



BY JOSHUA CHARLES WILDER

©2008

Star Trek New Order

Episode 015

“The Hardest Part”

Captain’s Log; Star Date 58254.3, The Beliskner has been assigned, with a token task force to patrol the region known as “Hell’s Gate” unfortunately the feature that gives this region it’s name is the massive plasma storms that constantly burn through it. The sensor foiling plasma makes this region perfect for an invasion, but they also make it very difficult for our ships to transverse it. The storms in the region are second only to the great infernos of the badlands. Since the fleet’s small number of maneuverable Intrepid, Nova and Defiant class are occupied elsewhere, my fighter wing has been tasked with the duty.

Three Peregrine Class fighters cruised through the fiery maelstrom, dodging among the pillar-like clouds of conflagration. Onboard the lead fighter, Commander Dranzian Chavin was attempting to scan the blazing tempest for any sign of the enemy.

“Damn!” She cursed, pounding her fist into the console, “I still can’t see anything but static, Hey Banshee, can you and Einstein see anything.”

“Not much,” answered Cadet ‘Einstein’ Percival, who was flying back seat in a Peregrine III flown by Cadet ‘Banshee’ Singer; she was monitoring an enhanced sensor pod carried by their fighter.

“Wait, I think I have a contact,” announced Lieutenant Commander ‘Stormin’ Dace in the last fighter, “Bearing thirty-four mark ten, thirty thousand meters.”

“Negative, sir” Percival replied, “I am just reading more debris.” During the Earth-Romulan War, a major battle was fought amongst the plasma storms, as such; there were many derelict Romulan and Coalition ships scattered throughout them.

“Alright,” Chavin interrupted, lets move on to the next patrol sector.”

* * *

Meanwhile, onboard the *Beliskner*, Captain Hunt was restless. They had seen no sign of the Romulan fleet suspected to be in the area, he had no choice but to continue sending out patrols to scan the storms.

“How long before the next patrol is supposed to exit the storms, Mister Dergos?” Hunt asked.

“Commander Chavin’s flight,” the Angosian replied, “is due to return in one hour sir.”

Hunt looked back and noticed that Dergos was gripping his console with white knuckles. “Anything I can do for you Major?”

“Not unless you can drop me off on Romulus, sir, I’m going stir crazy up here on these patrols, and I think my marines would agree.”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Hunt replied sarcastically.

*

*

*



The fighters still glided through the firestorms while they scanned their sector. Seeing nothing, Chavin was about to order them to continue to the next one, when abruptly, an alarm blared in her helmet. Suddenly, a Romulan fighter burst through the plasma and nearly collided with her craft. “Tally bandit!” She screamed over the comm., “any more contacts?”

“Negative,” Percival replied.

“I don’t think he saw us,” Singer noted, as the Romulan continued to barrel through the maelstrom, “Should we get out of here so we can tell the fleet?”

“There’s no time, we’ve got to follow him so we can find his base,” Chavin replied, and with that she banked into the inferno to follow the Romulan.

* * *

Meanwhile, on the opposite end of the sector, trouble was brewing. Without warning, a fleet of Romulan Warbirds decloaked in orbit of a federation colony world. The planet’s obsolete defenses opened up with Phaser and Surface to Space torpedo fire, but these barrages only served to illuminate their locations, which the Romulans subdued with a pinpoint orbital bombardment. Next the Romulans deployed wave after wave of landing craft containing Reman Shock troops.

The federation colony on Gamma Hydra IV fell within minutes, to the unrelenting surprise assault.

* * *

“With all due respect ma’am,” I still have crews patrolling the storms,” Hunt said to Admiral Nechayev, who was speaking to him via holographic Communicator, “I can’t leave them here without support, besides we may need them if we have to retake the colony.”

The holographic Admiral checked an invisible console, “Alright, Captain, how long until they are due to return?”

“In about 45 minutes,” Hunt answered, checking his Wrist Chrono.

“I can give you, one hour, after that, you must depart to join the fleet,” Nechayev relented, “Just in case, I’ll move the Star Carrier *Essex*, to provide fighter support for us, if your fighters can’t make it.”

“Yes Ma’am,” Hunt replied. The admiral’s image faded out of existence, “how in the hell did the Director of Starfleet Intelligence get assigned out here?” He asked no one in particular.

* * *

Chavin’s fighter continued to tear through the firestorms in search of her quarry. Ahead of her she spotted the Romulan zipping between pillars of conflagration. Up ahead, Chavin saw the fighter plunge into a solid wall of fire. She followed the fighter in, and shortly after, emerged in a relatively calm zone. Within seconds, another alarm blared in her helmet, which is when she took a look at her sensors, inside this void zone, were four Romulan fighters and a tender, it became clear to her that she had stumbled onto an enemy refueling base.

“Mayday,” She screamed over her comm., “tally multiple bandits, request assistance.” Through the interference of the storms, the rest of her flight heard the garbled transmission and arrived as fast as they could.

* * *

“Our patrol should be on there way back to base by now sir, should I allow the rest of the battle group to depart?” Dergos asked; the *Beliskner* was accompanied by a pair of Nebula class cruisers and a New Orleans class frigate.

“Tell them to return to the fleet,” Hunt said, as commander of the Galaxy class *Beliskner*, he was in *de-facto* command of the battle group; “Tell them; we’ll join ‘em as soon as we recover our fighters.”

“Yes Sir, remember, we only have about half an hour before we have to leave too.”

“Don’t you think I know that, major,” Hunt Snapped, “you’re dismissed!”

“Aye Sir,” Dergos spun on his heel and left the room.

*

*

*

Chavin got a bead on one of the Romulan fighters and fired a burst of Pulse phaser fire, she cheered as its shields flared, then collapsed, then the craft’s unprotected hull began to melt under the heat of the firestorms. Chavin banked away as the Romulan’s warp core imploded. Soon, another fighter was downed by Dace, but their trainees were not having as much luck.

The last two of the fighters had locked on to them. Inside, Singer was frantically trying to out maneuver her attackers, while Percival was watching her sensor readout, and trying to lock on to their pursuers with the aft phasers. An alarm blared in both of their helmets as the Romulans unleashed a volley of plasma yield missiles. Percival launched

a set of decoys in the hopes that they would jam the incoming missiles, but they had no effect. “We aren’t going to make it,” Percival shouted, “Those Missiles are locked in and homing.”

“Or maybe not,” Singer hypothesized, she pulled the stick back, “Are you thinking what I’m thinking?” Percival smiled. “Hang on!” Singer warned, “Here we go; time for a little something called a Crazy Ivan!”

“I hope this works,” Percival said as the ship flipped over on its back and accelerated straight towards the pursuing fighters. The Missiles continued to track her through the maneuver, and Singer fired phasers at close range towards the first bandit. Just before she hit, she banked away and flew between the fighters, followed by the Romulan missiles, which thanks to the distraction, were now homing on their launchers. The Romulans tried to disarm the missiles, but it was too late, the formation was vaporized in a cloud of intensely hot plasma.

All four of the fighters destroyed, Chavin turned her attention to the tender, which was now also firing its weapons at the federation fighters. Chavin lined it up and unleashed her two Photon Torpedoes and watched them impact the Romulan’s shield. Seeing that her only two warheads did not have the desired effect, Chavin called the other two fighters in to help her. Dace fired his two, with still little effect, but Singer’s torpedoes managed to put a hole in their dorsal shield. The Romulans didn’t take to kindly to that however, and opened up with even more disruptor fire.

Chavin's fighter took a hit, but her shields were holding so she pressed the attack and moved in for a strafing run on the tender. Each fighter took turns making close passes on the tender, first using their pulse phasers and nose arrays while approaching and then making slices with their aft array on their climb out. On her third pass, one of Chavin's pulses found its way to the Romulan's munitions stores, which exploded spectacularly. Unfortunately, Chavin was passing right over it at the time, her fighter was bracketed by the blast, her systems were immediately overloaded, and she was flung back into the firestorm.

Watching from his orbit point above the stricken tender, Dace saw her disappear into the plasma field, "Commander!" He shouted, "come in, Commander Chavin, do you read me?" After what seemed like hours waiting, Dace determined that the best way to find her was to get help from his ship. He rejoined with the trainees and they set a course out of the storm at full impulse.

*

*

*

"I have two contacts coming out of the storm," Dergos announced.

"Move to intercept," Hunt ordered, "Red alert." Klaxons sounded throughout the ship as the *Beliskner* approached the contacts.

"I have a clear reading now, they're our fighters," Dergos reported, "It appears that they're early."

"But there's only two," Hunt said, "Where's the third? Who's missing?"

“Their transponders are damaged, but I can tell you it’s one of the single seaters.”

“Please no,” Hunt begged, “open a channel.”

The screen came to life and showed the cockpit of Dace’s fighter. Hunt collapsed into his chair in shock. All Dace could stammer was, “I’m sorry sir.”

* * *

Chavin’s fighter continued to tumble through the storms. She had drifted very far from the battle site. When she came too, she found that the fighter had found its way into another clearing in the storms. She toggled the throttle into reverse thrust and shoved it all the way up in an attempt to slow her fighter’s tumble, but nothing happened. She then tried to apply the thrust through her computer interface, still nothing. Finally she shouted to the computer to slow her down and the craft began to stabilize its tumble and lose velocity.

Chavin glanced out the cockpit’s canopy and saw that the view was dominated by a small planetoid. She tried to check her astrogator for coordinates, but found the device useless, most likely damaged in the explosion. She again glanced out her canopy and noticed that the planet seemed larger; she thought it must have been her eyes playing tricks on her, and then she realized that it was getting closer. Her fighter had been caught in its gravity well, when she ordered the all stop; she had lost any momentum holding her in orbit.

“Frak,” She shouted, pounding her panel, “what’s next.” As if on queue, the outside of her fighter began to glow orange as it began to feel the upper reaches of the atmosphere.

* * *

“Our initial search has come up empty, sir,” Dace reported, “of course this storm is massive, and we only have a few fighters available.”

“How many shuttles do we have onboard, Commander?” Hunt asked, pounding on the desk in his ready room.

“Aside from the ten Peregrines, we have eight Type Sixes, four Type Eights, and seven Type Nine shuttlecraft, as well as three Danube class Runabouts and nine Normandy class Dropships,” Dace replied

“That seems like quite a few craft, Commander,” Hunt snapped, “Are you telling me that we have not committed our full resources to the search?”

“I was concerned about Romulans sir,” Dace justified, “What if one of our search teams was jumped by a Romulan patrol, with all due respect sir, the Peregrines would stand a better chance.”

“Well I guess we’ll have to take that risk, won’t we!”

“Yes Sir,” Dace responded

“You’re dismissed,” Hunt bellowed, pointing at the door.

“Aye sir,” Dace replied, snapping to attention as he turned on his heels and marched towards the door. “Might I also mention that we are running up close to our deadline, Sir?” Dace added as the door slid open. Hunt snapped and threw the model plane which was sitting on his desk at Dace. The plastic projectile crashed into the bulkhead next to Dace and shattered into a hundred pieces. Dace walked out towards one of the aft consoles where he could plan the full scale search.

*

*

*

As it hurtled through the atmosphere of the planetoid, Chavin’s fighter trailed a plume of white hot plasma. Chavin screamed for her ships computer to slow them, but it’s only response was an alarm indicating that the device was rebooting itself. Gazing at the flames licking at her canopy, she knew that the computer would not be able to come back online in time to prevent the craft from burning up.

Chavin frantically looked around her cockpit for the answer, until her gaze settled on the emergency transporter control. Unfortunately it shorted out when she attempted to set the beam out coordinates. Frustrated she pounded her gloved fist into the panel.

“Why the frak does this have to happen to me?” She complained to no one. She then reached down and grabbed the Bright yellow ring between her legs and pulled it as hard as she could. Nothing happened. “Why the hell does everything break when you need to use it?” The device designed to disintegrate the canopy had failed, and the safety mechanisms built into the seat had prevented it from splattering her all over the canopy.

Outside she could see large pieces of the hull melting away from her fighter. She twisted the ring slightly to activate the backup system, and then pulled it again. This time, explosives blew the canopy clean off, and her seat was rocketed clear.

Although the Gs of the ejection knocked her unconscious, Chavin soon came to, floating under her parachute, still several thousand meters in the air. “Frak,” she exclaimed, “I hate it when I have to do that.”



*

*

*

Captain Hunt walked out onto the bridge, his uniform blouse disheveled. Hunt walked over to the Flight Operations station on the aft wall, which Dace was seated at, and asked the lieutenant commander for a report on his rescue operations.

“I’ve got all our ships up in the storms looking for her, sir,” Dace responded, “but at this point things aren’t looking very good, there is so much interference in there that we’d be lucky to find her if we flew right by her ship.”

“What if she ejected, landed on a planet, or something,” Hunt stammered.

“I don’t even want to think about that sir,” Dace replied, “if she went EV in this shit she’d have been incinerated almost immediately and the chance of her landing on one of the planets in there is very low, there just aren’t very many in there, to land on.”

“Could we take *Beliskner* in there?” Hunt asked, “Would that stand a better chance of finding her?”

“Possibly, but we just aren’t maneuverable enough to go in there safely.”

“Sir,” Dergos interrupted, “We are getting a signal from Admiral Nechayev.”

“Onscreen,” Hunt ordered, returning to his seat.

“Sir, it’s encoded as private for you,” Dergos objected.

“You heard me,” Hunt responded, “Onscreen.” Dergos nodded and routed the call to the main viewer.

“Captain,” The admiral greeted, surprised, “I was expecting a more private conversation.”

“I know,” Hunt nodded, “I don’t think it’s necessary.”

“Very well,” Nechayev replied, “Then you also should know that you have passed the deadline, why are you still in Hell’s Gate?”

“We are still conducting search and rescue operations,” Hunt answered.

“How unfortunate, Captain,” Nechayev said, “I understand that this officer was very important to you, and your ship, but we need you at Gamma Hydra, we can’t wait much longer.”

“I am afraid we cannot leave yet ma’am,” Hunt objected, “I don’t leave beings behind, no matter whom.”

“Oh, really, captain,” Nechayev deadpanned, “Very well,”

“I can send my marines to assist though ma’am,” Hunt suggested.

“That would be acceptable,” Nechayev replied, “But, captain, I should warn you, you may be risking your career over this, and I will make sure that Admiral Cage and whatever other friends you have at Starfleet Command, cannot protect you, Nechayev out.”

The channel closed and Hunt turned to Dergos seated at the tactical console, “Major,” He said, “I want you to assemble two Companies of your best troops and have

them in launchbay two in thirty minutes, and Dace, have the Normandys return so they can pick his men up.” Both officers replied with a curt nod and went about their tasks.

* * *

Commander Chavin hit the ground with a hard thud. She dropped the chute’s risers and unclipped it from her rescue harness. Slipping a tricorder out of a pocket in her suit she scanned the atmosphere and unpleasantly found that it was mostly argon, most definitely not breathable, unless you were a Benzanite, fortunately, she found that her oxygen recycler was working perfectly. She switched on her suit’s communicator and attempted to contact the ship, “*Beliskner*, Starbuck,” She called using her callsign, “*Beliskner*, please respond,” the only answer was static. “Frak, come on Jon, hear me!” still static. She switched the communicator to standby to save power, “Well, it’s not too bad, I mean hey, Starbuck had worse on that Gods damned moon, and Jon’s bound to start having people search this planet eventually,” she said mostly to herself as she ambled down from her landing spot atop a small hill.

* * *

Hear me! Jon heard, seemingly from nowhere as he waited for his turbolift to reach the launchbay. On most Galaxy or Nebula class vessels, the twin clamshell doors on the underside of the saucer section, were used for loading oversized cargo modules. In the case of the *Beliskner* however, they were used as launch and retrieval bays for Marine hoppers and dropships, as one of the primary missions of the space control ship was to support planetary invasion landings.

When Hunt entered the bay, he saw Dergos and his marines standing at parade rest in a semi-circle in front of four of the Normandy class dropships, each sitting in its assigned space on the massive space doors. The four Normandys in the other launch bay, on the opposite side of the Captain's yacht, as well as the one stationed in shuttlebay three, were being loaded down with hover tanks and other essential equipment and supplies. Hunt moved to address Dergos, "Major," he asked, "Are your troops ready?"

"Aye, sir," Dergos answered

"Good," Hunt replied, patting the major on the shoulder, "we'll join you soon, and we *will* bring Dranz with us, I promise."

"Hoorah, sir," Dergos hooted in response.

"Hoorah," Hunt repeated as he spun on his heel and walked out. As he exited the room, he bumped into Laura Nakita, "Senior Chief," he acknowledged, as he continued down the corridor.

When Nakita walked in, Dergos called her over. "Hey Chief," he said, "I heard about the modifications you made to some of the ship's fighters."

"Yes sir," She replied, "Commander Chavin asked me to add larger phaser cannons to her fighters, since the torpedoes weren't working."

"Would you mind doing me a favor," Dergos asked.

"It depends," She said, "What?"

“Could you make one of those man-portable?”

“I can try; it’d be awful heavy, though.”

“How heavy?” Dergos asked

“A hundred kilos, maybe more if you want the full powerpack,” She replied.

“Not a problem,” he scooped her up, and placed her on his shoulder.



“Ok,” She stammered, as he set her back down on the deck, “Good luck,” she said as she rose up on her tip toes and kissed the major, then she sauntered out of the bay.

The marines quickly filed into their craft which then lifted off the deck as the doors parted and the room opened to space, in formation, the four craft dropped out of the bay and joined the other five, before jumping to warp.

*

*

*

Going was tough for commander Chavin, the ground was covered in boulders, and the dusty haze hanging in the air was so thick she could not see much beyond two meters in front of her. Suddenly she fell to the ground; her boot had caught itself in a divot. She stood up and wiped the dust off of her visor. “That wasn’t so bad,” she told herself, as she continued walking. As if by some cruel joke, she soon tripped over a boulder, and found herself tumbling down a hill, and over a small cliff.

When she came to a stop, she sat up, an alarm blared, indicating a malfunction in her life support system. She quickly inspected the suit but found no tears or cracks in the material, yet the computer continued to indicate a loss of oxygen. Shrugging it of as a malfunction, she silenced the alarm, but only then was she able to hear the hiss of precious air escaping. She reached around and checked the backpack, finally finding the damage; a rock had cracked the casing around her atmosphere recycler and damaged a hose.

Chavin quickly shut off the device to conserve air and rerouted the supply. She checked her remaining supply and found that she had less than a day’s worth left, and without the recycler, the used atmosphere would simply be vented, rather than being

scrubbed and reused. Once again Chavin stood up and dusted herself off before continuing down the hill.

When she reached the bottom, she took out her tricorder again to check her bearings. When she did it immediately started beeping, Chavin looked at the readout and saw that it had detected a large metallic object not far ahead, on the other side of a nearby ridge, with nothing better to do, she continued towards it.

“Hey,” She said to no one in particular, “God, Gods, Lords of Kobol, whatever you call yourselves, help me, give me some sign, anything!” A few moments later she crested the ridge and saw the source of the readings in the valley below. “Frak,” She uttered as she walked towards the large green swept winged craft. Chavin immediately recognized it as a type of Romulan fighter in common use during the first half of the century. “Well now that’s what I’m talking about,” Chavin exclaimed. She ambled down the hill and approached the large red canopy.

Chavin could now see that the canopy had been badly cracked, inside, the Reman pilot’s mummified remains were slumped over its console. As she continued around the side of the craft, she inspected the damage. Her hearts sank when she reached the back, Chavin could clearly see that the port side impulse engine, which had been hidden from view before, was completely gone. In its place was a massive hole where evidently the fighter had been hit by a photon torpedo. Conceding defeat, Chavin slumped down on a nearby rock to think of another solution. With nothing coming to mind, she picked up a stone and chucked it at the cockpit, the projectile bounced harmlessly off the transparent aluminum canopy. Just then Chavin was struck by an idea; she stood up and walked over

to the canopy. Then she withdrew a small survival hatchet from her backpack and started swinging the duranium tool at the windscreen, after several blows the aluminum composite gave way and the hatchet struck the console.

Chavin reached in the cockpit and shoved the corpse out of its seat. Then she shed the bulky backpack and squeezed through the window. Sliding into the formerly occupied chair, she tapped what she guessed was the communications control. The whole panel immediately came to life and started transmitting a distress call. Worried that the signal, in a Romulan code might attract the wrong people, she frantically searched for the off switch; unable to find it she gave up and smashed the console with her hatchet. “Frak, that went well.”

*

*

*

The Ten Forward Lounge is the social hub of a Galaxy class starship. Part old fashioned malt-shop, part community center, it was the place to go to hang out and talk with ones fellow crewmates, but with its nine curved floor to ceiling windows and their impressive view of the space in front of the ship, it also made an excellent place if one wanted some time alone to contemplate the day’s events. That was exactly where Captain Hunt was now; staring out of one of the windows at the immense firestorm his fiancé was missing in. He stood there nursing a nearly empty tumbler of a fiery green liquid. He tossed back the rest of the liquor and asked a passing waiter for another drink. A moment later a man returned carrying a tall kettle.

“Hey that’s not Saurian Brandy, Jack,” Hunt slurred.

“I know,” replied the bartender, “I don’t think you need any more brandy, Jon.”

“I don’t think so,” Hunt said as Jack helped him into a chair and poured him a hot cup of tea from the kettle.

“Aren’t you on duty?” Jack asked as he took a seat opposite Hunt.

“I don’t care.”

“You know,” Jack chuckled, “you’re making one hell of an example for the crew,” he gestured at the rest of the crew in the room, “You know as well as I do, probably even better, that we *will* find her, and even if we don’t, you’ve got to accept that she may be gone.”

Hunt opened his mouth to speak, but was interrupted by Taurik’s monotone Vulcan voice the intercom, “Captain to the bridge, we think we’ve found something.”

Captain Hunt jumped out of his chair and acknowledged the call, and then he took off running towards the door.

“Jon,” Jack exclaimed, and Hunt stopped, Jack tossed him a couple of pills, “Anti-intoxicants.” Hunt nodded in thanks and ran out the doors.

*

*

*

“Warning,” the computer toned, “life support at critical levels,” Chavin winced at the dire reminder, she had been so engrossed in trying to repair and reconfigure the communications system, that she had forgotten to retrieve her backpack, which contained

most of her supplies, including her air. She had been living off the small amount of air trapped in her suit, since she had removed the pack. She twisted around and reached out the broken canopy, grabbing onto the bulky backpack and pulling it inside. She tried to connect the air supply to a port on her helmet, but found that the hose's connect point had clogged with dust from the planet's surface. She tried to clean it out with her finger, but found that the glove was far too large to fit in the hole. Chavin now had less than half an hour of usable air left in her suit.

* * *

Captain Hunt strode confidently on to the bridge, and over to Taurik who was standing over the science console, which was being manned by Cadet Percival.

“You found something?” Hunt asked.

“We think so, sir,” Percival chimed, “A few minutes ago we received a short Romulan distress call, but it was cut off before we could get a precise fix.”

“How exactly does that help Cadet?” Hunt replied.

“Well sir,” Taurik cut in, “the signal was in an old code, one that the Romulans haven't used in years.”

“So, you think that somehow Dranz got a hold of a Seventy year old Romulan transmitter,” Hunt reasoned, “Even if she did, why would she cut off the signal?”

“Perhaps she thought that the signal would attract the Romulans,” Percival Hypothesized.

“Ok, you sold me,” Hunt said, “but you said you couldn’t get a fix.”

“We were able to narrow the search area significantly,” Taurik responded, bringing up a map of the solar system on the screen, “But she could still be any where within this area.

“If she found a transmitter, she must have made planetfall, are there any planetary bodies in this area?” Hunt asked.

“The fifth, sixth and eighth planets are currently passing through this region,” Percival said, “the eighth one is a gas giant, so we can rule that out, of the other two, the sixth is class H and the fifth is barely class L, it’s up to you which one we should search first sir, although we probably won’t have time to search both of them thoroughly with just shuttles and fighters.”

Hunt Stood up and pondered for a second, “We should try the Sixth one first,” He announced. Taurik gave him a quizzical look, “I don’t know, but I do,” Hunt replied, “I can’t explain it but I can feel that she’s there.”

“Aye sir,” Taurik answered, and then he directed the fighters to begin a sweep of that planet.

“Oh, and signal Commander Dace to bring his Runabout back to pick me up, and tell Sorel to prepare for rescue operations,” Hunt ordered.

*

*

*

Chavin checked her oxygen supply readout and found that it read less than five minutes, nothing better to do, Chavin resolved to die outside of this Reman's tomb, she began to pull herself back out the hole in the canopy. As she squeezed her shoulders through the gap, her leg kicked out and struck the weapons systems control, an alarm blared and she rolled out and ran for cover, diving over the crest of the ridge just as a plasma torpedo, still armed in the weapons bay, detonated in a blinding flash, obliterating the wreck.

*

*

*



“What the hell was that?” Dace exclaimed as he saw a huge flash of light through the viewport of the Runabout *Willamette*. “Captain, you may want to see this,” He yelled toward the aft cabin, Hunt came rushing forward and Dace explained, “I saw a massive discharge of plasma energy on the planet’s surface, something like a weapons detonation, approximate planetary coordinates were about forty-seven degrees, thirty-three minutes north by thirty-eight degrees forty-two minutes west.”

“Well, let’s check it out then,” Hunt suggested as he slid into the copilot’s seat. Dace manipulated the controls bringing the Runabout into a decent toward the planet.

“I am detecting a faint lifesign not far from the detonation sir,” Dace reported.

* * *

“Well this is it,” Chavin said to herself, clutching a broken arm, and lying at the bottom of the ridge on the side opposite the blast. The air supply was really running low now, Chavin thought she was seeing things, just before she passed out, she could have sworn she saw a Starfleet runabout swoop out of the dust cloud and settle into a landing nearby.

* * * * *

Star Trek, and any names, ships, starbases, planets, or concepts, etc. contained therein are the trademarked legal property of CBS Broadcasting Inc. I am simply borrowing these for the purposes of this fan fiction series and I do not intend to sell or distribute these works for any profit whatsoever. In addition, any other content, in this fan fiction is the intellectual property of the original author, whether it is I or another. Please do not reproduce this work without my expressed permission. If any of the above mentioned parties objects the questionable material will be removed as per request. If you have any questions regarding this disclaimer, please consult US Copyright law.