

— STAR TREK — ENTERPRISE

On the eve of the grand opening of Starbase One, constructed by a multispecies crew, Shran, in charge of its defenses, is kidnapped.

STARBASE ONE

PART 1



LINDSAY

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We wish you a pleasant time reading this story.

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Virtual Season 5 episode 6

Title : Starbase One, Part 1

Originally published on 11 November 2005

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Original revision : SueC, Kylie Lee

This cover artwork: Laurent

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<http://virtual.entstcommunity.org>

Producers : Medie, Kylie Lee.

French translation by Laurent available on website

<http://startrek.enterprise.online.fr>

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First diffusion of this free ebook version September 2006

Revision 1

Lindsay

Starbase One

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Part One

The complete EVS5 collection :

- 5.01 Damage Control, Part One
- 5.02 Damage Control, Part Two
- 5.03 Distant Sun
- 5.04 Home Fires
- 5.05 Echoes of Deception
- 5.06 Starbase One, Part One
- 5.07 Starbase One, Part Two
- 5.08 Fire of Water
- 5.09 Bitter Harvest
- 5.10 Veiled Threat
- 5.11 Amalgam
- 5.12 Machinations
- 5.13 From Alpha Century with Love, I : Hope for the best...
- 5.14 From Alpha Century..., II : ...Prepare for the worst
- 5.15 From Alpha Century..., III : The Battle and the War

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Enterprise Virtual Season 6 to be edited in 2006 - 2007

CHAPTER 1

Jonathan Archer sat in his ready room. The room seemed colder than usual, a reflection of how he was feeling after having to deal with yet another crisis aboard his ship. He thought back to meeting with Hernandez on Columbia over a year ago when he'd just thwarted the Xindi and stopped a race of aliens from conquering the future. He'd told Hernandez how much he'd wished for Enterprise's mission to be purely peaceful. "I didn't want to be in command of a warship, trying to make contact with new species." His mind had changed after the punishing Xindi conflict.

Now, having experienced the recent plots to topple the fragile peace that existed between the major races in the surrounding sectors, Archer felt those sentiments returning: the anger at his own peace-minded naïveté, at his blindly arguing with Jefferies years ago about how the mission should not be interfered with

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

by a massive weapons grid. After being delayed by sabotage and the discovery of a spy masquerading as Trannon, a Vulcan scientist, they were back on course to the Marianis sector to see the nearly completed Starbase 1 and to participate in the official opening ceremony.

His latest concern was personal, rather than the safety of his ship, however. He was considering some new orders, ones delivered personally to him by Admiral Gardner, endorsed by Minister Nathan Samuels, and requested by some of the alien governments who were currently involved in the construction of Starbase 1. His thoughts were interrupted by the familiar door chime.

"Come in, " Archer shouted, probably a little louder than he should have.

The door hissed open and a wave of calm entered in the form of Commander T'Pol, followed by Ensign Hoshi Sato. Archer eyed T'Pol as she entered the room, trying to figure out what she was going to say to him. He sometimes depended on the clarity of her logic in the maelstrom of his human emotions. Vulcans and humans could learn a lot from each other.

Sato spoke first. "Captain, we've updated Starbase 1 on our arrival time, and they say they are looking forward to seeing you. Also, you asked me to remind you ten minutes before the senior staff meeting."

Archer digested the information and responded, "Thank you, Ensign. Not that I want to sound rude, but you couldn't tell me this from the bridge?"

Sato smiled. "Well, Captain, I would have, but

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

your comm system was disabled and I needed the distraction."

Archer smiled back weakly, trying to put aside his problems for now. "Thank you, Ensign. I didn't know Malcolm was such boring company." Sato walked out of the room smiling, leaving Archer to his problems. T'Pol would be sure to bring him back to them anyway. He looked up at her from his chair. "Well?"

T'Pol handed him the padd she was holding. "It seems that you have become quite popular among many races. Our missions have made sure of that." She indicated the padd. "The leadership of the races that have partnered together to build Starbase 1 support your candidacy."

Archer nodded. "Do you think I should try to refuse?" Archer knew she wouldn't put herself in the position of deciding for him.

"You seem to make a difference everywhere you go. Yet it would be difficult to find a captain who could, as humans say, fill your shoes."

Archer grinned at T'Pol. "Almost sounds like you'll miss me."

T'Pol glanced at Archer's smug grin and responded coldly, "No."

The captain fought to keep his sense of hurt from showing in his expression--unsuccessfully, judging from the Vulcan's raised eyebrow.

"You are the one who encouraged me to use humor at times when it is needed most," she said pointedly. Ignoring the soft huff of laughter as he acknowledged her hit, she turned and left the room.

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

Archer switched off his terminal and followed T'Pol to the turbolift. When the doors opened next, they walked to the meeting room on C Deck, a place that would forever be associated in his mind with his breaking the news of the Xindi attack on Earth to the senior staff. He entered the room to find the staff assembled and waiting for their captain

"Please be seated." Archer remained standing as he addressed them. "Up until now, none but T'Pol was aware of the fact that this will be my final voyage as your captain. I have been ordered to take command of Starbase 1, effective at the opening ceremony."

Archer stopped there and surveyed the room. It was obvious from looking at each of their faces that they were having the same reaction that Archer had had when Admiral Gardner broke the news to him: shock and surprise.

CHAPTER

2

Drip drop. The sound of dripping water echoed in the quiet room. Shadows danced on the walls as metallic doors hissed open and a figure entered. It walked quietly to a console in the corner of the room. The console had been jury-rigged, the power drain so small as to pass unnoticed by the command center. As usual, and on time, a red light began to flash, signaling an incoming transmission. The figure waited for it to be received, then opened the file.

Enterprise's arrival imminent. Begin operations as planned. Report back on your progress at this time tomorrow.

The man smiled, deleted the message, and powered down the console. These inferior races believe their alliance will last. After today, that will all change. He adjusted his Starfleet uniform and walked out through the metallic doors past a sign that read,

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

"Welcome to Starbase 1."

CHAPTER

3

Enterprise dropped out of warp. Ahead was a large planet known as Marianis VI. It was in the orbit of this planet that the first alliance-built starbase was being constructed. In the time after the incident with the Terra Prime organization, when the Enterprise crew had prevented the plot to have nonhumans leave the Sol system, Starfleet and the major alliance members, including Vulcans, Tellarites, and Andorians, had chosen to strengthen their ties by agreeing to build an interspecies space station. Other species had also been involved, including a small party of Xindi engineers and a Kreetassan group.

As Travis Mayweather looked up from his console to the viewscreen, he found the near-complete Starbase 1 slowly orbiting the rather large planet. He found its design to be very pleasing to the eye. It hung on a slight angle, looking like a huge mythical torch.

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

The top was a large saucer that dwarfed Enterprise many times over. The saucer area housed the small but visible command center at the top as well as the huge internal docking station, which was to house ships traveling to and from the station. It would also serve as a place where ships could conduct repairs. Below the saucer was the command center, and then the station's reactor, science bays, and living quarters.

"Are you plotting a collision course, Ensign?" Malcolm Reed's dry English voice came over Mayweather's shoulder.

Mayweather quickly checked his readings, but of course a collision was never going to happen. He smiled at Reed's teasing. "Sorry, sir. I'm just appreciating a thing of beauty."

"Well, you're not the only one who's impressed, Ensign," said Reed, who Travis sensed had other reasons to appreciate the station. He also knew Reed was going to tell him what those reasons were. "I've been studying the weapons systems since I heard that Commander Shran had been given the job of overseeing the station's weapons grid."

Mayweather smiled. "I'm sure with Shran in charge, there will be a some kind of energy weapon behind every panel."

Reed responded, "There's nothing wrong with being careful. Anyway, I'm curious because Andorian weapons have higher particle yields than our phase cannons."

"You planning on crashing the ship into the station, Malcolm?" a new voice asked.

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

Reed spun around slowly in his chair to see Captain Archer walking onto the bridge. Commander Trip Tucker and T'Pol were close behind him; no doubt they had just finished lunch. "Ah, no, Captain. Just...appreciating a thing of beauty." Mayweather gave Reed a grin, and Sato smiled from the comm station.

The bridge crew assumed their stations, and as Archer sat down, Sato's comm panel beeped, the familiar tone indicating that they were being hailed.

Sato looked up, hand pressed to the unit in her ear. "Captain, Admiral Gardner is hailing us from Starbase 1."

Archer straightened himself up in his chair and nodded to Sato. The admiral's smiling face came up on the screen.

"Captain Archer, welcome to Starbase 1. It's good to see you made it, even if you're a little late."

Archer smiled back. "Thank you, Admiral. I've got a fine crew--we were never in any danger of missing the opening ceremonies."

The admiral's smile turned into a serious frown as he got down to business. "I look forward to seeing a full report on your recent mission. It was unfortunate that someone thought it fitting to place a spy on your ship. I'm ordering a full investigation."

Archer could feel T'Pol's gaze on him. He suspected that she sensed his frustration that he would not be on Enterprise much longer. "Admiral, I'd like to talk to you--alone--when there's time."

The admiral already knew what Archer was going

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

to ask him--Archer could tell that by the look on his face. "There'll be time, Captain. In the meantime, I'm ordering you to dock with the station."

"Thanks, Admiral. See you soon."

Archer frowned as Sato cut the viewscreen. He had just been given a new command. He should be feeling happy. In a way, Starbase 1 had been built because of him. It was perhaps fitting that he should command it. It would be a logical extension of his work to build bridges between races. Yet all he wanted in the end was to captain this ship--his ship, with his father's engines, and now, all that was being taken from him because he also had to follow his sense of duty and the desires of his superiors. One more attempt to convince the admiral to find someone else was all he had, and he would try very hard. He regained his outward composure, sure that the crew sensed his frustration as well. He was one to lecture them about following orders and loyalty--now he was having trouble with it himself! The crew members were like family, and now the head of that family was being taken away.

"Travis, you heard the admiral. Take us in," he ordered.

"And try not to bump anything on your way," Reed contributed from the weapons station.

CHAPTER

4

Enterprise approached the station, using its thrusters to maneuver itself to the correct position in front of the slowly opening space doors. Tucker watched in fascination at what lay inside the base. Small shuttles buzzed around with repair teams. Insignias of the many races that had contributed to the station's construction decorated the interior walls of the station. Each of the races had gone all out to make this a success.

As Enterprise slowly passed through the doors, Tucker could see the docking station that they were heading for. At one other station was a Xindi ship, a small model with the same configuration as Degra's ship. Seeing such a ship had once been a cause for alarm, but it soon had become Earth's only hope against destruction. The station, a concept of the major races, had been built for the sole purpose of enabling

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

alien cultures to get to know each other. No doubt scientific, diplomatic, and commercial endeavors would thrive here too, as well as mundane fleet and ship deployment operations for the various races. Tucker knew that Archer would be personally proud of the birth of an interstellar alliance that brought peace and stability to neighboring star systems. Tucker was looking forward to taking a tour around the starbase as soon as he could. He wanted to visit every nook and cranny of it.

"Cut thrusters and engage umbilicals," Tucker heard Archer order. Tucker knew that Archer had familiarized himself with docking procedures, just as Mayweather had spent time in the simulators getting ready for this new type of flight procedure.

"Cutting thrusters, and all stop," called out Mayweather, a hint of excitement in his voice.

"Well done, Travis." Archer tapped the comm button on his chair. "All hands, this is the captain. We've docked at Starbase 1. Begin securing your stations, and check the shore-leave roster for your assigned leave." Archer stood up, "Trip, T'Pol, let's go and meet the admiral. Malcolm, you have the bridge."

CHAPTER

5

Admiral Gardner stood before the airlock doors as they hissed open. The reception room had four giant windows on one of its wide walls, which had a spectacular view of the inside of the dock. Viewers could stand and watch shuttles, starships, and technicians in space suits as they drifted by. Next to the admiral stood Shran. The Andorian was looking forward to seeing Archer again, but would never admit it to anyone. Archer, his two most senior officers, and the Vulcan delegation walked in, and Admiral Gardner and his party shook their hands.

"Permission to come aboard, Admiral," Archer said.

"Permission granted," said Gardner. "It's good to see you, Jonathan. Welcome! The facilities manager got the crew's shore-leave requests and has everything in hand. I assume you're ready for a grand tour?"

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

"Yes, Admiral. This station has been the talk of the crew since we found out we were coming here."

"Prepare to be impressed," the admiral said. He raised his voice. "Follow me, gentlemen."

As everyone trailed after the admiral, Archer fell into step with Shran. "Shran, its been a while."

"It always is, pinkskin. You don't write anymore."

Archer grinned. "I never did."

The two began laughing, and Shran produced a small bottle of Andorian ale that he was hiding in his jacket. "Here--a toast to a lasting alliance and the reunion of old friends." Archer took the proffered bottle and uncorked it, sure that the admiral wouldn't have a problem with the breach of protocol, and took a swig before handing it back to Shran, who took a sip too.

Archer said, "I've seen your handiwork in the building of this station. It looks like it will be the most heavily defended in the sector. My armory officer can't wait to view the specs."

Shran looked proud. "One can never be too careful, Captain. The best Andorian weapons were put into this station. Let's hope they are never needed for anything."

Archer was in clear agreement. "I'll drink to that." Shran grinned and handed him the bottle again. The ale heated his throat. "Are you joining us for the tour?"

Shran shook his head as he stowed the bottle in his jacket. "Not this time. I'm powering up the weapons systems today, so I will be occupied with my team for a while."

Archer nodded. "Thanks for the drink." He hurried

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

to catch up with the group, and they entered the station's turbolift, which took them straight to the command center.

As the doors closed, Shran turned and headed the other way. He pulled out his padd and began looking at the power flow regulator diagram to check once more that the weapons systems would function under the current settings. He'd argued with the Tellarites for a good month before they'd agreed to let him directly tap more power and feed it to the weapons array. He glanced up as he walked, then paused at one of the huge windows to admire the emptiness before him. Enterprise was docked, and crew members were already disembarking.

Shran looked at his padd once again and was shocked to notice his hand shimmer--in fact, his whole body was. When he had completely disappeared, all that remained was his padd, which he had dropped in surprise.

CHAPTER

6

The turbolift doors hissed open, and Archer's group followed Admiral Gardner into the command center.

"Admiral on deck," a commander called out, and Gardner replied immediately, "As you were." The Starfleet commander approached the group, and Gardner made the introductions.

"Commander Taylor, this is Captain Jonathan Archer, his first officer, Commander T'Pol, and his chief engineer, Commander Charles Tucker. The Vulcan delegation has dispensed with the tour, but they've promised to make themselves known to you as soon as they've settled in."

Taylor smiled at all of them. "It's a pleasure to have you all here. Can I show you around the command center?"

Archer spoke up first. "Thank you for your wel-

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

come, Commander. If you don't mind, I need to speak with the admiral while you show my officers around."

If Taylor was disappointed, she didn't show it. "Please follow me," she indicated. As Admiral Gardner and Archer disappeared into a nearby ready room, Taylor began to show Tucker and T'Pol around the command center. It was large, polished, and starkly white. Consoles flickered everywhere, manned mostly by humans, with members of a few other races at some stations. Taylor took them to the first station.

"This is the weapons control terminal. It's based on the Andorian design provided by Commander Shran and his team. It's going online later today under the commander's direction. Over there is the science station. It's designed for a crew complement of three. It's a combination of Vulcan and human technologies."

"How did you manage to blend all of these foreign technologies together? The design phase alone must have taken months," Tucker said, sounding impressed at the engineering feat.

Taylor smiled. "It did, Commander--it was only the construction that was fast. Thanks to some help from the Xindi and the Tellarites, not to mention a lot of preplanning, we managed to build this station in five months. NX-class starships take over a year and a half to build, but with the combined efforts of all the alliance members involved, we've moved ahead by leaps and bounds."

T'Pol spoke next. "No doubt the compatibility of the technology of different races was the largest issue, but it seems to have handled quite efficiently."

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

Taylor walked them to another console on the other side of the room. "We were inspired by Commander Tucker's work. We read your report on how you managed to install Xindi power cells to replace Enterprise's damaged ones. It showed us that creativity is the most important ingredient in design." She indicated a console. "One of my favorite parts of the command center is here. Can I offer you a drink?"

"Altair water, perhaps," T'Pol said.

Taylor pressed a button and spoke the order. A panel opened, revealing a glass of water, which Taylor handed to T'Pol.

Tucker grinned. "You have a food synthesizer in the command center. You know, I should talk to the captain about getting one on Enterprise's bridge."

"I'm sure the bridge crew would approve," was all T'Pol said as she sipped. Her thoughts turned to Captain Archer, in the office with Admiral Gardner.

CHAPTER

7

Archer followed Gardner into the office and Gardner sat down. "Captain, I'm fairly sure I know what you're going to say." Archer remained standing, even though Gardner waved at a chair, indicating that Archer should sit. "You want to object to Starfleet's orders. You know, Jonathan, we all have a sense of duty that has more priority than our personal desires. Your career is with Starfleet, and this is where we need you now."

Archer didn't bother to hide his frustration. "Admiral, I'm an explorer, not a bureaucrat. Any good I did for the galaxy happened on Enterprise, not from behind a desk. This place is fascinating, but it's not where I should be."

Gardner looked up at Archer. He was clearly ready for any argument that Archer could come up with. "Captain, on numerous occasions you have brought

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

racers together against impossible odds. No one has seen Vulcans and Andorians talk the way they do now to each other, let alone Andorians and Tellarites. You are popular with these races. They respect you. You're a known quantity to them. They want to see you at the head of this place because you will keep the alliance alive from here. Starbase 1 is going to be the focal point of the alliance for some time, and it needs a familiar face that people can have faith in."

Archer sighed. He'd known he'd only had an outside chance at best, and it didn't pay off. But he'd had to try. After all, he hadn't really been given a choice. He'd been ordered. He walked to the window. He looked out into space and saw the emptiness--saw the uncharted territory that he was about to leave behind.

Gardner changed the topic in the gap of silence. "Captain, Starfleet is becoming more and more concerned about these Romulans."

Archer replied while looking out the window. "They seem to be behind a lot of the problems facing the alliance. Our proof is always sketchy at best, though."

"I'm concerned that we've never seen them. They seem xenophobic. That isn't good. In fact, that's what this space station is trying to combat."

Archer nodded. "We'll have to keep our eyes open. I doubt we've seen the last of them."

Gardner nodded in agreement. "I wonder what plans Mr. Trannon had for this station?" He referred to the spy that had infiltrated the Vulcan delegation on board Enterprise.

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

"This project is pretty big--destabilizing it would bring down a major alliance." Archer shrugged, preoccupied with the darkness of space which he observed through the window, although he was listening to the admiral, whom he could see as a faint reflection in the window. "It's possible he may even have a contact on this space station. The crew of the station should be on alert until the opening ceremonies are over. With so many delegates here, one spy can cause a lot of trouble. When I take command, I'll make sure to..." His voice trailed off as his eyes followed a shape: a ship dropping out of warp. He turned to face the admiral. "I thought Enterprise was the only ship scheduled to arrive until tomorrow."

The admiral frowned and stood up. "It is."

As if hearing what they were talking about, the comm came to life. "Admiral Gardner, a ship has dropped out of warp. It's taken on an attack posture and is approaching rapidly."

Gardner exchanged a look with Archer as he pressed the comm to respond. "Who are they?"

The response came back quickly. "Unknown."

Archer looked at the admiral. "Sir, permission to launch Enterprise?"

Gardner nodded. "Good luck, Captain."

Archer exited the room and signaled to T'Pol and Tucker. They ran to the turbolift. As the turbolift doors closed, T'Pol took out her communicator. "T'Pol to Enterprise. Prepare for immediate launch."

Reed's voice came through. "Acknowledged. We've been monitoring the situation."

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

CHAPTER

8

The alien ship sped toward the station. Its weapons were armed, and its engines ran hot. Mayweather turned to face the captain's chair. "Sir, it's less than a minute away."

Reed sat in the chair, awaiting Archer's return. "Go to tactical alert. Launch as soon as the captain signals that he is on board."

"Aye, sir," Mayweather replied.

Sato spoke up. "Sir, the station reports that not all of their weapons are online yet. Their targeting sensors are also not fully operational."

Reed grinned his "just our luck" grin. "Well, let's hope the captain hurries up," he said, just as Archer's voice came through the comm. "This is Archer. We're on board."

Reed stood up. "Launch."

Mayweather's hands danced on the console. "Mov-

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

ing off, full thrusters, fifty seconds to the doors."

The tactical console came to life and beeped its warning tone. The ensign at the weapons station looked to Reed. "They're firing on the station."

The turbolift doors opened and Archer and T'Pol ran to their stations. "Report!" Archer shouted.

T'Pol spoke from her station. "They're targeting the door controls. They appear to be trying to seal us in."

Archer was never one to play it safe at a time like this. "Travis, take us to one quarter impulse--we have to get through the doors."

Mayweather was accustomed to desperate orders from the captain, and he slid the lever forward to carry out his orders.

"Ten seconds to space doors."

T'Pol looked up at Archer. "Sir, the doors have stopped. There is insufficient room for us to maneuver out."

"Malcolm, can you blast the doors open?"

Reed, back at his station, adjusted the yield of the photonic torpedoes and gave Archer the affirmative. Before Archer could order the shot, Reed's console beeped again. "Sir, they're powering their warp engines. They're gone."

Archer saw the doors getting closer. He sank into his chair. "Belay that order, then, Lieutenant Reed. All stop, Travis--we're stuck here until they can get those doors open. Initiate redocking procedures." Archer's bad day couldn't get any worse--or so he thought until Sato turned him. "Admiral Gardner is signaling, sir."

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

Archer looked at the viewscreen as the admiral's face came up.

"Captain, the ship has escaped--and Commander Shran is missing. They've taken him."

CHAPTER

9

"We took a few shots, but we couldn't stop them. The station's weapons grid isn't fully operational yet." Archer studied the admiral's face on the viewscreen in his ready room and waited for whatever else he was going to say. "In light of this incident, Starfleet has chosen to delay the opening of the station for five days. Your orders are to investigate, find Shran, and bring him here. Columbia is due here in eight hours. Captain Hernandez can provide security while you are gone."

Archer looked determined. "We'll get started right away, Admiral. Archer out." The transmission cut, and Archer looked across the small room at Reed. "What do you think, Lieutenant?"

"The analysis you ordered of the firing pattern is complete." Reed waved a padd. "Sir, it shows that they knew where to aim to keep the station's doors closed."

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

T'Pol cut in. "Lieutenant, am I to infer that you believe they had help from someone?"

Reed nodded. "Not just that--I'd bet anything they had help from someone on this station. This level of precision indicates that they had access to the specs."

"Starbase C&C estimates that the doors can be repaired and opened in six hours," T'Pol reported. "They have two repair teams at work, one on the doors themselves and another working on the computer."

Archer nodded. "Ensign Mayweather is free now that we're back in dock. Malcolm, can you use his help?"

"Absolutely," Reed said immediately.

"Good. You have five hours. I want you two on board the station, looking for--whatever you can find. Then come back on board and report here to my ready room for debriefing. When we can leave the station, we're going to execute a search pattern and look for clues."

Reed reassured the captain, "Don't worry, sir--if anyone here was involved, we'll find him."

Archer looked to T'Pol. "In the meantime, go over the sensor logs of the alien ship and see what you can find out about them. Request them and any other telemetry or logs you think you might need from the station liaison." He stood up. "Oh, and cancel all shore leave. Get everyone back on board. Dismissed."

CHAPTER

10

Reed and Mayweather walked onto the station and began scanning the area where Shran was last known to be before he disappeared from the station. Someone had picked up Shran's padd from where it had apparently fallen, but it hadn't held any clues--just some things Shran was working on related to the weapons systems power-up. Reed and Mayweather had agreed that it probably wasn't a coincidence that Shran had been kidnapped before the weapons systems was fully online. And from a security standpoint, which Reed felt deeply, the kidnapping of the designer of the weapons systems, with access to every command code and an intimate knowledge of every system, was bad news. The codes were all being changed and Shran's team was executing the power-up without him, but station security had been terribly compromised.

Reed was meticulous about scanning every centi-

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

meter of the room, with a special focus on the area the padd had been found, to make sure no clue slipped through his fingers. He didn't want to let the captain down. He knew that everything the Enterprise crew did to solve this situation would affect the outcome of peaceful relations for the alliance.

"Travis," Reed called out to Mayweather, "Come and do a scan of this area I've just finished."

"Sure." Mayweather walked over and began a scan. He looked up at Reed and grinned when he saw what had caused Reed to call him over. "It looks like a faint energy signature--kind of similar to a transporter trace."

Reed was in full agreement. "I'm sure they used a transporter, and they did a good job of pinpointing his location in such a short space of time." He shook his head. "Something isn't right here."

Mayweather switched off his scanner and looked out the huge window that overlooked the interior of the dock, including Enterprise. "If someone on the station has been talking to these aliens, giving away locations, there must be a trace of it somewhere."

"The command center would be the best place to look for illicit comm activity," Reed said. "Let's go." In the turbolift, he added, "It would be covert and well hidden, but if it's there, we'll find it. Of course, it won't help if the contact on board the station has a separate dedicated communications unit, but it's a start."

When the doors opened, Commander Taylor came to greet them. "Gentlemen, welcome to Starbase 1."

"Thank you, sir," Reed replied, taking in the bustle

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

of activity around him.

"I understand you're here investigating Commander Shran's disappearance. What can I do to help?" she asked.

Reed pounced on her offer. "If it's at all possible, we need to access your long-range and subspace communications traffic to look for any unusual entries. This could take a few hours." Reed knew he was getting in the way, but he needed access--it was really the only lead he had to go on. They knew where Shran had been taken from and now they knew how he had been taken, but they definitely didn't know why, or where he was now.

The commander nodded, but cautiously, and directed them to a console. "You can have access from this terminal here. You should copy and download the information you need to free it up as quickly as possible. The techs get very cranky when someone gets in their way."

Reed grinned. "We'll keep that in mind. Thank you, sir." He turned to Mayweather. "We don't have much in the way of time, so why don't you check in with Hoshi and go over the communications logs. I'm going to look at the station layout and computer systems for abnormalities--hopefully we can get some answers for the captain soon."

Mayweather nodded and sat at the terminal. "I'll get right on it, sir."

Reed used a display close by. They plunged into the depths of Starbase 1's computer core.

CHAPTER

11

The sickbay doors slid open and Archer entered, his face grim in light of the current situation. Enterprise and her crew were in limbo while Reed conducted his investigation and while the station's repair teams worked to get the space doors open. When they were finally able to get out, they needed a place to go if they were going to find and rescue Shran. He looked around for Doctor Phlox and saw him at a biobed, tending to a crewman.

"Now, Crewman Peters, you must remember that spicy ingredients don't go down well with you. Unless you cut down, you'll be in here every time we drop out of warp." The doctor gave the crewman a shot. "That should make you feel better."

The crewman didn't look happy. "Thank you, Doctor."

Phlox added some more advice. "I have a Patha-

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

rian slime worm if you are looking for an alternative treatment next time. It works much more quickly and reliably than the drugs I just gave you. It works its way through your intestinal tract and finds its own way out. In fact, I really do think that we should try that next time. You'd just need to make sure you collect it for me. I like to use it myself sometimes." Phlox smiled. The crewman got up, looking rather uncomfortable.

"I'm sure it won't come to that, Doctor," he said as he walked passed Archer. He acknowledged his captain with the usual, "Captain."

Archer replied, "Crewman Peters." As Peters left, Archer approached Phlox. "Are you always scaring new crewmen with alternative treatments, Doctor?"

Phlox grinned playfully at Archer. "Only repeat offenders--anyway, it's good he didn't take me up on the offer, because there's no such thing as a Patharian slime worm."

Archer grinned his "Phlox is crazy" grin, the one he used whenever Phlox's reasoning seemed particularly alien.

"How can I help you today, Captain?" Phlox always seemed to find something to be cheerful about, even in serious situations.

"I'm finding it hard to relax lately--having trouble getting to sleep. I was wondering if it was medical or not."

Phlox pointed to the biobed, and Archer sat. He pulled out his scanner and began scanning Archer. "You are in perfect health, Captain. However, I'm

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

picking up something my scanner isn't; you are distracted, anxious, angry. Does that sound accurate?" He pocketed the scanner and crossed his arms, waiting.

Archer had known that Phlox would understand right away that what he was really looking for was advice. Phlox was easy to talk to, and he was perceptive as far as being able to tell what a human was thinking.

"Yes, that sounds about right," Archer said. He sighed. "I can't believe Starfleet wants it to be this way. I'm the first captain of a warp five vessel. I'm more effective working from the bridge of a ship, not in space station. How the hell could Starfleet inform me of new orders while on the way to the station? Choices like that usually take months to plan. I was told days ago." Phlox looked sympathetic. Archer continued, "And I'm not right for this new assignment."

His mind went through the events that had most likely influenced Starfleet's decision. He'd averted the recent crisis with the Xindi's superweapon, so the Xindi had supported his candidacy. The Vulcans had supported him because he had carried the mind of Surak and had altered their society forever by finding the Kir'Shara. The Andorians and Tellarites were supporting him as well because before his intervention, neither race would talk to each other--unless it was from behind the trigger of a fully charged weapon. Apparently, he was the one thing they could all agree on.

"It seems, Captain, that you are suffering by being pulled away from what you love most. The galaxy is full of adventures, and you are being forced to one that

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

could never compare to your current posting."

Archer nodded in agreement. He added to Phlox's assessment, though. "It's no secret that I fought hard for this command because of my father. When he died, I made his engine my life; I fought the Vulcans and Starfleet to make it a reality. I pushed hard to make Enterprise my command. I got what I wanted, and now I'm being pulled away from what has become my life." He huffed a laugh. "And isn't it ironic? Ambassador Soval thought Admiral Gardner would be a better choice to captain the Enterprise than me--less impulsive. Now it's Gardner taking my job away from me."

Phlox turned to the medical database behind him. He brought up a diagram of some kind of lizard that the captain wasn't familiar with.

"This might interest you, then. It's a male lizard found on Denobula. They are found in the wild. When the male of this species finds a mate, he links his body to hers so that he will never lose her. Science cannot explain why--there are no benefits for either partner. Sometimes the female will die, and the male will still hang onto her until he dies himself."

Archer was following Phlox so far. "You're saying I'm attaching myself to Enterprise in an emotional way?"

Phlox continued, "If for whatever reason the male loses the female--because he becomes dislodged somehow, for example--the male can never have the same female back. He must form a life bond with a new one."

Archer was uncomfortable with Phlox's answer,

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

but he saw the logic beneath the absurdity of the example.

"Captain, you love this ship. There are many captains who love their vessels beyond their sense of duty. You are attached, and now that bond is being broken; you will need to form a life bond with your new path in life now. Otherwise, you may never be as effective there as you should be--as you need to be."

Archer stared at the lizard. The doctor was comparing him to a Denobulan reptile! "I'm confident I can do the job. I just know, deep down, that I could never be happy in that kind of position." He sighed. "I don't suppose you have a worm in there that fixes people's emotions?"

Phlox made eye contact with Archer. "It's not a pleasant experience, Captain, and it may erase your memory if it gets too hungry." Archer was shocked at Phlox's matter-of-fact answer--Archer had been joking. Phlox continued, "But at least this way, Captain, you may never be a repeat offender."

Archer smiled. "Thanks, Doc."

He headed for the sickbay doors as the doctor opened a container on his bench. He took out a frozen lizard that bore a strange resemblance to the one he had been talking about. As Archer watched in astonishment, Phlox held the lizard up, pointed at it, and said to it, "Now don't get too attached to me, will you?" Then he popped the lizard in his mouth.

CHAPTER

12

Tucker and T'Pol sat at a table in the mess hall, crew members around them eating and talking while the view of Starbase 1's interior filled the windows. Tucker took in the view, feeling a little overwhelmed by the station's sheer size.

Tucker swallowed his bite of fish. "You'd think at the rate they built this place, someone was cutting corners."

T'Pol pushed some form of leafy green Vulcan vegetable around on her plate. She raised an eyebrow and cocked her head slightly in a way that Tucker always took to mean she was having difficulty understanding some aspect of humanity. "Surely you have faith in the combined work of the various races? It seems that the shared technologies and ideas of different races have contributed to this station's rapid completion."

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

Tucker had already reached that conclusion and didn't really need to hear T'Pol's answer. He was trying to get around to asking her something more important--something that made him feel like a teenager again.

"Did you think about what I said before?" He was sure that she had, but as usual, her Vulcan stubbornness wasn't going to let him read her answer before she gave it to him.

"I'm not really a fan of science fiction. It clouds how people view science fact."

Tucker almost thought she was playing hard to get. "It's just a movie night, and who could pass up the chance to see the original War of the Worlds?"

"Commander Tucker, are you asking to spend time with me?"

Tucker thought about the situation for a moment and tried to turn it around to favor him. "No, I'm just offering you a chance to see something that takes you away from the real thing. Don't come if you don't want, but I know that with the captain gone, you'll have to know your crew better."

"I hadn't considered that point," she said thoughtfully. "The crew has always looked to Captain Archer for guidance, and it will be a difficult transition for them."

Tucker smiled. "Then it's a date." T'Pol opened her mouth to say something, but Tucker's communicator beeped and interrupted her attempt to protest. Tucker unzipped the pocket on his upper arm and flipped open his communicator. "This is Tucker."

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

A familiar English accent spoke. "Sir, it's Lieutenant Reed. I've been going through the station's computers looking for anomalies, and I've found a strange power configuration on one of the lower decks of the station."

Tucker set down his fork. "What kind of power configuration, Malcolm?"

"It seems that there are very small spikes of power in that area. The station's crew aren't sure what it is yet because that section isn't scheduled to go online for a few more weeks--they're waiting for the technicians to arrive. The whole thing is running at minimum power. I was wondering if you could take a look."

Tucker glanced at T'Pol, and she nodded. "Commander T'Pol and I are on our way."

They got up immediately and walked out of the room, their previous conversation forgotten. T'Pol spoke as they walked out of the door. "I'll inform the captain."

CHAPTER

13

Tucker and T'Pol entered the not-yet-operational science section of Starbase 1, passing a "welcome" sign as they located the door. "This is it," Tucker said as the door slid open. As they entered, lights came on. He looked around the room. "Looks like the ventilation system isn't up to snuff. I can't believe the water on the floor--that can't be safe, with all this equipment."

T'Pol glanced over at the puddle on the floor. "It is well away from the machinery," she said. "I'm sure it will be repaired when the area is ready to use."

Although air and lights were on, because technicians occasionally had to go in there to work, the area was on emergency backup to conserve resources. It was the incredibly low power consumption that had drawn Reed's attention to the anomalous spikes. The area had been mainly built with Vulcan hardware, so

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

to Tucker's eye, the aesthetic was unfamiliar. Being the most curious of scientists (although they would never admit to that), they had placed a bid to design and assist in the building of the science section. Its design was efficient, as was the Vulcan way. The Vulcans who were to do the final configuration and who were to staff the area wouldn't arrive until the opening ceremonies--ceremonies that had been postponed for a week, at great inconvenience to the delegates.

"What did Admiral Gardner want?" T'Pol asked as she scanned the room. Admiral Gardner had taken Tucker aside when they'd embarked.

"Oh, nothing much." Tucker looked around the room. "He gave me the padd Shran was using when he disappeared. Since Lieutenant Reed is in charge of the investigation, the admiral thought we might want to run scans on it, figure out if it was involved in his disappearance." He patted the pocket where he'd stowed it. "They couldn't find anything, but I guess you never know. I figure maybe Doctor Phlox's medical imager could show us something new. The imager uses a different kind of technology. Worth a try, anyway."

T'Pol's scanner emitted a high-pitched beep. "Over there." T'Pol pointed to a unit in the corner. "That unit is emitting a power signature that matches the one Lieutenant Reed noticed."

"This one?" At T'Pol's nod, Tucker activated it, then sat down. He frowned. "It's just the comm system. It's completely standard--as standard as Vulcan technology gets, anyway. Wait." He squinted at the screen as he dug deeper. "That's weird. It's rigged up

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

to draw extra power from that console over there--by the wall." He turned to face T'Pol. "The science area is designed for very long-range scans, but nothing's up and running yet. If I wanted to send any kind of message from here, long distance or not, I'd need more power. Everything's on minimal backup power--just enough to keep the computers integrated." He pointed. "I'd need to boost the power by pulling some from another unit. Just like this."

"We've obviously found some kind of clue that indicates espionage," T'Pol said.

Tucker creased his forehead as he studied schematics. "It looks like it's been configured to use the station's subspace transmitter to carry messages using a signal piggybacked onto other traffic."

T'Pol took her communicator out of her pocket. "If it is a transmitter of some kind, then maybe there are some transmission logs. Even a piggyback signal has a destination."

"I'm sure our guy deleted the logs. But I'll check anyway." Tucker went to work.

"T'Pol to Captain Archer." Archer responded immediately. "Captain, Commander Tucker and I have discovered a console that piggybacks signals onto legitimate subspace comm traffic. It is definitely not part of the area's design."

Archer's voice had a note of "at last" as he spoke. "Got a destination yet for those signals?"

"Commander Tucker is analyzing the logs now."

Tucker pulled out his own communicator. "Captain, I'm an engineer, not a comm decoder wizard, and

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

some of this deletion-encryption technology is--well, I haven't seen anything like it. I think Hoshi needs to take a look. I'm transmitting the data stream now." He adjusted his communicator and sent the data.

"Got it, Commander," Sato's voice said a few seconds later. "I'll cross-reference the power spikes with the logs that Lieutenant Reed sent me for the legitimate comm traffic. Shouldn't be too hard to come up with a destination."

"Thanks, Hoshi," Tucker said.

Archer said, "As soon as Ensign Sato gets us a destination, we'll be on our way. The doors were finally repaired, so we can get out. In the meantime, see what else you can find. I'll let you know when we're ready to go."

Tucker got up as T'Pol finished speaking to Archer. "Yes, Captain."

Tucker walked over to the door they'd used to enter. "T'Pol, this red flashing light wasn't here before." He pointed to the control console to the right of the door.

T'Pol looked up from her examination of the power unit. "This is a Vulcan design. Red indicates that someone has locked the door from the outside."

Trip's face turned serious. "Not good."

CHAPTER

14

Archer paced around the bridge as Admiral Gardner's face appeared on the viewscreen. The admiral demanded, "Captain, what is your progress on this situation?"

Archer stopped pacing and looked at the admiral. "Sir, my officers have found evidence of unauthorized transmissions piggybacked onto legitimate comm traffic. My comm officer says they were directed to a planet three days from here. I would like permission to investigate and see if we can find Shran's location."

The admiral nodded, his face showing a man under some stress. "Columbia is due to arrive any minute now, and we've prioritized bringing the weapons systems online. We're not up to full capacity, but damn close. Depart immediately and find out what the hell is going on."

Archer walked to the captain's chair and pressed

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

the communications button. He addressed his crew. "This is the captain. Prepare to depart the station immediately." He turned to Sato. "Recall all the crew members who are still on the station."

Sato nodded and went to work.

Admiral Gardner spoke again. "Captain, I don't need to remind you what's at stake here. If this station is compromised, this whole project could be derailed."

Archer was about to speak when Sato called out to him. "Sir, Commander T'Pol says that they're locked in one of the science rooms on board the station."

Archer ran to Sato's console. "T'Pol, what's going on?"

T'Pol's voice sounded calm and serene, as usual. "Captain, we've been locked in the science lab deliberately. We have been unable to find a way out. I was just about to contact you when Ensign Sato hailed me."

Archer felt tension rise inside him--he was desperate not to waste any more time. "Stand by. We're going to beam you out of there."

"Understood. T'Pol out."

At that moment, Reed and Mayweather entered the bridge. Reed spoke to Archer as he rushed over to his console. "Captain, everyone is aboard except for Commander T'Pol and Commander Tucker."

Archer waved impatiently at Reed. "They'll be on board in a second."

T'Pol's voice sounded next. "Captain, this is T'Pol. I'm on board, but we're having trouble getting a lock on Commander Tucker. There is a buildup of interfer-

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

ence."

Archer was furious. It didn't sound like anyone was in any immediate danger, but the incessant delays annoyed him. "What the hell is going on down there?"

"Captain, I am convinced that all of this is deliberate. Someone tried to trap us in the science section. I fear that Commander Tucker is in danger."

Archer pointed at Reed. "Malcolm, get a team together. Get down there and blow those doors open if you have to."

The admiral spoke up as Reed launched himself from his seat. "Belay that order, Captain. I've already had station security force the doors open. They just reported back. The room is empty."

Archer faced T'Pol. "Captain, there was only one way in and out of that room. At the moment, the only other door leads to vacuum."

Archer turned quickly to face Admiral Gardner. "Admiral, I need my chief engineer for this mission. I want him back."

The admiral was clearly tense as well. "Jonathan, he could be anywhere. I've sent a bot around to scan the exterior of the station by that section. And I'll divert station security to finding him. But the mission is of higher priority. I'm assigning Mr. Kelby to act in Commander Tucker's place until we can get him back. We must find Shran and save this project. Take Enterprise and discover his location. I can't stress the seriousness of the situation enough: the person who designed the entire defense of the starbase has apparently been kidnapped. If that information should fall into the

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

wrong hands--" The admiral leaned forward, seeming to look right into Archer's eyes. "I will find Commander Tucker. Count on it. You have my personal assurance. Jonathan, go."

The bridge crew all looked at Archer. He was clearly not happy: his best engineer and his close friend was in danger, and he was being ordered to go in the opposite direction.

"Initiate undocking procedures," Archer said at last. "We're on our way. Archer out." As the screen went dark, he looked at Mayweather "Take us out and go to maximum warp when we're clear. Hoshi, tell Mr. Kelby we're going to need all the speed he can give us."

Sato nodded as Enterprise pulled free from the moorings, glided out of the space doors, and shot away at warp speed.

CHAPTER

15

Enterprise sped through space on course towards an unsolved mystery. During the three-day journey, Archer ordered battle drills to keep the crew alert. Reed seized the opportunity to push his team, not to mention the crew, to their limits in different battle scenarios. At the end of each day, he reported the crew's efficiency and response time to Captain Archer. The crew were given fewer drills on the third day because Archer was confident that they were as ready as they'd ever be for whatever was ahead of them.

Archer sat in his ready room looking over a text transmission from Admiral Gardner; it was the latest update on the search for Tucker. As Archer had feared, Tucker had not yet been found. When his door chime sounded, he called, "Enter!" T'Pol walked in. Archer had a feeling he knew what she wanted. "Please sit down." He indicated the chair.

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

She sat and asked the obvious question, "Has there been any word on Commander Tucker?"

"It's the same news as yesterday and the day before--a whole lot of nothing. They forced their way into the room and found nobody there. There was a faint energy signature that shows he may have been beamed out. Or that might have been the residual trace of your beam-out--nobody can tell. But in any case, there was no other ship, the way there was when Shran was kidnapped. The station's security is conducting an extensive search, but there's a lot of ground to cover. Commander Tucker's body was not found outside the station. And Admiral Gardner is directing the search himself." He threw the padd down. "So--no. No word."

T'Pol got up and looked out the window into space as she spoke. "The admiral would want this situation resolved and the culprit found as soon as possible."

Archer got up and joined her. He changed his tone to a more gentle one, curbing his frustration for a moment.

"T'Pol, I know you have feelings for him."

She looked at him. "Captain, I am merely...concerned about his well-being."

Archer didn't buy it. "We've served together long enough for me to figure you out. It's fine. You don't need to hide it from me. He's my friend. It's not just an officer who's missing."

T'Pol shifted her weight, which Archer recognized as a signal of her discomfort. "Captain, if you think it is inappropriate for me to--"

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

Archer raised his hand and cut her off in midsentence. "I'm only trying to tell you that we'll find him. Don't be worried."

Archer could see T'Pol struggling to maintain her composure. She was obviously fighting some very strong emotions. Archer, who was used to far less demonstrative Vulcans, still found himself surprised by this Vulcan contradiction, although he had noticed similar behavior from her in the past, especially since their time in the Expanse. She whispered her reply, "Thank you, Captain." And that was enough for her. She left the room.

CHAPTER

16

Hours later, as they approached their destination, the senior staff gathered on the bridge. Everyone seemed tense. They had all been there when Admiral Gardner had ordered Archer to leave Tucker behind, and although they all knew their mission was crucially important not only for Starbase 1's launch but for interspecies relations, they also regretted having to leave Commander Tucker behind. The red lights around the bridge indicated that the ship was on tactical alert.

"Five minutes to orbit," Mayweather reported.

Archer discreetly looked around at each of his crew members. They all had looks on their faces that echoed his own thoughts: this trip better have been worth it.

T'Pol, at the science station, looked up at Archer as their sensors began reporting data now that they had dropped out of warp. "I'm detecting a structure on the

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

largest landmass in the northern hemisphere. It is made of alloys that are foreign to this planet."

Archer acknowledged what she said with a nod. "Travis, go and prep Shuttlepod One. I'll put together a team and be there in a minute."

Mayweather shot out of his seat. "Aye, sir."

As Mayweather entered the lift, Archer took the helm, waving away the replacement pilot who had started for Mayweather's seat. "Malcolm, are there any other ships in the area?"

Reed shook his head. "No, sir."

The planet grew larger on the viewscreen. Archer checked his instruments and put the ship in geosynchronous orbit over the structure. Then he signaled to another pilot to take over. "Malcolm, T'Pol, you're with me. Let's get down there and hope this wasn't a waste of time. Ensign Sato, you have the bridge."

T'Pol and Reed followed him into the turbolift, Reed pulling out his comm to call some MACOs for muscle, and they headed for the shuttle bay.

CHAPTER

17

The shuttle trip had been uneventful. No one on the surface challenged their approach to the small building, and the space around the planet was still clear. Mayweather guided the shuttlepod slowly to the ground. He had to use the shuttle's navigational instruments: the hellish red storms made visibility next to impossible, and although the inertial dampers had been maxed out to keep things bearable, the ride had been rough.

"Captain, we're about to land," Mayweather reported, although Archer thought he heard Mayweather mumble "I think" under his breath. A thud and a shudder confirmed that they had indeed landed.

Archer, adjusting his EVA suit, turned and addressed all of them, including the two MACOs, who stood by the door, weapons at the ready. "All right, everyone, let's get our helmets on. Watch the indica-

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

tors on your environmental suits--they'll protect us from the toxic dust, but Doctor Phlox says we can't stay outside for long."

When everyone was ready, the MACOs opened the hatch and went out first. It was windy. Toxic red dust hit them from every direction, but the lights on top of their helmets pierced it. Luckily, Mayweather had done his job well: the building was only meters away. The whole group, apart from Mayweather, who stayed with the shuttle, ran to the building, awkward in their EVA suits.

Archer had T'Pol scan the building for entrances. She immediately determined where they should go. They found a locked door, but it only took T'Pol a minute or two to get it open. Inside was another door. Archer looked at T'Pol.

"Airlock," T'Pol explained. "No doubt designed to keep the undesirable weather out."

Archer signaled the group. "Let's go. Set your weapons to stun--and watch yourselves."

They walked in slowly, the MACOs once again taking the lead. The doors automatically closed behind them, and a progress bar lit on the wall, indicating how long it would take before the door into the building would release. Above them, an eerie blue light glowed. It took almost five minutes before an indicator lit up, and Archer found himself getting restless. When the blue light flicked off and the indicator flashed, T'Pol hit a control, and the door in front of them opened.

"Captain, I'm detecting a breathable atmosphere,"

STARBASE ONE - PART ONE

T'Pol reported. "And the toxic dust on our suits has been rendered inert." She folded her scanner. "I believe the blue light was an indication of a decontamination protocol. It should be safe for us to remove our helmets."

"Good," Reed said in relief, and he took off his helmet, the others following suit. The group cautiously walked down a short corridor and found another door, which Reed scanned. "Sir, I suggest you all stand back. I'm detecting life signs on the other side of this door."

Archer moved aside and let Reed go to the front, where he began operating the door mechanism. "What kind of life signs?" Archer asked.

T'Pol spoke for him. "It's hard to tell--this door is interfering with the scanner."

They heard something click inside the door. "Got it," Reed said in satisfaction, stepping back as the door slid open in front of them.

Archer signaled the MACOs to check ahead. When they signaled all clear, Archer ran in. The dim light in the small room brightened as someone turned on the lights, and in the middle of the room was a chair with a figure tied to it. Drops of blood pooled at the figure's feet--blue blood. His stomach clenched. Archer could hear heavy breathing that sounded like someone had been punched in the ribs a few too many times. The hunched-over figure turned its head, and Archer saw the delicate waving of antennae.

"Shran!" As he got to the figure, he lifted his head so he could see his face. He'd been right. Shran looked

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

at Archer, and Archer, horrified, looked right back. "What the hell happened here?"

All Shran could do was turn his head ever so slowly in the direction of a doorway. He hissed, "Pink..ssskin."

Archer looked to T'Pol. "Figure out how to get him to the shuttle."

Archer ran to the doorway Shran had indicated, the MACOs just ahead of him. In another dim room, he saw another figure on the floor, face down. This figure wore a Starfleet uniform. Archer turned the figure over. As he did so, he realized just how much trouble there was going to be ahead.

Lying in his arms was the dead body of Admiral Gardner.

CHAPTER

18

Back on Starbase 1, Admiral Gardner adjusted his Starfleet uniform and made a call from his office. The face of Captain Hernandez came up.

"Yes, Admiral, what can I do for you?"

The impostor said, "Captain, I have an update for you about Enterprise's situation. I'm afraid it's not good news."

Hernandez replied almost too quickly. "Have they found Shran? Is he alive?"

"I'm not sure. I've just received a transmission from Enterprise. It seems a Xindi group of reptilians captured Archer's landing party while they were investigating the planet. They used Enterprise's shuttlepod to sneak aboard the ship, and they've captured it. They then contacted me at the station and have informed me to evacuate the station before they bring Enterprise here and collide it with the station."

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5

Hernandez's face was one of shock and disbelief. "What about the crew on the ship?"

"Those that weren't killed were beamed down to the planet. The reptilians are terrorists, and they are coming here. Starfleet will not be complying with their requests. We've been ordered to maintain communications silence and ordered to stop the Enterprise by any means possible. After that, we can launch a rescue mission to the planet."

Hernandez's expression had not changed. "So the Xindi reptilians have been causing all of this trouble. Sir, I'd like to review the transmission, if I may. What are your orders in the meantime?"

The impostor wanted to smile at Hernandez's gullibility, but he continued to play his part. "I want you maintain your defensive perimeter and watch for Enterprise. You are to maintain radio silence as well, unless you hear from me--don't make contact with the reptilians aboard Enterprise. When Enterprise arrives, we'll use the combined power of this ship and the station's weapons to force the terrorists to surrender or be destroyed. And I'll send the transmission for you to review right away."

Hernandez nodded. "Understood. We'll keep our eyes open, Admiral. Columbia out."

Gardner cut the transmission and smiled. Everything was going to plan.

To be continued...

— STAR TREK — ENTERPRISE

Starbase One Part One

At the eve of the opening ceremonies of the new Starbase One built as the first alliance of interstellar species, Shran, in charge of its defence, is kidnapped. Archer and the Enterprise are sent away to find him, despite strange events on the station.

At the eve of creating the interstellar alliance, a new adventure begins for the NX-01 Enterprise crew, by Lindsay.

ENTERPRISE VIRTUAL SEASON 5