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"Captain, something's coming in on the distress frequency," Lt O'Hurry called. "It sounds pretty important."

"Everything's always an emergency for you," Quirk replied. "You need to learn to lie back and savour the moment."

"No captain, it's a distress call from Star Brothel Alpha. I'll put it on the viewscreen."

The giant screen at the front of the bridge changed again, this time into a picture of a command centre in flames. "This is Star Brothel Alpha. We're under attack. I don't know how they got onto the station. Our life support systems are only just functioning. We can't hold out much longer. If there's any starship nearby, please come quickly."

"You've got something in common there Lieutenant, they want us to come quickly as well," Checkoff commented.

"I can't see what concern that is of yours Checkoff. I was crossed off your list a long time ago."

"I see your point but I'm contemplating starting a second lap."

"I won't be interested in participating until you get a turbo fitted. The last time we did it was a nightmare. You took at least ten minutes."

"We seem to be wandering off the point slightly," Quirk interrupted. "These people look like they're really in distress."

"That would be the logical reason for a distress call," Spook added. "Rarely have I encountered a distress call when the sender wasn't actually in distress. Sometimes the situation isn't perceived as distress by others but logically..."

"Shut up Spook," Quirk cut him off in mid lecture. "Your constant references to logic are getting extremely annoying. If you mention logic once more, I'll bloody well thump you."

"That would be an impossibility captain," Spook replied. "As I'm currently only a ghostly image of my former self, you can't logically..."

Quirk put all his strength into a right hook, which passed straight through his science officer. The force he'd put behind the attack though continued to carry him forward by his own momentum and not only his fist but his whole body as well fell through the non-physical form of Spook. This miscalculation caused the captain to stumble forward, where he ended up landing face down in Lt O'Hurry's lap.

"Well don't just lay there, get on with it. I can't wait all day," the communications officer complained.

"It was an accident lieutenant. Don't start getting excited," the captain stood up again and straightened himself out. "OK, lets set a course for Star Brothel Alpha. Solo, engage the super-sneeze. Full speed ahead."

"No response from the engines captain," Solo reported.

Captain Quirk sat back in his armchair and pushed one of the buttons on the arm rest again. The main viewscreen suddenly changed from its display of the stars and was replaced by the scene of two naked humans engaged in love making.

"Oops, wrong button," Captain Quirk commented as the blue movie disappeared off the screen again. Pressing a different button, Snotty's voice appeared out of the chair speaker. "Snotty, when can we have sneeze drive? We've received a distress call from Star Brothel Alpha. Somebody just jumped them and they need us there as soon as possible."

"I'm working as fast as I can capt'n. The flu injectors were shot to pieces after redirecting the propulsion system into the klatex shield generator. I've already replaced most of them but It'll be at least an hour before we get super-sneeze again. I can probably get the standard sneeze on line in ten minutes, if that's any good to you."

"At least we'll be moving," the captain reluctantly accepted.

For the next ten minutes, the Tantalise sat motionless in the vastness of space. Time drifted by silently as the officers on the bridge had stopped talking to each other. Lt O'Hurry was annoyed with Captain Quirk for not following through after his mishap and Mr Spook was still shaken by the captain's attempt to hit him. Granted, as a ghost it was impossible for the captain to hurt him, but it was the principal that counted in Spook's mind. On the opposite side of the bridge, Checkoff had taken offence at Lt O'Hurry's insistence of him being fitted with a turbo before she'd consider him again and Solo always kept himself to himself anyway.

In the engine room Snotty strived to get the sneeze drive functioning enough for them to be on their way to Star Brothel Alpha, but as he was placing the final flu injector into its rack, he suddenly sneezed and dropped it. As the glass casing containing the super strains of virus shattered, the engine room safety systems automatically isolated the area and sealed the transparent containment doors. Snotty was now sealed in his own plastic box and would continue to be so until the crisis was over.

"Medical team to the engine room. Medical team to the engine room," the metallic voice of the ship's public address system announced. "Flu virus escape detected."

On the bridge display console, superimposed on the star view, was a flashing red warning. 'FLU CONTAINMENT BREACHED' blinked on and off to indicate the severity of the message.

"Bridge to engineering, what's happened down there Snotty?" Quirk was talking into his console microphone again.

"The super virus is loose Cap'tn. Sorry, I dropped one of the canisters."

"Are you all right? What can we do from here?"

"Get the doctor to prepare the antibodies to mutation 46824 and get it down here fast. My head's already starting to feel muggy, my throat's closing up and I'm pouring gallons from my nose. I estimate five minutes before the situation reaches critical for us."

"Hang on in there Snotty, 'Balls' is on his way."

"What about administering the antibodies captain? If Dr McBoy enters the sealed area, he'll end up being infected himself," Spook added.

"He can take a dose of antibodies before he goes into the engine room."

"That won't work captain. They're only effective after you've actually been infected."

"What are you suggesting instead?" Quirk asked.

"Logically, the answer is for me to go into the contaminated area. As I have no physical form, I'm therefore immune to the super strains of flu."

"Without actually having hands, how do you plan to carry the antibody vials?"

"I've been practising telekinesis since I became a ghost and I've recently succeeded in carrying large objects instead of just being able to push buttons and twiddle knobs," Solo looked up at the twiddling knobs reference but quickly realised it wasn't his favourite subject being discussed.

"You've convinced me," Quirk accepted. "Solo, you have the bridge. We'll be in the sick bay if you need us and don't make a mess on my armchair again."

Captain Quirk headed for the turbolift and instructed it to take him to the sick bay. Meanwhile Spook took a shortcut through the walls and arrived there well in advance of the captain.

"Have you finished preparing the required antibodies, doctor?" Spook asked.

"We've just completed thawing them. I was about to leave for engineering when you arrived."

"That won't be necessary balls, I'll be taking them into Snotty."

"This is a medical emergency, not a scientific experiment," the doctor replied indignantly. "I'm quite capable of administering antibodies to an infected engineering crew. Do you think I'm getting too old to do my job or something?"

"You seem to be rather paranoid about your age balls," Quirk observed. "You're letting this rejuvenation business get to you. If you enter the contaminated area, you'll be infected as well as Snotty. Spook can take the antibodies in without any risk whatsoever."

Reluctantly the doctor agreed with the captain and the medical team made their way to the engineering deck. Outside the containment screen Spook was already waiting to transport the antibodies through to the fast deteriorating engineers.

"Are you sure you can hold the antibody vials?" Quirk asked, still dubious about Spook's abilities at telekinesis. "We only have one batch of antibodies defrosted and two minutes left to use them."

Gingerly Dr McBoy handed the glass containers to the translucent form of Spook. Surprisingly they didn't just fall through his fingers but floated a couple of inches above his outstretched hands.

"Trust me," Spook assured the doctor. "I've been practising this for weeks and now I can lift objects a lot larger and heavier than glass vials." Spook turned towards the engine room and walked forward. Within seconds he was on the opposite side of the screen and standing beside Snotty.

"Quick. [sniff] I can't hold on much longer. [snort] Give me the antibodies," Snotty pleaded.

Spook looked down at his hands to find that the glass vials had disappeared. With a glance behind him he noticed Dr McBoy lying on the floor on the opposite side of the transparent containment seal. It was only seconds later that he was back outside the sealed engine room again.

"What made you think you could carry solid objects through a glass wall?" McBoy asked as he cradled the precious antibodies in his hands. It was only quick reactions on the doctor's part which prevented the disastrous loss of them, as they fell to the ground.

"I'll go through the airlock this time," Spook declared as he scooped the glass vials out of McBoy's hands.

Thirty seconds later Snotty and his engineers had been inoculated and were gradually recovering from their inadvertent dose of super flu. It was another thirty minutes before the ship's extraction system had effectively cleared the air of any harmful bacteria and it was safe for the containment seals to be removed.

"Beam the engineering crew direct to the sick bay," Dr McBoy was talking into the wall communicator.

"I'm fine now that I've had the antibodies," Snotty argued. "I need to stay here and get the engines back online. I was on the last flu injector when the accident happened."

"I'll stay and help you," Spook offered. "With all your engineers in the sick bay you could do with the extra pair of hands." Now that Spook had proved his telekinetic skills he was keen to practice them.

"Thanks Spook, and I appreciate the timely rescue."

Dr McBoy was about to argue that the chief engineer should be in the sick bay with his crew but he'd accepted defeat before the battle had even started. Spook had successfully taken all the glory and he was relegated to the sidelines again. He was tired, the adrenaline had worn off and his flying leap to catch the antibodies had worn him out. Even though he may look like an athletic young man, he still needed his afternoon nap to replace his energy. It was annoying to think that he was so close to perfecting the ultimate rejuvenating potion, but was still so far from finishing it. With all the medical emergencies over the last few hours he hadn't been able to do any work in his laboratory. He decided to have a little nap before continuing with his rejuvenation experiments.

While Spook and Snotty finished replacing the final flu injector, Captain Quirk returned to his day cabin and the Stella Internet once more. After the latest close encounter with a Clingoff Bird of Play, he wanted to study them in more detail, and detail was what he was looking at. The images flashing across the computer screen displayed one masochistic situation after another. In some ways Quirk wondered what it would actually be like to have a liaison with a Clingoff, but the sight of whips and chains frightened him somewhat. He was in a quandary. He wanted to know what it was like, without the actual participation. Like a frustrated teenager, he had to make do with looking at the dirty pictures.

"Computer, display location of the planet Pervertia," Quirk instructed.

A star chart appeared on the computer screen with the location of the Clingoff home world mapped out. Quirk studied the image like a teenager pinpointing the location of a sex shop. He sat for many minutes studying where it was and thinking what it would be like to go there, but actually making the decision to visit the location was another matter. In the past he even set a course for Pervertia, but usually turned back before the Tantalise had even crossed the neutral zone. It was during one of these failed visits, where he'd been bolder and actually approached the planet that Spook had been captured and had only just escaped with his spiritual energy intact.

Quirk felt guilty for what had happened to Spook. If he hadn't been so drawn towards knowledge of the Clingoffs, they'd never have been in that quadrant in the first place. In another way though he envied his science officer. Spook had sampled the Clingoffs' perverted ways, but logic had overridden his search for knowledge and he refused to even discuss the little he did know. No matter how much Quirk tried to innocently question Spook about his time on Pervertia, Spook just kept repeating how disgusting the Clingoffs were. This reply just fuelled Quirk's desire for knowledge, while at the same time making him concerned about the implications.

"It feels a lot worse than it looks," Spook interrupted Quirk's thoughts.

"I wish you wouldn't keep appearing over my shoulder," Quirk complained. "Why don't you use the door like everybody else?"

"Sorry captain, I just floated in to inform you that we have full power again."

"Any sign of that Clingoff ship?" Quirk enquired.

"Negative captain. They seem to have learnt their lesson."

In a room locate beside the sickbay; Dr McBoy was at his desk, studying the results of his latest experiments. The failure to find a way of rejuvenating his stamina was eating into him. The latest series of tests he'd felt certain would yield favourable results, but unfortunately the effects had only lasted for fifteen minutes. He could effectively give himself a booster before any proposed close encounter, but if the liaison continued beyond the deadline he'd be asleep in seconds. The only person he could think of who'd be willing to agree to such a limited time schedule was Lt O'Hurry, but she was on duty and consequently a test was out of the question.

"Engage the super sneeze," Quirk ordered as Solo gave the lever in front of him a tweak with his right hand and sighed with relief.

With his left hand he turned the key clockwise and was rewarded with a loud cough as the flu virus seeped into the engine chambers. Seconds later a giant sneeze left the area of space behind the Tantalise covered in watery debris, as the starship sped onward towards Star Brothel Alpha.

"It's at times like these I wish I'd just gone to work in my father's chain store," the Clingoff captain commented.

It was a very timely departure for the crew of the Tantalise, as unbeknown to them the Clingoff Bird of Play was creeping up behind them. With the intention of taking the Tantalise by surprise from behind, the Clingoffs had used their cloaking device to approach to within striking range. The telltale spatial anomaly caused by using their main engines, absent due to the sneaky nature of this Clingoff captain. With the main engines shut down, he'd used thrusters alone to slowly creep from beyond the Tantalise's sensor range. The cloaking device would hold for only ten more minutes on battery power, but that would have been long enough if the Tantalise hadn't suddenly sneezed off.

The cause of the Clingoffs latest predicament was a thick green tenacious substance that had clogged their sensors and engine intakes. Even their view through the bridge viewscreen was one of a lumpy green coating.

"What kind of weapon was that?" the captain asked.

"My limited sensors tell me it wasn't a weapon captain," the Clingoff science officer reported. "We were coated with exhaust debris as the federation starship started its main engines."

"That's just great. Grollied at the crucial moment of the battle," the Clingoff captain complained. "As soon as you've wiped the snot off, we'll find and destroy that bloody starship."

While the Clingoffs were busy wiping their nose, the Tantalise had sneezed herself halfway across the quadrant, but the crew were less than happy. The engines had kicked in on time but they'd suffered a serious problem of synchronized sneeze. Like a leaping frog, the Tantalise was covering vast distances in a short space of time, unfortunately it was in short three to five second bursts.

"Commputtter, emmergggenncyyyy enggginne shuutttt dowwwn," Quirk shouted into his microphone, as his body danced like a rodeo rider.

"Unrecognized voice command," the computer replied.

On the opposite side of the bridge, Solo attempted to reach the helm controls but every time he stretched towards them, the ship leapt forward again and the controls ended up out of reach. Similarly in the engine room Snotty was having difficulty with his attempts to unsynchronise the engines. With his arms wrapped around any solid object he could find, he was gradually making headway towards the engine controls.

"Self destruct sequence initiated," the computer announced. "Fifteen minutes to self destruct."

"Ohhhh shiiiiit!" Quirk exclaimed. "Wrooong buuuttton."

"Fourteen minutes, fifty seconds to self destruct," the computer announced.