

# NOVA TREK

# 2



# TIMESPOT

A NOVEL BY  
MADISON  
BRUFFY

BASED ON  
CONCEPTS BY  
GENE  
RODDENBERRY

# NOVA TREK

## TIMESPOT

By

## Madison Bruffy

Based on concepts  
Created by Gene Roddenberry

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# **Part One:**

**Where she's been**

**SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO- IN A TIMELINE  
THAT NO LONGER EXISTS....**

Cadet Kirk paused as she entered the Academy's bridge simulator. The lights sent highlights dancing through her red hair as she took it all in. It certainly looked like a *Daedalus*-class bridge- the white molded chairs, the personal viewers mounted on their molded white necks above each station, the viewscreen with its rounded corners-

-and the captain's chair, slightly raised behind and above the helm so the captain can see past the crew stationed there.

Her post- at least for today. She looked around once more, her eyes falling on the dedication plaque by the turbo lift doors:

*FSS Horizon*. She shook her head. Right down to the smallest detail. Turning, she looked to the other two girls in the room- one was blond, the other had raven-black hair. This was Janice Rand and Amanda Stevens respectively. The three had shared enough study groups over the last three years that they knew each other fairly well. "Where are the boys?" she asked them.

Janice shrugged as Amanda answered. “They weren’t at roll call. I’m betting they over slept.”

Kirk turned toward the command chair, only to turn back around as a new voice- a familiar voice- filled the air. “Don’t bother starting the simulation.” All three girls looked to the entrance to see Commodore Franklin Fitzpatrick- the Academy’s current Commandant- and two security guards come in. “Cadet Kirk.”

She knew that tone in her uncle’s voice and she stood a little straighter with the knowledge that something was wrong- big time. “Sir?” Her eyes were on his face and she found herself thinking- even now- about how deep brown his eyes were- even when he was upset.

He stopped in front of her, the frustration clear in both his expression and his tone. “You’ve been charged with breaking into the Program Control Room in an attempt to alter the simulator’s programming.”

Shocked, she glanced to each side as the security guards took up position on each side of her. “When was I supposed to have done this, Sir?”

“Last night.”

Her brows came together in anger at this- anger that showed in her tone, too. “You *know* I was at Mom’s birthday party last night- with at least fifty witnesses!”

Fitzpatrick raised his hand for silence. “I don’t like it any more than you do- and I sure as hell don’t believe it. But until we have more to go on, I have to go by the book.” She met his gaze and understood his frustration. He was her uncle- but as head of the academy, he couldn’t- and wouldn’t- play favorites.

And she wouldn’t want him to.

He shrugged. “You’re confined to quarters pending a full investigation.”

Wonderful, she thought. That meant a security guard outside her apartment door. The neighbors’ll *love* that.

She stared at her uncle for a moment more before allowing the guards to escort her toward the simulator’s entrance. As she stepped over the threshold, the world was washed away in a greenish-yellow light.

She never reached the corridor beyond.

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She had vague memories- feelings of being pulled apart atom by atom and being slowly put back together and then nothing.

The next time she was able to open her eyes, she found herself in some kind of medical recovery ward- At least, that's what she assumed it was. But it was a recovery ward like none she'd ever seen before. There were four beds in the room- but the other three were empty.

She watched in silence as people she assumed were doctors and nurses came and went, took readings or checked the monitor over her head. Finally, a dark haired man came in, looked up at the monitor, and then smiled down at her. He had the beginnings of bags under his eyes and some grey in his hair- overall, he appeared somewhat older than the other medical staff she'd seen. When he spoke, his southern accent- while faint- was still clear. "Well, young lady, everything looks fine."

"Who are you?"

"Dr. Leonard McCoy, Chief Medical Officer."

"Chief Medical- ?" She looked around. "That means a ship or a starbase." She met his gaze without hesitation as she spoke. "Where am I?"

"The safest place you can be right now," the doctor replied. At the look on her face, he continued. "Now, don't go worrin'. There'll be someone along in a little

bit to answer all your questions. For now, you just relax and enjoy the peace and quiet for a bit. All right?” That gentle smile came back to his face as he patted her shoulder, before he turned and left the ward.

*Relax??* He had to be joking. She sat up in the bed, noticing what looked like some kind of computer screen on a mounted swing arm off to her right. Just as she started to reach for it, she heard voices in the outer room. One was Dr. McCoy’s, but she could only catch bits and pieces of what was being said.

*“Matches your academy physical...”*

*“...being escorted from the simulator. All memories stop at that point...”*

*“...Not Janet then...”*

*“...the girl that would have become Janet had things not gone the way they did...”*

*“Jan, all this aside,”* that was McCoy again, *“What are you going to do with your kid sister now that she’s here?”*

Kid sister? Who’s-

*“...Make sure she has a chance to finish what she started- and if we can build some kind of family out of this, so much the better...”*

That sounded like- No.

A moment later, an impossibility stood in the ward doorway. It was her- but an older version of her- and she carried herself like she was used to being the one in charge. “Well, I see someone’s awake.”

“Who- what’s going on?”

The older version paused by the bed and indicated the empty one behind her. “It’s a long story. May I?”

The eighteen year old nodded and listened as the thirty-four year old sat down and told her what had happened. How former Lt. Commander Ben Finney tried to frame Captain Janet Tamera Kirk for negligent homicide- only to find himself sentenced to a rehab colony instead- from which he promptly escaped, using his extensive computer skills. Skills he used to hack into Starfleet’s records and access Jan’s file.

Once in, he went on to download everything he could find- including her medical records and information on her encounter with a being known as the Guardian of Forever. The Guardian has control of all of Time and Space and Finney used it to go back in time and plant false evidence in the simulator control room.

The long and short of it was this: By the time the dust settled, the cadet’s timeline no longer existed and-

for all intents and purposes, she was now sixteen years in the future. Jan then explained something else and the eighteen year old stared back at her in shock. "...*Not aging?!*"

'You don't *appear* to be aging,' Jan clarified. 'Dr. McCoy thinks the Guardian slowed your aging processes down- a lot.'

It took the teenager a moment to digest this. "So...what do I do now?"

"What do you want to do?"

The younger indicated the older. "I want the life you're living."

Jan smiled and nodded as she stood up. "All right. I'll contact Uncle Frank and Aunt T'Pel and see about getting you back into the Academy. Think you can get used to answering to 'Tamera'?"

Tam shrugged. "Don't seem to have any choice. But I'll never get a command. They don't put teenagers in command of starships."

Jan watched her for a moment and then her tone became firm- like that of a teacher to a student. "You won't always be a teenager in your *head*," she stated. "And that's where it counts. With your lifespan, if you

play your cards right, the day'll come when you'll be commanding ships that aren't even on the drawing board yet.”

They talked for a bit more, then Jan took her leave to see to some remaining details. The moment she was out of the ward, Tam gasped as a sudden surge of energy swelled up inside of her. “Whoah...”

It would be later, in a cabin Jan assigned her that Tam would try to recapture that moment. Standing at the foot of the cabin's bed, she concentrated, tried to recall and remember what that surge of energy felt like.

Her eyes went wide when, to her surprise, a swirling cloud of greenish-yellow energy began to take on form in front of her. It looked like nothing so much as the kind of smoke that might come from an ancient Arabian lamp after it's been rubbed a time or two.

As she continued to focus on it, the center of the cloud began to clear- but as it did so, it wasn't the other side of the cabin she saw.

Instead, she was looking out, onto a barren world covered in the dust and ruins of centuries, its sun far dimmer- and older- than Earth's. She saw herself lying on the sand, unconscious, with Jan kneeling and leaning over her while a Vulcan she now knew was Spock,

stood over an unconscious human male she could only assume was Finney.

All four of them were in front of a large oval-shaped object that had to have been the Guardian Jan had mentioned. Tam listened as Jan turned to face it. "...Will she live?"

Tam couldn't keep the amazement out of her face as the Guardian pulsed and glowed as it answered in a single word that seemed to possess all the weight of all the ages behind it. "Yes."

Jan immediately tapped her combadge. "Kirk to *Enterprise*. Four to beam up. I want a medical team and a security detail standing by when we arrive. Energize."

Tam watched as the transporter effect took them, leaving the Guardian by itself. After a moment, out of curiosity, she reached toward the portal and her eyes went wide as her hand passed through. With a swallow in a throat gone dry, she stepped through entirely-

-to find herself three days in the past and standing on the Guardian's world. For a moment, she just looked around, taking in the fallen pillars and broken walls, listening as the wind blew in and around the rubble and watched as small dust demons danced across the ground. Then she turned her attention back to the

Guardian. It was like a deflated oval with a small, broken pillar standing nearby. The guardian itself appeared clean- ageless, as if dust and dirt never touched it.

She carefully moved toward it with one question in mind. “Why?”

“Specify.” That one word seemed to echo and re-echo, almost bouncing off the ruins around them.

Tam had to swallow once more before she could speak. “Why give me the same powers over Time and Space that you have?”

“There are two reasons,” the Guardian replied as its physical presence flashed in sequence with its words. “You and your sister wish to explore and protect the Material Universe.

“There is also a need to protect- and perhaps explore- the Temporal Universe as well. Your sister’s insistence on your survival created an opportunity to grant you the ability to do both.”

Tam tilted her head as she thought that over. “But I can only travel into the past, right?”

“Correct,” the Guardian answered. “The future must be denied to all.”

The red head nodded. “Okay. I can accept that. What was the other reason?”

“Two identical particles cannot exist in the same time and place,” the Guardian declared. “You are still Janet Tamera Kirk. Granting you the powers of the Guardian altered your existence sufficiently to prevent the mutual destruction of you and your sister.”

Tam thought back, remembering the feeling of being taken apart atom by atom and being put back together. She looked at the Guardian with slightly narrowed eyes. “Why do I get the feeling that the second reason occurred to you *before* the first one?”

That was one question her benefactor didn’t answer.

“Well, thank you anyway,” she finally told it. “For all of it.” Turning away, she concentrated with an effort that now seemed right to her. She re-opened the portal, stepped through-

-and found herself back in her cabin aboard the *Enterprise* only a few seconds after she’d left. The question facing her now was what to do with this unexpected gift.

The door buzzer went off, followed a moment later, by Jan’s voice. “Tam? Are you all right?”

The teen took a deep breath as she opened the door.  
“ ‘course I am. Why?”

The captain watched her closely as she stepped into the room. “Computer picked up two temporal disturbances here in your cabin- and since we just left the granddaddy of temporal disturbances three days ago- What’s going on?”

Tam would record in her log later, how right it had felt, telling Jan what the Guardian had done. How this older version of herself seemed more like an older sister with each passing moment. Maybe being who they were- two versions of the same person- had something to do with it. There were no secrets- no barriers between them. It was easy to be open and to trust- after all, if you can’t trust yourself, who can you trust?

Then, too, Jan had sixteen more years of life experience than Tam and the teenager had enough sense to know it would be foolish not to take advantage of that.

Once she’d finished explaining, Jan asked for a demonstration and Tam did so without even thinking about it- it was as if, after doing it once, opening a portal seemed totally normal to her.

Within moments, they were watching the *FSS Daedalus* as it left on trial runs. Then it was the NX-01 as it encountered the Romulans for the first time. That in turn gave way to the sight of Zefran Cochran's *Phoenix* rising from its missile silo. That gave way to a sprawling space station in Earth orbit using what could only have been primitive solar panels for power.

Then Tam brought up a view of a twentieth century launch facility on Earth and a scene of a woman working at a primitive- from their point of view- computer.

A moment later, she was shot with a Romulan disruptor and the girls found themselves teaming up with Colonel Maxwell Fellini and Gary Seven in a fight to stop the Romulans from destroying Earth and the Union in the Twentieth century. They succeeded in stopping the plot- but at the cost of Gary Seven's life. This left his companion, Isis, at loose ends until Tam invited her back to the twenty-third century with her.

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By the time the *Enterprise* finally arrived at Starbase 98- its intended destination all along- Tam had made enough trips between centuries that she was just as comfortable in the twentieth as she was in the twenty-third.

Still, Starbase 98 brought further change. The plan was, that Tam would stay there with the girls' aunt and uncle till she could catch a ship back to Earth and the Academy.

Only thing was, no one had expected the Romulans to drop an invasion in everyone's lap!

Tam would never forget her time aboard the *Lydia* serving as her uncle's yeoman. Of being on the dreadnaught's bridge and watching as Jan used the *Enterprise* to literally ram the Romulan command ship.

Between the resulting glare, the smoke, debris and fire, everyone feared the worse. Then the debris clouds clear away and the fires used up what oxygen they had, leaving the *Enterprise* with a quarter of its saucer gone and the Romulan ship vaporized.

With her uncle's permission, Tam practically ran to the nearest transporter room and beamed over.

The moment she saw the *Enterprise's* transporter room, she could only stare. The platform she was standing on was dark- it had been the *Lydia's* transporter that had sent her over. Maintenance panels around the room were burnt, bent or hanging by a single contact.

Some were gone all together.

She nodded to Lt. Kyle and headed for the door- only to hear it *screech* as it opened, sounding as if the ship itself were screaming in agony.

Beyond the transporter room, was nightmare- as if one had come back to the family home to find it gutted by fire and ravaged by earthquake at the same time. Blackened bulkheads were everywhere- what ones weren't buckled. Ceiling supports had fallen, forcing her to duck under some and climb over others. Some still hung from burnt and blackened ceilings at crazy angles.

The deck hadn't been spared either- twisted, buckled and in some sections, gone completely. In some sections of corridor, only emergency lights were working, providing just enough light to see by.

That's when she tripped over it. At first, she thought it was just another piece of debris.

Then she saw the gold uniform- just the arm she'd tripped over. The rest was buried in the ruins.

A hand on her shoulder-

Tam jumped- almost lashed out.

“Easy,” the technician said. Then he too saw the arm and called out back the way he had come. “Mike! We’ve got another one over here!” He then turned back to Tam. “Where are you trying to get to?”

“The Command Suite.”

The Human male shook his head as he led her off to one side. A work detail had arrived and was busy clearing the debris off the body. “You won’t make it this way- debris has the corridor blocked further on and the emergency bulkheads-“ It was then that the man got a good look at her. “Hey, I saw you around before the battle. Aren’t you the Captain’s sister?”

“Yes. I just beamed over from the *Lydia*.”

“You need to get to Sick Bay,” he told her. “There are all kinds of rumors flying around that the Captain was hurt pretty bad.” He glanced around. “All the turbo lifts are out.” He pointed. “Take that ladder down one deck. Then go back to the first intersection and turn left. It’s a straight shot to Sick Bay from there.”

She nodded her thanks and turned toward the ladder.

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Upon reaching Sick Bay, Tam almost wished she'd stayed aboard the *Lydia*.

Every section, every ward was filled with the wounded and the dead. Medical personnel were everywhere trying to do everything. It took several minutes before she spotted him, his surgical smock splattered with blood of all colors as he knelt beside a patient laying on the floor- all the beds were full.

She watched as he turned off the scanner he'd been using, sighed and then pulled the body's sheet up over its head. As she stepped up beside him, she couldn't help noticing how tired he looked. "Dr. McCoy?"

He looked up at her call. "Tam. How long have you been back?"

"Just a few minutes. Doctor, is Jan- ?"

He stood and patted her arm. "She'll be all right. Had to set a few ribs. Minor skull fracture. She's restin' now. It'll be a few hours before anyone can see her."

The relief that flooded through Tam was almost unbearable. "Thank God." She glanced around at the

chaos flowing around them. “Since I have to wait, anything I can do to help?”

There was- and for the next two hours, she was so busy, the memories would all become a blur later. She was in the exam room with Spock, Kang and the Romulan Commander when a man that looked like her late brother came in and told them Jan was awake.

Spock had explained Captain James Kirk to her, but Tam still felt uneasy as she moved past him and into the same recovery ward she had occupied only a week earlier. Now, some two hours after the battle, the other beds were empty- the wounded having been healed and discharged or transferred to other ships for more extensive treatment. Her older self was sitting up as she entered. “Jan- ?”

“I’ll be all right,” the captain told her. Then confusion came to Jan’s face and voice. “How’d you get- Why are you in uniform?”

Tam smiled. “What else is an Admiral’s yeoman going to wear?”

Jan’s eyes went wide. “Admiral’s yo- ?” She smiled and held up her hand. “You can tell me all about it later.”

McCoy came in soon after with Jan's uniform. Their uncle was calling and this was one call she had to take on the Bridge. It was a crowded trip with everyone stuffed into one of the few working turbo lifts. But once there, it was citations for the crew, an honorary captaincy for Kang and a promotion to Commodore for Jan.

Then James Kirk took his leave. Tam started to reach out to him- to stop him from leaving. But she stopped herself instead. She had no claim on this man from another plain of existence- as much as she might have wanted one. With memories of the last time she'd seen her brother burning in her mind, she watched in silence as the Captain beamed away.

Then came the so-slow trip home- just barely under warp three. Tam stayed on the *Enterprise*, helping out where she could. Whether it was helping Jan pick up the Command Suite, or helping Spock put the Science Section back together or working with Mr. Scott in Engineering. She didn't know much- if anything- about those areas, but she did what she could and learned what they had time to teach her.

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Once the *Enterprise* arrived at Starbase One in Earth orbit, the news media dogged everyone for nearly a week. Even Tam's first day of classes after *finally* getting the re-enrollment done. Once the media found out she was Jan's sister, they followed her every step. Finally, when they tried to bring their camera chairs into her phys-ed class, she had to call security and have them forcibly removed.

At enrollment, she doubled up on classes against everyone's advice- even Jan advised against it. But most of it was remedial- designed to help her catch up on the sixteen years she'd been jumped over and she found herself handling it as easily as she had her high school classes- easier in fact, because she discovered that if she were confused about an event, she could simply open a portal and watch it in 'real time'.

It was actually a relief to bury herself in her classwork. It helped bury, or at least dull, the memories of what she'd seen in the ruins of the *Enterprise*.

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Six months after their return home, while *Enterprise* was being re-built at Starbase One, Tam was once more stepping into a Bridge Simulator. Only this was no *Daedalus*-class bridge. It represented the newest design

and she swallowed when she saw the name on the dedication plaque:

*FSS Enterprise*

She couldn't completely control the chill that ran down her back as she nodded to the others in the room and stepped toward the command chair. She stood beside it and glanced around that grey and black and steel room, taking in the new monitor screens and stations and the people manning them. They were all waiting for her to sit down. Once she did so, the simulation would begin.

With a deep breath, she eased herself down into the Center Seat.

No one stopped the simulation this time as she called for course and speed. They were traveling parallel to the Romulan Neutral Zone. That was new. Last time she'd been in a simulator, it was the Klingons they were going to face.

Now, the Klingons were looking more and more like allies and the Romulans were the enemy. The S.O.S. came in and scans picked up five propulsion residue trails at that location- inside the 'Zone. Motion sensors were also picking up five cloaked ships in the same area.

Five-to-one against. Not good odds. She ordered the communications officer to send out a call for any Union or Klingon ships in the area. Then she turned to the Helm. “Hold position.”

The navigator- an Andorian male about a year younger than her- looked over at her. “We’re not going to engage them?”

Tam’s eyes went wide at this, then her brows came down together as she answered. “Hell no we’re not going to engage them. My sister took on their invasion fleet because she didn’t have any choice- but we do.

“We’re going to sit right here and keep an eye on our new found friends till our back-up arrives.”

Tam hadn’t known that Grand Admiral Nathan Stryker himself had come to view the exercise till he stepped into the simulator and praised her for making the right choices. Someone else had been there that day, too and Tam’s eyes went wide as she entered. “Jan?”

Without hesitation, she went to the older female and they shared a hug. The Commodore smiled. “Where else would I be on the day my kid sister takes the biggest test of her life- and passes with flying colors?” She tilted Tam’s head up to meet her gaze. “You did

good, Kid. There's nothing wrong with being cautious when the situation calls for it.

“Now, you head on to De-briefing and when you get home this evening, we'll celebrate.”

And they did. Jan, Spock, Fitzpatrick, T'Pel, Shev- the entire family was there- except one.

After the party, Jan found Tam out on the porch, looking up at the sky. “You okay?”

The younger of the two shrugged. “Yeah, I just...” She let the sentence trail off. Then Tam glanced at Jan. “I wish Dad had been here today.”

Jan put her arm around Tam's shoulders. “Don't worry. Someday he'll come home and he'll hear all about it- from you.”

Tam looked over at her for a moment, then turned her gaze back to the sky. The two together, watched the stars till after midnight.

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It was seven days later that the news came over Tam's bedroom computer terminal. Once she saw the printout, she literally ran down the stairs. “*Jan! Jan! They came!*”

In the living room, where she'd been using a padd to read the latest dispatches, Jan looked up at the shout. "I'm in the living room. What came?"

Dressed in a t-shirt and jeans- both of twentieth century origins- Tam came charging into the room waving the printout like a flag. "My orders! My first orders!"

Now mentally nineteen while any medical scan would insist she was still eighteen, Tam had one week to report to the *FSS Georgetown*- one of the new *Miranda*- class ships.

The only remaining "bump in the road" was Isis. The feline-that-wasn't had spent the time since they got home roaming the ranch in both human and feline form. Problem was, ensigns shared cabins aboard ships- one roommate, sometimes more. Sooner or later, Isis' secret would be discovered.

Thankfully, she liked the ranch- it was a lot quieter than most of the places she and Gary Seven had visited. She volunteered to stay behind as the house caretaker.

As a result, on the day specified in her orders, Ensign Tamera Kirk stood with Jan in a transporter room aboard Starbase One. "You be careful out there," the Commodore told her. "That's an order, young lady-

and write once in a while, let me know how things are going.”

Tam smiled. “Yes, ma’am..” Then her smile turned slightly shy. “...Sis?” It was hesitant, but it was said.

Jan met her gaze, then a gentle smile came to her own face. “It’s about time.”

They shared a hug then- one only sisters could share. Then Tam turned and stepped onto the transporter platform.

Jan looked to the technician manning the console and nodded.

In a chime of sound and a sparkle of energy and light, her kid sister was gone.

**Part Two:**

**Where she's at**

*Personal log; Stardate 6136.02*

*Janet Kirk recording.*

*Tam's finally on her way to the career she wants. Admiral Stryker was right. She's my kid sister- and I'm going to worry about her like any older sister would.*

*I just hope my worries prove groundless and she gets that center seat someday...*

*FSS Georgetown*

*NCC- 1812*

*Miranda-class*

Somewhat smaller than the *Constitution*-class or the upcoming *Excelsior*-class, the *Georgetown* had a single hull. In shape, it somewhat resembled a filled in horse shoe. The warp nacelles were mounted below the body of the vessel, allowing for a "roll bar" type of assembly on top that housed the ship's sensors, scanners and deflectors. The result was a much more compact look than either of the ship's larger sisters.

With the ship's functions similarly compact, the size of the crew was likewise smaller- almost by half. Being

the twelfth ship in the class, the *Georgetown* benefited from the lack of a spotlight, allowing her crew the privacy needed to do their jobs without the media second-guessing them like it did the more famous ships in the Fleet.

In the Main Transporter Room- one of two aboard the *Georgetown*- the sing-song chime of the transporter effect faded and the new arrival looked around as she adjusted the duffle bag hanging from her shoulder. This transporter room was somewhat darker in its colors compared to the *Enterprise*. But it didn't take but a moment for her eyes to adjust and spot the Vulcan transporter tech or the somewhat handsome Human lieutenant standing in front of the platform. "Permission to come aboard?" she asked.

The Human male nodded as his light brown hair caught the room's lights. "Granted." He offered his hand and she shook it as she stepped down onto the deck. "Lt. Ray Wesley."

"Ensign Tamera Kirk."

The lieutenant raised an eyebrow. "Well, two famous last names on the same ship. Guess that means we'll have to save the universe at least once." They

both smiled as he waved a hand toward the door. “If you’ll come with me, the captain’s waiting.”

As they left the transporter room and started down the corridor, Tam’s eyes were everywhere, trying to take in everything. She couldn’t wait for her off-time so she could explore the ship from end to end.

Wesley- who had only been a full lieutenant for the last two years- glanced over at her and smiled at her obvious eagerness. “I understand you were at the Battle of Starbase 98.”

Tam looked over at him and nodded. “Yes, sir. Aboard the *Lydia*. I served as Uncle Frank- Admiral Fitzpatrick’s yeoman. I didn’t get back aboard the *Enterprise* till after the battle.”

“Was she really as bad off as the FNF said?”

Tamera shook her head. “Worse- a lot worse.” The ensign closed her eyes against the memories- only to open them again moments before they came to a stop before a cabin door. The sign next to the door stated clearly who the cabin belonged to:

St. Clair, Maxwell, Captain

Wesley pressed the buzzer and the door slid aside as a voice called out. “Come on in.”

As the two stepped inside, Tam got her first look at her first commanding officer. Maxwell St.Clair was in his late fifties- making him over twenty years older than Jan. The salt and pepper grey in his sideburns gave him the look of a nineteenth century sea captain- one that could face off against a French man-o-war or the wild forces of Cape Cod.

Wesley performed the introductions. “Captain Maxwell St.Clair, Ensign Tamera Kirk.”

Seated at his desk, the Captain looked up from the monitor in front of him and Tam couldn’t help notice the strength in his face and the stark clearness of his slate-grey eyes. “At ease, Ensign.”

Tam assumed the position with her hands behind her back. “Yes, sir.”

He then looked to Wesley. “Your security division got a near perfect score on the last drill, Lieutenant. Congratulations. Let’s try for the rest of it next time, clear?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Dismissed.”

Wesley nodded. “Sir.”

As he left, St.Clair turned his attention back to Tam and she couldn't help thinking that all he needed to complete the image of a sea captain was a pipe. "Have a seat, Ensign."

"Thank you, sir," she replied as she sat down across from him.

The man indicated the monitor screen- a much thinner version of the ones she'd seen aboard the *Enterprise*. "It says here that you're supposed to be my new Gamma Shift communications officer."

Tam nodded and then shrugged. "Yes, sir- and to be honest, after I got over the excitement of receiving my first orders, that kind of surprised me, too."

"Why was that?"

"Well, while I *did* minor in communications, I *majored* in astro-navigation," she explained. "I'm fully rated for both stations."

"I see." St.Clair leaned back in his chair. "The reason I'm bringing this up, is because I never requested a comm officer. I requested a navigator. My last one, Lt. Lisa Blackwell, left us at Starbase One to get married."

Tam was confused. “She had to leave Starfleet to get married?”

“She took a ground assignment,” the captain explained. “She wanted to start a family and that’s rather hard to do aboard a starship.”

“I understand, sir.”

“Would you mind switching to Alpha Shift navigator?”

“No sir- not at all.” Tam then leaned forward in her seta. “May I ask a question, sir?”

He nodded. “That’s what training flights are for.”

Tam tilted her head slightly. “What exactly is the *Georgetown*’s mission? If it’s not classified that is.”

A slight smile came to the older man’s face. “It’s not. While ships like the *Enterprise* and other larger capital ships are keeping an eye on the Romulan Neutral Zone, the bulk of exploration has fallen to the smaller ships like the *Georgetown*.”

Tam nodded in understanding. “So we get the “Seek out new life and new civilizations” part.”

St.Clair chuckled softly. “Exactly.” He glanced at a clock mounted on a nearby bulkhead- mounted over a model of a nineteenth century clipper ship. “you go

ahead and get settled in- your cabin is 49B, same deck, port side. Unpack, explore the ship and I'll see you on the Bridge at 0800 tomorrow morning.”

Tam stood up, shouldering her bag as she did so. “Yes, sir.”

She got as far as the door when St.Clair called to her. “And Ensign?”

The red head turned back. “Yes, sir?”

St.Clair smiled. “Welcome aboard.”

She returned his smile with one of her own. “Thank you, sir.”

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Tam's gaze was everywhere as she walked along the corridor. The over-all color scheme was more subdued than the *Enterprise's*- at least prior to the repairs. She wondered what they looked like now. It was strange. The *Enterprise* was not home- she hadn't even spent that much time on board her, really. Yet, she felt an attachment to her that Tam couldn't really explain. Just like she couldn't understand why it hurt so much when she thought of the damage *Enterprise* had suffered. Was it just because it was Jan's ship? Or was it- as crazy as

it sounds- because, in a way, Tam had begun her new life there? *Enterprise* as mid-wife? Tam smiled at the crazy thoughts and shook her head.

Having studied the deck plans for the *Miranda*-class during that week prior to coming aboard, everything seemed to fit comfortably in Tam's mind except for one or two items, which could easily be put down to modifications in the ship's design.

Finding cabin 49B, she pressed the button that should have released the door.

It stayed closed.

“What the- ?” She pressed the button again and again the door stayed closed. “Computer, unlock the door to cabin 49B.”

“I'm sorry. Cabin 49B is occupied.”

Tam sighed. She should have known things were going too well. She looked up slightly as she spoke. “Computer, run a voice ID check. Kirk, Tamera, Ensign. I'm assigned to cabin 49B. Now unlock the door.”

After a moment, the computer spoke again. “My apologies, Ensign.” There was a *snap* and a *click*. “The door is now unlocked.”

Tam pressed the button again-

The door slid open-

The lights came up-

-And Tam found one of the beds occupied by two people *very* involved with each other. The female looked up. “What the- ? Who the hell are you?!”

“Ensign Tamera Kirk. I’ve been assigned to this cabin.”

“Oh. Oh, hell.” The other girl practically shoved her male companion out of the bed and squirmed under the sheets as he grabbed his pants, jumped into them and headed for the door.

A slow grin came to Tam’s face as the door slid shut behind him and she turned her attention to her new roommate. She looked to be a few years older than Tam. Her straight raven-black hair fell below her shoulders, throwing off blue highlights as she moved. Her hair did very little to hide the spots that ran down each side of her face to vanish beneath the sheets. “You’re a Trill, right?” Tam asked.

“Yes.” The other woman offered her hand. “Ensign Emony Dax.” The two shook hands. “Sorry about all

this. Really wasn't expecting anyone." She indicated the other bunk. "All yours."

"Thanks," Tam replied as she walked over and set her bag down upon it. "I didn't mean to barge in--"

"It's okay," Emony replied as she rose from the bed. "Don't worry about it." It was then that Tam found out something else about her roommate:

The spots went all the way down.

"My last roommate came from a world where sex before marriage was punishable by death," Emony noted.

Tam's eyes went wide at that and Emony turned to face her. "You don't, do you?"

"No," the teenager replied. "No, I'm just an old fashioned Earth girl."

Emony sighed in relief. "Good."

Silence filled the cabin for a few minutes as the Trill dressed and Tam unpacked. As Emony closed up her jacket, she noticed one object that Tam had removed from her bag. "What's that?" It was a small box-like shape with a single connection at one end.

“An external memory core,” Tam replied. “My sister gave me a complete copy of her music library before I left.”

Curious, Emony came over to the bed and gently picked the core up. “What kind of music?”

A gentle smile came to Tam’s face as she took a civilian blouse from her bag and laid it to one side. “Twentieth century country music- all the classics.”

Emony looked up at that. “Really? I don’t think I’ve ever heard any twentieth century music before.” She held the core out to Tam. “Can we hear some?”

Tam took the core in hand and smiled. “Sure.” Crossing to the computer work station located at one end of the cabin, she plugged the device in and set it for automatic play back.

As she turned back to Emony and her unpacking, the voice of Hank Williams filled the cabin.

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*Personal log; Stardate, 6136.12*

*Tamera Kirk recording*

*I think I've gained a convert to twentieth century country music. Emony was intrigued by every song she heard.*

*Once I finished unpacking, she offered to show me around and make the introductions. We toured and visited and talked for the rest of Beta shift before we both turned in. Didn't sleep too well, though- nerves I guess.*

*Come morning, I was up and gone before she was. In fact, I had breakfast and was stepping out onto the bridge fifteen minutes before my time.*

*Yeah, I was a little anxious...*

Captain St.Clair looked toward the aft port turbo lift as the doors parted and Tam slowly stepped out. Like the ship's corridors, the Bridge was mostly done in shades of grey- except for the various monitor screens. St.Clair glanced around as he spoke. "Your attention, people. This is Ensign Tamera Kirk, our new navigator." He smiled then. "And eager beaver."

Tam knew she was blushing as she returned everyone's nods and stopped beside the command chair. "Captain."

"Ensign."

"Permission to assume my post?"

He nodded. "Granted."

She stepped forward, pausing beside the navigator's seat. "You're relieved, Lieutenant-?"

"Redford. Paul Redford."

"Mr. Redford."

He flipped one last switch, then rose from the chair. As he stepped away, Tam was very aware of everyone's eyes on her as she assumed the station and began familiarizing herself with the console.

St.Clair soon spoke up from behind her. "What's our course, navigator?"

Tam studied her readings and checked them twice before she spoke. "Currently on course 175 mark 6, Sir. Maintaining Warp Factor Seven."

"And if we maintain this course, what's the first celestial body we'll encounter?"

The Ensign took another look at her console. “Planet Nine in the Domeclaine System. Sir.”

Then she frowned and missed St.Clair and Redford exchanging glances. “Something wrong, Ensign?”

“I was checking our arrival time, sir and the figures don’t-“ She turned to meet the captain’s gaze. “Sir, someone has changed the time read-outs from Starfleet standard to Deltan.” The rest of the crew watched as she turned back and her hands moved over the console. “Settings restored to Starfleet standards. Estimated arrival time at Domeclaine Nine, is in six hours, ten minutes.”

Lt. Redford cleared his throat. “I confess.”

Tam turned to look at the brown haired man. “Sir?”

St.Clair explained. “The Deltan settings are Paul’s idea of an initiation prank. He pulls it on every new navigator we get. But I think you just set the record for catching on to it the quickest.” He smiled then. “Lt. Blackwell didn’t catch on till after she’d given me the arrival time- then she nearly killed Paul once she got off shift.”

He met Tam’s gaze. “Welcome to the Command Crew, Ensign.”

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*Personal log: Supplemental.*

*Tamera Kirk recording.*

*I think I'm starting to like the crew of the Georgetown. They know how to relax without risking discipline. In a way, Captain St.Clair is a lot like Jan. He trusts his people to do their jobs and they trust him to lead the way. The more formal, military aspects of things only come into play when they have to.*

*In terms of what's- technically- my second training flight, I think I was very lucky to be assigned here...*

Captain St.Clair liked to walk around his bridge. He spent as much time on his feet as he did in his command chair- and it wasn't a nervous pacing, either. It was clear that he was interested in what was going on at every station. Sometimes the conversations between him and the crewman manning that station would last a good long while before he moved on.

The *Georgetown's* first officer was an Andorian male- Lt. Commander T'elleg. Like Spock, he doubled as the ship's Science Officer. The one thing that set him

apart from *Enterprise's* security chief, Lt. Commander Therran, was the ponytail he wore- full and long, it reached to the middle of his back. He was standing by Tam's side of the helm, checking some readings when she finally got up the nerve to speak. "Mr. T'elleg, may I ask you something?" He studied her for a moment, then nodded. "Once we arrive at Domeclaine Nine, what's our mission?"

The Captain had been talking to the crewman manning the weapons console- a consolidated station for controlling the ship's phasers and shields. Having heard Tam's question, he took it upon himself to answer. "Up until now, Domeclaine Nine has only been visited by automated probes. We'll be going in to confirm their information and carry out a more detailed survey of the planet."

"So Domeclaine Nine is uninhabited?" Tam asked.

St.Clair leaned against the weapons console as he shrugged. "That's what the probes say, anyway." He studied Tam for a moment before he spoke again. "You're rated for the new landing party gear, aren't you, Ensign?"

"Yes, sir."

He nodded. "Then you can join the landing party."

Tam stared at him in shock. “Sir?”

The captain shrugged once more as he headed for his chair. “Have to get your feet wet sometime- and this looks to be a routine survey.” He stopped behind the helm and met Tam’s gaze. “But *never* take any new world to be routine.”

“A good friend told me once, ‘Young lady, if you can imagine it, plan for it’,” Tam replied.

St.Clair nodded. “Your friend was right.”

From orbit, Domeclaine Nine looked like your normal class “M” world. Two major land masses, each equal in size to the Euro-Asian continent on Earth. Lots of islands of various sizes and lots of water. Clouds were currently scattered across two thirds of the planet.

Tamera could hardly take her eyes off the Main Viewscreen as she watched the planet rotate beneath them. It was the first alien planet she’d ever seen outside of the Guardian’s world.

Mr. T’elleg broke in on her contemplation from his science station. “Captain, we’re picking up something unusual.”

Sitting in his command chair, St.Clair glanced over at him. “Unusual how?”

The Andorian’s hands moved over his console and the view of Domeclaine Nine changed to a different angle. “Located in this area,” he said as part of a continent was outlined by the computer, “Are two continental plates that have not moved in almost two thousand years.” Everyone stared at the screen, then turned to the blue-skinned male. “As we all know, any planet has a series of plates that make up the planetary crust. They usually ‘float’ on the magma of a planet’s

core. The only example Union science has ever seen of plates *not* moving is when a planet is totally dead, its molten core cooled and solidified.

“For these two plates- for any plates- to remain in place on an otherwise normal world is impossible.”

“Why didn’t the probes pick up on it?” St.Clair asked.

“They weren’t programed to carry out a plate-shift analysis. Only the ship’s larger computer with its additional survey programs could detect it.”

The captain rose from his chair and stepped around the helm as he continued to watch the viewscreen. “Is it just these two plates? Are you sure they’re not just...’stuck’ somehow?”

T’elleg nodded. “Those two are the only ones. If they are ‘stuck’ then the day they become ‘unstuck’, that whole quarter of the planet’s surface will pay for it.”

“Earthquake,” Tam noted- and only then noticed that she’d spoken.

The Andorian nodded. “On a scale no one has ever seen before.”

St.Clair glanced at him, then back at the screen. “Then it sounds like it’s time to beam down and find out what’s going on.”

=^=

As soon as the transporter effect released them, T’elleg, Tam and Wesley all reached for their tricorders as St.Clair reached for his communicator. “St.Clair to *Georgetown*. Transport complete. Out.”

It was warm- in fact it felt like late spring as Tam’s voice was heard. “Sir, the probes *did* say that this world was uninhabited, right?”

St.Clair was looking away from Tam as he answered. “That’s right, Ensign.”

“Then, sir, with all due respect, I think those probes need to go back to school.”

“What do you- ?” He turned and his voice fell silent as his gaze followed the direction she was pointing to see a city in the distance- a city with crystal towers that reached hundreds of stories into the sky. But it was not a new city. It was clear, even at that distance, that some of the towers were shattered, while others were broken off.

Tamera shook her head as she studied the readings her tricorder gave her. “This doesn’t make sense.” She looked to St.Clair. “According to this thing, it’s not there- yet we can see it.”

St.Clair took her tricorder and ran the scans again- getting the same readings she’d gotten. His eyes narrowed as he studied the distant city. “A projection of some kind?”

T’elleg turned toward them. “If that were the case, there’d be an energy reading of some kind.”

“Not if it were masked somehow,” Tam offered.

The Andorian shook his head. “That would still imply an intelligence, Ensign, and the probes-“

St.Clair scowled. “I think we’ve already proven the probes wrong.” He handed her tricorder back to Tam and started walking toward the distant city. “Now let’s find out how and why.”

=^=

*Personal Log; Stardate 6136.14*

*Tamera Kirk recording.*

*Once on the surface of Domeclaine Nine, we were faced with more questions than answers and answers were what the Captain wanted....*

T'elleg had been working with his tricorder as the landing party walked along. The area around them was a dust bowl- nothing was growing anywhere around them. Now, the Andorian looked up and spoke quickly. "Captain, stop- please."

St.Clair, Tam and Wesley gathered round him. "What is it?" the captain asked.

The Andorian held up his tricorder. "According to the chronometer, we've walked back in time twenty years."

At that point, Tamera, who'd been trying to get the same readings, picked up on something else instead. "Sir, we can also scan the city now. But it's real faint- almost like a ghost."

St.Clair looked toward the city as he thought this over. "So, the further we walk, the farther back in time

we go and the more solid the city becomes.” He looked to Tam. “Try to call the *Georgetown*.”

She took her communicator from her belt- glad they’d left the bulky landing party jackets on the ship. “Ensign Kirk to *Georgetown*, come in. *Georgetown*, this is Ensign Kirk, please respond.” After a moment, she looked to St.Clair and shook her head.

The captain nodded. “That’s what I thought.”

“Sir?”

He met Tam’s gaze. “Twenty years back in time, Ensign. The *Georgetown* hasn’t been built yet.”

T’elleg had more good news. “Sir, this distortion- or whatever it is- isn’t confined to the surface.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s still too early to be certain,” the science officer replied. “But it looks like this...temporal distortion reaches beneath the surface as well.”

St.Clair met his gaze for a long moment. “The continental plates you mentioned earlier.”

T’elleg nodded.

“That would take a lot of power,” Tam noted.

St.Clair met her gaze. “Like the power provided by a city.”

Wesley looked to his captain at that point. “So what do we do, Skipper? Go back to the beam down point and our time, or go on to the city and their time?”

St.Clair looked to each of them as he answered. “Right now this...temporal distortion is limited to the planet. We need to find out what’s causing it and put a stop to it before it decides to expand out into the galaxy.”

He started walking. “We’re going on to the city.”

=^=

They walked on. As they did so, the dust bowl gave way to a rocky plain with an occasional scrubby bush. That in turn gradually transformed into more and more grass with a few trees as the path they were on became a cracked, pitted and broken road.

It was at this point, some thirty minutes after they’d started walking, that they found the body. They almost missed it for its clothes had faded to shades of grey and the being’s skin had taken on a dried, leathery look.

T’elleg knelt beside it and scanned it. “Mummified.”

“How long?” St.Clair asked.

The Andorian checked his tricorder before he spoke, then met his captain’s gaze. “One thousand, three years.” He stood up as he continued. “And Captain, there’s no longer any doubt. This distortion *is* holding the plates in place. The readings are stronger all across the spectrum.”

They moved on. It was five minutes later by their time, when Tam called out and pointed to the sky. “Captain!”

Hanging in mid-air, was a vehicle, frozen in mid-flight. They walked on for another five minutes and when they looked back, the vehicle was gone. “We’ve gone back in time another four years, “T’elleg stated. “I doubt that vehicle’s been built yet.”

They continued on. The land around them became greener and gradually, took on a more cared for look as buildings began to show on the horizon.

It was about this time that they started encountering people- and these weren’t mummified. They seemed immobilized- frozen in the middle of doing everyday things. Tam’s eyes were drawn to their ears- more slender, taller and pointed than any Vulcan’s. The overall effect was that of a classic fantasy-style elf brought

to life. Caught between one moment and the next, one step, one word, one breath and the next.

The city itself, the towers, all of it was intact as if they'd reached the height of this society's development before the decline began.

St.Clair looked around as he spoke. "T'elleg, what are your readings now?"

Never taking his eyes off his tricorder's read-outs, the Andorian turned in a full circle as he scanned the area. "According to my readings, we've gone back in time two thousand years." He then looked to the captain. "And the city's as solid as we are."

Tamera's red head had been bent over her own tricorder. Now she looked up. "Captain, I'm picking up an energy reading now." She pointed off to their right. "That way."

Wesley had been scanning as well. "Confirmed. We must be getting closer to the day all this started."

St.Clair met his gaze, then turned to Tam. "Lead on, Ensign."

They followed her through the streets, passing people frozen in time till they were facing a building that seemed more important than the ones around it.

The crystal it was built from , seemed cleaner somehow- prouder than the structures surrounding it. They stopped at the bottom of stone steps leading up to double doors and T'elleg studied the place closely. "Since the trail seems to lead inside, we can only assume this is a research lab of some kind."

The Captain glanced at him, then up at the building. "Let's find out." He started up the steps with the others following his lead until they entered the structure and found themselves in a fair-sized lobby. Marble-like walls, reception desk, boxes of planets arranged around the area and several exits. St.Clair looked to Tam. "All right, Ensign. Which way?"

She checked her tricorder and pointed to one of the exits. "That one, sir. Down that hallway." Following her scans, Tam led them through the lobby and into the hall she'd indicated. They passed numerous doors before she stopped in front of one. "This one. Whatever it is, it's behind here."

St.Clair placed his hand on her shoulder and gently moved her to one side. "Stand clear, Ensign." He then checked the door carefully with both his eyes and Wesley's tricorder. Only after he'd done so, did he reach for the switch mounted nearby.

It didn't respond to his touch. "T'elleg?"

The science officer stepped forward and repeated the steps his captain had gone through before turning his attention to the switch and its panel. He reached to his belt and took out a tool that he used to pry the panel off- revealing various sorts of alien circuitry beyond. Another tricorder scan and a different tool. A moment later, two small 'snipping' sounds were heard. "Try it now, sir."

St.Clair stepped up to the door- it was a sliding door, not unlike those on the *Georgetown*- and pushed to the left. Nothing. He then pushed to the right- and the door slid easily into the wall. "Thank you, Mr. T'elleg." He then stepped into the room as the others followed.

The room was part laboratory and part work shop. Tables were positioned all around with various pieces of equipment or consoles located on top.

Tamera's gaze slid over all of this, before focusing on the largest piece of equipment in the room. It was a large, ring-shaped device that- to her mind- bore an unofficial resemblance to the Guardian of Forever.

T'elleg stepped toward the structure, his tricorder's hum seeming to increase in intensity as he scanned the device- then scanned it again. "Remarkable." He looked

to St.Clair. “Captain, according to my scans, this device is supposed to be some kind of ‘time-viewer’ capable of opening windows into the past.”

Wesley spoke as he kept an eye on the rest of the room. “Seems pretty clear that something went wrong with their first test run.”

T’elleg nodded. “Instead of creating ‘viewports’ into the past, it opened the entire Domeclaine Nine timeline at one time.”

The security chief stepped over beside the others. “That would explain our little ‘walk through the ages’.”

T’elleg nodded. “Yes- and Captain, you were correct about the threat this effect presents. For every one of our minutes, it expands by five years. By my calculations, in ten years, it’ll envelope the planet. After that-“

Lt. Wesley looked from the science officer to the captain. “What I don’t understand is how come we haven’t been affected- frozen in place like the natives?”

“Maybe because we’re from beyond their time,” Tam suggested. “If the device only opened the Domeclaine Nine timeline, that timeline would’ve ended the day they threw the switch, right?”

St.Clair studied her face for a moment, then nodded before he turned to the others. “So now, the question is, how do we shut it down?”

T’elleg looked down at his tricorder, then up at his captain. “Sir, as Ensign Kirk pointed out, this distortion only effects the people that created it. In view of the Prime Directive, do we have the right to shut it down?”

St.Clair met his gaze as he replied. “You just said that this distortion will eventually cover the planet. Are you saying now, that your calculations were wrong?”

The Andorian shook his head. “no sir. Eventually-decades from now- this distortion will reach out into the solar system- and then the galaxy as you assumed earlier.”

“Then what are you saying, Commander?”

“What I am saying, Captain, is this: Shut down the distortion and we may end up killing the entire native population.”

Tam looked from the science office to the captain as the ‘discussion’ continued. St.Clair shook his head. “These people died two thousand years ago.”

T’elleg nodded. “But they’re alive here and now- just as we are. There are also the continental plates to consider. Shutting down the distortion may release two thousand years of movement. This entire quarter of the planet would be laid to waste- again, killing the native population and us.

“There’s also the possibility that the distortion won’t shut down now that it’s begun. Disturbing it in any way may in fact cause it to expand in to other timelines- including ours, capturing us and the *Georgetown*.”

“Mr. T’elleg, “Tam called, “What if we managed to shut it down without all of that happening? How likely is it, that we’d end up trapped in their past?” She looked to St.Clair. “In order to shut it down, we’d have to be here with it.”

The Blue-skinned male nodded. “Being trapped like you describe, is a definite possibility, Ensign.”

Wesley shook his head. “Damned if we do, and damned if we don’t.”

Maxwell St.Clair was silent for a long moment as he stared at the current center of his problems. “Would a large enough containment field restrict its expansion?”

T’elleg shrugged. “It would take time to analyze our readings and build one that might work. But we’re dealing with an alien technology that no Union citizen has ever encountered before- guarantees are impossible.”

Wesley looked from St.Clair to T’elleg. “What about some kind of energy syphon? Drain the energy so the power drops off- make the distortion fade gradually?”

“Sir?” they all turned to see Tamera standing by the machine. She indicated some thick cables running along the floor. “Considering what Mr. Wesley said, what about simply cutting the power? Wouldn’t that trigger some kind of controlled, automatic shut-down? It would with Union tech.”

The Captain and Science Officer traded glances and then T’elleg knelt by the cables and scanned them. “Standard materials- nothing we haven’t seen before.” He checked his tricorder again and then pointed to one. “This one. If we cut it, the power stops.” He looked to St.Clair. “I’d like to include a delayed trigger.

Something to give us time to get back to the beam down point, beyond the distortion. Just in case.”

St.Clair nodded. “Just in case’ are three of my favorite words. Get to it.”

Tam watched as the Andorian took a small tool kit from his belt and set to work disassembling both his tricorder and his phaser. Taking tools in hand as he needed them, he began reprogramming various components. The Ensign looked to the captain to see him watching her. “He’s a walking engineering section,” She noted. “Is there anything he doesn’t carry?”

St.Clair shrugged. “I don’t know- but he’s never come up short.”

T’elleg looked up from his work. “Captain our walk from the beam down point took fifty-three minutes. Due to the jury-rigging I’m doing here, I can only set this for fifty.”

The captain nodded. “Then we’ll just have to double-time it out of here.” As T’elleg turned back to his work, St.Clair had orders for Tam. “Get a complete scan of this place, Ensign. The equipment, the building, the people- but stay in shouting range.”

“Yes, sir.”

As the young redhead moved off and began her scans, St.Clair turned to someone else. “Mr. Wesley, go with her. There doesn’t appear to be any danger at the moment, but who knows.”

“Yes, sir.”

Wesley followed Tam from the room, catching up with her in the hallway. “Not quite what you expected for your first time out is it?”

Tam looked up from her tricorder and shrugged. “The captain surprised me when he ordered me to join the landing party.”

The Lieutenant kept one eye on their surroundings as he replied. “You have to start getting experience sometime.”

The nineteen year old nodded. “That’s what the captain said.”

With a lop-sided smile, the security chief turned to her. “Did the captain ask you to dinner?”

She looked at him like he was crazy. “No. Are you asking, Lieutenant?”

He nodded and his smile softened. “Yes, I am.”

She studied his face for a long moment. The past year and a half had been so crazy; she hadn’t had time

for a real date- not that anyone had actually asked. A slow smile came to her face and she nodded. “All right- you’re on.”

They had reached the lobby and an easy silence settled over them- only to be broken by the captain as he and T’elleg joined them. “Let’s go. We’ve got forty-seven minutes left.”

They ran from the building. While back in the lab, T’elleg’s bomb continued counting down the remaining minutes.

=^=

Leaving the crystal city of two thousand years ago, they reached the city limits at a fast walk. “We can’t run all the way,” St.Clair told them. “We’d wear ourselves out before we got half-way.

“Quick march, people.”

With thirty minutes left, they were jogging along the road. As it changed from well-maintained to abandoned, Tam looked back to see the same flying vehicle still caught in mid-flight.

They had ten minutes left when they came to the molasses that slowed them down- the section of road that was broken and had pieces missing. Heading toward the city, they’d had plenty of time to deal with its pot holes and twisted surface. But now as they dealt with the sink holes and sand dunes which were blown across it, they could feel time catching up and passing them by.

Finally, they were back on the dirt trail and the dust bowl was around them The Beam down point came into view-

-and the ground heaved up under them as a loud shattering roar filled the air.

Their time had run out.

The ground that had risen up a moment before now dropped from under them, shaking and vibrating like an ancient steam engine about to explode. It shook with increasing violence until no one was able to stand.

Off to one side, in the distance, an entire range of mountains rose as high as Earth's Mt. Everest, sending dirt and boulders flying, to land miles away. On the other side of the landing party, another range of mountains rose up even taller, causing the level ground they had been standing on, to become the bottom of a very large canyon.

The sky- which had been an easy light blue the whole time they'd been here, now grew dark as volcanos erupted, sending up tons of ash and smoke, while at the same time, the water table was shattered, sending geysers of water thousands of feet into the air.

Wesley's voice reached everyone faintly as the roar and crash of two thousand years of planetary change did its best to drown him out. "We're not going to make it!"

Tamera looked around as the land rose and fell and boulders crashed into everything and swore. The lieutenant was right. If they stayed there, they were dead.

“Damn!” She concentrated and opened a portal.  
“Everyone- into the portal- Hurry!”

As lave bombs fell around them and spears of rock shot up from the ground, Wesley and T’elleg stared in shock.

It was St.Clair that got them moving. “Move- both of you! Or do you want to die here?!”

The two traded glances and deciding it would be better to die somewhere else, they jumped into the portal together.

“Go on, Ensign!” St.Clair shouted as rain began to wash the ash out of the sky.

“I can’t- It’ll close behind me,” Tam replied. “We have to go together.”

The older man nodded and side-by-side, they jumped into the portal as the ground they’d been standing on began to crack and lava rained down into the resulting chasm...

=^=

Wesley and T’elleg were both waiting and worrying when the two stepped out of the portal at the beam down point. Wesley turned from his pacing and T’elleg

started to speak, but St.Clair cut them off. “Tricorders out and operating- Now!” He glanced at Tam as he turned toward the city. “How far back?”

“By our time, only a few seconds. Any more would create a time para-“ She turned to face him in sudden realization. “*You know ?!*”

He didn’t meet her gaze as he pointed. “Later. Look!”

The mountains were starting to shake, yet there was no vibration or sensation to go with what they were seeing. They were outside the distortion- and out of danger as the land within tried it’s best to tear itself apart.

But everyone’s eyes were on the ancient- and distant city as it shook and shimmered, cracked and broke, fell apart- and faded away.

Then, from their point of view, a new city began an almost immediate rise. Growing higher by the moment, it wasn’t made of crystal like the one before- but of the more familiar materials of chrome, steel and glass.

Tam’s voice broke the silence as the land around them settled into a new calm. “Whoah...”

St.Clair smiled at her reaction as he reached for his communicator. “St.Clair to *Georgetown*.”

“*Georgetown* here, sir.”

The four traded relieved glances at the captain spoke. “Scan the planet for any unusual readings- anything at all.”

It took a moment for the ship to carry out the scan, then the voice of the ship’s communications officer was heard again. “Sir, everything looks fine from up here. The landing party, the city- it all looks fine.”

“Refresh my memory, “St.Clair ordered. “What’d the probes have on the city?”

“Nothing ,sir. It was one of the things you wanted to check out.”

St. Clair’s eyebrows rose at that even as he spoke. “Understood. Repeat the scan every half hour and contact me if there’s any change. St.Clair out.”

Ray Wesley shook his head as the captain put his communicator away. “How could they miss the earthquake?”

“Same way they missed the continental plates,” T’elleg replied. “By walking back in time and shutting down the time viewing experiment, we re-wrote

Domeclaine Nine's history. The earthquake took place within the distortion- which means it happened several years before we arrived."

He then turned to Tamera. "Ensign, how-"

"-Do you stand in your First Contact classes?" St.Clair asked- cutting the Andorian off.

"I'm in the top five percent in all my classes, sir." She replied.

St.Clair nodded. "Then let's go see if anyone's home."

"Captain," T'elleg called," First Contact is usually reserved for societies that have developed some form of faster-than-light travel."

"In case you've forgotten, Mr. T'elleg, we've already had First Contact with these people," St.Clair replied. "Two thousand years ago. Now let's finish cleaning this mess up."

With that, the *Georgetown's* captain headed off toward the city once more.

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When they reached the city limits this time, the picture was entirely different.

Instead of flying vehicles high in the sky, and people frozen in mid move, the city was bustling with hover cars a foot off the ground and people heading to and from various destinations.

Then the natives began taking notice of the visitors among them. They stopped and stared, some actually took a step back, while others pulled their children to them in a protective hug.

St.Clair signaled his people to stay put and slowly stepped forward. He held up his hands to show that they were empty and hoped the universal translator in his belt would work. “We are visitors,” He began. “May we meet with your leaders?”

For several moments, no one moved. Then several natives in uniform came on the scene and took the landing party to a nearby vehicle. Wesley looked around as they climbed inside. “Too nice for a paddy wagon,” he noted.

In point of fact, they were not taken to the local jail. Instead, they were taken to the city’s administration building- built on the site of the old research lab.

Tam didn't say anything. Having nothing to contribute at the moment, she kept silent, watched and listened.

If the truth be known, she was actually more concerned with the fact that the captain knew her secret. She couldn't help wondering what he would do with that knowledge. Her sister had said, "...There are good people in Starfleet. But like any organization, it also has its share of idiots..." Tam stole glances at the captain and couldn't help wondering which category he fell into.

The same went for Mr. Wesley and Mr. T'elleg. Could she trust any of them? Or was her career over before it could even begin?

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But the subject didn't come up then. They had other, more important business to deal with.

Once the city's leader was past the shock of these visitors' appearance, he invited them to join him and his advisor- who was also his wife- in talks that lasted almost non-stop for the next three days. During that time, St.Clair explained who and what the landing party

was and native telescopes confirmed a large ship in orbit.

The talks that followed involved scientists and philosophers, physicists and historians. The landing party's scans were presented and played back, discussed and compared with records that were two thousand years old. A week passed before the Leader and his people understood how close their ancestors had come to destroying themselves. If the *Georgetown* hadn't been ordered to check out the system, there's a good chance Domeclaine Nine would never have broken free of the trap her population had fallen into.

Fortunately, the "Time-viewing" experiment never went beyond the first test. According to the histories, the power lines over-loaded. Once St.Clair showed them the truth, the native historians immediately began correcting their histories.

In and around all of this, the Leader and his wife asked other questions- questions about the *Georgetown* and the Union.

St.Clair was leery of telling them too much all at once. But he'd already gone this far. It'd be best to tell them the facts right from the start. So, he showed them star charts, pointing out the Union and telling them

about the Klingons and the current mess with the Romulans.

The captain told them about the Union- what it was and how it came to be; who was in it and why- and what everyone hoped it stood for.

It was clear the Leader and his wife listened closely to every word St.Clair said.

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Two weeks after the *Georgetown's* arrival, found Captain St.Clair and Ensign Kirk on the steps of the administration building along with the Leader and his wife. The leader was speaking. "...It is too bad that you must take your leave of us, Captain."

"I'm afraid our schedule's pretty tight," St.Clair replied. "We were supposed to be in orbit around Ficus Five yesterday to re-supply the colony there."

"We understand," the Leader's wife stated. "And we are thankful for the time you have given us- in more ways than one."

"Indeed," the Leader added. "You've given us back-"

*"Captain!"*

St.Clair turned to see Tam running down the steps toward the street. In the same instant, he saw something else as well:

A female walking across the street-

Her child lagging behind-

A hover car barreling down on them at too fast a speed to stop-

Tam grabbing the child and throwing her clear-

Then there was the sound and feel of impact.

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When Tam opened her eyes, she found herself in one of the *Georgetown's* Sick Bay recover wards with a human female in her mid-sixties leaning over her. "...who?"

"Well, welcome back, Ensign. I'm Doctor Miranda Bellows- Chief Medical Officer."

Tamera closed her eyes. "Not the best way to...meet the family doctor," she whispered.

Dr. Bellows had to smile. "If you can joke, you must be feeling better."

“Twenty-third century and I get hit by a car,” Tam slowly shook her head in disbelief. “How bad?”

“You were busted up pretty good, “the ship’s doctor said. “Most of your ribs, right thigh, right arm- in two places- and good knock to the head.”

“Doctor.”

Bellows turned to see St.Clair in the recover ward doorway. “Well, Captain. I was just getting ready to call you. Our young hero’s awake.”

“How long before she can return to duty?”

Frustration exploded across the doctor’s face and was clear in her voice. “Hell, Max, it’ll be a week at least before she can even sit up.”

“A....starship’s flown from the seated position,” Tam said.

St.Clair couldn’t hide his smile as Bellows replied. “But not from the *prone* position, Young Lady- which is where you’re going to be for a few more days yet.” She then turned back to the Captain. “Try not to wear her out. This is the first time she’s been awake since the accident.”

He nodded and watched as she left the ward.

“She’d make someone a great grandmother,” Tam stated.

St.Clair chuckled softly. “Actually she is- twice over.”

He stepped over beside the bed. “You’ve caused quite a stir, Ensign.”

“Sir?”

“The Leader and his wife insisted on granting you Domeclaine Nine citizenship for saving the little girl,” St.Clair said. “Turned out the hover car’s barking system had failed. The driver was trying to stop the entire time he was coming at you.” He paused and then continued. “You’ll also find a Citation of Merit in your mail when you get out of here.”

“Thank you, sir. Are we still in orbit?”

“No. We left Domeclaine Nine, two days ago. But their story’s not over.”

“Sir?”

“Officially, Starfleet ‘slapped my wrist’ for making First Contact,” St.Clair told her. “ ‘Circumstances forced the issue, but do it again.’ There’s a full diplomatic team on its way to start them on the membership process- the Leader requested that. Your

willingness to sacrifice yourself to save that little girl impressed them more than anything I said.” His smile grew.” So, your first mission and you’ve already added another member to the Union.”

“Ever since I was little, I wanted to join Starfleet,” Tam said with a yawn. “I wanted to see the universe beyond Earth, be part of it- maybe leave it a little better than I found it.” She closed her eyes.

St.Clair checked the monitor. She’d drifted off to sleep. His smile grew gentle. “Young Lady, you’re well on your way to doing all three.”

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*Personal Log; Stardate 6142.1*

*Tamera Kirk recording.*

*Dr. Bellows has finally released me from Sick Bay! It was about time, I was going stir crazy. On the other hand, I no sooner reached my cabin, than I got a summons via intercom to report to the Captain's cabin...*

The door slid open when Tam pressed the buzzer. "Come in." She stepped into the Captain's office to find him seated at his desk. Mr. Wesley and Mr. T'elleg were there as well. St.Clair waved a hand toward the chair on the other side of his desk. "Have a seat, Ensign."

"Thank you, sir," Tam said quietly as she sat down.

"I know you still have some questions," the Captain began.

She couldn't deny it. "Yes, sir."

The oldest male in the room nodded as he leaned back in his chair. "Then let me answer them. I knew about your...gift before you arrived on board. When my copy of your orders arrived, it included an information packet concerning your gift."

Tam's confusion was clear. "Sir?"

"Grand Admiral Stryker put it there." He raised his hand for silence when he saw that Tam was about to speak." Before I opened it, I thought it was a discipline file." He shrugged. "Needless to say, I was a little surprised to find out otherwise."

The nineteen year old finally found her voice. "With all due respect, sir, that's not the kind of information I want floating around Starfleet."

St.Clair nodded. "I agree. Which is why I sent a recommendation to Admiral Stryker that it should be removed. This time, your gift saved the landing party. You may go the rest of your career and never need to use your gift in the line of duty again- or you may need it tomorrow.

"The point is, none of that matters. What matters is that, it's *your* gift and until you need to make use of it, it's no one else's business.

"Stryker agreed and removed the packet from your file."

Tam released the breath she'd been holding.

St.Clair looked down at the desk for a moment. "I sent Stryker two copies of my report. One tells him

exactly what happened. The other states that when the distortion began to fail, the resulting energy fluxions threw us clear. I left it up to him as to which one became the official record.

“He chose the energy fluxions over your gift.”

He met Tamera’s gaze. “I suppose that leaves only one more question: Can the three of us be trusted with your secret?” He looked over at Wesley and T’elleg. “I have no intention of saying anything. Do you gentlemen?”

T’elleg shook his head. “No sir.”

Wesley smiled. “I seem to remember that distortion giving us a pretty bumpy ride myself.”

St.Clair nodded in approval, then turned back to Tam. “Now I have a question, Ensign. When did Dr. Bellows say you can return to duty?”

Tam smiled. “First thing in the morning, Sir.”

The captain nodded once more- then raised his head slightly. “One more thing. In the years to come, you’ll find that a captain choses his landing party based on two criteria. One is the requirements of the mission. The other is something you won’t find in any manual.

“A captain not only chooses the specialists that he needs to carry out a specific mission, he also picks people he knows will keep their heads in an emergency. People he can count on to obey orders under the worse possible conditions- because his life and the lives of everyone in the landing party may depend on any given member of the team.

“Based on what I saw of you on this mission, I think you can expect a lot more landing parties in your future.”

Tam felt the tension drain from her body and she smiled. “Thank you, sir. I’ll be looking forward to them.”

St.Clair nodded toward the door. “Dismissed.”

As the three left the office, T’elleg headed off in one direction, while Tam and Wesley moved off together in the other. “It’s a little early for dinner,” the security chief noted. He smiled as he looked over at the redhead. “How about I spring for lunch instead?”

Tam’s eyes were bright and her smile clear as she nodded. “You’re on.”

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**Part Three:**

**Where she's going**

*Epilogue: Twenty-two years later...*

The newly commissioned *FSS Challenger* sat in her spacedock at the Utopia Planitia shipyards around Mars. Her hanger bay doors stood open in readiness.

The shuttlecraft glided smoothly through those doors and settled onto the deck in its designated spot without scratching the new deck's paint.

Once the hanger doors were closed and the hanger itself was pressurized, airlock doors opened, allowing the command crew, an honor guard and a visitor to enter.

The first officer checked to make sure the podium was set up and that the ceremony would be carried throughout the ship. Then he tapped his combadge and spoke softly.

A moment later, the shuttle's hatch slid open and an officer started to step out. Her red hair caught the hanger's lights and her green eyes gleamed with excitement as she glanced around before stepping clear.

The first officer stepped up to her and saluted.

"Permission to come aboard?" she asked as she returned the salute.

"Granted, Ma'am. If you'll follow me?"

With that, he led her over to the podium and it was clear every pair of eyes in the hanger was locked on what looked like a nineteen year old girl with captain's pips on her collar.

The first officer stepped up to the podium and all over the ship, the crew stopped what they were doing and joined the command crew in watching and listening to what was to come. "This is the First Officer. Stand by for a special announcement." He then stepped to one side, leaving a clear path for the redhead.

She nodded to him and as she stepped forward, she reached to her belt and took out actual envelope, from which she removed a real sheet of paper- something Starfleet reserved for special orders and special occasions. As she unfolded the paper, she looked out over the command crew, spotted the visitor and smiled.

Then she spoke. "I will now read the following orders into the ship's log. From Grand Admiral Franklin Fitzpatrick, to Captain Tamera Kirk. You will proceed at once to Utopia Planitia shipyards, where you will rendezvous with the newly commissioned *FSS Challenger*.

"You will assume command of the *Challenger* for the duration of its first eight year tour as it carries out

the Starfleet mandate to seek out new life and new civilizations, to defend and bring justice to the farthest reaches of the Federal Union of Planets and most importantly of all, as she boldly goes where none have gone before.”

Tam then returned the orders to their envelope and then to her belt. She then looked up. “Computer?”

The A.I. responded immediately. “Yes, Captain?”

“Note in the ship’s log, that on this date, at this hour, I do hereby, legally, assume command of the vessel.”

“Yes, Ma’am. It is so noted. Welcome aboard, Captain.”

She smiled. “Thank you.” Then she looked to the bridge crew. “We’ll have plenty of time to get to know each other. Right now, though, I want a meeting of the full command crew in the briefing room in one hour- and I want full status reports on every section at that time.” She then nodded to the first officer.

He stepped forward. “Attention! Dismissed.”

As the crew began to scatter, Tam left the podium and went straight to her visitor- hugging her sister tightly. “I’m glad you come make it.”

Admiral Janet Kirk smiled. “Where else am I going to be the day my kid sister assumes her first command?”

“You were right,” Tam told her. “That first day in Sick Bay when you told me I’d be commanding ships that weren’t even on the drawing board yet.”

Jan gently touched her cheek. “Kiddo, you’re just getting started.” Then her own smile grew. “Now, come over here. I want you to meet your chief communications officer.”

Tam was a little confused by this, till her gaze fell on the female in question. She was about thirty years old and Tam’s attention was drawn to her ears-which were more pointed and slender than any Vulcan’s. She knew then that this girl could only be one race.

“Lieutenant Glendela,” Jan introduced, “Captain Tamera Kirk.”

Tam took the girl’s hand. “You’re Domeclainian, aren’t you?”

“Yes, Ma’am,” she answered. “And it’s an honor to meet you again.”

“Again?” Tam glanced at her sister in momentary confusion- then it hit her and her eyes went wide in

shock as she turned back to Glendela. “*You* were the little girl- ?”

The lieutenant nodded. “Yes, Ma’am. From the moment I found who you were, I followed your career every way I could. I knew if this ‘thing’ called ‘Starfleet’ had people like you in it, then that’s where I wanted to be.”

Tam took both her hands in hers.

Then they shared a hug.

A short while later, the *Challenger* glided from her spacedock and set course for the Final Frontier.

END