said.

"Not yet. They don't seem softened up yet." Hercules grit his teeth. "Fire again, Mr. Okel. Target the lead ship's engines. Area attack. Take out the ship stupid enough to attack us too."

"Aye sir." Okel targets the lead ship with area attack. He hit.

The lead ship was damaged and stopped in position, the two other ships broke off their attack and went to warp.

"Captain main target disabled. The other ships are breaking off." Okel reports. He wonders if the orb is still on board the target ship or if it was transported off.

"The orb?" The captain asked.

Okel ran a sensor scan.

"Can we transport it off, Mr Okel?"

Okel studied his readouts. "I'm afraid not captain. It has some form of shielding around it.

"Hail them."

"Hailing frequencies open. Aye Aye" Ziara said as she opened a frequency to the other ships.

Once Hercules heard the hailing frequency chime signal, he said, "Enemy vessel, this is Captain Hercules Henry of the Federation starship Habakkuk. You will immediately cease your hostile actions and any attempt to escape our justice. Your actions constitute an act of war. We demand that you power down and prepare to be boarded. Failure to comply will be met with the harshest of responses."

He turned to Okel, "Signal to DS9 that we have the enemy ship routed. Find out their status."

The face of a cardassian appeared on screen "This is Gul Alket, our ships have gone for reinforcements, you don't have enough time to try any plans" he smiled "Your move federation"

"I am five seconds away from having my ship target your ship's batteries, the ones that power the force field you have surrounded by the orb, which is considered stolen property," the captain said as he stood. He knew Cardassian etiquette. Negotiations were always done with a steel visage. "And if you force me to make such a move, I will also have you suffer the indignity of being transported aboard this ship along with your command crew. I will subsequently have you turned over to Bajoran authorities to spend the rest of your lives in one of their penal colonies. You have five seconds to comply. Any other response than complete capitulation with these demands will mean that this will be the last time you hear me speak until you see me testify at your criminal hearing. The countdown begins now."

Ziara helpfully added a visual count down to their transmission.

Before Okel can communicate with DS9 the exchange with the cardassian begins. He hits the mute button and says "Captain, while their shields are down what about transporting a transponder onto their hull? We could use a sensor package from a class 2 probe." He then unmutes the transmission.

Hercules didn't respond. He confidently watched the timer with a smug look on his face.

Gul Alket just stared at the captain "Your starfleet, you would never do that"

The timer said two seconds. The captain said over the open channel, "Tactical, target their batteries. Maximum phasers. Fire when the timer hits zero."

Okel targets the engines.

Ziara noticed the blinking red light that told her the thrusters were overheated. She wouldn't have expected that, but every ship had its quirks and she hadn't mastered the Habakkuk's yet. She muttered a prayer in Caitian to the ship as she figured out how to manoeuvre without them.

Seeing the timer run out and getting the nod from the captain, Okel fires the phasers.

Chell had a slight smirk about their face. They mumbled, "Serves 'em right." Then looked about to make sure no one heard.

The phaser shot out of the banks and hit the ships starboard engine, hull plating the weapon systems as well.

The Cardassian on screen grunted "This isn't over Captain Henry, we will meet again" he turned and faced one of his officers "Drop the force field, we can't wait for reinforcements"

Captain Henry turned back to his chair, sat down, crossed his legs and smiled. "Your reasonableness will be noted in our ship's records, Gul. Chell lock onto the orb. Transport it over. And I suggest, Gul, the next time you and your friends choose to visit Deep Space 9 that you call ahead."

Chell gave the Captain a quick nod before starting to lock onto the orb.

As he did so, Ziara maneuvered the ship deftly to put the ship on the best line for the transporter beam to follow.

"Seems I'm having trouble locking on. Okel can you get a lock from your station?"

Okel tries to use the tactical station to assist with the transporter lock.

"If I didn't need to run a bypass earlier this wouldn't be a problem. The spoonheads are getting off easy." With the Tactical station linked up and target locked Chell began the transport sequence. "There we are."

Commander Feezal turned to the captain "Your order's sir"

"Let's head back to DS9," the captain said. "We will let the Cardassians deal with the failure of their attack squadron to achieve their goal. It will likely be way less merciful than a Bajoran tribunal. Helm, full impulse back to the wormhole."

"Helm, you heard the captain" Feezal said

"Setting course for Deep Space Nine. Aye Aye." Ziara said as she turned the big ship back towards the wormhole.

The large ship moved away from the wounded Cardassian ship, righting itself back to the standard orientation after her manoeuvres had put them off tilt a bit. The wormhole grew out of nothing and into the massive rift. Ziara was awed by it every time she saw it since she had been a little kid on the Bridge of the Sundowner. The Galaxy class ship slid through it and back towards the alpha quadrant.

Chapter 3

Lieutenant commander Ezri Dax was sitting in General Kira's office.

"I really don't know what to say general" Ezri said as she stood up.

Kira stood as well and moved to the other side of the desk "Just be glad, your will be on the front lines in the gamma quadrant, exploring strange new worlds"

"I hope I can do the same duty to the USS Habakkuk as I have done on deep space nine"

"It won't be the same without you" Kira nodded "But that ship will need a good councillor"

Just then a voice came over the comm "General, the USS Habakkuk has returned"

"Acknowledged" Kira said. "Have captain Henry report to my office"

Chapter 4

Captain Henry walked into General Kira's office, the general was standing talking to Ezri but turned around to see the captain "Ah captain, thank you for joining us" she said.

"Is everything wrapped up with the Orb? Mind giving me a little background? My crew is curious as to how we ended up in a firefight against Cardassians first thing out the gates."

"These aren't your traditional Cardassians, they are part of an extremist group called the True Way" the General looked at the captain "There core value is that the occupation of bajor shouldn't have ended"

"Some things never die," the captain remarked. "How further could my crew be of assistance?"

"Starfleet has decided that you will be going on a five-year mission" Kira paused for a few seconds "To the gamma quadrant"

"There have been some crew changes though, your first officer is being transferred and Starfleet is assigning you a new chief engineer, we have also made a decision about your ship's councillor"

"Wait? My chief engineer? I just picked her up out of the brig."

"Yeah, Starfleet didn't want an enlisted officer on this mission, and Ezri will be your councillor"

Hercules looked at the staff presented on the PADD. "Aw. Buchanan is so cute. What is he? All of 16 years old? and Ezri. It will be an honour to Serve with you."

"And you captain" Ezri said "I will see you on the ship" She said as she exited the room.

"All of the information about your officers is available in their personal file"

"So, can we talk about this five-year mission? What's the objective?"

"Exploration, captain, what else"

"And what of the Dominion Threat? Sending a Galaxy class full of families into possible enemy territory. Or can we skip the dangerous parts?" He smiles coyly.

"There is a peace treaty with the dominion, i doubt that they will risk that" the general responded

"Well then. An open-ended mission to explore. I'm in."

Chapter 5

Okel had spent time since they got back to deep space nine in his quarters, specifically unpacking and making sure his quarters were up to his standards.

Okel looked at Vulcan Lirpa mounted on the wall next to his Nausicaan Tegolar Sword. He stood contemplating his past experiences in security.

It had taken Ziara a bit to work out who Okel was, she hadn't recognized him immediately. However, she grinned as she pressed the chime to let him know she was there.

Okel snapped out of his memories and called out "Come in. "

Ziara stepped into his quarters. "Nice place," she commented as she stepped forward. "Nausicaan?" She asked nodding at the sword. She wanted to bear hug him but restrained herself for the surprise.

"Yes." I have made a study of martial arts and various weapons. It was useful as I was often assigned to security details on away missions." He sighed.

"Sometimes it was just a matter of appearing formidable." He pauses on the verge of perhaps saying more.

"You appeared pretty formidable about a decade ago." Ziara said as she admired his collection.

He peered at her. "Rareth family? I thought your name sounded familiar. So, did you escape your family by joining Starfleet as well?"

"More like a vacation. My family has a history of service. but I didn't take it seriously until after we ran from those pirates in a 'commandeered' shuttle along the Beltane nine docks with you shooting back and me driving." Ziara said with a grin.

Okel sat on his bed. "I have a confession. Those pirates were only after you because my family was in league with them sort of. After they sold you those goods, they pointed the pirates at you. That's part of the reason I left. They just had too many shady dealings and were forming alliances with some Orion's." He pauses. "I left their 'ship' and went back to Andoria to bone up my studies to be able to apply to Starfleet."

"The past is the past. After that, I kind of realized why Starfleet is important. It's good to see you again." The tiny Caitian said with a purr as she wrapped the Andorian in a hug.

Okel is shocked by the hug. But relaxes and hugs her back, though not as enthusiastically. Ziara May feel something under his uniform and realize he has an Ushaan-tor stabbed to his lower back.

"Well I'm hoping to have to spend some time practicing sensor scans. It's not something I'm used to doing and I don't want to disappoint the captain. "

"Yhea, I was kind of expecting him to tell science to do it. But I don't have a read for how he wants to run the ship yet. I wonder if that will continue when my uncle joins us." Ziara said, she noticed the weapon but didn't comment on it. She didn't carry personally, but she knew people who did.

Chapter 6

Once the ship was safely docked and secured, Ziara left an ensign on watch and headed down to engineering where she knew Chell probably was. She managed to catch Chell as they were walking without anything important in their hands. Ziara launched herself towards her old friend. The tiny Caitian half tackle half hugged the hybrid. "Arlin! It's so good to see you. I knew you were in this region of space and wanted to look you up once I got settled, but I never expected to get assigned to your ship. This is soo exciting." She quickly enthused as she hugged Arlin.

Chell gave Ziara a firm hug back. "Well that is kinda my doing. Was going to be reassigned to DS9 until I had a slight issue. You know how I tend to let my mouth run at times."

Ziara smirked, "That I do. How many times have I had to post bail so that we could work on Betty before a meet?" Ziara teased gently.

"Hey, I always pay you back." Chell gave Ziara a slight punch to the shoulder. "By the way how is the old girl? Running smooth?"

"Like you wouldn't believe. I flew her here and made a stop in the badlands. I set a record for the dash, but no one was there to see. If I can squeeze a few days off next time they hold it, I think I could win, and perhaps break some records with a bit of luck. You want to see what I've done with her since last time?"

"I better if ya made any adjustments to the plasma flow regulation. You always seem to mess that up."

"How am I supposed to tune her if I can't touch the plasma flow regulation?" Ziara with a happy purr as she led Arlin towards the shuttle bay and her ship.

Chell started to follow behind before running back to grab a toolkit. As they caught back up to Ziara Chell laughed a little. "You can tune Betty up as long as you don't ramp it up to high. Do that without compensating and you can have a plasma cascade rupture. I don't want to have to replace the entire eps system again."

"If I don't ramp it up, I miss the high end. The EPS system can generally handle the fluctuations. It's only broken twice..." Ziara said, and then under her breath, "since I went to the academy." she added.

Chell rolled their eyes.

"Besides, I heard that Uuthreep recently put out some new bioneural gel packs that should be able to balance the load better, I've been dying to try them, but their soooo expensive and I haven't had the time to race. But once we win a few, I'd like to try them." Ziara said as they entered the huge shuttle bay. Tucked away in a corner was the familiar sleek black shape of Black Betty.

Chell spotted the familiar shuttle right away. Heading straight over Chell ran a hand along the side of Betty. "Is that a new scratch?"

"Just a small one." Ziara said, despite the fact it could be seen from half way across the shuttlebay and was clearly deep. Not deep enough to breach the inside, but enough to cause concern. "I didn't dodge an asteroid in the denorious belt quick enough and it scratched the paint. I was planning to fix it after I landed, but well, we've had an exciting day.

"Well we shall have to take care of that once I get done fixing up the Habakkuk's sensors."

"Yhea, I've got to grab one of your crews and get to work on those thrusters. Docking was a pain without them, and we're a lot less manoeuvrable."

"So much to fix for our first run. Hope that doesn't become the norm." Chell glanced over at Ziara. Pointing at her pips Chell spoke up with a somewhat serious tone. "So, when'd that happen. Gonna have to get used to calling you sir."

"A couple of weeks ago, I came straight here from the Academy. CPO might outrank cadet, but they don't out rank a lieutenant." She grinned at Arlin. "Got the extra bump from flying with Nova Squadron, which is why I haven't made nearly as many changes as I'd like over the last few years. She's working without the latest tech, probably can still outrun every ship in the system though."

"That's good to hear. Hate to think all that work went to waste." Chell opened the shuttles hatch and made a gesture toward the inside. "So, shall we begin checking out the damage now or later?"

"We can look now, but I pushed her pretty hard getting here and playing around on the pit stops along the way. She's not a hanger queen, but pretty much everything needs a once over, and I have a new set of coils I'd like to install. I haven't even had time to unpack yet. Most of my stuff is still in her." Ziara explained as they entered the Cargo bay of the Betty. It was crowded with boxes filled with parts and Ziara's things. There were a few panels that were out of place, showing Ziara's clean but not extraordinary style of engineering. She was good at maintenance, and the Black Betty was always a work in progress.

"Well then I shall give her a quick glance to see what needs work sooner rather than later." Chell started a full scan of the shuttle systems before turning to look at the boxes. "After that I'll let you unpack while I go check how my people are doing with the ships repairs. Only left 'em for a moment so I can gauge how they do on their own."

Ziara grinned, "Right. Make sure they can work without you looking over their shoulder. I'll get you my systems readout." Ziara said in the growling purr that she used when she was off duty. When they moved into the small middle living area, it was everything two people needed for living in a shuttle like this for long trips. The replicator was a bit larger and industrial grade, designed for making ship parts as well as food for the crew. The second bunk was filled with junk, indicating Ziara had flown here on her own.

Chell eyed the bunk before turning back to Ziara. "Thought you Starfleet officers were supposed to be tidy."

"I am tidier, when I've got a passenger. But there wasn't anyone headed out this way that was cute enough and wanted to ride with me. I almost got this cute Trill science officer, but she shipped out before I could ask her."

"Sounds about right." Chell checked on the scan. With a quick glance they noticed the shuttle would need a few new parts, but mainly just needed some minor maintenance. "Well seems you kept this thing in better shap than last time. Shall get to work on this in a bit. Duty first though. Gotta make sure the department hasn't fallen to pieces. After we can grab a raktagino and get Betty running right again." Chell gave Ziara a wink before heading back out the shuttle. "Oh sorry. Permission to disembark sir?"

Chell rubbed Ziara back as they hugged in a comforting manor. "That it has." When they finally released the hug Chell made toward Engineering before turning back to wave back to Ziara and Betty.

Chapter 7

Captain Henry was sitting at the desk in his ready room looking over the new senior staff's personal files.

He put the files down then picked up his antique copy of Robert's Rules of Order and began reading through it for what must have been the eightieth time.

Hercules was a man of etiquette. It was like a language to him, one easier to master than foreign tongues. Every culture had etiquette, defined in its own way, subtle at times, sometimes more obvious.

He studied cultures from an etiquette standpoint. Even blind and deaf members of a society, the sightless and speechless, could pick up on nonverbal clues and integrate into societies. On many occasions, he would be symbolically blind and deaf on a first contact mission. The ability to pick up nuances in behavior, to integrate into an alien culture, could mean the difference between life and death.

As the captain studied his rules of order, he heard the door chime.

"Enter."

"Commander Dosru Reson reporting for duty sir" she stands tall at attention

"Welcome, Commander. So, tell me a little bit about yourself. We will be spending a lot of time together it seems."

"Newly promoted commander sir, pleasure to be here" the commander looked at the captain directly "If i may ask sir, what is our mission profile"

"The classic - seek out new worlds, new civilizations. Boldly go where no one has gone before. Very exciting indeed. Any recommendations what direction we should take once we enter the Gamma Quadrant? Should we go left, right, up, or down?" he joked.

"Sir i am sure you know that there is no up or down in space"

"Joke much where you from?"

"Can't two people joke captain" Dorsu said and smiled

Hercules stood. "What say we head to the Stargazer Pub? I haven't quite had the chance to give it a proper dedication."

"Sounds good captain"



The captain approached the bar. "So, Dosru. What's your poison of choice?"

The commander looked at the bartender and raised her hand "A diet coke please"

Hercules was perplexed. " 'Diet coke'. Never heard of it. Where's it from?"

"It is an ancient earth drink, i have been partial of it since i was at the academy"

"Okay. Let's give it a try. Make that two," the captain ordered.

The bartender walked over with two caramel coloured drinks "Here you go" he said as he put them down on the table.

Hercules took a sip and cringed. "Oh, my. You have quite the sweet tooth I take it."

"So, sir, what question's do you have" she took a drink "I believe that for us to work together we must trust each other completely"

"Agreed." Hercules took a moment to think about it. "What is the greatest challenge you have ever faced as a Starfleet officer?"

"Okay" she paused "When i was on my first commission, a helm officer, i was charged with treason" she took another drink "I was exonerated but it was the greatest challenge that i have faced"

"Treason? What were the charges?"

"I was framed by the romulans, they made Starfleet think that i had leaked Intel on the defiant class starship." she turned around and looked out of the window "The charges were dropped when a romulan stood up for me and gave evidence that i didn't leak the Intel"

"Wow. A Romulan. You have some interesting friends. Who was this Romulan?"

"I never found out, all i know is that they have some association with starfleet" she said

"Hmm. So, I read your file. But tell me about your skills. What were your focuses at the Academy?"

"I always had an interest in the Judge advocate office, that interest became a bit stronger after the incident"

"You must have more skills than that? I can't see them giving me a first officer with one area of specialty."

"I am an expert in helm operations, graduated top of my class" she smiled "i can do every move in the Starfleet manual"

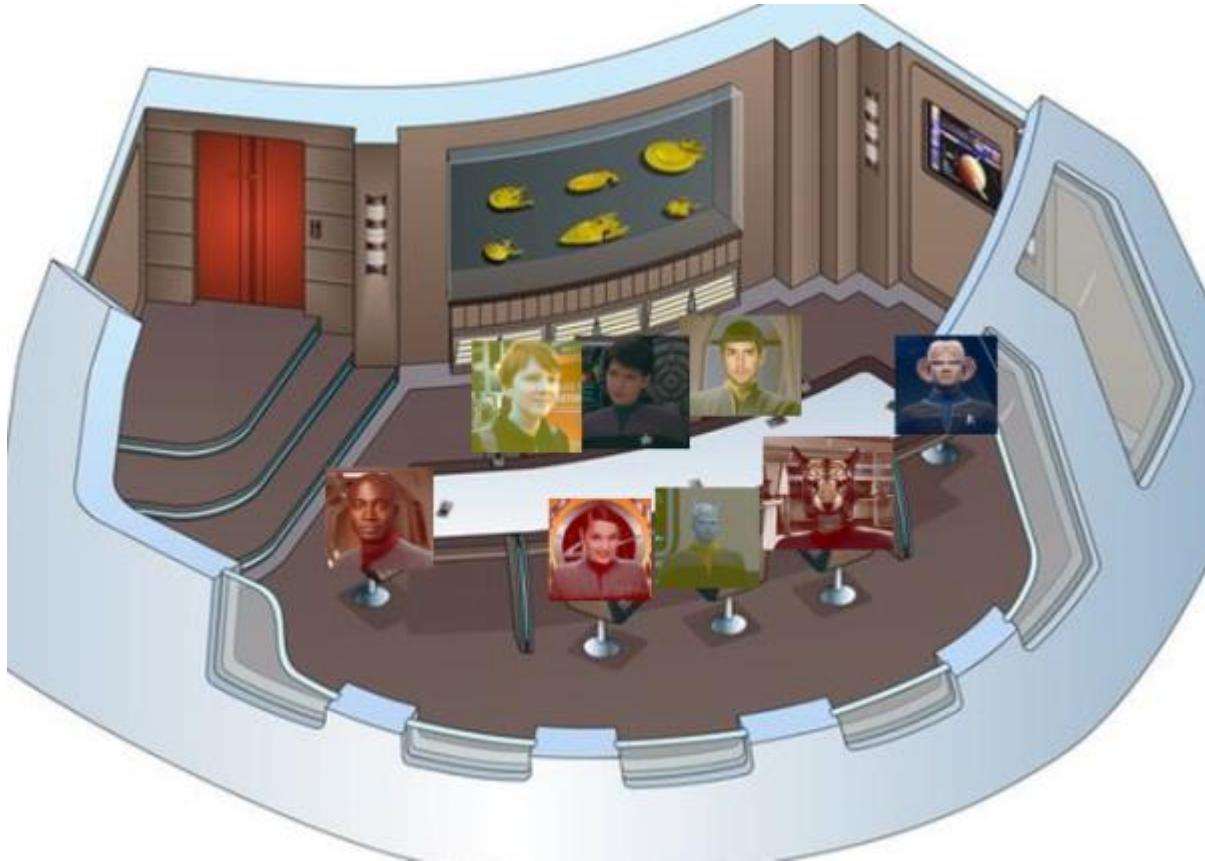
"Even the Riker manoeuvre?"

"Specifically, the Riker manoeuvre" she took a big gulp of her drink "so captain, what was your original position"

Hercules laughed at the question. "Disarming leftover ordinance from the war. Photon torpedoes lodged in the side of vessels that never went off; defunct space mines; cleaning out biological and chemical weapons depots. Led teams into some scary situations. Taught me to be calm under stress."

Dorsu paused "I bet that was fun" she smiled "so how are the other senior officers"

"We're all getting to know each other. In fact, with that question, I think its time for a senior staff meeting." He stood then gulped down the rest of his Diet Coke and cringed again. "Oof. I will never get use to that." He exited the Stargazer Pub with his new first officer in tow.



Okel sits in the conference room reviewing personnel records on his pad. He wished he'd had more time to visit with each member of security, but some things could not be helped.

Ziara bounded into the room energetically, with a padd in her hand. She settled in next to Okel "So you getting a good sense of who you got? I think I'm starting too, but I want to put them through their paces, perhaps a race through the Denorious belt if we stay here at DS9 for long enough. Everyone's new to the ship so I want to set in good patterns down. We're going to have the smoothest running shuttle bay in the sector if I have anything to say about it."

"At ease, Lieutenant," Captain Henry said. "And please take your seat." He waited for the Caitian to settle in then began. "Glad to have us all gathered in one place. I'm sure you have all been filled in on our mission perimeters. It's

the dream of every Starfleet cadet to get the legendary five-year mission. So, we will all be living the Dream. Exactly what course to chart once we pass through that wormhole into the Gamma Quadrant is now a matter of discussion. I, of course, suggest first star to the right and straight on until morning. But I would appreciate hearing from all of you on the matter. Opinions? Ideas?"

"And please let's go around the table, Introduce yourselves. Name. Rank. Position. Then your idea. One minute a piece. We will start to my left with the round Ensign."

"Ensign Euan Buchanan, chief of operations, i believe we should steer clear of dominion territory" he smiled at the captain "But given how the ship took on the cardassian's i think we could take them"

Ezri looked at all the senior officer's " I am Ezri Dax, lieutenant commander stationed on deep space nine before this, I am just happy to be here, don't really mind where we go"

"Lieutenant Sovin sir. I apologize for not being able to take my station when you came aboard. I was still recovering in sickbay. I shall keep this ship running as efficient as possible on the journey."

Doldar, a bit jittery from the cup of raktajino he had earlier. He spoke with a breathy voice, "Doldar. Lt. Commander. Chief Science Officer. I would love to get a deep scan of the interior of the wormhole."(edited)

"Lieutenant Junior Grade, Ziara Rrareth. Chief . What some of you might not know is that before the war, I was junior assistant helmsman on a Caitian trader that visited the Gamma Quadrant. It's been suspected that the Idran Terminus is on the edge of Dominion space. I know that during my visits, I never heard of them. This suggests that by heading away from core dominion space we are more likely to encounter species that are not under the control of the Dominion."

"That sounds fun," the captain said. "Can you tell me more about this Idran Terminus"

"Aye, Sir. The Idran Terminus of the Bajoran wormhole is so named because it is 4.7 light years away from the Idran system, which consists of three stars. It was a vital navigational marker when the Gamma quadrent was first explored.

It has no class M planets however, there was a small trading station there that was destroyed during the war."

"Lieutenant Okel Th'akyllith. Chief of Security. I honestly don't have any opinions on course sir. I would like to institute some cross training with security in other departments."

"We will get to that. I appreciate your enthusiasm, Mr. Okel, as much as I appreciate your actions during our first skirmish against the Cardassians." The XO stood up "I am commander Dorsu Reson trill" she waved at them "I hope to get to know you all" she sat back down.

"It sounds like no one here has a definite opinion about what to do." Hercules nodded. "Hence, we will pass through the wormhole. Once through, we will set a heading to the farthest reach of Federation star charts. I want to push this ship for a good trial run too. Get us far out. I will be authorizing us to travel at warp 9.25 for a two-week period. Yes. I know we will pass a lot along the way. We can drop sensor buoys every few hundred light years. But I want us really out there seeing things no one in the Federation has ever seen before. Get your departments prepped and ready. I want us on our way in eight hours. Dismissed."