
Episode 453 – Boldly going where no crossover has gone before

It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

"I was wondering if we would ever get to this point with this venture," Mark admitted as he entered the apartment. "Where we've read multiple fics by the same author."

"Admittedly I sort of got there before," Christina replied as she and Rex followed him in.

"What do you mean?"

"The other pilot I shot with the other cast," she explained. "We reviewed two different fics by the same author back-to-back." There was a pause. "Well they really were the same fic save for having a different OC, but the OCs were basically the same anyway."

"That's not helping," Rex offered.

"It was just as confusing for me too," she finished.

"I think about the fact that I missed two episodes you did," Jill offered as she joined them. "And then realise that I'm the lucky one."

"You're such a charmer," Mark shot back.

"And proud of it," she beamed.

"Do you do anything besides be bitchy all the time?" Rex asked.

"That's actually a good question," Mark admitted. "I am kind of curious as to what all of you do besides this and your actual jobs."

"How so?" Rex scratched the side of his head in thought.

"Call it curiosity," Mark admitted.

"And not you building profiles of us at all," Jill added.

"Well, even before my espionage days, I had quite an interest in photography," Mark said.

"Really?" Christina said. "What are your subjects?"

"Cityscapes, mostly," Mark replied. "I just love to capture how different urban centers are throughout the known worlds. You know, capturing famous landmarks from different planets and the like."

"Right. Now didn't you used to be a con artist or something?" Jill stated as much as she asked. "And you wouldn't have been scoping out potential marks, would you?"

"I mean..." Mark shrugged. "I suppose looking like a harmless tourist snapping away does put people at ease."

"And these shots of yours, they wouldn't happen to accidentally contain sensitive military or political targets?"

"I can't say it doesn't happen," Mark replied. "Still, I've got a sunset shot over a stone arch bridge reflected in the water that would melt your heart." He took in Jill's disbelieving expression and added "Well, melt anyone else's heart."

"Okay, that's enough," Christina said gently. "Jill, what about you?"

"So I'll admit that I'm a total gym junkie," Jill spoke up. "I keep myself on a punishing fitness routine, largely so I can continue to maintain my flight status."

"That doesn't exactly sound fun," Christina noted.

"Well no," Jill admitted. "But the thing is that I get a lot of reading done in the process. Nothing like having a good book in front of you while you're on the treadmill or the bike or whatever else."

"So what do you read?" Rex asked. "I'd imagine you to be an action-adventure type."

"Pfft, that's basically my job," she replied. "No, I mostly read detective novels while I'm working out. Okay, so some of them are on the cosy side of it to."

"You ever considered joining a book club?" Christina offered.

"I find that nothing kills my enjoyment of something more than talking about it."

"So do you even have spare time for hobbies?" Rex asked of Christina.

"Bits and pieces," she replied. "A lot of my casual time is under scrutiny, so I have to be sure of just how I present myself in the public eye. That means my actual hobbies have to be something I can do exclusively at home."

"And what does that mean?" Rex asked.

"I make model kits."

"Seriously?" Jill said incredulously. "That's about the last thing I expected from you."

"It's actually really relaxing," Christina replied. "Just using your hands and being constructive for a while is a great way to unwind and get your mind off things. I've got a whole collection of different competitor's kits, from their unique custom machines to the stock models they were based off."

"Now how did you get into building model kits?" Mark asked.

Christina gave a light shrug. "Our competition has a long-running sponsorship deal with a certain model manufacturer, and I got sent a sample of my own kit. I'd never built one before, so I thought I'd give it a try. Turned out to be really fun."

"Being a model of your own machine couldn't have hurt," Mark commented.

"Oh, absolutely," Christina said with a broad grin. "There's nothing better than having a little pilot figure of yourself."

"So, uh," Rex managed. "I have a foodie blog."

"I... am genuinely surprised," Mark admitted.

"Well, it's kind of a specialty one," he continued. "Okay, it's entirely about ham rolls."

"You write a blog about ham rolls," Jill simply stated. "I mean, why?"

"Look, ham rolls are a complicated thing," Rex explained. "You gotta consider all sorts of factors that go into it. There's the bread, for starters; you know, what types of bun or how it's prepared or the like. Then there's the ham, with issues of how its sliced or prepared or if it's off the bone or thin sliced or the like. Then consider matters like if you add cheese or not, or any butter or other condiments, or if you add lettuce or tomatoes or whatever else. Plus you have to look at the really deep issues, like if it's a ham roll if you have other deli meats on it as well, or if you're using a vegan ham substitute or whatever else."

"In short, ham rolls are serious business," she replied.

"I'm just saying that there's a lot that goes into a ham roll," Rex shrugged. "That's all."

"Well hey there, fellow flesh and blood human beings," the Voice began, crashing headlong into the conversation.

"Um, good morning?" Rex managed in reply.

"And how are we all doing?"

"We were good until you showed up," Jill shot back.

"Fantastic," the Voice all but sneered. "So you'll all be thrilled to hear that we have the second half of a Trek to The Past lined up for today."

"Not to sound like I'm asking for spoilers or the like, but does anything actually happen in this part of it?" Mark asked.

"There are verb structures that suggest action," the Voice replied. "Up to you how you want to interpret that."

"Does it come to any sort of meaningful conclusion?" Christina asked.

"Most assuredly not," the Voice answered.

"Do the characters get any depth or development?" Mark added.

"I'll let you figure that out for yourselves," the Voice continued. "But you probably already know the answer."

"Do the Knight Sabers actually appear?" Rex offered.

"I think you're asking a bit much of a Bubblegum Crisis fanfic," the Voice finished.

"That was entirely unhelpful," Jill noted.

"I try," the Voice concluded. "Anyway, have fun, kids. And as always, I'm looking forwards to your reviews when we're done with this."

"Is it just me or does she seem a little... mean?" Rex considered as he took his place on the couch.

"There does seem to be a subtle shift in the tone," Christina admitted as she and the others joined him.

"Just a tiny bit," Jill added as the big screen turned on, converting the world over to prose format.

> A Trek Into the Past

> by

> Brett Handy

> Chapter 2:

Jill: Hang on, didn't we just have chapter two?

Rex: Maybe this is chapter two of chapter two.

Jill: Are you like this all the time?

> The first thing that the Dr Conroy noticed about the 21st century

Rex: Was that everyone spent all their time staring at their phones

> was the pollution. "You wouldn't

> believe the contaminants in the air", he commented to his companion.

Mark: [John] I mean, they're still burning dinosaurs to move their ground vehicles.

> "Put the Tricorder away", Mara hissed quickly.

Jill [Mara]: You're like this everywhere we go. It's so embarrassing for me.

> Embarrassed John flicked it back into its holster.

Christina: Gave it a little twirl first.

> The two of them were walking down a rather large avenue, in Mega-Tokyo's shopping district.

Rex: Where they could get all the tentacle hentai they could ever want.

> There were surprisingly few people out,

Mark: The death of brick and mortar retail is real.

> and it was making Mara slightly nervous.

Jill: The fact that she was apparently wandering around in her pyjamas didn't help.

> They continued down the street, glancing at shop windows as they passed.

Rex: John wants to stop at the Build-A-Bear station

> John frowned at the price tags, "Where are we going to get money from?", he asked.

Christina: You didn't think this plan through at all, did you?

> Mara shrugged, "I don't know, we'll think of something", she replied.

> Rummaging through one of his pockets he pulled out a sliver of Gold-pressed Latinum,

Mark: Fortunately he just happened to have this brick of precious metal on him

> "I wonder if this is worth anything?", he mused.

Christina: Or if they even know what it is.

> "I'm sure we can work out something", said a voice from behind him, the Universal Translator

> that the officer's Commbadges tied into, translated the Japanese into Federation Standard

> (English).

Christina: With optional close captions

> The two officers spun quickly, to be confronted by at least a dozen strange looking people. They
> were wearing jackets that had 'Outriders' labelled across them.

Mark: Sure, they look like reputable businessmen.

> Several of them were carrying pieces of metal piping.

Rex: They'd stumbled into a plumbing supply company.

> John frowned, "Do you know what this is worth?", he asked.

Jill: Roughly one savage beating.

Rex: What's that in brisk pummellings?

Jill: Two, but I'll have to make change in noogies.

> The obvious leader (he was much bigger and uglier than the rest)

Mark: And he had more pips on his collar.

> stepped forward, "I'd say it

> was worth letting you get out of here alive", he said smirking. The rest of the gang laughed rudely.

Christina: Well there's no way that this scene will end with them getting their comeuppance.

Mark: Of course. The fic would never go for something so clichéd and predictable.

> Mara began to edge on hand towards her phaser but a hand on her arm stopped her, "Don't",

> John said, "It's too public".

Rex: You beamed into the middle of a store and have been walking around in public in your Starfleet uniforms. I think you're a bit past that point.

> She nodded and dropped into a fighting crouch,

Mark: [John] Before you do that, may I remind you that they have lead pipes.

> "Let's see how well I taught you Doc", she said, advancing towards the gang.

Jill: If I recall, she'd mostly pummelled him senseless.

> John recognised her advance from one of the Klingon katas, for paired attacks, that he had

> learned.

Jill: Hooray, finally some action in this turkey.

> He smiled and put his medical case and Tricorder on the ground,

Rex: A kid then ran off with them.

> "I'd suggest leaving", he said to the gang, advancing in tandem with Mara.

Mark: But we haven't completed our transaction! I can offer you reasonable rates.

> The leader of the gang frowned, was not used to having anyone challenge him, "well, get them!",

> he shouted, moving forward. It took less than three minutes before the majority of the gang were

> down.

Mark: Well, there you go, we had an action scene.

Jill: And yet, I feel empty inside.

> The Klingons were the unmatched unarmed combat masters of the Alpha Quadrant and their

> techniques were nearly flawless.

Maya: Please ignore every time that Worf is effortlessly taken out by the monster of the week.

> The two officers had barely broken a sweat,

Jill: John had simply passed out at the first sign of blood.

> "Well I guess you learned something after all", Mara

> commented, noticing John had taken down almost as many of them as she had,

Rex: She'd never seen anyone flail so violently before.

> "there might be a place in security for you".

> John grimaced, breathing heavily, "No thanks", he replied,

Jill: He has career goals beyond 'being the first to die this episode'

> retrieving his kit and tricorder.

Rex: And going through their pockets for change.

> Mara looked at the unconscious gang members, "We might just have found a source of clothing",
> she said.

Mark: So they set out to casually stroll around MegaTokyo while dressed like leather daddies

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> Sylia was hovering over Mackie anxiously, they had found him a few minutes ago and had been
> unable to wake him.

Rex: Mondays, am I right?

Christina: When do you usually get up on a Monday?

Rex: Tuesday.

> "Come on", she said, slapping his face gently, "Wake up!".

Christina: Try slapping him harder

Jill: He might enjoy that too much

> Nene and Priss were looking around the store, "Well it doesn't look like anything was stolen",
> Nene reported after checking the cash register.

Mark: You wouldn't want anyone to walk off with their massive daily take. There could be three,
maybe four dollars in there

> Mackie yawned loudly, "Ahhh, Sis", he said, "You wouldn't believe the dream I had".

Jill: Mackie, we know about your 'dreams'. Just stop right there.

> Sylia looked at her brother crossly, "We've been trying to wake you for ten minutes", she
> scolded.

Christina: Usually it's Mackie who's trying

> Priss grabbed his jaw forcing him to look her in the eye,

Jill: Normally Mackie has to pay for that.

> "Well he doesn't look drugged", she commented.

> "Ahh, Sylia, I think you should have a look at this", called Linna nervously, from the rear of the
> store.

Rex: Somebody cleaned out the break room biscuit jar.

> The three women left Mackie to lock up the store

Christina: Just assuming there were no after-effects of whatever had happened to him

Jill: Cut to Mackie repeatedly walking into a glass door.

> and went to see what Linna was so excited about.

Christina: [Linna] Why didn't you tell me these were on sale?

Jill: [Sylia] Seriously, not now.

> "What's go you so upset?", Nene asked curiously.

Mark: Linna's realised that this is probably her only dialogue in the whole fic.

> Linna gulped, "This is a security recording from about twenty minutes ago", she explained,
> pushing some buttons on a console.

Christina: This would normally be Nene's job, but she's rummaging through the discount bin.

> The three other Knight Sabres turned to watch the monitor. They saw Mackie sitting behind the
> counter, obviously bored.

Jill: There was no action on the toilet cam

> "So what??", asked Priss impatiently. Linna just pointed to the screen
> where two figures had just *materialised out of thin air*.

Christina: [Priss] Big deal, I can do that on TikTok.

> They continued to watch as the female
> noticed Mackie and proceeded to shoot him with some kind of energy weapon.

Mark: So to summarise, their plan was to beam into the middle of a store that could have any number
of people inside of it as well as cameras or other security devices and then shoot any witnesses.
Great way to keep a low profile there

> Priss closed her mouth with a snap, everyone was stunned as they saw the male figure rush
> over to Mackie and check him over, with a strange device.

Rex: [John] Try again, he's just stunned.

> "What are you doing?", he shouted at his companion, in English.

> There was a burst of static covering her response, and the screen broke up for a few moments.

Jill: Oh, I'm sure it wasn't an important part of the alien invasion.

> When it cleared the two figures had closed their strange devices and were leaving the store, one of
> them muttering something about shopping.

Rex: They realised that their store had just been attacked by aliens. Well, very stupid aliens.

> "Do you want another look?", Linna asked. It was a rhetorical question, they replayed the tape
> several times, trying to see how anyone could have faked what happened. The two figures were
> wearing jet-black jumpsuits,

Christina: Actually they're more of a warm black. I notice these things.

> the male had a blue coloured stripe across his shoulders and the
> female had a golden one. They were carrying assorted strange devices

Rex: Including a divining rod and a Krillian Camera

> and both were wearing a badge that looked similar to an large stylised arrow-head.

Jill: You guys get great resolution on your store security camera.

> Mackie had joined them from the store, amazed to find that he hadn't dreamed the strange pair.
> He rubbed his chest, trying to find any evidence that he had been shot. Shrugging

Mark: [Mackie] Just an alien death ray, no biggie.

> he examined the
> tape, "These guy's really know how to make an entrance", he commented, seeing the beam-in for
> the tenth time.

Jill: [Priss] I just wish Sylia would let me do that.

Rex: [Mackie] What, teleport into the store?

Jill: [Priss] No, shoot you.

> Sylia had watched the tape a few times before sitting back into a chair, thinking. Nene had
> attempted to enhance the image using computer imagery,

Mark: Cue the inevitable enhance and rotate

> but nothing new had been revealed.

Rex: Linna insisted on watching it a twenty-sixth time, just to be sure.

> "At least they didn't hurt Mackie", Nene commented, trying to find something positive.

Christina: As long as there are no long-term effects of whatever it was they did.

> Priss snorted, "Well, everyone makes mistakes", she said nudging Mackie.

Rex: ...is the fic trying to do our job for us?

Jill: I say let it

> Mackie just ignored it, he was used to being teased by Priss,

Jill: Priss' 'teasing' had amounted to several fractures.

> "Well, what are we going to do about it?", he asked.

> Sylia shook her head, "Well, we don't know enough to get very far", she said, "So for the
> moment, I think we had all better head home".

Mark: Not going to check the area for any further signs of these two? See if there were any other witnesses? See if anyone noticed two distinctively dressed people leaving the store and wandering around? No? Well okay then.

> Linna nodded, "I've got work tomorrow anyway", she said. The five of them walked through the

> empty store and out to the front to where their cars were parked.

Jill: They are remarkably casual about this apparent alien attack.

> There were several ADP cars and an ambulance parked a little down the road. On impulse

Rex: The cars exploded. It was probably going to happen anyway.

> Nene walked over and quizzed one of the attending officers. When she returned to the group it was
> with a satisfied smirk, "And what's got you so happy?", Priss asked, noting her expression.

Mark: Priss finds only misery in the joy of others.

> "Oh, I found out a little more about our mysterious shoppers", she said,

Christina: Did you find out which PR firm was paying them? That's what I always look for in mystery shoppers

> "It turns out that a group of Outriders decided that they looked like easy pickings".

Rex: Muggers, the first level enemies of the criminal world

> Priss smirked, "And they shot 'em", she guessed.

> Nene shook her head, "Nope,

Jill: Priss swore under her breath.

> according to the gang", she grinned, "they fought it out with their fists".

> "How many of them", Linna asked curiously.

> Nene's smile widened, "Oh, not more than a dozen", she said. The other Knight Sabres
> exchanged disbelieving glances.

Rex: I mean, forget the time travel and the crossover, the most unbelievable part of this fic is that John could actually fight.

> "That's not the best part", Nene said giggling. Seeing their less-than-amused expressions,

Jill: Quit milking your part, puffball.

> she

> continued quickly, "Oh it seems that one or two of the Outriders woke up with their clothes missing".

Mark: Their initiation ritual had gotten somewhat out of hand.

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> If he were Human, Uslim would have been bored, if he were Human that is.

Jill: As a Vulcan, he entertained himself by reading safety manuals.

> Being a Vulcan he

> simply decided that it would provide useful information if he were to monitor the Television
> Stations.

Rex: So far he had learned that humans outsourced all their vital government services to technologically enhanced uplifted dogs.

> "This is most Illogical", he commented, watching a commercial, telling people that if they drank
> *spiffy* brand of soft drink it was 'cool'.

Rex: What, who doesn't want a nice cold can of Product Placement?

> "I fail to see how temperature relates", he complained.

Mark: He's been around humans for years. How has he not picked up on even basic slang and idioms?

Christina: Because being an emotionless alien is the closest thing he has to a personality.

Mark: Yeah, I'll give you that

> Deciding that the Television broadcasts would be best monitored by the computer

Jill: He's watched as many Murder She Wrote reruns as he can.

> he devoted himself to better understand the city's information network.

> "Computer", he ordered, "Locate a signal that is intended for the information processing centre
> and tie my terminal into it".

> <*Working*>, the computer responded, <*No central information processing centre located*>.

Maya: Wikipedia hasn't been invented in this retro future.

> Uslim frowned, "This might take some time", he thought.

Mark: Well that was incredibly pointless

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> General Korako was displeased, standing before him was a figure of defiance and nothing they
> did seemed to make a difference.

Rex: They refused to eat their greens or drink their juice.

> "Tell us who you really are", insisted Captain Shiro.

Mark: Mark Grayson, totally not a spy

Christina: Christina McCade, competition duellist

Rex: Rex Brandtiger, technician and ham roll connoisseur

Jill: Jill Vader, ace pilot and jerk. Pleasure to meet you.

> The prisoner looked at him defiantly, "I am Captain Ford Harakam, StarFleet service number
> 356-297-445,

Rex: Extension three

> United Federation of Planets", he said again.

Mark: [Ford] Mostly just us and the Vulcans and some funny guys.

> "Bullshit!", snapped Shiro, slapping him across the face, drawing blood.

Christina: [Ford] Fine, I'm princess Flutterwings from the Sparkle kingdom. Happy?

> Harakam just repeat his previous statement, adding that mistreatment of Prisoners was a
> violation of article 5 of the uniform code of military justice.

Rex: [Ford] If you guys have even invented that yet.

> "And", he said, looking straight at Shiro, "You touch me again and I'll break your hand".

Jill: Up until this point he'd been entirely fine with the slapping.

> Shiro raised his fist again, intending on smashing him in the face, but a voice stopped him.
> "Shiro!", snapped Korako,

Mark: And you are?

Christina: Not Shiro, obviously

> stilling his hand, "I'm sure that the Captain must be tired after his long
> trip, see that he is given appropriate quarters".

Rex: By the fic's timeline, they've been at this for two weeks now.

Jill: They've got very slow processes

> Shiro fumed for a moment before motioning two guards forward, "Take him to his room", he
> ordered.

Mark: [Shiro] Make sure he's got a robe! And fresh towels!

> Major Hitomi watched from the corner,

Christina: Fighter pilot, power armour jockey and assistant interrogator? Is there anything she can't do?

> she didn't like this business of interrogation, "Sir, must we keep questioning him?", she asked,

Rex: [Korako] I mean, my weekend's free, why not?

> "If his is a military officer, then we are violating our *own* codes".

Mark: But does the USSD recognise Starfleet as a legitimate entity? Are they signatories to the Geneva convention?

> Shiro glanced at her, "Major, you stick to flying aircraft

Jill: Rather than doing... Whatever it is you're doing here.

> and leave the 'questioning' to us", he said.

Christina: He put 'questioning' in air quotes because he's really not sure if that's what he's doing.

> Korako stood, "I agree Major, it would be violating regulations if we used, Ahh, less conventional
> techniques", he said.

> Shiro shook his head, "How do we know is *really* is a military officer?", he asked.

Rex: He could have just gotten lost on the way back from Comicon.

> Hitomi shook her head, "That uniform, for one thing", she said, "and he has the bearing of an
> officer".

Mark [Shiro]: And what military does he serve with?

Jill [Hitomi]: Um, Starfleet?

Mark [Shiro]: And is Starfleet a real entity that exists on this world?

Jill [Hitomi]: Um, no?

> Shiro smirked, "Oh, studying him that closely?", he asked insinuatingly.

Christina: [Hitomi] I mean... yes? We're meant to be gathering information.

Rex: [Shiro] Oh, doing your job, were you?

> "Enough!", said Korako, "This bickering is getting us no where", both officers were silent,

Jill: Next he's going to send them to time out.

> while the general thought to matter through.

> He sat behind his desk, "Captain Shiro", he said, "I give you permission to use any means

> necessary to get the information out of him".

Jill: Nothing for it but to start waterboarding.

> Shiro grinned, evilly, "Yes Sir!", he said smartly, turning to make preparations.

Rex: Shiro will never admit it, but he's always wanted to torture an alien.

> "Oh, before you go", the general added, "The Major here, will make sure that you don't do any

> permanent damage to our 'guest'".

Mark: So put down the pliers

> Shiro stiffened slightly and continued out of the room..

Rex: [Shiro] Party pooper.

> Major Hitomi looked questioningly at the General, "Well Hitomi, I want you to make sure our
> guest survives the interrogation", he explained.

> "But Sir", she began to protest.

> Korako nodded, "I understand", he said, his eyes softening, "I don't like it either, but we need that
> information".

Jill: Sir, you are a terrible liar.

> Hitmoi shook her head, "And if his army comes looking for him?", she asked, remembering her
> encounter with the runabout.

Rex: Don't you mean navy? He's with Starfleet after all. Kind of implies ships and the like.

> "God help us all", the general said, turning away to look out the window.

Jill: Great view of the military-industrial complex from here.

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> "I'm telling you that you got cheated!", Mara insisted.

> The two officers were sitting in a small cafe, getting rather strange glances.

Christina: Everyone assumed they were dating, and neither of them could decide who was more
offended.

> They were dressed

> in the same clothing that they had 'acquired' from the unfortunate gang they had met two nights

> ago.

Mark: In terms of keeping a low profile this was at best a lateral move.

> "Lieutenant", John said, "Shut up and eat your dinner".

Christina: Before your fake soy sushi goes off. This is the retro-cyberpunk future after all.

> Mara gave him a sour look, "Yes *sir*", she said sarcastically, approximating a mock salute with
> a spoon.

> John had exchanged some of their Latinum with a pawn broker,

Mark: The pawn broker had literally no idea what it was, but figured he could pass it off onto some other dumb sap.

> getting quite a bit of cash from the deal.

Jill: They had so many yens.

> They had located all but one of the parts that Uslim required,

Rex: It turns out that there was a certified starship mechanic they could buy from. Who could have seen that coming?

> but now they had a small cash problem.

Christina: Maybe they should just beat up some more muggers.

> "How are we going to afford a crystal of the quality that Uslim needs?",

Rex: New age stores are notorious price gougers.

> John asked, counting his remaining money.

> Mara shrugged, "You'll think of something", she said, continuing to eat.

Mark: Overly elaborate museum heist it is.

> The only remaining part was a piece of high quality crystal, it was required for Uslim to replace
> several Isolinear Optical Chips. Cheap crystals were easy to find,

Jill: Oh yeah, there's isolinear optical crystals just lying around all over the place.

> but the quality that was needed
> was the problem. The type of crystal was only currently used in scientific research or military
> applications.

Rex: So not the local Radio Shack.

> Suddenly a ADP car screamed passed the restaurant, "Please evacuate the area immediately!",
> came an amplified voice from the car, "A rouge Boomer is headed in this...".

Rex: I was wondering how long it would be before that happened.

> The rest of the sentence was cut off, as the car exploded in flames.

Jill: The AD Police, your tax dollars at work.

> John and Mara overturned a table and hid behind it, as pieces of glass flooded the restaurant.

Mark: Mara had realised she was a low-ranking Security officer and this was the monster of the week

and did not like her odds.

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> Leon was not having a good day,

Jill: For starters, he was Leon

> he was prepping a K-12 power armour for launch. "One
> minute to target!", called the pilot of the ADP helicopter over the radio.

Rex: And here he is, still in his long johns.

> Leon nodded to his team, they were travelling towards the area of disturbance, all four of them in
> the latest armour available.

Mark: Built to an already obsolete spec by the lowest bidder

> A light went green in the launch bay and the squad piled out,

Jill: Hollering their blood-curdling war-cry, 'I don't wanna die!'

> parachutes deploying and breaking
> thruster firing to slow their descent. Leon was amazed at the destruction below.

Rex: [Leon] Property values have actually gone up.

> The two Boomers
> had turned up almost half an hour ago, cutting a swath of destruction through the city. Everything
> the ADP threw at them was brushed aside, they had lost nearly twenty K-12's this evening,

Christina: Do they even have twenty power armours in their inventory?

> only five of the pilots had survived.

Jill: Slow day for the ADP then

> The four man team landed in formation, moving towards the closest Boomer,

Mark: Well so far we've thrown bodies at it to no avail, but I'm sure that continuing to do the same
thing will work out fantastically for us

> overhead, Leon could see outlines of nearly a dozen ADP helicopters,

Jill: Packed wingtip-to-wingtip between the buildings, no doubt.

> all adding their gunfire and rockets in an attempt to stop the Boomers.

Rex: If only they had a ridiculously over-armed, over-engineered high speed stealth attack chopper
that was completely ill-suited to their mission profile.

> Deploying in a tight formation the squad turned the next corner to
> be confronted by a scene of total destruction.

Jill: Wait, that's just every day in Flint, Michigan. Never mind.

> Broken and twisted wrecks of K-12s littered the street,

Rex: Mondays, am I right?

> Leon averted his eyes at the scene.

> He glanced up as he heard another aircraft overhead, "What the hell is that?", called one of his
> team members.

Mark: If it's a Pelican coming to drop off the Master Chief, I would not bat an eye at this point.

> Leon recognised the Knight Sabres transport and welcoming the help,

Jill: [Leon] Okay boys, the main characters are here. We can all go home.

Mark: Leon has come to realise that he's a supporting character in his own life.

> he signalled the squad to

> move forwards, "It's the Knight Sabres", he announced, "Anyone object to their help?".

Rex: Well if they want to get killed instead of us then I won't argue

> The squad was silent, "Well, then lets move out", he said, "We don't want them to have all the
> fun".

Jill: 'Don't want them to have all the fun' he says while standing among the mangled corpses of his
colleagues

> Leon was worried, from what he had seen these Boomers were different,

Mark: Isn't that the start of literally every BGC fic?

Christina: No; Largo didn't come back.

> the ADP had *never* been this trashed.

Christina: They had suffered the worst losses since the last time this had happened.

> "I hope Priss is alright", he thought, remembering the brown-hair

> singer who he knew to be one of them.

Jill: Oddly enough, knowing her secret identity meant his chances with her have gone down.

> *****

> Priss was definitely *not* alright,

Mark: Thanks for that, narrator.

> "Damn, my rail-gun spikes just bounce off", she called to Linna.

Rex: Oh, so its an MDC structure

> The two of them had were going after the closer Boomer, while Nene and Sylia took the one further
> away.

> Linna nodded, "Alright, lets see how it deals with my ribbons", she said,

Jill: Well, it could tie them into a pretty little bow.

> dodging in close to the

> Boomer. Priss shot a series of rounds at the Boomer, distracting it so that Linna could get a good

> hit.

Rex: [Boomer] You do know those don't hurt, right? Like, why should I pay attention to you?

> Linna's ribbons lashed out at the C-55, unfortunately they shattered on impact.

Christina: I'm not sure how those things work, but my guess is 'not like that'

> Jumping

> backward in shock, Linna dodged another of the Boomer's laser blasts. Priss continued to shoot,
> distracting it for a moment.

Mark: She wasn't sure how she felt about her new role as 'bait'.

> Jumping high, Linna came down on the Boomer's back, using a knuckle
> bomb. The blast only served to anger the Boomer and it backhanded her into a wall.

Rex: TOGG!

> Priss screamed in frustration, she was nearly out of rounds.

Jill: She wished she had more ammo to pump ineffectually into it.

> Linna was unsteadily getting to her feet, the Boomer aiming its laser at her.

> "EAT THIS", came a shout from further down the street.

> The Boomer was blown from its feet by a missile.

Jill: Shoot missiles at the killer robot? What a brilliant plan! Why didn't anyone think of that before?

> Priss ran over and grabbed Linna, moving her
> out of the way. Turning she saw a squad of four K-12's moving down the street,

Rex: Great, we've got its attention. Now what?

> the lead unit had a heavy missile launcher on one shoulder, she recognised its pilot.

Mark: She recognised him by his missile launcher.

> The Boomer got to its feet, seemingly unhurt by the powerful blast. "Fire!", Leon screamed
> again.

> The squad opened up with everything available, high calibre armour piercing rounds impacted
> into the Boomer, not doing any damage but pushing it backwards.

Christina: On the other hand, they were scuffing the hell out of its finish

> "What the hell are you doing",

Rex: [Leon] Kinda drifting, day to day, scraping by not knowing if it's going to be my last but not able to live and celebrate my life in between.

Christina: [Priss] I meant fighting this boomer.

Rex: [Leon] Oh yeah, me too.

> Priss shouted over the noise to Leon (who was standing watching the Boomer, but not firing).

Rex [Leon]: I'm helping.

> "Just wait", he said.

Mark: A couple more hours of this and he'll get tired of this.

> The Boomer managed to get off a couple of unaimed laser blasts, before the sheer kinetic

> energy of the Bullets pushed it back through a wall.

Christina: Let's all pretend this works and not think too much about it.

> "NOW!", shouted Leon, firing his remaining missile, not at the Boomer, but at the building that it
> was under.

Rex: [Leon] Whoops, uh, totally meant to do that.

> A volley of six missiles followed his, screaming into the building and destroying most of
> the supports.

Mark: [Pilot] Uh, so did we!

Christina: [Pilot] Totally on purpose.

> Tons of concrete and steel fell straight on the Boomer's head, pinning it to the ground.

Jill: Brilliant plan there. Say, did you check to see if that building was empty of innocent bystanders first?

> As the dust cleared, it was apparent that the Boomer was still intact, its screams and growls
> echoed from beneath the rubble. But fortunately it couldn't move.

Rex: And it lasers its way out of there in a minute.

> The ADP squad cracked open
> their armour, grinning at each other in relief. "Well that's one down", one of them observed.

Jill: We suffered massive casualties to achieve only a partial victory. Righteous!

> Priss was about to thank them

Christina: [Priss] Good thing there were men here to save us.

> when she remember Sylia and Nene,

Mark: Up until that point she had been only vaguely aware that they existed

> they had gone off to fight
> one of these things themselves. "I'm sorry, we have to go now", she said to Leon,

Jill: [Priss] My home planet needs meeeeeeeeeee...

> "Our other friends might will probably need help".

Christina: And that's probably not even the worst break-up speech Leon's ever heard

> Leon nodded, "We'll help", he offered, it was a thought echoed by the rest of the squad as well,

Rex: [Pilot] We actually got to do something!

Mark: [Pilot] Hooray! I'm not dead yet!

> they snapped down their canopies and checked their weapons. The four K-12s and two worried
> Knight Sabres quite literally flew down the street.

Rex: They literally flew because they... flew

> *****

> "NENE!", Sylia screamed, as the pink hardsuit was backhanded through a building.

Mark: Nene contributing as much as ever.

> The Boomer that they were fighting seemed to be completely bullet-proof.

Christina: As well as stain resistant and non-stretching

> She had it numerous time, with enough force to damage or destroy a regular C-55.

Rex: How much effort it took to destroy compared to a standard C-55 boomer was their measuring stick

> Her arm blades were broken, snapped off when she attempted to impale the Boomer.

Mark: This is their hardsuit tech which is generations ahead of anything else right?

Jill: Yep.

Mark: Okay, just checking.

> It had struck her across the stomach, ripping into her armour.

> "Nene?", she called over the radio, "Come in, can you hear me?".

Christina: [Nene] I'm sorry, Nene's not in right now.

> She felt a trickle of blood down the inside of her abdominal armour.

> She was busy watching what had happened to Nene, when she felt a searing pain in her
> shoulder, dodging away, she saw that her armour was burnt away.

Jill: She vaguely noticed that she'd been shot with a laser

> "Damn, he tagged me", she growled.

Jill: She's slightly annoyed that she's been shot with a laser.

> Bobbing and weaving she decided that her only chance lay in destroying part of the Boomer's
> control system.

Mark: Why she didn't do this before was another matter

> She began to run in circles, trying to get a close shot at the Boomer's back.

Christina: I can only assume the Boomer stood there staring at her.

> Seeing
> her chance she rammed a fist at the back of the Boomer's head. The explosion of the knuckle
> bomb did little.

Rex: On the upside it worked out that one itch he just couldn't reach.

> She suddenly felt herself impaled on the boomer's claw.

Jill: Another mild inconvenience, no doubt.

> "That's it", she thought, feeling immense pain, wondering what would happen to the Knight
> Sabres after her death.

Jill: Sylia has made contingency plans for her death. The first of which is that somebody kills Mackie.

> "I hope Nene is alright", was her last conscious thought.

>

> John winced and ducked further behind the wall.

Mark: He may be the protagonist of this fic, but he was going to do everything he could to avoid contributing to it.

> The sounds of battle were echoing from across the street.

Rex: Naturally they stuck around rather than heading for the hills.

> Mara and John were huddled behind a small concrete wall, trying to avoid the stray
> shots coming into the cafe.

Jill: They were pretty confident that this single wall would protect them from all the heavy-calibre gunfire and anti-tank missiles flying around

> "I wonder how much longer its going to go on?", Mara mused,

Mark: Why, do you have somewhere to be?

> she had drawn her phaser out of concealment when the Boomer had first appeared.

Christina: Having no clue what was going on, she simply assumed that this was a colourful local ritual

> They both ducked as a large object flew through the shop's front window.

Rex: When they said they'd be making flying cars, I'm pretty sure that's not what they meant.

> John looked in horror
> as the still form lying against the shop's rear wall, a pool of blood was rapidly spreading across the
> floor. He grabbed up his medical kit and ran over,

Rex: His medical kit is two wavy things that make different humming noises.

> knelling beside the person, running his Tricorder over the body.

Jill: Mate, by the time they're bent around in that shape, all you can do is go through their pockets.

> Mara ran over beside him, "Oh god, is he alive?", she asked.

> John had gone into 'doctor' mode,

Mark: Shame he rarely does that in the med bay.

> "**She* is alive,

Jill: Mara apparently missed the high heels and moulded metal boobs.

> but won't be for much longer", he said.

> "Doc", Mara, said warningly, "Remember that we aren't supposed to interfere".

Mark: Mara long ago learned to never help anyone ever.

> John ignored her, reaching for into his medical kit, grabbing up a laser scalpel, trying to seal up
> the gaping wound.

Christina: Yes, trying to cut the gaping wound closed.

> "If I can get her stabilised, she should survive", he muttered.

> Mara grabbed his arm, "You could be destroying history", she insisted, "Remember the Prime Directive, you took an oath".

Jill: You've already decided that this isn't your history. Why not go hog wild at this point?

Rex: Be right back. Stomping on every butterfly I see.

> John pulled his arm away, "I also swore another oath", he said, turning back to his patient,

Mark: [John] To my fellow Goonies.

> "To aid the sick and injured".

> Mara nodded slowly, "Well it's your decision", she said, turning back to watch the front of the store.

Christina [Mara]: But if you inadvertently erase me from history then I'm never going to speak to you again.

> The doctor turned back to his patient,

Mark: But first he had to check if she had insurance.

> running a tissue regenerator over the gaping wound,
> "What I wouldn't give for access to a bio-bed", he thought.

Rex: Then remembered how his ship blew up purely due to the captain's stupidity.

> He was frustrated in getting to the internal damage, but the strange armour the woman was wearing. Scanning for some kind of release mechanism he located it and began snapping the armour off.

Mark: Hang on to that, it's probably collectible.

> It fell away from her body quickly, revealing that she was wearing some kind of tight-fitting undergarment.

Rex: This was his first encounter with a scantily-clad space babe and it wasn't going how he had expected

> A noise behind him startled John and he spun around, standing in the broken shop front was a Boomer.

Christina: He has no idea how local clothes, currency or customs work, but he can recognise what type of killer robot this is on sight

> John dove to his left, pulling his phaser from its hiding place in his sleeve.

Jill: He rigged up a quick-release phaser arm slide for the next time he gets in a bar fight.

> Luckily for him, the Boomer was distracted for a moment by another person wearing power armour.

Christina: Yes, the Knight Sabers do seem to just be distractions in this fic.

> He rolled to his knees, firing his small phaser at the Boomer.

Mark: It glowed orange and vanished in a truly unconvincing special effect.

> The red-gold beam hissed into the Boomer, sparking on it's armour.

Rex: [John] Well, it's never done that before.

> Unfortunately his small

> type-I phaser did little against the Boomer's armour, managing to only scratch the surface.

Christina: Mara told him they needed to bring the disruptor cannon, but no, he was worried about 'going undercover.'

> It had

> turned back to face him, when his beam was joined by a second. John glanced to his left, seeing

> Mara firing her own phaser.

Christina: How are these things meant to work?

Rex: Well, they make things kind of glow, or something.

Christina: You have no idea, do you?

Rex: Not a clue.

> "This is useless", he thought,

Jill: My review of the fanfic so far

> diving to the side as a laser beam cut in his direction. He pulled

> out his Tricorder, scanning the strange Boomer carefully.

Mark: He's being attacked by a killer robot, but he's still got time to make a detailed analysis of it.

> The readings he got astounded him.

Rex: It was made out of chocolate with a caramel centre.

> *****

> Mara ducked another laser shot, returning fire. She had already gone through eight settings on

> her phaser, all had little or no effect.

Mark: She'd started with 'mild annoyance' and cycled all the way up to 'light sunburn'

> "Mara", John shouted from behind some cover on her right, "Use setting 10 or above, it's got

> tritanium armour!".

Christina: Good idea. Obviously she was holding back against the killer death robot.

> Mara nodded, and set her phaser up to the highest level,

Rex: The 'requires sunglasses' setting.

> "I hope he's right", she thought.

Jill: This is John. When has he ever been right?

> With

> the amount of use she had already put it through, and using it at the highest setting, a type-II phaser

> should be just about out of power after her first shot.

Christina: You forget to charge your death ray before going out, this will happen

> She jumped towards the Boomer,

Jill: Well, there's your first mistake.

Mark: First mistake?

Jill: Latest mistake. Latest in a long line of mistakes.

- > dodging another laser blast. Taking careful aim, she shot
- > straight at the Boomer's chest. To say the result was spectacular would be an understatement, the
- > Tritanium armour was blasted into vapour as soon as her shot hit it.

Jill: I'll just assume this was indeed spectacular and just move on

- > The Boomer's head was blown from it's body, most of which vaporised under the intense energy.

Rex: Didn't hit it that hard. Must have had a self-destruct.

- > Mara breathed a sigh of relief, dropping to her knees. She glanced at her phaser, she had
- > guessed right, it was totally discharged.

Jill: The phaser had enough, and needed some 'me' time.

- > "Next time I'll bring along a phaser *rifle*", she thought to herself.

Rex: Again, wah-wah

>

- > John returned his phaser to it's hiding place (after carefully setting it back to stun).

Jill: He wasn't going to accidentally disintegrate a guy again.

- > He hurried over to his patient, noticing that she was more or less unharmed by this last attack.

Rex: She was unharmed save for being run through.

- > Mara was scanning the area with her Tricorder, "It looks like there are more people coming", she
- > announced,

Mark: Obviously now is a good time to be showing off our future technology.

- > "And that other power armour is still functioning". Then she noticed an unusual reading,

Christina: Up until this point it had been a perfectly normal killer robot rampage.

- > "I'll be back in a moment", she said, scrambling over the rubble.

- > John just continued to work, he had managed to stop a lot of the internal bleeding and was
- > fighting to keep the young woman alive.

Rex: He's out of his depth. Usually he waves the little humming thingy over someone and does what the computer tells him to.

- > "You really took a beating", he said to her unconscious
- > face, "So, do you do this thing for a living, or what?".

Jill: This was the best conversation he'd ever had with a woman.

- > Not really expecting an answer John continued to babble a bit.

Mark: I think that's the most natural-sounding dialogue we've had so far

- > A few moments later Mara returned, sliding down into the 'fox-hole' where John was treating his

> patient.

> She held up the Boomer's head, "We've found our last part", she said.

Jill: [Mara] I'm going to stick it on the shuttle's dashboard.

> John looked up momentarily from where he was still working. "Oh?", he asked.

> "Yeah, the laser is generated by passing it through a high-quality refractive crystal", she
> explained,

Mark: Pausing for the grade school science lesson

> "Now we can get out of here".

> John grunted, "In a minute", he said.

Rex: [John] Not now mum, gimme five more minutes.

> Mara frowned, "Now look, you said once you have her stabilised we can get out of here", she
> said.

> John frowned, "She's nowhere near stable yet,

Jill: She's still going on about hollow Earth and the mole people.

> I've had to shock her heart four times to keep it going", he explained,

Mark: You have? Fic, you can't just brush over that sort of detail.

> "I can't leave yet".

Rex: [John] I can't leave her with these barbarians and their leeches and...

Christina: [Mara] We're not *that* far back, you know.

> Mara had her Tricorder out and was scanning the area again, "Well it looks like her partner is on
> the way", she announced, picking up the other hardsuit.

Christina: John is trying to think of some way in which this does not seem awkward.

> John shook his head, "I can't leave", he said flatly.

> "Well come on Doc", she said, "We can't stay here, if they find us..."

> It was at that moment that Nene came running around the corner of the street. John looked at
> Mara suddenly, "You take the crystal back to Uslim, I'll follow when she's stable", he said.

Rex: [Mara] Okay, I guess I'm gonna break you out of space prison or something.

Christina: [John] Uh, actually...

Rex: [Mara] If they don't just straight-up vivisect you, that is.

Christina: [John] Y'know, come to think of it...

> Mara shook her head, not willing to leave her friend.

Jill: And I suppose John as well.

> "I don't want any arguments Lieutenant", he barked at her.

Rex: Seriously? You're a junior doctor and you're pulling rank?

> Mara frowned, "I still don't like it", she complained.

Christina: [Mara] Last time I left you alone, I had to dig you out from under the floorboards.

Rex: [John] That was a long time ago.

Christina: [Mara] That was last week at Ten Forward.

> Thinking for a moment she tossed John her

> phaser, "Here, this will be charged up again in about an hour", she said.

Mark: What sort of wall plug do you need for charging a phaser?

Rex: I bet it'd be one of those strange European adapters.

> John smiled, "Thanks Mara, good luck".

> Mara nodded, "You too, don't get yourself killed", she warned.

Christina: Try not to wander into another killer robot attack.

> Moving slightly away from her friend, she tapped her communicator, "Computer, one to beam
> back", she ordered.

> *****

> Nene arrived just in time to see a woman dissolve in a pillar of light.

Rex: She realised that the Rapture had begun and she was going to be left behind

> Blinking slightly she

> checked her sensors again, looking for Sylia's signal. It was close, and she hurried forward.

Jill: [Nene] Wow, that could only have been an actual miracle! [Pause] Oh well, moving on.

> What she saw frightened her, Sylia was lying in a pool of blood, her armour had been removed
> and was lying in a pile by her feet.

Christina: It wasn't even properly stacked, it was horrible.

> Before she could move, a man stepped between her and Sylia,

Mark [John]: Whatever you think this looks like, I promise it isn't.

> "Whoever you are, stay back", he shouted, levelling some kind of weapon at her.

> Nene froze, "That's my friend", she said indicating Sylia.

> The man frowned, but slipped the weapon back into his clothes and turned back to Sylia,

Rex: [John] I trust you completely, strange pink armoured woman.

> picking up a strange instrument.

Jill: Odd time to practice the pan pipes, but you do you.

> "What are you doing to her", Nene cried, placing a hand on the man's shoulder.

Christina: [John] Honestly, I have no idea.

> He frowned at her, "Saving her life", he said bluntly, "Now unless you've got some medical
> training I'm telling you to stand back".

Jill: [Nene] I've seen every episode of Grey's Anatomy.

Rex: [John] Well, that's more than I've got.

> Nene was unsure about the strange man, he seemed to know what he was doing,

Mark: In as far as she had no idea what he was doing at all.

> Sylia was still alive after all. And from the amount of blood on the floor it was certainly good to hear.

> "Mackie", she called into her radio, "We're going to need an airlift, immediately".

> A few moments later Priss and Linna arrive, escorted by a group of ADP K-12's.

Rex: Yeah, way to keep the secret identity going, guys.

> "Keep them back", she called to over the radio Priss, "Sylia's been hurt".

Jill: The idea that people could get hurt while fighting killer robots had never occurred to her before this

> *****

> Priss turned to Leon, "One of our group is hurt, please wait here", she ordered.

> Leon nodded under his suit, "Alright men", he said, "spread out and look for that Boomer".

Mark: She's an illegal mercenary and vigilante and he's a cop so naturally he does everything she says.

> The other three began looking for the Boomer, investigating the buildings that had been ruined.

Christina: Going to look for civilian survivors while you're at it?

Jill: Nope, robot gets the priority

> "Anything I can do to help?", he asked.

Rex: Given that you're Leon, the answer is definitely no.

> Priss shook her head, "We'll be leaving soon", she said, "Unless you have some kind of
> objection?".

Mark: [Leon] Would it matter if I did?

Jill: [Priss] Depends on how much dignity you want to have left.

Mark: [Leon] Joke's on you, I don't have any!

> Leon shook his head, "No Priss", he said to her quietly, "You and your friends are free to go".

> And with that he turned and walked back to his men

Mark: This has been a crude simulacrum of human interaction

> *****

> Linna was examining Sylia, shuddering at the mess she was in.

Christina: [Linna] Her mascara's run and her foundation's a mess. [Pause] Oh, and she's been run through.

> "I'm telling you that it's dangerous to move her", said the strange man.

Jill: [Nene] Can't you just transport her, like how your friend beamed out of here?

Mark: [John] How did you know about that?

Jill: [Nene] Are you kidding? I've watched all the Star Trek.

> Nene placed a hand on his shoulder, "Thank you for what you've done, but we'll take over now".

> The man snorted, "You've got to be kidding", he said, "Are any of you doctors?"

Rex: Linna used to date a doctor. Does that count?

> I've just spent the last ten minutes and god knows how much effort,

Mark: [John] I've been waving the thingy over her for ages. My arm's tired!

> keeping her alive, I'm not about to let you ruin my work".

Jill: Careful, he's very territorial

> Linna looked at him carefully, he seemed slightly familiar. "And you are a doctor?",

Christina: Yes, but his qualifications aren't recognised anywhere on Earth

> she asked looking at the slightly worn jacket and jeans he was wearing.

Rex: He dresses like a quirky small town doctor with a heart of gold. I'm convinced

> "I'm as close to a doctor as your going to get lady", he said,

Jill: [Nene] That's not a yes, is it?

> "Now either let me keep treating her or let her die... it's your choice".

Mark: John follows the grand tradition of Starfleet doctors by being a cantankerous jerk

> Linna nodded, "Alright, you can come with us", she announced.

Christina: [Linna] It'll be great. We'll stay up all night and drink hot cocoa and talk about boys...

> Nene tapped her on the shoulder, "Are you sure that's a good idea?", she asked,

Rex: Something that should have been asked at every stage of this story.

> "You remember what Sylia said about..."

Mark: Not feeding Mackie after midnight? Yeah, got it.

> Linna cut her off, "That was before she got herself gutted by a Boomer", she said sharply,

> "'He's' the only doctor we've got".

Jill: Apparently she didn't plan for sudden disembowelment

> A moment later the transport landed and it's doors opened. The three remaining Knight Sabres

> lifted their leader carefully and carried her to the waiting plane.

>

> Mackie nearly had a heart attack, seeing his sister wheeled out of the transport.

Jill: He realised that he might never have the chance to leer at her again

> He knew that someone was wounded, but no one had told him it was her.

Rex: Though he had a one-in-four chance of guessing

> He quickly followed the stretcher into the infirmary.

Christina: Since when did they have an infirmary?

Rex: Okay, so it's the garage, but at least they laid out a tarp.

> He gulped as he saw the ragged gash on her stomach and her pale complexion. He felt a hand
> on his shoulder, it was Linna, "I'm sure she'll be alright", she said comfortingly.

Christina: Linna, you are a terrible liar.

> "I'm going to need some kind of power source", said a man that Mackie had never seen before.

Rex: Several cans of Surge later, and he was ready.

> He was hovering over Sylia's prone form, examining her carefully. Mackie felt a spurt of recognition,
> "Isn't that the guy from the shop", he blurted to Linna.

Mark: He's the nonspecific guy from the nonspecific shop

> Linna frowned and looked at the man closely, "Your right", she said, "I didn't notice".

Rex: [Linna] Not gonna lie, was kind of busy with the killer robot.

> Linna then motioned to Priss and the two of them went apart to talk.

Jill [Linna]: If she doesn't pull through, I get all her stuff

> Mackie continued to watch anxiously as the man hooked up a strangle device to her arm, "What
> are you doing??", he asked, concerned.

Mark [John]: Doctor stuff

Rex [Mackie]: You're waving a beeping thing over her. How is that doctor stuff?

Mark [John]: Well are you a doctor?

Rex [Mackie]: Uh, no.

Mark [John]: Right, so belt up and let me do doctor stuff

> The man gave him a worried look, "If I don't replace some of the blood that she's lost, she'll die",
> he said tersely, "Now unless you've got some important reason for being here, please leave".

Rex: Mackie suddenly needed to justify his own existence and came up short.

> *****

> Nene (still in her armour) placed a hand on Mackie's shoulder and gesturing to Sylia, "Excuse
> me *doctor*", she said, "That's his sister".

Mark: [John] Oh good, you can be a blood bag.

> John sighed, "Sorry", he said, looking at the young boy, "I'm just a little stressed out at the
> moment".

Jill: [Linna] Oh no, that's fair, after all it's not my friend who's dying while a so-called doctor snaps at me.

> John failed to recognise the boy as the one that Mara had stunned when they had first arrived,

Rex: John has trouble telling people apart. Many patients have suffered.

> he was too caught up in his work. "Where's that power?", he insisted to Nene.

Christina: Ask Snap! about that.

> She walked over to a power outlet, "Here", she said, wondering what he meant.

> John frowned, and scanned the wall with his Tricorder, there was power there, but it was at a
> very primitive frequency and modulation.

Rex: He has to test it first. Anyone got a handy elephant?

> "Well I guess it's better than nothing", he muttered, placing the power cell over the outlet.

Christina: [John] How does this thing work, I mean, do you just sort of beam it in or...

> "Now as long as the StarFleet Engineers had taken into
> consideration the power type..", he thought to himself.

Mark: I'd say it'd be stupid for Starfleet technology to be set up to interface with primitive ancient power sources, but then I remember how often Star Trek characters end up in the 20th century anyway

> A moment later, the cell beeped and all the lights went out.

Rex: [John] Sorry. That was my bad.

> "What the hell are you doing?", Nene said, looking at the glowing power pack.

Mark: [John] Causing a blackout.

[Pause]

Jill: [Nene] I am gonna slap you.

Mark: [John] You're in power armour!

Jill: [Nene] I know.

> John noted that the power pack was at full charge and he quickly put it into the regenerator. He
> flicked the switch and the regenerator hummed slightly. "All we can do now", he said, "Is wait".

Rex: So, uh... [pause] Anyone for Hungry Hungry Hippos?

> *****

> "Come on!", said Mara impatiently, "How long is this going to take?".

> "About an hour and a half less than the last time you asked", replied Uslim,

Mark: [Mara] That was three hours ago.

Rex: [Uslim] Yes, and?

> adjusting the crystal slightly.

Christina: Quietly considering giving her a Vulcan neck pinch and being done with it.

> Mara had returned with all the necessary equipment, but as Uslim kept reminding her, this would
> take a few days.

Rex: Cave-aged cheeses won't happen straight away

> "Have we got enough power to beam him back?", she asked.

> Uslim shook his head, "Our power reserves are down to almost nill", he said,

Christina: [Uslim] Maybe if somebody hadn't replicated a four-course seafood banquet?

Mark: [Mara] I was stress eating, okay?

> "We must conserve as much power as possible, until I can get these components installed".

Jill: These guys are not very good at this, are they?

Mark: They are not.

> Mara slumped down into a chair, she had never abandoned a friend before

Jill: Please ignore the security team that died around her on the ship

> and was not about to

> start now. "John should be here now", she thought to herself, "I should have forced him to come".

Rex: [Mara] I should have shot him and dragged him off and left that woman to die. It's the right thing to do.

> Even as she thought it she realised that it wouldn't have worked, had she tried to force him to come
> he would have resisted and she might have lost the chance to get the parts back here.

Jill: [Mara] Still, worth it to phaser his ugly mug.

> "John will be fine", Uslim said, in what was probably a comforting tone (for a Vulcan).

Mark: The best part about being a Vulcan is that nobody can tell if you're being insincere

> Mara nodded, not really convinced, picking up the phaser rifle she had been working on,

Rex: [Mara] One. Point. Oh-five. Megawatt. Phased energy rifle.

> she checked it's charge and components for the tenth time.

Christina: It's when she started lining up tin cans in the back of the runabout that Uslim had to step in.

> "I won't be caught out next time", she growled, sighting down the rifle's length.

Jill: Mara believes in carrying a gun at all times. It made her wedding night a tad awkward

> *****

> John woke suddenly. "What...", he muttered, not recognising the surroundings. He was lying on
> a strange bed, covered with a light sheet.

Mark: At least this time it wasn't the bathtub full of ice

> Blinking he sat up, then he remembering, he quickly turned to check on his patient.

Rex: John also keeps forgetting what his job is. Many patients have suffered.

> The young woman looked better,

Mark: All her inside bits are inside her, so that's a good start.

> but it would still be a few days until she was completely out of
> danger and then a week or two before she was fully-recovered.

Christina: She was only lightly disembowelled.

> John checked the regenerator, it had completed its work and had switched itself off.

Mark: And it's not switching back on until it gets its name on the credits.

> He yawned, picked up the Tricorder and scanned the woman,

Christina: [John] Being a doctor is awesome. I can just lie back in bed and wave a thing at my patient from half way across the room.

> noticing that her heartbeat and other vital signs were stable.

Rex: [John] Full kidney function, both hearts beating fine... Wait, what?

> "Your doing better miss", he said (never actually being told her name).

> She groaned slightly and he quickly leaned over, her eye's fluttered open, "Where?", she
> murmured.

Mark: [Sylia] If this is the garage again...

> John smiled down at her, "Your alright miss,

Christina: Said the stranger in her home.

> with a bit of rest you'll be back up in no time", he said comfortingly.

Mark: Without actually answering her question.

> She shook her head and attempted to sit up, John quickly held her down,

Rex: He really needs a restraining force field about now. [Pause] Or, y'know, straps.

> "No!", he said, forcing her to stay down, "Do you want me to sedate you?".

Jill: He could make her read the fic. It's really that dull.

> She shook her head again, "Who.. are.. you..", she said with some effort.

> John smiled, "At the moment I'm your doctor", he grinned,

Rex: [John] Tomorrow, I'm your debt collector.

> "But my name's John".

Mark: The strange visitor from a distant time and place known as John.

> After a moment he smiled again, "By the way", he said, "Do *you* have a name?".

Christina: [John] I mean, your name tag says 'Berlei...'

> "Her name's Sylia", came a timid voice from the door.

Rex: Sylia Segnovich. It's complicated.

> John turned around to see the young boy that he had noticed earlier,

Jill: And instinctively zapped him with a phaser. It's what Mara would have done.

> "How is she?", he asked.

> John waved him over, "Ask her yourself", he said,

Jill: [Sylia] Get out of here.

Mark: [Mackie] Yep, she sounds fine.

> "The hypo that I gave her is almost worn off".

Christina: [Mackie] If I start by asking 'what's a hypo?' I'm never going to stop, am I?

> The boy, who John remembered was called Mackie walked slowly over to the bed and hovered
> over his sister, "Hey Sis?", he said.

> Sylia opened her eyes and smiled weakly, "Mackie", she groaned,

Rex: Her usual reaction to Mackie.

> "The others?".

> Mackie nodded, tears in his eyes, "Your safe Sis", he said, "Everyone else is safe too".

Rex: Leonardo da Vinci, Darkwind, Koko the Gorilla, Sonny Hokori... everyone

> John turned and walked back to his medical case, packing away the regenerator,

Jill: Along with his bone saw and artificial leeches. Starfleet medicine is advanced.

> "This is the best part of being a doctor", he thought to himself happily.

Mark: The satisfaction of a job well done is the best part of saving lives

> A moment later three unfamiliar women walked into the room,

Christina: He hasn't gotten used to their 2040 redesigns yet.

> "Mackie!", one of them said angrily, "We told you to keep an eye on him, not...".

Jill: They just assume the worst about him at all times, don't they?

> She broke off, noticing that Sylia was awake.

> "Sylia!", she cried happily, leaning over the bed. The other two also smiled, tears filling their
> eyes.

> After a few minutes, one of them (she had long black hair and a serious expression)

Christina: I have no idea which one of them that's meant to be.

Jill: Maybe identify them by their eighties fashions instead

> walked over to him, "Will she be alright?", she asked.

> John nodded, "She needs a few more days of observation, there still could be complications,

Rex: Getting disembowelled makes her kinda mad

> but it looks good so far", he replied.

> She stuck out her hand, "I'm Linna", she said,

Jill [Linna]: The one everybody forgets about

> "You'll probably want to freshen up, Mackie will show you to a spare room".

> The two of them walked upstairs, John marvelling at the security systems that seemed to be everywhere.

Mark: He's a really big fan of police states

> Finally they emerged into what looked like a pretty ordinary looking house.

Christina: Ordinary for being 250 years old.

> Mackie motioned John into a room, "Here you are", he said.

Rex: [John] This is a broom closet.

Jill: [Mackie] We had to make do.

> John walked into the room and Mackie closed the door behind him, locking it.

> "Hey!", John called through the door, "What's going on?"

Mark: [John] I've heard of a house call, but this is ridiculous.

> "Sorry doctor", Mackie replied, "But Linna thinks that it would be better if you stayed put for a while".

Christina: They politely asked him not to teleport away

> John sighed, he would feel better after cleaning up (or at least as close as he could get in the 21st century).

Mark: He kept scrubbing, knowing full well that he'd never be clean again

> As he walked into the bathroom, he suddenly realised where he had seen him before.

Rex: A Twitch stream? A wanted poster? Give us a hint here.

> "Oh no..", he thought to himself, "Of all the luck...".

> {Author's Note: Yeah *scratching my head* that does seem a little contrived, doesn't it?}

Jill: He said it, not us.

> Finally getting out of the street clothes, he also slipped out of his uniform

Mark: Which he was wearing under his street clothes like the pyjamas they are.

> and into a shower.

Rex: He did need to ask how the seashells worked.

> Fifteen minutes later he was back into uniform and thanking whoever designed the fabric.

Christina: The other clothes had made him itch in awkward places.

> He re-attached his communicator badge and decided to call in,

Jill: Nah, just leave them hanging. It's probably been what, a day already? They won't mind.

> since he was alone and not really able to do anything else.

Rex: Staring at the walls it is

> "Conroy to runabout Murray", he said tapping his commbadge, "respond Murray"

> {Author's Note: The Murray River is one of the biggest in Australia - since the Runabouts are
> named after rivers.. what the hell...}

Mark: Did you consider establishing this earlier in the fic rather than relying on an awkward footnote?

> "Doc, where the hell are you?", responded Mara,

Christina: [John] Well, I'm in a room. [Pause] Sorry. I was hoping to give you more than that.

> "You've been out of contact since I left you".

Jill: [Mara] You never write, you never call...

> "Sorry Mara", John replied, "But I've stabilised the woman's condition and should be ready for
> beam-out soon".

> "Well", replied Mara, "That would be great, except for the fact that while Uslim is repairing the
> Engines, we've only got minimal *life support* and no chance of using the transporter".

Jill: [Mara] I mean, considering the power shortage, it's probably for the best we didn't both beam
back at once.

Mark: [John] Why's that?

Jill: [Mara] Tell me, have you ever seen 'The Fly'?

> John sighed, "Well how long will it take?", he asked, feeling a little uncomfortable.

> "Uslim here", interrupted Uslim, "I must first realign the Isolinear matrix and then compute the
> proper flow curve...".

Rex: Then reboot the gronkurbler fliibletnwerk before finally frequency shifting the zonkwingle
tweedlesquirge in the main bumblesnork array.

> John broke in, "Uslim, I'm a doctor, not an engineer", he said,

Rex: Also, wah-wah

> "Just tell me how long".

Christina: [Uslim] After that, longer.

> There was silence for a moment before Uslim responded, "I don't know", he said.

Mark: [Uslim] It would be faster, but someone keeps interrupting me to ask if it's done.

> John nodded to himself, "Well let me know when your ready", he said, "I'm not sure how long I'll
> be welcome here".

Mark: He's worried that they'll start charging rent.

> Sitting down on the bed, John check the charge on his own phaser and then on the Type-II that
> he had borrowed from Mara, rhey were both at full.

Rex: He didn't need to cause any more blackouts.

> He grimly placed the Type-II into it's holster and
> slid the smaller up one sleeve.

Mark: He was now ready for a wild west card game

>

> Major Hitmoi winced as she saw the condition of her charge. Harakam had several burn marks
> on his temples

Rex: You go out in an Australian summer and that will happen

> (the result of the electrodes that had been attached there) and he was bleeding from
> a cut lip.

Jill: Sounds like a good night out in North Korea

> She winced again as Captain Shiro smashed his fist into the prisoner's face.

Mark: Well pummelling him senseless hasn't worked so far, but why not keep trying anyway?

> "I am.. Captain.. Ford Harakam.... Service No", Harakam mumbled weakly

> Shiro snarled and raised his fist again. Hitomi grabbed it before he could get any momentum up,
> "That's enough", she said firmly.

Jill: Keep going and he's going to start singing 'Daisy Bell.'

> Shiro sneered at her, "Got no stomach for this pilot?", he said grinning.

Rex: Not to put too fine a point on it, but what is she doing here anyway?

Jill: She's already a fighter pilot and armoured trooper. Why not add 'interrogator' to her resume?

> Resisting the urge to pound him into the ground Hitomi gestured to the two guards standing at
> the door, "Captain Shiro is leaving now", she ordered,

Christina: He overstayed his welcome, and didn't even tip.

> "You will personally make sure he is standing
> 100 meters from this building before returning".

Christina: She likes abusing her authority and handing out arbitrary orders.

> Shiro shook his head, "Your making a mistake", he said as the guards removed him, "The
> general will hear about this".

> Hitomi waited until they had left before she brought Harakam a glass of water, "here you go", she
> said.

Jill: [Hitomi] And before you ask, it's totally not drugged or anything.

> He looked at her with blood-shot eyes, "What's this?", he asked weakly, "Your suppose to be the
> 'good Romulan' ?".

Rex: The really strange spinoff to the Good Wife.

> She shrugged not understanding exactly what he meant,

Jill: I suppose that is the problem with this process. He could be giving them valid answers but they

would be meaningless to them

>"Drink it", she insisted, "If you weren't so resistant to the drugs it would be over by now".

Mark: Careful there. He might start telling you about his cleansing diet

> Harakam nodded, "Well I guess that's too bad for you then", he said.

> Hitomi looked at him sadly, "No, it's too bad for you", she said, "The general needs that
> information".

Mark: Where are you from?

Rex: I was born on the Colony planet Flobadob IV in the Alpha Quadrant

Mark: How did you get here?

Rex: An exploding spaceship tore open a hole in space and time

Mark: Where are the rest of your crew?

Rex: Hiding in a spaceship at the bottom of the harbour

Mark: Stop lying to me!

> Harakam shrugged and then winced at the pain,

Mark: [Harakam] Say, any chance of a massage while I'm here?

Christina: [Hitomi] Yeah, no.

> "That's no concern of mine", he said, and then drank the water.

> Hitomi nodded, "Well I think Shiro has done enough for tonight", she said.

> Harakam shook his head, "I've been interrogated by the best", he said, "I was even captured by
> the Cardassians once..".

Jill: They forced him to view their Instagram streams, the fiends

> Harakam broke off at her empty expression, "Those names *really* don't
> mean anything to you?", he asked.

Mark: He's ready to start with the gatekeeping now

> Hitomi shook her head, "No, I'm sorry, but they don't", she said.

> Harakam sighed, "Well I'm sorry that this is the way it has to be", he said and then looked firmly
> ahead, ignoring any other comments she made.

Rex: This is what people did before you could block them on social media

> *****

> Quincy was disappointed, he was sitting watching a record of the battle that took place
> yesterday. "Impressive", he murmured,

Christina: He was impressed in a disappointed way

> noticing that the modified C-55s were seemingly
> unaffected by the ordinance thrown against them.

Rex: They tried Super Soakers, Nerf guns, Airsoft... Nothing worked.

> "Yes Sir", replied Dr Marshall from his seat in front of Quincy's desk,

Christina: That's the one over the Rancor pit, right? Just checking.

> "The Atomic and Molecular
> structure of the element make it almost impervious to current weapons".

Jill: But ask it about its mother and it collapses into tears

> Quincy frowned as one of the Boomer's was trapped under a building, "Oh don't worry Sir", said
> Marshall,

Rex: [Marshall] It's just, uh, taking a nap! Yeah...

> "That C-55 is still intact, it's servo's just can't lift that much weight".

Mark: Do you even lift, Boomer?

> Quincy frowned and watched the telemetry from the second Boomer,

Christina: He could have gone without the lengthy sequence of it trying on hats.

> "What's that?" he demanded, seeing a red-gold beam lance across the Boomer's vision.

> Dr Marshall gulped nervously, "Well sir...", he began.

Christina: Slowly inching away from the trapdoor.

> A moment later Quincy saw all the Boomer's readings cut out, "I thought you said it was
> impervious to all weapons", he demanded.

Rex: Disclaimers may apply

> Marshall nodded, "All *current* weapons sir", he said, shaking his head,

Jill: [Marshall] That one's still in beta.

> "According to our data, the Boomer was hit by a Phased Energy weapon".

Rex: [Marshall] It's this little dustbuster thingie that makes stuff glow.

> Quincy frowned, "A Phaser?", he mused, "We've been attempting to produce a phaser for nearly
> ten years".

Rex: Closest they've managed so far is a death ray

> Marshall nodded, "Yes Sir, but whoever destroyed the Boomer, used one", he explained, "There
> was very little of the Boomer left, most of it was disintegrated".

> Quincy swivelled his chair around to face the window, "You've done well doctor", he said,

Christina: Marshall is legitimately surprised that he's still alive.

> "What did you call this metal?".

> "Its called Tritanium", he replied.

Christina: You can tell that somebody from marketing came up with that

> "Well, see to it that you replace the armour on as many models as possible", Quincy replied.

> Marshall swallowed nervously, "Uhh sir, those two C-55s used up almost all of our supply", he
> explained, "I have no idea where to get more from".

Mark [Marshall]: Given that we can't replicate the material, maybe it would have been better to conduct lab tests in a controlled environment rather than losing our entire supply on the city where it could be lost or destroyed or retrieved by somebody else or-

Rex [Quincy]: Who's in charge here?

Mark [Marshall]: You are, sir.

Rick [Quincy]: Who looks like an evil Christopher Walken?

Dan [Marshall]: You do, sir.

Rick [Quincy]: So shut up and do the nonsense job I gave you!

> Quincy nodded, "Well I'll see that some gets delivered as soon as it becomes available", he said,

Rex: He's going to camp out on ebay waiting for sellers.

> dismissing the doctor with a gesture.

Christina: Decades later they were still waiting.

> A few moments after doctor Marshall left, a tall figure entered the room,

Jill: Without any further description, I'm going to assume it's Jeff Goldblum.

Mark: Say, what does our cast look like anyway?

[Pause]

Rex: Uslim's a Vulcan.

Mark: That actually does help.

> "I hear you need something?", he said to Quincy.

> Quincy nodded, not turning to look at the man, "As much of that metal as you can find", he
> replied.

Rex: Give it time, we're combing the beach as fast as we can.

> The man nodded, "Oh", he said, stopping suddenly and turning back to Quincy, "Our 'guest' had
> some more information to tell us".

Christina: Left a four star review with some good recommendations.

> With that he tossed a tape recorder and piece of paper on the desk,

Mark: Quincy stared at the thing on his desk and had no idea what it was.

> "He was very helpful", he finished, walking out the door.

Rex: Quincy is going to have the best Pinewood Derby cart ever.

> Quincy picked up the record of the interrogation, "Matter Transmission, Faster than Light
> engines, Anti-matter reactors", he muttered,

Mark: All too weird. He'll just stick with his indestructible future metal armour.

> "It looks like something out of science fiction".

Jill: Rex?

Rex: Oh, right. [coughs] Wah-wah.

>

> "Relax, focus..", Lt John Conroy, was thinking, moving through the complex relaxation
> techniques that were the complement to the Klingon martial arts that he had learned.

Mark: This is the race that like shouting and charging blindly at the enemy. I'm not sure how good those techniques could be

> He had been
> attempting to relax since talking with Mara and Uslim, so far nothing seemed to be working.

Christina: He needs a model kit, that always works for me.

> Sighing in frustration he sat down in a chair and tried some breathing techniques.

Rex: In... Out... He forgot how to do that.

> "Don't stop", said Linna, stepping into the room, "I don't think I've seen techniques quite like
> that".

Christina: She's never seen somebody breathe before

> John nodded, "It's an obscure form", he said, "Taught a *long* way from here".

Mark: John is such a hipster

> John smiled slightly, "About 500 light years from here", he thought, but didn't add.

Rex: [John] Wait, I said that out loud, didn't I?

Jill: [Linna] Dunno, wasn't listening.

> "Sylia's condition seems to be stable", Linna noted sitting down opposite him.

Christina: As an aerobics instructor, she's trained to make that call.

> "She's not quite out of the woods yet", John disagreed, "It's going to take some special care if
> she's going to *ever* going to be back to the same physical condition as before".

Jill: Are we talking montage level of care here?

> Linna nodded, "I know", she said quietly.

Rex: [John] I'm going to have to wave the thing over her like, two or three more times.

> John stood, "Well are you going to keep me in here forever?", he asked bluntly.

> "Eager to leave?", Linna asked, smiling slightly.

Mark: Nah, he loves being locked up against his will.

> John shook his head, "No", he replied, "But I don't really like being a prisoner".

Rex: He's worried that if he runs they'll send the giant bubble after him

> Linna frowned, "Well, I'm afraid that there are a few things that need explaining before we let you
> roam around at will", she said.

Mark: They're moving him to a free-range exhibit with the Zebras and Ostriches

> John sat back down, "Such as?", he said.

Rex: Well for starters, what's with those blue pyjamas you've got on?

> "What were you doing in the combat area?", Linna asked.

Jill: The idea that there might be innocent bystanders to a boomer rampage never occurred to her

> John smiled, "Ducking", he replied shortly,

Mark: Ha ha. People died there.

> "A friend and I were having lunch when the Boomer attacked,

Rex: [John] Totally ruined my deconstructed chicken fried steak.

> we didn't have time to get away".

> Linna nodded, "Alright, that explains why you were there", she said,

Mark: [John] Oh good, she bought it.

Christina: [Linna] Wait, what?

> "Now can you tell me why you decided to help Sylia?".

Jill: He had to get the plot moving somehow.

Mark: Still not sure it worked.

> John shrugged, "She was hurt, I'm a doctor", he replied simply.

Rex: He saw an ambulance to chase.

> Linna shook her head, "You're the first doctor I've met that didn't ask for a credit card before
> treating a patient", she commented.

Jill: Or her insurance details.

> "Credit Card?", John asked.

Mark: John's knowledge of Earth history is something something eugenics wars something.

> Frowning deeper Linna studied him closely, "You not from around here, are you?", she asked.

Rex [John]: Nonsense. Why would you say that, fellow human from this period in time?

> "No", John replied, "Not from anywhere around here".

> "Well...", Linna said, waiting for an explanation.

Mark [John]: Okay, you got me. I'm from Ohio

> John frowned at her, these questions were becoming rather invasive,

Christina: Up until this point he'd been fine with their detaining him.

> "I really think that I've answered enough questions", he said, "I'd like to leave now".

Mark: [Linna] But I haven't even gotten your Instagram!

> John stood and started for the door, Linna stepped in front of him, "Oh no you don't!", she said
> blocking his way, "Not until you tell me how you do that fancy entrance thing".

> "What 'entrance thing' is that?", John replied, confused.

Rex: You know, puff of smoke, spray of confetti. That thing.

> Linna smiled, "That one where you appear out of thin air in a column of light and shoot an innocent bystander", she said.

Jill: It happens every time they use the transporter. It's a known bug, but they haven't found a fix as yet

> John edged his hand near the phaser-II, hidden in his clothing, that he had borrowed from Mara,

Mark: [John] And by 'innocent bystander,' you mean...

Christina: [Linna] Okay, so it's Mackie.

> "I don't know what you're talking about", he said.

> Linna's eyes narrowed, "Oh I think you do", she said.

Jill: [John] In my defense, that was Mara.

> John backed up slightly, so that the phaser wouldn't cause any permanent damage,

Rex: The stun setting is classified as less lethal.

> "I'm sure you must be mistaken", he said.

> Linna moved with him, keeping the distance between them constant,

Rex: Linna's a close talker.

> "Come on, you and that friend of yours who likes to shoot people", she said.

Mark: John is realising that doesn't narrow it down.

> John whipped out the phaser, only to have Linna knock it from his grasp, "No you don't!", she said.

> John decided that a hasty exit would be a good idea and moved to sweep Linna's feet from under her.

Rex: He learned that technique from future Cobra Kai

> Unfortunately she read his move and avoided it. He quickly switched to a series of body blows that she easily parried.

Jill: John's just realised that he's not prepared to fight someone who actually fights back.

Rex: What about those gangers he demolished?

Jill: That *Mara* demolished.

> "Not bad", Linna noted.

Mark: [Linna] Not actually any good, but hey.

> She then began her own attack, aiming for John's head, he barely managed to block her attack, stumbling backwards.

Jill: [John] Not in the face, not in the face!

> Linna followed up with a kick to the chest and John fell backward and thumped against a wall.

Christina: Either Linna's really strong or this is a really small room.

> "Had enough?", she asked, panting slightly.

Rex: [John] I'm *puff* doing *pant* great *wheeze* how about *splutter* you?

> John groaned and shook his head to clear it. "You win", he said, clambering to his feet, "Your a
> better fighter".

Jill: Her career as a Jazzercise instructor finally paid off.

> Then he pulled the smaller type-I phaser from his sleeve, "But somehow I don't think
> you can dodge this", he said, aiming it at her.

> Linna raised her arms, "That's cheating", she said.

Rex: Bringing a space laser to a martial arts fight is definitely against the rules.

> Suddenly the door was flung open, "Doctor!", called Mackie, "Something's wrong with Sylia!".

Mark: [Mackie] She won't let me give her a sponge bath!

> John looked at him, wondering what could have gone wrong, unconsciously he slipped the
> phaser away as he bolted for the door,

Christina: Does he usually hide a phaser on him before seeing patients?

> leaving a confused Linna standing in the middle of the room, with her hands raised,

Mark: [Linna] I am so stealing his death ray.

> "Well I guess that's the end of my questions", she said to the empty room.

Jill: Rex?

Rex: I think I'm done, sorry.

Jill: Don't blame you.

> Racing down the hallway, John was breathing heavily when he finally reached the infirmary, he
> grabbed up a Tricorder and scanned Sylia's still form,

Rex: [Mackie] Doc, she's coughing up blood!

Christina: [John] Give me a minute, I'm still getting readings.

> "That's strange", he said, puffing, "There's nothing wrong...".

Mark: Yes, but she's demanding room service.

> He broke off and looked up to see Mackie, Linna and the woman named Priss standing in the
> doorway,

Mark: Ah, the old "critical patient is having complications" prank.

> "Well I think that answers *one* important question", Priss said dryly.

Christina: [Linna] Actually I got a good assessment of his fighting skills and learned what weapons he
has and where he hides them.

Jill: [Priss] I was talking about our prank.

Christina: [Linna] Oh. Well never mind.

> John frowned, "Oh?", he asked.

> "As to your moral standards", Linna continued.

Rex: Professor Genki approved.

> "That was a test?", John asked, confused.

Jill: [Priss] Yeah, to see if you were exactly the kind of schmuck we thought you were.

Mark: [John] And?

Jill: [Priss] You passed with flying colours.

Mark: [John] Um... Thanks?

> The three nodded, "It was to see if you'd abandon Sylia to save your own skin", Priss said,

Rex: [John] Wait, that was an option?

> "Looks like you passed".

> "Who's bright idea was that?", John said sarcastically.

> "Mine...", came a weak voice from the bed.

Jill: [Sylia] I'm dead and I've still got to do all the thinking around here.

> John frowned, "Well next time make it something a little less trying on the nerves", he said, "I

> almost had a heart attack running down all those stairs".

Rex: In the future there will be no cardio.

> Mackie and Priss laughed,

Mark: If the fic then freeze-frames and rolls the credits then it would be perfect.

> while Linna just smiled slightly,

Christina: [Linna] Ah, our bosses' life is in the hands of an idiot.

> "Everybody out", John said, "Sylia needs time to regain her strength".

> Everyone filed out, John turning out the light as he left, he took the Tricorder with him to keep a

> constant monitor on Sylia's condition,

Mark: That's the Tricorder he uses to scan Sylia.

Christina: Yes.

Mark: That he's taking with him.

Christina: Yes.

Mark: Away from Sylia.

Christina: Yes.

Mark: So he can get readings on her.

> "I should have thought of this before", he muttered.

Mark: He's not very good at this, is he?

Christina: Come on, he's got a blue skivvy, what more do you want?

> The three led him to a comfortable lounge room, "Doctor?", Mackie asked curiously, "What's

> your *real* name?".

Mark: [John] Jonathan Wellington Tiddlesworth Conroy-Harrington-Smith-Smythe the fourth.

Jill: [Linna] I'm just going to keep calling you "idiot."

Mark: [John] Okay, that's... Wait, what?

> John smiled, "It's John", he said, "John Conroy".

Rex: He lives in permanent fear of time-travelling robots coming to kill him

> "Well John", Linna said, "How would you like a job?".

> "A job?", he asked, "What kind of job?".

Jill: Garbage collector. What kind of job did you think it would be?

> "Well, we need someone to help Sylia recover from her injuries", she explained, "And since your
> the only doctor available....".

Jill: You are the only doctor in all of MegaTokyo

> John shrugged, "Alright", he said, "But no more locking me in my room".

Christina: But what if he won't eat his greens?

> Linna nodded in agreement, "Done!", she said.

Jill: This has been two idiots negotiating.

> John returned to his room to get some sleep (carrying the Tricorder with him to keep a close
> watch on Sylia), he slumped into bed and felt more relaxed than he had in weeks, even if
> these people were not *quite* his friends, he knew now that they weren't the enemy.

Rex: As opposed to Cobra, the Enemy

> *****

> "How can you trust him?", Priss argued, "We don't know anything about him".

Rex: We know that he wears his pyjamas around all day and can't operate a shower.

> Linna nodded, "He also knows nothing about us", she said, "So we're about even there".

Mark: I see certain flaws in this argument

> Mackie looked up, "Are you sure Linna?", he asked, "If he's going to be taking care of Sylia...."

Mark: [Mackie] Maybe we should chain him up in the sickbay or something. I'm just spitballing here.

> Linna shrugged, "He wouldn't have reacted that way if he didn't care", she said,

Christina: He only cares about the malpractice suit.

> "He also would have attacked me more aggressively if he intended to escape".

Jill: Which still doesn't excuse the fact that he attacked you in the first place.

> "And what about those weapons he's carrying?", Priss asked, "You've got to admit that it's
> dangerous for him to be carrying those around".

Christina: Which is why none of you thought to take them while he was asleep.

> Linna nodded, "He's already proven that he'd only use them when someone threatens him", she
> said.

Mark: Of course, he perceived his imprisonment as a threat...

- > A moment later a breathless Nene rushed into the room, carrying something in a plastic bag,
- > "Wait till you see this", she said. Tipping the bag open, a piece of metal clattered to the desk.

Rex: Nene, have you been dumpster diving again?

- > "What the hell is important about that?", Priss asked.
- > "It's part of the armour from the second Boomer from yesterday", she said.
- > "What blasted and melted it like that?", Mackie asked, eyeing the strange metal.
- > "The lab boys have no idea", Nene said, "They couldn't even make a dint in it".

Christina: So how did you get it?

Jill: Nene is facing a lot of charges. A lot.

- > "What did they use?", Priss asked, picking it up and turning it over in her hands.
- > "Everything", Nene said, "Diamond drills, laser cutters, even explosives,

Rex: Pizza cutters, baseball bats, root vegetables... everything

- > nothing so much as scratched it".

Mark: They think it's made out of old chewing gum or concentrated black box flight recorders.

- > Linna looked at the metal with bleak eyes, "I think we're in serious trouble", she said, "If the
- > Boomer's are *that* armoured....."

Mark: Well good thing you have a guy here with super space lasers then

Christina: Funny that

- > *****

- > Glossary: (For those of you unfamiliar with some of the Star Trek terms

Jill: Then what are you doing reading this fic?

- > - if you see anything that should be explained missing, or anything I've got wrong, let me know)

Rex: Constant references to Gorn captains will not be explained.

- > Commbadge - A StarFleet commbadge is standard issue to all officers,

Mark: Non-comms get stuck with a walkie-talkie.

- > it provides for communication, identification and transporter lock,

Jill: You press it, then kinda talk into the air at nothing.

- > it is a small, badge like object, that is coated with a layer of gold and silver.

Mark: Now available from your nearest geek merch store for fifty bucks. Shipping extra.

- > Danube Class Runabout

Rex: Something that crashes to set up the plot of every third episode

- > - A small class of ship used by StarFleet, capable of Warp Speed and with
- > several cargo options (ie: combat, planetary survey, exploration),

Christina: Can also be fitted out with a minibar, dance floor and photography studio.

- > it makes the small vessel a more
- > useful replacement to a shuttle (the usual transports that are used on starships)
- > Gold-Pressed Latinum - Standard currency inside and outside of the Federation, mainly because it
- > cannot be replicated.

Mark: But I thought that the Federation was a post-scarcity Socialist society.

Christina: It is.

Mark: But they also have currency.

Christina: They do.

Mark: I'm sensing a small problem here.

- > Isolinear Optical Chip –

Rex: The technobabble plot device technobabble.

- > This is a data storage media, often used in the control systems of
- > spacecraft, but also used in much the same way as computer disks today.

Jill: That might just be the most dated line in the fic so far

- > Phaser - A phaser is the standard issue defensive weapon to all StarFleet personnel - There are
- > several distinct types.

Christina: Available in a variety of colours and finishes to suit your outfit, whatever the occasion.

- > Type I- Smallest type of phaser, capable of stun/kill settings only

Mark: It's **only** capable of killing someone

- >II - Pistol-sized phaser, capable of molecular disruption (vaporisation)

Jill: When you really need to hide the bodies.

- > III - This is a rifle model, only used in special circumstances, considered a heavy weapon.

Rex: Mara considers it her best friend, and cuddles with it every night.

- > {as a note - the big phaser arrays on the Enterprise-D are listed as Class-X}

Christina: And as always, thank you for that, witless interjection.

- > Replicator - This device creates matter from energy in specific patterns –

Mark: Kind of like a 3D printer, but more future-y.

- > it can be used to create **virtually** anything,

Christina: Except for what they might actually need for the episode.

- > but the power costs are quite significant.

- > Tricorder

Rex: The thing that Link looks for so he can save the princess Zelda

> - Hand-held instrument used by StarFleet for detection and scanning. There are several
> different types of specialised Tricorders, medical, science etc.

Christina: Which one would you use for home cooking?

> Tritanium - A strong metal used in the construction of starships, it is a light and durable material.

Mark: Found on the periodic table between Unobtainium and Questionite

> Universal Translator

Jill: I think we can figure this one out on our own.

> - The Universal Translator is a computer program that ties into every
> StarFleet commbadge, it translates the sounds (and in some cases gestures/smells/body language)

Rex: What if there was an alien race that communicated by farts?

Mark: I'm just going to cut that one off now

> of alien species into Federation Standard

Rex: Well, I'm glad we've passed this slow patch, and the fic can really get started.

On that final comment, the big screen switched off, converting the world back to prose format. "That was the third-" Mark began.

"-or second second," Rex added.

"-or something chapter of A Trek to the Past," Mark corrected himself. "A fic in which a lot of effort is spent on ensuring that nothing happens."

"Agreed there," Jill nodded. "Look at everything we covered before the fic up and died. All of that was just one overly long, incredibly dry setup."

"It does seem that way," Christina agreed. "Get Doctor Guy into the Knight Sabers."

"And supposedly he'd then hang out with them, fight Boomers with his phaser and end up banging one of them." Jill considered. "I'll say Linna."

"Because she got the most interaction with him?" Mark asked.

"That and how well-developed a character she is," Jill smirked. "Because that's really all they have in common."

"I suppose that beyond that the fic would eventually end with our designated protagonists headed back to their own time," Christina considered.

"If they didn't die of their own stupidity," Rex noted. "I mean, they have been making things as hard on themselves as possible so far."

"Although they'll need to rescue Captain Guy from the USSD first," Mark added. "Because otherwise that plot didn't go anywhere."

"You know what we did get though?" Rex offered. "Shouting Quincy. Best part of the fic so far."

"I can only imagine that Quincy shouting at people is a BGC fanfic cliché," Christina considered.

"It's no Largo returning, but I guess it will do," Mark noted.

"So I can see you're all super into the fic," the Voice crashed into the conversation. "So let's hear what's going on in those tiny little brains of yours and what you made of it."

Christina spoke first. "I have to admit, my main problem with the fic was with our feature cast. In this sort of crossover, it makes sense to have an original cast representing the vast membership of Starfleet, and it lets the authour tell the particular story of these characters. The problem is that they really have barely any character at all.

"Our cast seem to be solely defined by their roles. Mara is the tough and aggressive one because she's in security; John is the caring one because he's a doctor; and Uslim is the cold and logical one because he's a Vulcan. And as far as I can tell, that's the sum total of their personalities. They never step outside those labels, never develop beyond their positions established in their introduction.

"As a side note, I have to point out that the characters also completely lack any kind of description or appearance. It's not an issue on the other side of the crossover, as that largely uses pre-established characters that the readers can easily visualise. But in the case of the Starfleet cast, we don't have any kind of visual hook to work with. It's another factor that makes it hard to see them as actual characters, and without that it's almost impossible to care about them and their story."

"For me, the big thing was that it was just so dumb," Mark added on. "Really, at just about every point, it seemed like each decision anyone made was the worst possible option. The whole situation comes about because the captain blatantly ignores warnings and gets his ship destroyed. Of course, the fact that they were using the shuttle bay for triage definitely doesn't help. That part is mostly just a contrivance to get the characters together on the runabout, but it still falls apart with a simple thought.

"From then on, the Starfleet cast take over making as bad decisions as they can. They never once considered the possible consequences of their actions or made any real effort to hide their identities. Their plan of beaming into a boutique in the middle of the day could have gone horribly wrong, but it was only by sheer dumb luck that they found it deserted save for a single cashier. In fact, it feels like they only got their crystal through dumb luck as well; it just happens to be in the decapitated head of the robot that attacked them. Saved them from having to think about it.

"One thing worth noting on this is how they flip-flop on the Prime Directive. They establish early on that they're not in their own timeline, yet still worry about interfering with the past. There's no discussion on how they can have consequences if it's not their past, nor any thought of how they wound up in a different chronology. They just make it a problem for no reason." Mark pause for a second, then added, "Actually, I think the whole thing can be summarised with Uslim's reason not to go outside. Other Vulcans have used simple disguises when traveling in the past or on alien worlds, but they just don't think to put on a hat, even though it's the easiest thing in the world."

"So here's the thing that got me about the fic," Jill continued. "It's got time-travel, robots, aliens, armoured vigilantes and exploding spaceships and a whole pile of other crap that I've already forgotten about, all of which are in three chapters. So given all of that, I have to ask one question. Why is it so damned dull?"

"Don't get me wrong, there's a lot going on," she explained. "But at the same time, very little of it has any impact. We open with a spaceship battle that feels more like a formality than anything else; it's there to set up the plot, yes, but it's not exciting or gripping at all. Our designated heroes are hurled through time and end up in a strange land, but yet they act like it's the most casual thing in the world. There's a fight between the ADP and an indestructible boomer where Sylia's life is on the line but no, it's just a thing that's going on which we have no investment in."

"One of the biggest problems is that in many ways, there's too much happening in the fic. Look at the number of plot beats we have going on; John with the Knight Sabers, Uslim repairing the shuttle, the USSD interrogating the captain and GENOM apparently having access to Star Trek technology and making super-advanced killbots. This is all while introducing a whole pile of new characters, who, as noted, are completely undeveloped. Plus on top of that we have our missing fourth crew member who was never accounted for which would have added even more to the fic."

"Another problem that contributed to the dullness was the writing," Rex added. "For the most part, it's completely flat and lifeless; there's no description at all, and no effort made to convey any sense of action even in the action scenes. Most of the dialogue feels lifeless, like the characters are reading off a list or the like. Similarly, there's no effort at descriptive text at all; by the time we were done, we had no idea of what any of the new characters looked like. In a weird way, Uslim is the best described character simply because we know he's a Vulcan."

"There was one other bit of the writing that stood out, and not in a good way," he continued with a small sigh. "The fic made constant efforts to be funny, mostly through character reactions to their circumstances and surroundings. At best these all fell flat, and at worst, they were actively unfunny and detracted from the rest of the narrative."

"Your poor wah-wah horn," Christina noted.

"Exactly," Rex nodded. "They didn't add anything to the fic, and often ended up being more painful than anything else."

"So in other words, a precursor to modern MCU-level quipping," Jill considered.

"A lot of that," Rex agreed.

"Well thanks all of you for that," the Voice beamed. "It's been a fun little series. I'll see you all for the next one, whenever that is," she finished. "Toodles."

"And just like that, we're done," Mark noted. "At least this one was short."

"I'll take that," Jill admitted. "Not that it really had much else going for it."

"I should be off as well," Rex admitted. "Got a post to write and some pictures to add to it."

"So do you take photos of your ham rolls?" Christina asked.

"Got to for the blog," Rex nodded. "I mean, a photo is worth so much more than just the description alone."

"Right," Jill nodded. "And do you take photos of any other food?"

"Nope, just ham rolls."

Jill paused a moment. "I don't know if that's dedication or stupidity," she finally admitted as the image dissolved into a mess of digital artefacts. "Well done."

Author's notes:

Yes, I know we covered Chapter Two last episode. However, the author labelled chapter three as chapter two in their original post, and I preserved it in the name of accuracy.

As near as I can tell this is the entirety of the fanfic. Certainly it's all that was on Usnet or the fanfic archive that I retrieved it from. There may have been more on Brett Handy's personal website, but with it down I don't see any way to retrieve it even if it did exist. The death of the personal website is a loss to us all.

Next time we rebuild a crossover. Two for the price of one!

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Bubblegum Crisis created by Artmic/Youmex

A Trek Into the Past written by Brett Handy

Rex Brandtiger and Jill Vader created by Rick R. (natch)
Mark Grayson and Christina McCade created by Zogster

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Hats? Email us at elmerstudios00 (at) gmail.com and register your Jeff.

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> {Author's Note: Yeah *scratching my head* that does seem a little contrived, doesn't it?}